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Moses, Martyr and Messiah:

Abraham Lincoln and Black Emancipation.

A Study in the Popular Development and Political Use of Myth.

(With especial reference to the years from 1860 to 1870)

by

Valerie Beardsmore

Submitted to the University of Kent at Canterbury for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, May, 1980

Abstract

Myths which centre upon Abraham Lincoln's relationships with black Americans provide a case study in the popular development and political use of myth in a modern democratic society, and of its ability to find meaning outside the culture in which it originates. In 'advanced' societies myth plays an important role in politics. Not only can politicians secure popular support by associating themselves and their policies with a hero of their society and the values he represents, but also by concentrating complex events or trends within a single theme, myth supplies a coherent, easily assimilated and so - especially in times of social crisis - peculiarly potent political argument.

Most Lincoln myths have been used politically, but those relating to emancipation emerged primarily as part of the political campaigns of secessionists during the crisis of Southern nationalism, 1860-1861, and Northern anti-slavery radicals during the 1865 assassination crisis. In both cases the mythical Lincoln symbolized, and so simplified, the complex economic, social and ideological developments which brought about the Civil War and, during that conflict, the abolition of slavery in the United States.

Among secessionists, the myth-making process distilled white Southerners' fears for the future of their slavery-based society into the compelling image of Lincoln as a rabid abolitionist whose election to the presidency would necessitate their section's withdrawal from the Union. In 1865 Northern anti-slavery radicals revealed the potential political usefulness of images of Lincoln as Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty when they used them to sanctify wartime emancipation and incorporated them into an interpretation of the Civil War which they believed demanded an approach to Reconstruction that would ensure the total and permanent abolition of slavery and the establishment of at least basic civil rights for black men. The image of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation proved especially valuable to those seeking protection for the rights of freedmen, but during the 1866 and 1868 election campaigns those who were more concerned to bring about rapid restoration of former rebel states to their proper places in the Union also incorporated mythical images of Lincoln into their campaign rhetoric, demonstrating the flexibility of myth in political use. Thus the heroic Lincoln was detached from his earliest political associations, facilitating his incorporation into America's national mythology.

In Britain Northern partisans used the Emancipator image of Lincoln to stimulate anti-slavery sympathy for the Federal cause and to confirm an analysis of the Civil War directly linked to their political interests at home. However, in Britain too the heroic Lincoln was gradually detached from his early political associations, and this made possible his emergence as a hero of the broad values of freedom and democracy.

Acknowledgements

While researching for and writing this thesis, I have incurred many debts of gratitude. In particular, I wish to thank Dr. Christine Bolt, who in supervising my research was generous with both her time and her advice. I am also indebted to the staffs of many libraries, and wish to thank especially the librarians at the University of Kent, Johns Hopkins University, the British Library at Bloomsbury and the Newspaper Library at Colindale. Finally, I should like to record my gratitude to my mother, Mrs. E.G. Beardsmore, for her patient support, and the debt that I owed to my father, Mr. L.W. Beardsmore, who gave me constant encouragement and support during the preparation of an earlier version of this thesis.

Contents

One:	Myth and History: parts one and two	1
Two:	American Responses to the Emancipation Proclamations	39
Three:	The Martyr-Emancipator as Political Myth: 1865	83
Four:	The Heroic Lincoln as Political Myth: I The Election of 1866	138
Five:	The Heroic Lincoln as Political Myth: II The Election of 1868	202
Six:	Popular Development of the Lincoln Myths	240
Seven:	Black Americans and the Lincoln Myths	287
Eight:	Lincoln Myths in Britain	340
Nine:	Britain and the Enduring Image of Lincoln as Hero	398
Ten:	Conclusions	490

Abbreviations

Cong. Globe:	The Congressional Globe.
Lincoln, Works:	Roy P. Basler et al, eds., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln. 8 vols. and Index (New Brunswick, N.J., 1953 -55).
O.R.:	Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.
S.N.:	Slave Narratives...Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project.
Tributes:	Tributes to the Memory of Abraham Lincoln: Reproduction in fac-similie of eighty-seven memorials addressed by foreign municipalities and societies to the government of the United States
AHR	American Historical Review
JAH	Journal of American History
JNH	Journal of Negro History
MVHR	Mississippi Valley Historical Review

Note: Mid-Nineteenth Century newspapers in Britain and the United States often capitalized personal names. When quoting from newspapers, I have not followed this practice.

Myths are, quite simply, historical phenomena; and, if we wish to understand them, we had best attend to the concrete circumstances in which they occur.

Henry Tudor

Preface

The heroic Lincoln is the product of a compelling national myth of the United States which has found enduring meaning for both Americans and non-Americans. As the author of a recent compendium of literary works on Abraham Lincoln has written, "his spirit continues to thrive the world around."[1] Moreover, this heroic being has from the first functioned as political myth and still does so, as Illinois Republicans demonstrated when in 1972 they filled the window of their office in Springfield with outsize portraits of Lincoln and their party's presidential candidate, placed side by side, to drive home the message that Richard Nixon was the spiritual heir of the hero of their state and nation. Clearly a study of the emergence of the potent mythical concepts of Lincoln which make up what is called "the Lincoln Myth" should offer insights into the myth-making process at both a popular and political level, and it is with the object of providing such insights that the following study has been undertaken.

The cluster of mythical images presenting Lincoln as a hero of emancipation have formed an important and enduring element of the Lincoln Myth in popular and political thought, and it is upon their early growth and political use that this study will focus. The analysis will take place within the framework of a theory of myth and political myth which emphasizes its function as an interpretation of past events intended to make crude sense of the present and offer guidance for the future. In Chapter One this theory of myth is put forward in detail and a discussion of the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist enemy of the South, well known to students of the Civil War era, which was developed by Southern

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1 Victor Searcher, Lincoln Today: An Introduction to Modern Lincolniana (New York, 1969), 330.

secessionists during the crisis of 1860-1861, is presented as a case-study in the political use of myth. Chapters Two to Nine form the main body of the thesis, offering an analysis of the early development and political use amongst white and black Americans and in Britain of mythical images of Lincoln relating to emancipation.

In essense the discussion will show that these images of Lincoln emerged primarily as political myth, illustrating the crucial role of politicians as myth-makers in nineteenth century society. Thus it will be suggested that a major reason why the concept of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation found no significant support amongst white Americans at the time when the Emancipation Proclamations were issued in 1862-1863 was that such a concept was not politically useful at that time. It will also be suggested that amongst black Americans heroic concepts of Lincoln emerged at an early date, operating as crude political myths, and that he was hailed as a hero of emancipation by British Radicals and working-class spokesmen from September 1862 onwards because they found such a concept of him politically useful. The emergence of heroic images of Lincoln in America at the time of his assassination, and particularly those concerned with emancipation, will also be shown to relate to their political usefulness to a dominant group of myth-makers at this time, the anti-slavery Northern politicians and preachers who used the myths as arguments for an approach to the problem of reconstructing the Union after the Civil War which would ensure the total and permanent destruction of slavery.

An analysis of actual political use of the heroic Lincoln during the congressional elections of 1866 and the presidential election campaign of 1868 will reveal the changing pattern of exploitation of Lincoln myths by

politicians during the later 1860's. From this it will be seen that while concepts of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation continued to prove useful to politicians seeking to protect and enlarge the rights of black Americans, and particularly the freedmen, Lincoln's emergence as a national hero, to which early political use of mythical images of him contributed, gave him value for politicians whose views diverged from or even conflicted with those of the early myth-makers. It is suggested here that this process by which the heroic Lincoln was detached from his earliest political associations enabled him to survive declining Northern interest in Reconstruction and in the plight of Southern blacks and made possible his enduring role in American thought and political debate. It is considered to be significant that a broadly similar process occurred in Britain where after 1865 the heroic Lincoln was gradually detached from his early associations with the Radical and working class campaign for suffrage reform, and became generally accepted as the heroic representation of the shared values of two nations which cherished their roles as defenders of democracy in the western world. This will be seen to have given the heroic Lincoln a broadly political usefulness in relationships between Britain and America during the late Nineteenth and the Twentieth Centuries. In the United States, enduring black support for mythical images of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation is related directly to the perennial political usefulness of such images to black leaders seeking the integration of their race into a society dominated by the values of white Americans.

In the discussion outlined above, a number of terms appear frequently which require definition. The term "radical" is used to describe three groups of politicians. Southern radicals, who appear in Chapter One, are so described because they proposed a radical or extreme

course of action as a solution to the crisis of the South which they perceived in 1860-1861. It should be noted, however, that they proposed radical action to secure conservative ends, namely the preservation of an economic system and a social system based upon slavery. Republican Radicals, who appear in several chapters, are not easily defined. In essence the term is used to describe Republicans who before or during the Civil War urged radical action against slavery by the National Government, on both moral and pragmatic grounds, and who after the War advocated an approach to Reconstruction which assumed the power of Congress, preferably acting in co-operation with the President, to adopt far-reaching measures designed to ensure the total and permanent destruction of slavery and to secure at least basic civil rights for black men. Problems associated with defining Radicalism in this context are discussed later in this study.

Thirdly, the term Radical is used in the discussion of British attitudes to Lincoln to describe members of the radical wing of the Liberal Party who espoused a variety of reforms designed to create a better society in Britain, and this study is particularly concerned with those Radicals who sought far-reaching change in the British system of parliamentary representation to give working men a more significant role in the process of government. Their concern to expand the suffrage was one obvious link with American Republican Radicals such as Charles Sumner, and some contemporaries drew parallels between the two groups, one American observing that, "The Radicals in England or in this country are men of mind, thought, principle, who go to the root of things, and wish to establish politics on the solid foundation of human rights."[1] It is interesting to note that both groups exploited mythical images of Lincoln as a symbol of the values of freedom and human equality.

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1 "A Veteran Observer", New York Times, Sept. 3, 1866.

Racialism and racialist are terms which appear throughout this study and are used to describe beliefs, attitudes and patterns of behaviour reflecting prejudice on the part of members of one racial group against members of another race resulting from a firm belief in the innate mental and moral inferiority of that race.[1] Two terms associated with myth also require brief definitions. Mythology has two widely accepted meanings. It is used to describe both the study of myth and a particular body of myths. In this discussion only the second meaning is used. Finally, the term 'tradition' is used to describe a mythical interpretation of events which, however, may be compressed into one compelling image. Thus the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist condenses the tradition viewing him as such.

Throughout the discussion that follows, a knowledge of the history of the era studied and of Lincoln's role in the Civil War and in emancipation is assumed. The ways in which mythical images of Lincoln diverge from the historical record are therefore not generally indicated. Some works dealing with the historical Lincoln are cited in Chapter One,[2] but in this respect some observations of George B. Tindall may be borne in mind. According to Tindall, "myths have a life of their own which to some degree renders irrelevant the question of their correlation to empirical fact." As Tindall goes on to suggest, the emergence of myths and the influence that they exert over human beings is itself part of the historical record.[3]

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1 The terms 'racism' and 'racist' which are used by many scholars can be used to convey similar meanings but often have other connotations. They appear only in quotations in this study, and in such cases their meaning should be evident from the context in which they appear.

2 For works on Lincoln see the works by Jay Monoghan and Victor Searcher cited below, and bibliographies in the biographies cited in Chapter One. On Lincoln historiography see Don E. Fehrenbacher, The Changing Image of Lincoln in American Historiography (Oxford, 1968) and Benjamin P. Thomas, Portrait for Posterity: Lincoln and His Biographers (New Brunswick, N.J., 1947).

3 See page 2 of Tindall's essay in the volume edited by Gerster and Cords cited on page 18 below.

Chapter One

I: Myth and History

> Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization;
> it is not an idle tale, but a hard-worked active force...[1]

From the time of his death in 1865 to the present time, Abraham Lincoln has been widely acknowledged to be one of the foremost - perhaps the greatest - of American heroes. Lincoln's life, from his birth in Kentucky in 1809 through his inauguration as sixteenth President of the United States in 1861 to his tragic murder four years later is not merely a matter of historical record. Around the historical figure have gathered a variety of myths and folktales[2] which together make up what is often called the Lincoln Myth or the Lincoln Legend.[3] Myth and history are sometimes difficult to separate, but aided by the publication of his papers in 1947, historians have succeeded in demonstrating where heroic images of Lincoln diverge from the record of history. However, while concern with the historical Lincoln has, since the turn of the century, produced several scholarly biographies[4] and a large number of essays and articles,[5] the myths themselves have been considered

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1 Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays (London, 1947 ed.), 101.

2 Folktales, which often contain mythical elements, are traditional tales which are local in character and express local wisdom. They often centre upon folk heroes. On the folklore Lincoln see below, Chapter Ten.

3 The term legend is sometimes used interchangeably with myth and sometimes to distinguish myths relating to historical characters or events. The term myth is preferred in this thesis.

4 Lord Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln (New York, 1916); James G. Randall, Lincoln the President, 4 vols. (New York, 1945-55); Benjamin P. Thomas, Abraham Lincoln (New York, 1952), long considered the best one-volume biography of Lincoln; Reinhard H. Luthin, The Real Abraham Lincoln (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1960); and a more recent work by Stephen P. Oates, With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln (New York, 1977). Carl Sandburg's dramatic but not always accurate account of Lincoln's life, Abraham Lincoln: The Prarie Years, 2 vols. (New York, 1926) and Abraham Lincoln: The War Years, 4 vols. (New York, 1939) must also be mentioned.

5 See, for example, the collections of essays published under the following titles:- David Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered (New York, 1961 ed.); Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., The Leadership of Abraham Lincoln (New York and London, 1970); Norman A. Graebner, ed., The Enduring Lincoln (Urbana, Ill., 1959); Allan Nevins and Irving Stone, eds., Lincoln, A Contemporary Portrait (New York, 1962).

sufficiently interesting and significant to become the subject of several monographs.

Of these the most worthwhile is Roy P. Basler's study of the Lincoln Legend in literature, but two others cannot be ignored. Newspaperman Lloyd Lewis used myth in a loose, journalistic sense to describe a range of short-lived and usually false beliefs and stories about Lincoln and his assassin John Wilkes Booth. The resultant book, a product of Lewis' interest in the centuries-old mythical theme of the dying god, contains much undocumented evidence of interest to the student of Lincoln myths as well as much of less significance. In Legends that Libel Lincoln, Montgomery Lewis used the term legend to define, as the title suggests, popular but false stories about Lincoln and his family.[1]

Yet while a new biography of Lincoln has recently been published, there exists no volume on him comparable to Merrill Peterson's excellent study of the Jefferson image as it developed in literature and politics in America or John W. Ward's interesting monograph on the heroic Jackson as a symbol of his age.[2] Though more limited in aim and scope than either of these works, and though approaching its subject from a different perspective, this thesis seeks to contribute to the study of Lincoln myths and of the role of Myth in American life. Paying particular attention to myths relating to emancipation, it seeks to trace the early development and political use of mythical images of Lincoln which began during his lifetime and reached a peak in the years immediately following his death, and will do no more than sketch some aspects of the later growth of Lincoln myths in order to illuminate particular arguments.

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1 Roy P. Basler, The Lincoln Legend, a Study in Changing Conceptions, (Boston and New York, 1935); Lloyd Lewis, Myths After Lincoln (New York, 1929); Montgomery Lewis, Legends that Libel Lincoln (New York, 1946). On the mythical theme of the dying god see James G. Frazer, The Golden Bough. A Study in magic and religion, 12 vols. (London, 1907-15 ed.).vol.3.

2 Oates, op.cit., Merrill D. Peterson, The Jefferson Image in the American Mind (London, Oxford and New York, 1960); John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (London, Oxford and New York, 1955).

Though necessarily influenced by what scholars have written about the heroic Lincoln, it will differ from most other works on myth in America in three ways.[1] Firstly, the thesis seeks to study the role played by myth in a modern democratic society and focusses upon the political use of Lincoln myths and particularly those relating to the freeing of the slaves. Secondly, an attempt is made to work within the framework of a theory of myth and political myth derived from the studies of scholars whose primary interest is in myth.[2] Thirdly, the thesis seeks to demonstrate, with particular reference to Britain, how myths may come to have meaning for societies other than that in which they originate.

The vital role played by myth in "traditional" societies, by which is meant communities whose way of life is inherited from previous generations, has been established beyond doubt,[3] and many studies have suggested myth's continuing importance in the life of modern societies.[4] In the Twentieth Century the example of Nazi Germany has demonstrated conclusively the potency of political myth.[5] However, the growth of myth and its function in political life in a modern democratic society is a subject which has been to some extent neglected. By focussing upon the heroic Lincoln, this study seeks to show that myths and cults play as significant a part in the life of such a society as Martin Nilsson has revealed that they played in Ancient Greece.[6]

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1 See especially Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship (New York,1941,1972); Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge, Mass.,and London, 1950,1970); Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1660-1860 (Middletown, Conn., 1973).

2 See the footnotes to this chapter. Slotkin, op.cit. opens with a chapter on mythology generally and myths in America.

3 See in particular Malinowski, Myth, Science and Religion.

4 See, for example, Roland Barthes, Mythologies,trans. by Annette Levers (London, 1973), and Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Reality, trans. by Philip Mairet (London, 1968)

5 See Henry Hatfield, "The Myth of Nazism", in Henry A. Murray, ed., Myth and Mythmaking (Boston,1968 ed.), 199-220, and Dietrich Orlow, "The Conversion of Myths into Political Power: The Case of the Nazi Party, 1925-1926", AHR, LXXII, No.3 (April, 1967), 906-24.

6 Martin Nilsson, Cults, Myths, Oracles, and Politics in Ancient Greece (New York, 1972). I am indebted to Nilsson's work in my understanding of the role played by myth in politics.

Before looking more closely at the heroic Lincoln, some attempt must be made to clarify the interpretation of myth upon which this study rests. Definitions of the term "myth" date back to the times of the Ancient Greeks, from whose word "muthos", meaning originally an utterance and later a tale or story, the English word is derived.[1] At that time myths were widely held to be allegories with hidden meanings expressing moral or philosophical truths. Since then a variety of other interpretations of myth have been put forward.

Taking the better known of these, myths have been viewed as distorted history, false tales of pagan gods, attempts by primitive men to explain the existence and character of the world, survivals of the lost and poetic language of early man, and the spoken part or correlative of ritual which lives on when the rites cease to be observed. In addition, in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries the work of anthropologists and psychologists, which has added new dimensions to the understanding of myths, has produced fresh theories of myth. Anthropologists, and especially Bronislaw Malinowski, have put forward the view that myths are sacred narratives which play a vital practical role in traditional societies where they account for and reinforce social institutions and rituals. Meanwhile, from the studies of psychologists has emerged a theory of myth as a product of the human psyche, in which repressed inner conflicts of the human mind are given outward expression. Inspired by the work of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, psychological theories of myth claim that the desires and anxieties which are reflected in the dream life of an individual find expression for society as a whole in the collective form of myths. From this has developed the concept of myth as a produce of the "collective mind" of a community.[2]

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1 G.S. Kirk, The Nature of Greek Myths (Harmondsworth, Middlesex,1974),22

2 For useful discussion of these and other theories of myth see David Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth", in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed. Myth: A Symposium (Bloomington and London, 1965), 3-23; Kirk, op.cit., 38-91; Harry Levin, "Some Meanings of Myth", in Murray, ed., Myth and Mythmaking, 103-14 and Henry Tudor, Political Myth (London, 1972), 13-64

To some it seems that all such attempts to explain myth in terms of a single all-embracing theory must fail.[1] Thus, for example, while some myths originated in ritual, not all do so, nor can it be shown that every myth gives expression to the repressed mental states observed by psychologists. The fact is that myths may originate for a variety of reasons and may fulfil a variety of functions in society, but the character of myth cannot be defined solely by origin or function. Yet certain characteristics of myth, some closely related to the theories outlined above, can be observed.

Firstly, myths are traditional tales, that is, stories handed down from generation to generation in a community. Often they are passed on by word of mouth, but sometimes, as was the case with Greek myths and the mythical tales of some European gods and heroes such as Norse myths or British stories of King Arthur, myths are preserved in writing. Many myths are sacred tales and may indeed express timeless, universal or spiritual truths, and serve as a means to comprehend the divine.[2] As some writers have suggested, one function of myth is to give expression to that which cannot easily be translated into non-mythical language.[3] In this, with its potent imagery appealing to the emotions, myth plays a role similar to the symbolism of art which also conveys meaning in a distinctive form not easily - if at all - represented in any other way. Myth is then a unique way of perceiving and interpreting reality which it presents in a simple and dramatic form. This characteristic of simplifying the complex makes myth a valuable medium for expressing abstract ideas and values. Often myth-making involves an emotional response to what is perceived, as Henry Nash Smith indicated when he defined myth as "an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image."[4] The mental process which creates myth is therefore

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1 Kirk, op.cit., 38.
2 Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism and Truth", op.cit., 19; Joseph Campbell, "The Historical Development of Mythology", in Murray, ed., Myth and Myth-making, 19-45, especially pp.20, 23; Samuel H. Hooke, Middle Eastern Mythology (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1978 ed.), 165-85.
3 Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (New York, 1962), xviii.
4 Smith, Virgin Land, xx.

similar to that which creates symbols, for these too simplify and dramatize what is observed.[1]

Thus myths express ideas or values through the medium of dramatic, and often sacred, narratives which create powerful mental images evoking strong emotional responses. In doing so they may perform any one or several of a variety of functions. They undoubtedly articulate mankind's understanding of its experience whether this relates to the spiritual or the secular world, and frequently take the form of explanation of natural or social phenomena.[2] Myths may equally serve not only to explain but also to endorse and reinforce the organization of a society, or its customs, rituals and beliefs. This vital social purpose of myth was clearly revealed in Malinowski's studies of traditional society on the Trobriander islands northeast of New Guinea. Analysing the sacred narratives of the Trobrianders, Malinowski established that myths purporting to describe the origin of a particular group of people are designed to account for and justify the social organization of the community in which they exist.[3]

Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss views myth-making as primitive man's way of coming to terms with his environment which gives him an illusion of understanding and controlling it just as science gives modern man accurate knowledge of and real control over natural phenomena. In addition Levi-Strauss argues that myth, being determined by the structure of the human mind, reflects its tendency to divide experience into opposites, and so serves to reconcile contradictions in mankind's experience.[4] As this suggests, myths may also express and explain paradoxes and problems in the experience of a community as these are understood by the myth-maker , and one of the

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1 Ibid. The close connection between myths and symbols is discussed in Donald A. Mackenzie, The Migration of Symbols and their Relations to Beliefs and Customs (London and New York, 1926), x.

2 Kirk, op.cit.,108.

3 Malinowski, Myth, Science and Religion, 116-7.

4 Claude Levi-Strauss, "'Primitive' Thinking and the 'Civilized' Mind", in Myth and Meaning (London, 1978), 15-24; see also Henry Tudor's discussion of the theory of myth put forward by Levi Strauss, in Tudor, Political Myth, 52-60.

functions of myth is to offer solutions to these. Many myths are concerned with the enduring and universal problem of death,[1] and Malinowski has claimed that Trobriander myths concerning the cycle of life and death"are an explicit development into narrative of certain crucial points in native belief."[2] This seems to support Joseph Campbell's theory that mankind needs myths, rituals and symbols to help it through periods of crisis, as for example, the transition from boyhood to manhood or girlhood to womanhood which in traditional societies is attended by elaborate ritual and recourse to myth.[3] In relation to this, it will be seen that a community or nation turns more frequently to myths, and that these myths are more potent, in times of crisis, and that political myth is more evident, and exerts its strongest hold on the public mind, in times of political crisis.

Myth owes its potency in part to its dramatic character and its appeal to the emotions, but there are reasons for supposing that myth-making meets needs buried deep within the human psyche.[4] Studies of early European myths have shown that these not only met national needs, but also were successfully transplanted from one people to another, Norse myth reappearing in Scottish ballads and Arthurian myths spreading across Europe in the Middle Ages.[5] Moreover, certain themes are common to most bodies of myth, reappearing too frequently and in areas too widely separated, both geographically and historically, to be explained by any theory of diffusion.[6] Prominent amongst these are the enduring conflict between the powers of light and darkness, and the theme of sacrifice and rebirth.[7] There can be little doubt that such themes reflect

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1 See, for example, Anthony F.C. Wallace's discussion of the myths and rituals associated with death in an American Indian community in The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (New York, 1972, ed.), 93-107.

2 Malinowski, Myth, Science and Religion,

3 Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (London,1975 ed.),13-27.

4 See Campbell, "The Historical Development of Mythology", op.cit., 20-23, and Kirk, op.cit., Chapter Four ("Myths as Products of the Psyche"), especially pp.88-91.

5 Thomas Carlyle, "Lectures on Heroes" in Sattor Resartus, Lectures on Heroes, Chartism, Past and Present (London, n.d.), 211; Geoffrey Ashe, ed., The Quest for Arthur's Britain (London, 1968), vii.

6 Clyde Kluckhohn, "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking", in Murray, ed., op.cit., 46-60. On the world-wide distribution of symbols see Mackenzie, The Migration of Symbols.

7 Campbell "The Historical Development of Mythology",op.cit.,24-29; Mircea Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise in Primitive Tradition", reprinted from Diogenes (Summer, 1953) in Murray ed. op.cit. 61-75

universal patterns of thought and fulfil needs universally felt by human beings. The multiple functions served by myth also contribute to its enduring value and importance to human society.

In traditional societies myths gain authority by relating what the myth-maker seeks to explain or endorse to events which occurred in a Golden Age in the remote past, reflecting, according to Eliade, mankind's longing to return to a paradisal state.[1] What is clear, however, is that although myths usually describe what happened in the past,[2] they are primarily concerned with the present. Myth among the Trobrianders was, according to Malinowski,"a statement of primeval reality which still lives on in present-day life and as a justification by precedent, supplies a retrospective pattern of moral values, sociological order, and magical belief."[3] Thus a crucial function of myth-making is to interpret the past so as to give guidance for the present. This raises two points crucial to a discussion of Lincoln myths, namely the relationship between myth and history and the issue of truth and falsehood in myth.

Although myths describe the past, they are not history. In Lord Raglan's view, the traditional tales of illiterate communities, while apparently recording memories of historical events, were really myth.[4] Other scholars have conceded that myths may contain elements of historical truth but emphasize that it is not myth's primary function to present an accurate record of the past.[5] "Whatever the hidden reality of their unrecorded past may be," wrote Malinowski, Trobriander myths "serve to cover certain inconsistencies created by historical events, rather than to record those events exactly." Myth, Malinowski concluded, "taken as a whole, cannot be sober, dispassionate history, since it is always made ad hoc to fulfil a

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1 Mircea Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise in Primitive Tradition", reprinted from Diogenes (Summer, 1953) in Murray, ed., op.cit., 61-75.

2 Some, however, such as eschatological myths, are concerned with the future. See, for example, the millennialist myths of the Middle Ages discussed in Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium (1970 ed.)

3 Malinowski, Myth, Science and Religion, 146.

4 Lord Raglan, The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama (London, 1936), 10.

5 A.R. Hope Moncrieff, Romance & Legend of Chivalry (London, n.d.), 8.

certain sociological function, to glorify a certain group, or to justify an anomalous status." For Malinowski, myth is neither mere narrative, primitive science, history, nor simply an explanatory tale, but "an indispensable ingredient of all culture. It is...constantly regenerated; every historical change creates its mythology, which is, however, but indirectly related to historical fact. Myth is a constant by-product of living faith, which is in need of miracles; of sociological status, which demands precedent; of moral rule which requires sanction."[1] This does not deny that myths may in some cases represent, as Michael Grant suggests, "an imaginative treatment of history."[2] "Into the ten days Battle of Dunheath," wrote R.W. Chambers, "Norse poetry has probably compressed the century-long struggle of Goth and Hun..."[3] This may be so, but it cannot be seriously supposed that an epic poem represents an attempt to record the past objectively.

Unlike the historian, the myth-maker is not concerned to present an objective account of the past. Indeed, since he need not himself believe all that he says, he may deliberately distort the past in order to dramatize his tale and so give force to his argument. However, in traditional societies or in modern "stump" politics, where the myth-maker is in personal contact with his audience, he must be able to carry conviction. There is a related and more crucial distinction between myth-maker and historian. The latter is primarily concerned with the past. Though not always averse to pointing out its moral for the present, his first and main objective is to clarify what has already happend. The myth-maker, though he may dwell upon past events, is primarily concerned with the present. The crucial message of his tale is the meaning which the past, as he presents it, has for the present and the future. His purpose is to relate the past in a way which makes sense of the present and gives guidance for the future for the audience to whom the myth is addressed.

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1 Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion, 125,146.
2 Grant, op.cit.
3 R.W. Chambers, Widsith (Cambridge, 1912), 48, quoted in Raglan, The Hero, 124.

of Ancient Greek society, the use of myth in politics is time-honoured.[1] Since the time of the Greeks, some scholars have viewed myth as a means of preserving political power exploited by priests and secular rulers alike, and Nilsson's excellent monograph shows how effectively myth was utilized in the political life of Ancient Greece.[2]

A few other examples will suffice to underline this point. Joseph Campbell has demonstrated how the Zoroastian myth of the universe as a conflict between the powers of light and darkness found "formidable socio-political expression" in the empire of Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great, Hebrew ideology, and the world missions of Christianity and Islam.[3] In Eleventh Century England at the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror's minstrel, Taillifer, sought to inspire the subsequently victorious Norman army by singing of the French mythical hero Roland and of legends of Charlemagne,[4] and the round table at Winchester Cathedral probably represents an attempt by a Fourteenth Century English king to sacntify his rule by associating himself with the mythical British hero, King Arthur.[5] Even in traditional societies, myths may play a political role. Thus Trobriander myths of origin confirming and sanctifying the superior status of particular clans[6] are crude political myths.

In modern, politically complex societies myth plays an even more obvious political role. In nineteenth century America, politicians sought to endorse themselves and their political stand through association with the men who had established the United States Government, thus helping to create the myth of the Founding Fathers. In post-war Germany of the 1930's, a society undergoing severe economic and social crisis, Nazi ideology made heavy use of myth,

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1 Nilsson, op.cit., 88.
2 Nilsson, op.cit.
3 Campbell, "The Historical Development of Mythology", op.cit. 25-26.
4 Geoffrey Ashe, "The Visionary Kingdom", in Ashe, ed.,op.cit.,2; Moncrieff, op.cit., 28.
5 Richard Cavendish, King Arthur and the Grail (London, 1978), 53.
6 Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion, 116-17.

ritual and symbol, and stimulated the development of a racialist theory of Jewish inferiority similar to that of Negro inferiority exploited by many white politicians in the Southern States of America both before and after the Civil War. Countering the Nazi threat in the World War of 1939 to 1945, Britain and her allies also utilized myth as a discussion of Lincoln myths in Britain will show.[1] Symbols and slogans which condense both mythical and non-mythical themes also play an important role in modern politics, as the following study of political use of the heroic Lincoln will demonstrate.

Criticizing attempts to explain myths by establishing the objects upon which they centre, Ernst Cassirer observed, "it is not a question of what we see in a certain perspective, but of the perspective itself."[2] Political myths are concerned with political events, but share many of the characteristics of myth in traditional societies, for the myth-making process remains the same. Writing on the use of myth in the political life of Ancient Greece, Nilsson saw himself as taking for his subject "mythology as ancient history in which the origins and causes of the present events and claims are found."[3] However, while, as this indicates, political myths must indeed be seen as true narratives if they are to achieve their purpose,[4] they are never an objective record of the past. The political myth-maker deals largely with historical events, but the perspective in which he views the past is not that of the historian. For political myth undoubtedly has a vital practical social purpose. The functions of political myth will be discussed more fully in relation to heroes, but its central role is often to articulate the values of, or to explain, justify and sanction the authority or policies of, a particular ruling group. It may, however, serve a very different purpose, which perhaps gives insight into the role of myth in less advanced societies. For as the political use of eschatological myths in peasant rebellions in Medieval

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1 See below, Chapter Nine.
2 Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth (London, 1953 ed.), 11.
3 Nilsson, op.cit. 13
4 Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana, Chicago & London, 1967), 4.

Europe or by Twentieth Century Communists, reveals, political myths are not necessarily designed to preserve the status quo. They are practical arguments which may be promoted in order to justify an attempt to secure power by a particular section of the community, or to corrode values rejected by a ruling elite or by those seeking to challenge its power, and may be used, especially in combination with non-mythical arguments, to indicate the action necessary to secure such change.[1]

As with myth generally, political myth is most potent in time of crisis. This is partly because it operates to reconcile contradictions in men's experience and partly because it can simplify complex trends and events. This enables myth to offer a clear and coherent interpretation of the events leading up to the crisis in which a society finds itself and, in making sense of the emergency, to give practical guidance on how to escape from the crisis situation. Myth thus gives relief from a situation of crisis, as was the case in Germany in the 1920's.[2]

This function of myth is accentuated by its tendency to look back to a better age in the past, which, like the Golden Age recalled by myth-makers in traditional societies, will be regained if the policy urged by the myth-maker is adopted. This is particularly clear in the mythology of Southern Secession in 1860-1861 which depicted withdrawal of the slave states from the Union as the only way to bring about a return to the Golden Age when Southern society was not threatened by Northern anti-slavery fanaticism. At the same time, by evoking an emotional response, and in particular by arousing patriotic sentiments, political myths often promote social unity and help to make a community mentally prepared to take action which is designed to free its members from a crisis situation and enable them to recapture the Golden Age depicted. This role too was illustrated by the myths of Secession.

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1 Tudor, Political Myth, 91; Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of the State (London, 1946), 287.

2 Orlow, "Conversion of Myths into Political Power", op.cit., 907

Many myths narrate deeds ascribed to a superhuman figure, the hero, who, as studies of heroes and hero-worship show,[1] displays certain characteristics. Embodying the qualities most admired by the society which creates him, the hero traditionally follows a pattern of life found in mythical tales throughout the world.[2] Brought up in humble circumstances,[3] he passes through many trials[4] before, through the performance of great acts, achieving high rank and the honours associated with it. The national hero often appears only after a long period of suffering on the part of his people[5] and rises from obscurity[6] to become their saviour. Though possessing superhuman qualities, the hero is not a god, but he is frequently depicted as a divine agent,[7] and his deeds raise him to within reach of divinity.[8] An atmosphere of tragedy often surrounds the hero's life,[9] but the tragedy of his death is frequently tempered by a belief that he will return.[10]

Mythical tales about heroes may centre upon historical figures, but they do not represent an accurate record of their subject's lives. Indeed, historical figures are moulded to fit the pattern of a hero, as Marcus Cunliffe, Merrill Peterson and John W. Ward have shown with regard to the lives of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson respectively.[11] The hero may also be to some extent his own myth-maker, representing his actions in terms of great mythical themes. Thus Cromwell perceived and articulated a role as divine agent which Carlyle recognized to be heroic.[12]

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1 Joseph Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces; Carlyle, "Lectures on Heroes", op.cit.; Raglan, The Hero.
2 See especially Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces.
3 Kluckhohn, "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking", op.cit., 56.
4 Carlyle, "Lectures on Heroes", op.cit., 224; Wecter, The Hero in America, 15-16. See also Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, passim.
5 For example, Moses.
6 Raglan, The Hero, 179.
7 See Carlyle on Cromwell, in "Lectures on Heroes", op.cit., 345, and Ward, Andrew Jackson, 101-32.
8 Grant, op.cit., 45.
9 Ibid., 48-49.
10 Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, 300. There was an enduring belief in Britain that King Arthur would return: see Cavendish, King Arthur and the Grail, 197.
11 Marcus Cunliffe, George Washington: Man and Monument (London, 1959); Peterson, The Jefferson Image; Ward, Andrew Jackson.
12 Carlyle, "Lectures on Heroes", op.cit., 345. On Lincoln as his own myth-maker see Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York, 1948), 93-136.

Like myths in general, heroes perform a variety of functions in society. Crucially they embody in idealized form thevalues of the society in which they emerge. Thus, according to Nilsson, "Theseus was finally made the representative of that humanity on which the Athenians prided themselves..."[1] A vital role of national heroes is to represent and so stimulate patriotism, and, as Wecter notes, hero-worship plays a vital part in American patriotism.[2] It is a role the hero is well fitted to play, since people generally identify more easily with human figures than with impersonal forces or abstract values and ideals. Thus, for example, as Ward observes, "the various concepts which give substance to the abstraction nationalism, were articulated in Andrew Jackson ..."[3] So, by representing and articulating its values, the hero often comes to symbolize the spirit of an age, as Jackson did. At the same time, the hero gives guidance for those who cherish his memory, for not only is he a mouthpiece for the timeless truths articulated in myth, but also he can be used to endorse a position adopted or a policy advocated.

In this the hero clearly has political value, and his emergence may be linked with a political campaign. For politicians traditionally sanction themselves and their policies through association with one or more of their society's heroes, thus contributing to the development of hero-worship. The hero, and his antithesis the villain, therefore often play crucial roles in the development of mythical arguments in politics. While the hero's basic function in political myth is to represent and endorse fundamental themes and values of the society which creates him, or the claim to power and the policies of a particular political elite, he may serve, as in the case of the revolutionary hero such as Che Guevara, as a symbol for those struggling to overthrow a repressive regime or bring about other radical social change.[4]

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1 Nilsson, op.cit., 52.
2 Wecter, The Hero in America, 2.
3 Ward, Andrew Jackson, 6.
4 On the heroic Guevara see Fidel Castro's introduction to Ernesto Ché Guevara, Bolivian Diary, translated by Carlos P.Hanson and Andrew Sinclair (London, 1968), esp. p.9.

In the chapters that follow an attempt will be made to analyse the early growth of mythical images of Lincoln, and particularly those relating to emancipation, within the framework of the interpretation of myth, political myth and the role of the hero in mythical thought, presented here. The resulting discussion of Lincoln myths will demonstrate the validity of this interpretation of myth and at the same time seek to answer a number of questions concerning the development of mythical images of Lincoln. In broad terms, the thesis will seek to demonstrate the role played by Lincoln myths in the Secession Crisis of 1860-1861, the Civil War years, and the early years of Reconstruction, and in doing so will attempt to establish and illustrate the functions which myths fulfil in a modern democratic society and particularly in political life.

Each chapter will also set out to answer particular questions relating to the growth of Lincoln myths. Chapter Two will ask why it was that the image of the Great Emancipator, a potent and enduring mythical concept of Lincoln, failed to emerge at the time when he issued the Emancipation Proclamations, and will study American responses to emancipation in an attempt to provide an answer to this question. Chapter Three will show that mythical images of Lincoln, and especially those associated with emancipation, flourished in 1865, and will suggest that these images originated in the efforts of anti-slavery preachers and politicians to secure popular support for a radical approach to Reconstruction which would ensure the total and permanent abolition of slavery. Chapters Four and Five will seek to demonstrate actual use of mythical concepts of Lincoln in election campaigns, and will focus on the congressional elections of 1866 and the presidential elections of 1868 respectively.

In Chapter Six an attempt will be made to establish the extent to which mythical images of Lincoln found popular support in America, and attention will be paid to those groups which were critical of or rejected some or all of the Lincoln myths. In Chapter Seven black responses to the myths relating to emancipation will be discussed, and it will be suggested that

black Americans in the Northern and Southern States were less naive in their acceptance of the image of Lincoln as the Emancipator of their race than is usually thought. Particular attention will be paid to black political use of Lincoln myths in the 1860's and 1870's. Chapters Eight and Nine will show how myths can find meaning outside the society in which they originate, and will illustrate British responses to Lincoln myths during the Civil War and offer some evidence of the persistence of mythical images of Lincoln in British thought into the Twentieth Century. The discussion will show that while political use of the heroic Lincoln by British radicals and their allies was short-lived, the mythical Lincoln continued to have meaning for generations of Britains as a symbol of the broad values of freedom and democracy. Finally, Chapter Ten will offer the conclusions reached by this study. The discussion of Lincoln myths will, however, begin in this chapter with a brief analysis of one of the earliest mythical images of Lincoln, that viewing him as an abolitionist.

II: "Lincoln, the abolition candidate", A Political Myth of the White South

> The Black Republicans have nominated Lincoln for the Presidency. His election will be a sectional triumph...LET THE SOUTH ARM...There is no time for delay!...Abolitionism is at your doors with torch and knife in hand!...THE TIME HAS COME! Lincoln is elected...The whole South is ripe for a slave Republic...We can never submit to Lincoln's inauguration; ...but cannot all of the Southern people...band together to resist the abolition foe?[1]

Writing on the study of Southern history in the context of myth, George E. Tindall claimed that few areas of the modern world have developed so complex and potent a mythology, and that the various mythical images of the South have significantly affected American history. Certainly Tindall's essay, and other writings on myth and Southern history, suggest that Southern thought

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1 Arkansas State Gazette (Little Rock), Sept. 15, 1860; The East Floridian (Fernandina), Oct. 31, Nov. 14, 21, 1860; Montgomery Advertiser quoted in Arkansas State Gazette, Nov. 3, 1860. The quotation in the chapter title is from the Tallahassee Floridian Journal, July 14, 1860.

is characterized by a tendency towards myth-making.[1] This tendency was illustrated very clearly during the Secession Crisis of 1860-1861. The background to and events which occurred during this crisis, and the rhetoric of secessionist leaders, have been studied in detail in many able works on the period, and it is unnecessary for the purposes of this discussion to do more than outline happenings familiar to all who study the period.[2] However, one aspect of the ideology of secession, the tradition viewing Lincoln as an abolitionist, provides a case study in the political use of myth and serves as an introduction to a wider study of Lincoln myths focussing on their role in American political life.

The arguments developed in favour of secession of the South from the Union and the establishment of an independent confederacy of slave states played heavily upon a number of mythical themes, notably those making up what has been called the plantation myth and racialist images of the Negro together with associated concepts of the moral and intellectual superiority of the white race which during the previous thirty years had become central to the thought of white Southerners.[3] At the same time, secessionists viewed the events of the previous decades from the myth-making perspective

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1 See George B. Tindall, "Mythology: A New Frontier in Southern History", reprinted from Frank E. Vandiver, ed., The Idea of the South: Pursuit of a Central Theme (Chicago, 1964), 1-15, p. 2, and other essays, in Patrick Gerster and Nicholas Cords, eds., Myth and Southern History, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1974), I: The Old South.

2 The secondary literature relating to this period is immense, and only a few works can be suggested here. For the best general history of the 1850's see Allan Nevins, The Ordeal of the Union, 8 vols. (New York, 1947-71), vols. 1-4. Useful single volume histories covering this period are James G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston, 1961), hereafter cited as Randall and Donald; Roy F. Nichols, The Stakes of Power, 1845-1877 (New York, 1964 ed.); and the more recent work by William R. Brock, Conflict and Transformation: The United States, 1844-1877 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1973). For monographs and periodical articles on specialized aspects of the history of this era see footnotes to this chapter and bibliographies in works cited.

3 See Francis Pendleton Gaines, The Southern Plantation: A Study in the Development and Accuracy of a Tradition (New York, 1924), and James W. van den Zander, "The Ideology of White Supremacy", Journal of the History of Ideas, XX, no. 3 (June-Sept., 1959), 385-402.

rather than objectively, and developed a mythical interpretation of these events which appealed to the emotions of white Southerners, and particularly to emergent Southern nationalism, and so helped to unite those who in 1861 supported the withdrawal of their section from the Federal Union. One crucial theme in the mythology of secession which operated both to make crude sense of the present crisis and to give guidance on action to escape it was that depicting Lincoln as an abolitionist. The remainder of this chapter will show the role played by this myth in the politics of secession, indicate its survival in the Confederate South, and suggest why it remained a Southern myth.

Tindall has suggested that Southerners were especially susceptible to myths, and attributes this to the Southern mind being "peculiarly resistant to pure abstraction and more receptive to the concrete and dramatic image..."[1] Another historian of the Old South has noted that in the 1840's and 1850's Southerners were growing increasingly hostile to abstract thought,[2] which, if Tindall is correct, would have made them increasingly susceptible to myths. The experience of the late 1850's would seem to confirm that this was the case, and, given the potency of myth in times of crisis, the events of the decade preceding the Civil War and of the crucial year of 1860 can only have accentuated this trend.

For the South at this time undoubtedly faced a crisis, and the thoughtful Southerner of 1860 was a worried man. For many years he had felt that his section's peculiar civilization based upon cotton, black slaves and white supremacy was being threatened. For, with an increasing and already superior population, the North was rapidly becoming dominant within the United States, and it became clear in the 1840's and 1850's that the interests of its free labour and industry-orientated society frequently clashed with those of an

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1 Tindall, "Mythology: A New Frontier in Southern History", op.cit., 3.
2 Drew G. Faust, A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of Intellectuals in the Old South, 1840-60 (Baltimore and London, 1977).

agrarian economy based on slavery.[1] Though abolitionists, who called for the total destruction of slavery,[2] were a small minority in the free states and although few Northerners had any love for the Negro, many in the North felt that the existence of slavery mocked American ideals of freedom and democracy,[3] and growing anti-slavery feeling was reflected in the rise of the Republican Party.[4] Moreover, even those willing to sanction slavery where it existed were often unwilling to watch it spread to new territories, for they equated its expansion with increased power for slaveholders at the expense of the free states, fewer economic opportunities for whites and intensified racial friction.[5]

While the South controlled the presidency it could hope to safeguard its interests and protect slavery. The presidential election of 1860 was therefore crucial. Though presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln and many other Republican leaders stressed that their party intended no hostility to slavery in the states, they were totally opposed to compromise on the issue of its extension to the territories. To this extent their rise to power undoubtedly

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1 On the antebellum South see Wilbur J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York, 1941); Avery O. Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism (Baton Rouge, La., 1953); Clement Eaton, The Growth of Southern Civilization (New York, 1961); Ulrich B. Phillips, The Course of the South to Secession. Edited by E. Merton Coulter (New York, 1964 ed.); and Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism (Baton Rouge, La., 1961). For a good introduction to the subject of slavery see Kenneth M. Stampp, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South (New York, 1956). An important book on slavery and antebellum Southern society is Eugene D. Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South (New York, 1967ed.). Extensive bibliographies of works relating to slavery including older studies such as Ulrich B. Phillips, American Negro Slavery (New York, 1918) and the most important of the mass of monographs, essays and articles published in more recent years see Robert Wm. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, Time on the Cross: the Econometrics of American Negro Slavery, 2 vols. (New York, 1974), vol.Two, or Paul A.David, and others, Reckoning with Slavery (New York, 1976).

2 For general works on abolitionism see Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860 (New York, 1960); Martin B. Duberman, ed., The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists (Princeton, N.J., 1965); Benjamin Quarles, Black Abolitionists (New York, 1969), and footnotes to this chapter.

3 Duncan J. McLeod's Slavery, Race and the American Revolution (London, 1974) argues that Southerners had come to terms with the paradox of slavery in a Republican state.

4 On the Republican Party see Andrew J. Crandall, The Early History of the Republican Party, 1854-1856 (Boston, 1930) and George H. Mayer, The Republican Party, 1854-1966 (New York, 1967 ed.). On Republican ideology see Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (London, Oxford and New York, 1970).

5 For works on Northern anti-Negro feeling see below, Chapter Two. Mounting tension between North and South is discussed in many works, but see Avery Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (Chicago, 1957ed.); Holman Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850 (Lexington, Ky., 1964); James A. Rawley, Race and Politics: "Bleeding Kansas" and the Coming of the Civil War (Lincoln, Neb., 1969); and Robert Russel, Critical Studies in Antebellum Sectionalism (Westport, Conn., 1972). On the breaking up of the Democratic Party see Roy Franklin Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy (New York, 1962ed.).

represented a threat to the position of slaveholding states within the Union,[1] and, in addition, Republicanism's radical wing, which owed much in origin and development to the abolitionist movement, showed marked hostility to slavery wherever that institution existed.[2]

To some Southerners who had long feared for the future of slavery in the South it seemed that the only solution to this potential threat lay in radical action: withdrawal of the South from the Union and the establishment of an independent confederacy of slave states. To win support for such a programme these pro-slavery radicals[3] developed arguments in favour of a radical solution to the South's problems, widespread acceptance of which culminated in the founding of the Southern Confederacy in 1861.

At the heart of secessionist ideology lay a mixture of mythical and non-mythical themes centering upon slavery, which had become for Southern radicals the only issue of importance. Correctly believing slavery to be crucial to the economic and social organization of their society, many Southerners claimed that emancipation would bring about the ruin of that section by destroying its prosperity and forcing upon it racial equality, thus producing social anarchy. Linked to this was the non-mythical argument that slavery, as a domestic institution of the Southern states, was protected by the Constitution, from which it followed that any attempt to put pressure on these states to emancipate

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1 Two articles presenting conflicting views on the threat posed by Lincoln's election are Arthur C. Cole, "Lincoln's Election, An Immediate Menace to Slavery in the States?", AHR, XXXVI, no.4 (July, 1931), 740-67, and J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton's article with the same title, AHR, XXXVII, no. 4 (July,1932), 700-11. On the Secession Crisis see also, Norman A. Graebner, ed., Politics and the Crisis of 1860 (Urbana, Ill., 1961); David M. Potter, Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis (New Haven, Conn., 1942);and Kenneth M. Stampp, And the War Came: The North and the Secession Crisis (Baton Rouge,La., 1950). On the 1860 presidential election see Emerson D. Fite, The Presidential Campaign of 1860 (New York, 1967 ed.), and Reinhard H. Luthin, The First Lincoln Campaign (Cambridge, Mass., 1944).

2 Foner, Free Soil, 116-23.

3 Southern radicals were those pro-slavery antebellum Southern leaders who during the Secession Crisis demanded that the slave states withdraw from the Union in the event of a Republican victory. Secession conventions were dominated by men of substance - chiefly middle-aged lawyers, planters and farmers - and included the leading public men in each state. Separatism was strongest in regions where large slave populations made slavery crucial to the way of life and where even non-slaveholders had an economic (and social) stake in its continuance. Secessionists proposed radical action to secure conservative ends - crucially the preservation of the South's slavery based society. See Ralph A. Wooster, The Secession Conventions of the South(Princeton,NJ, 1962), and, on the profitability of slavery, Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross.

violated their constitutional rights.[1] Upon the basis of these assumptions, the emergence of the free states as a distinctive and powerful society with values and interests which diverged from and sometimes conflicted with those of the South was interpreted as a challenge to Southern rights and security, and this belief was dramatized in the mythical image of the North as an aggressive society dominated by anti-slavery extremists. The newly-formed Republican Party, the political expression of Northern anti-slavery feeling, was viewed by secessionists as the machine through which the attack upon the South was to be mounted once control of the Federal Government was secured. Thus the party which in reality represented in 1860 all shades of hostility to slavery from Midwestern hostility to Negroes, which feared abolitionism as much if not more than the expansion of slavery, to Radical Republicanism, became in the mythology of secession ideology the organ of abolitionist fanaticism. Calling for immediate action to counter the alleged danger, secessionists presented the election of a Republican President as the realisation of a potential threat, the overt act which would demand withdrawal of the South from the Union.

The message of secessionists in 1860-1861 was that even if Republicans avoided a direct attack upon Southern slavery, their policies would ruin the South, and few expressed any faith that the alleged enemy would show such restraint. The attack upon Southern rights would, it was claimed, commence immediately the Republicans gained power, with anti-slavery men being sent South to build up an abolition party below the Mason-Dixon line.[2] There could be no delay following such a victory: if the Republicans succeeded in electing "a sectional man, upon their sectional, Anti-Slavery platform, breathing destruction and death to the rights of my people," Congressman Gatrell of

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1 For pro-slavery arguments, which combined non-mythical and mythical themes, see William Sumner Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1935). A valuable collection of extracts from antebellum pro-slavery writings is Eric L. McKitrick, ed., Slavery Defended: the views of the Old South (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963), which has a useful bibliography.

2 Floridian and Journal, Nov.10, 1860; remarks of William Lowndes Yancey of Alabama at a public meeting in New Orleans reported in the New Orleans Daily Picayune, Oct. 30, 1860.

Georgia warned, "...I need not tell you what I, as a Southern man, will do-". Gatrell's meaning was clear enough. Upon the election of a Republican president Southerners would, in words attributed to Jefferson Davis, United States Senator for Mississippi and future President of the Confederate States, look to their guns.[1]

The image of Lincoln as an abolitionist was central to this line of argument. In nominating its presidential candidate in 1860 the Republican Party had selected a man who, though morally opposed to slavery, had avoided identification with the abolitionists, in preference to William H. Seward of New York who was considered to be more radical on the slavery issue. In the eyes of secessionist myth-makers, however, Lincoln's nomination was the culmination of Northern anti-slavery fanaticism, and his election in 1860 would therefore be the overt act which would demand withdrawal of the Southern States from the Union.

An article warning against Southern submission to Lincoln's election published in the Richmond Enquirer in December 1860 reveals how this image of Lincoln fitted into an emotive mythical interpretation of events which pointed out a course of action allegedly offering escape from a crisis situation. According to this article, which the author "Junius" insisted was a truthful representation of men and historical events, the South had long been the victim of Northern aggression and had made numerous compromises and concessions to preserve peace, but the election of Lincoln meant "the rule of abolitionism" and the utter degredation of the South. In the mythology of secession the mythical Lincoln, a rabid abolitionist, represented the values of an alien and aggressive society and so symbolized a perceived threat to the South, as this article makes clear. Lincoln was, according to "Junius","the beau ideal of a relentless, dogged Free-Soil border ruffian,...a fanatic in philanthropy, and a vulgar mobocrat and Southern hater in political opinions." This mythical image of Lincoln dramatized and reinforced the message that his election created a crisis

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1 Arkansas State Gazette, Aug. 4, Oct. 6, 1860.

which demanded action on the part of the South. Invoking other mythical themes in his appeal to the memory of "the bold spirits of '76'" and the blood of the revolutionary fathers, and warning that submission to Lincoln's election would seal the doom of the South, "Junius" urged that the only way to escape from this crisis peacefully was by secession.[1] In Alabama, the Montgomery Advertiser similarly urged the need for separation rather than submission to the rule of Lincoln and Greeley, "the abolition foe".[2]

A similar interpretation of events and of Lincoln's role in these was expressed in a letter of South Carolina Congressman John D. Ashmore. "The booming of 100,000 cannon and the slaughter of an hundred Waterloos", he wrote, "would be music to my ears and gladness to my sight rather than see S.C. the victim of Lincoln, Seward, Sumner, Wilson, Lovejoy, Helper et id omne genus... Men like myself who for a lifetime have fought the extreme ultraracism of the South and the mad fanaticism of the North will not permit Abe Lincoln's banner inscribed with 'higher law,' 'negro equality,' 'irrepressible conflict' and 'final emancipation' to wave over us. We have and do deserve a better and more glorious destiny...Three hundred thousand swords are now ready to leap from their scabbards in support of a Southern Confederacy."[3]

The radical concept of Lincoln as virulently anti-slavery gained strength from his failure in 1860 to repudiate it. He argued that anyone who wanted to know his opinions on slavery could read his past speeches.[4] In any case, Southerners who promoted secessionist arguments were likely to discount any assurances of goodwill he might make.[5] Governor Brown of Georgia indicated why

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1 "A Voice of Warning from Virginia to the South", Richmond Enquirer, Dec. 4, 1860.

2 Montgomery Advertiser quoted in Arkansas State Gazette, Nov. 3, 1860. Horace Greeley edited the Republican New York Tribune.

3 Ashmore to Horatio King (First Assistant Postmaster General), Nov. 5, 1860, King MSS, Library of Congress, quoted in Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 369.

4 Lincoln to Truman Smith, Nov. 10, 1860, Lincoln, Works, IV, 138. Even had Lincoln's speeches been easily obtainable (and he could recall making over 50 speeches in 1856, none of which were, to his knowledge, in print in 1860: Lincoln, Works, IV, 67), they were open to misinterpretation.

5 Lincoln was apparently aware of this: Boston Liberator, Aug. 24, 1860. In any case, anything he could say which would not alienate any of his Northern supporters would need to be ambiguously phrased.

this was so: "The rights of the South and the institution of slavery", he wrote, "are not endangered by the triumph of Mr. Lincoln, as a man, but they are in imminent danger from the triumph of the powerful party which he represents, and of the fanatical abolition sentiments which brought him into power..."[1] Thus radicals who, like Governor Brown, conceded that Lincoln personally did not threaten the South, promoted a variant of the tradition representing him as the instrument of an abolition party. Whatever Lincoln might say, however conciliatory he might appear, he thus remained dangerous.[2]

Lincoln's Inaugural Address, a skilful blend of firmness and moderation, could not therefore destroy the tradition, in spite of the new President's unqualified declaration that "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." In Montgomery, Alabama, on the day of Lincoln's inauguration, Thomas R.R. Cobb wrote, "We are receiving Lincoln's Inaugural by telegraph, it will not affect one man here, it matters not what it contains." Given the state of the radical mind in the South, Lincoln's speech meant, as the Montgomery Weekly Advertiser declared, that, "war, war, and nothing less than war, will satisfy the Abolition chief..."[3]

Popular support for this concept of Lincoln was demonstrated in resolutions adopted at public meetings throughout the South during the winter of 1860-1861. One such meeting in Florida saw secession as the only remedy

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1 Letter of Joseph E. Brown dated Dec. 7, 1860, written in reply to citizens requesting his views on the election, published in the Floridian & Journal, Dec. 22, 1860.

2 A speech by John Crozier of Tennessee indicates just how slender Lincoln's chances were of winning over his secessionist opponents: "Mr. Crozier said he, for one, would never submit to be the white slave of the Northern Abolitionists, and he would be proud to be a rebel, if Abraham Lincoln is elected. The milder his Administration the more violent would be the resistance of Mr. C. He pointed to the career of Louis Napoleon to show that tyranny, in its inception, is always mild, but none the less dangerous on that account." Arkansas State Gazette, Oct.13, 1860.

3 Lincoln, Works, IV, 250; "The Correspondence of Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb, 1860-1862", Southern Historical Association Publication, II (1907), 147-328, p.253 and Montgomery Weekly Advertiser, March 5, 1861, quoted in Clement Eaton, A History of the Southern Confederacy, 268.

following the election of a President "with avowed and expressed purposes of hostility to us, our interests, and our rights -"[1] Letters published in the secessionist press at the time reflected hostility towards the "Abolitionist President".[2] The South's reception of the news of Lincoln's election had also been revealing. Mary Chesnut of South Carolina heard the news while travelling by train in the South and recorded the reactions of her fellow passengers:[3]

> The excitement was very great. Every body was talking at the same time - One, a little more moved than the others stood up - saying despondently (sic) - "The die is cast - No more vain regrets - Sad forebodings are useless. The stake is life or death -"
>
> "Now did you ever!" was the prevailing exclamation, and some one cried out: "Now that the black radical Republicans have the power I suppose they will Brown us all." No doubt of it.

As this suggests, the belief that Lincoln's election threatened the South, a belief which reflected the effectiveness of secessionist rhetoric and the pervasiveness of the mythical image of Lincoln as an abolitionist or the tool of an abolition party, played a key role in bringing about a state of mind favourable to secession. "All over the deep South", comments Carl N. Degler, "Lincoln's election was a signal to abandon the Union."[4] It was their mythical, and so simple, dramatic and emotive, interpretation of Lincoln's role in events which enabled Southern radicals to make his election, as Robert Russell, quoting William Lowndes Yancey, has pointed out, the occasion needed to "fire the Southern heart - instruct the Southern mind - give courage to each other, and...precipitate the cotton States into a revolution."[5]

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1 East Floridian, Dec. 28, 1860. See also meetings described in the Floridian and Journal, Dec. 8, 1860; the New Orleans Daily Picayune, Dec. 15, 1860; and the Knoxville (Tennessee) Register, May 2, 1861, in Secession: A collection of newspaper clippings dealing with secession, compiled by Perley R. Lovejoy. Johns Hopkins University. Vol. 5, p.106

2 See, for example, letters in the Floridian and Journal, Nov. 24, 1860.

3 Mary Chesnut's diary quoted in Randall and Donald, 135-36. Mrs. Chesnut was married to Senator James Chesnut of South Carolina. For a full citation of the published version of this diary, see below, p.

4 Carl N. Degler, The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1974), 126.

5 Yancey to James S. Slaughter, June 15, 1858, quoted from J.W. DuBose, The Life and Times of William Lowndes Yancey, 2 vols. (Birmingham, Ala., 1942 ed.), I, 376, quoted in Russel, Critical Studies, 86.

If the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist proved popular in the slave states, it was not accepted by all Southerners. However, it is clear that some who were not convinced of his abolitionism nevertheless saw Lincoln's election as a threat to the South, reflecting support for variants of the tradition. Thus in early April 1861 a Mobile trader told an informant of Salmon P. Chase, Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, that "he did not assert that the President was an abolitionist - he did not pretend to know whether he or any of his cabinet were or not - but the point was, they had been brought into power by abolition principles and votes, and this was enough to justify secession by the South."[1]

While the election of 1860 resulted in an overwhelming victory in the Lower South for Democrats who supported Breckinridge and whose radical wing advocated secession, Unionism was strong in the Upper South and the Border States,[2] and many Southern Unionist felt that Lincoln and his party were far from being the greatest threat to their section, a view upheld by the New Orleans Daily True Delta which warned, as the secession movement took shape, that "the South is now drifting into the fatal embrace of her most implacable enemies..."[3] Others, like staunch Unionist Benjamin F. Perry of South Carolina, counselled against extremism on the grounds that charges against Lincoln were not proved.[4]

There is evidence to suggest, however, that the tradition was sufficiently widely held to influence the thought of even Southern moderates. A Tennessee Unionist, explaining Southern fears, told Bostonians, "You have no right to ask us to sit quietly under the election of a man who has publicly declared that whenever and wherever he can abolish slavery, he will do it."[5] Moreover

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1 Richard Ela to Chase, April 12, 1861: "Letters to Secretary Chase from the South, 1861", AHR, IV, no. 2 (Jan. 1899), 331-47, p.335.

2 W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots 1836-1892 (Baltimore, 1955), 81-83

3 Dwight L. Dumond, Southern Editorials on Secession (New York, 1931), 185.

4 Col. B.F. Perry of Greenville, S.C., to Editor, Charleston Courier, reprinted in Pennsylvania Weekly Telegraph (Harrisburg), Sept. 19, 1860; letter signed "Union" to Editor, Arkansas Weekly Gazette, Aug. 26, 1860.

5 L.C. Norvell speaking at a Bell and Everett Union meeting, Boston Liberator, Sept. 21, 1860. The Boston Liberator was an abolitionist weekly edited by William Lloyd Garrison.

while moderate papers like the Arkansas State Gazette, which supported the Constitutional Union Party candidates John Bell and Edward Everett, were critical of disunionist arguments, they perhaps contributed to the development of the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist when they stressed the necessity to defeat him and pictured his election as a threat to the Union.[1]

As secessionist sentiments grew stronger after Lincoln's election, even papers which opposed extremism accepted the tradition, On November 15, 1860 the New Orleans Daily Picayune urged against rash action in response to the election and stressed that if opponents of Republicanism in Congress stood by the Constitution the new President would be incapable of injuring Southern institutions. Ten days later the paper began to change its position, a reflection of the hardening of public opinion against moderation, and the Picayune now found it necessary to warn readers that Lincoln could be convicted of "deadly animosity against slaveholding institutions", and a determination to use the Federal Government's power "to promote and make necessary the abolition of slavery within the States."[2]

Thus during the Secession crisis Lincoln became a symbol of values rejected and forces feared by Southerners generally, and a correspondent of the Arkansas State Gazette was shocked when a prominent Arkansas Unionist was labelled by secessionists "an apologist and defender of Lincoln!"[3] The mythical belief that Lincoln was an abolitionist enemy of the South helped to prepare and encourage Southerners to take radical action to escape the alleged crisis of a Republican victory in 1860. It is interesting in passing to note the support given to the tradition by one private citizen in particular who, writing in 1864, recalled his attitude during and after 1860: "I have ever held that the South were right. The very nomination of Abraham Lincoln, four years ago, spoke plainly war - war upon Southern rights and institutions.

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1 "The Presidential Canvass", Arkansas State Gazette, July 14, 1860.
2 Daily Picayune, Nov. 15, 25, 1860.
3 Arkansas State Gazette, April 6, 1861.

His election proved it." In 1865 John Wilkes Booth's long-held conviction that Lincoln was the abolitionist arch-enemy of the Southern States was to have tragic consequences.[1]

During the war, Confederates used the term "abolitionist" somewhat casually as a defamatory description of the enemy.[2] In spite of this, the tradition viewing Lincoln as an abolitionist continued to have political values as a justification of secession which would vindicate and stimulate the Confederate war effort. In his inaugural address delivered in Little Rock on November 15, 1862, Governor Harris Flanagin told the Legislature of Arkansas that Southern fears that Lincoln's administration was composed of "avowed enemies of our institutions" had been proved to be well founded.[3] Lieutenant General Thomas H. Holmes, a Confederate commander in Arkansas, similarly used the tradition to justify and stimulate the Southern war effort when, in his address "To the People of Arkansas", he declared that it had required the election of "an abolition President" and the threats of "his fanatical party" to violate the Constitution, "to arouse the people of the South to a sense of the danger and degredation that awaited them."[4] The tradition was also used to revive Confederate morale. Thus in February 1864 the Confederate Congress issued an address to the People of the Confederacy which incorporated the image of an abolitionist Lincoln into an interpretation of the war designed to stimulate loyalty to the Southern cause. According to this address, secession had been forced on the South "by a long series of oppressive and tyrannical acts, culminating at last in the election of a President and Vice President by a party confessedly sectional and hostile to the South and her institutions..." The address made several attacks upon the Emancipation Proclamations, which were presented as proof of the abolitionist

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1 Letter of 1864 quoted in George S. Bryan, The Great American Myth (New York, 1940), 240.

2 Arkansas State Gazette, Feb. 14, 1863; Montgomery Daily Advertiser, May 20, 1862; Jan. 15, 1863; Feb. 21, 1864.

3 Arkansas State Gazette, Nov. 22, 1862.

4 Ibid., Feb. 14, 1863. Address issued Feb. 2, 1863.

intentions of the Northern Government. Thus the tradition viewing Lincoln as an abolitionist and as an instrument of abolitionism played a vital role in this attempt by the Confederate Congress to place responsibility for the war upon "the radical and despotic faction which now rules the North..."[1] Yet though the tradition did not disappear during the war, it was losing its potency. Its importance in the secession crisis had reflected its usefulness to politicians anxious to stimulate Southerners to secede in order to protect slavery. When during the war it became increasingly clear that slavery was doomed, whether or not Lincoln had intended its abolition, the political value of the tradition gradually diminished.

The tradition never found significant or enduring favour outside the South, but was not without supporters in the Northern States. It did indeed emerge there at an early date. Owing to the anti-slavery origins of the Republican Party, any politician belonging to it was liable to be dubbed a "Black Republican" by opponents in the Free States, and during the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858 Democrat Stephen A. Douglas made great play with the idea that Lincoln, with his "Abolitionist doctrines", not only wished to free the slaves, but also favoured complete racial equality. Douglas was a talented politician who saw the value of capitalising on anti-Negro feeling during his struggle with Lincoln for the vacant senatorship of Illinois. After the 1860 election and the outbreak of war, he made no further references to Lincoln's alleged abolitionism, and was prepared to spend what proved to be the last months of his life recruiting support for the Republican administration among Northern Democrats, but it would seem doubtful whether his publicly revised opinion of Lincoln would have been effective in changing the attitudes of those convinced by his earlier oratory.[2]

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1 Montgomery Daily Mail, Feb. 25, 1864.

2 Douglas, Speech at Ottawa, Illinois, Aug. 21, 1858, Lincoln, III, 7, 9-10. See also his speech at Chicago, Nov. 17, 1858: Liberator, Dec. 3, 1858. Douglas' efforts to counter Southern extremism began soon after Lincoln's election, as in his letter published in the Daily Picayune, Nov. 14, 1860.

Certainly the view that Lincoln was closely associated with the abolitionists found acceptance amongst Southern sympathizers in the Border States and further North. From Illinois a Mississippi-born resident of that state wrote to Jefferson Davis denouncing such leaders as Lincoln, "who became soured toward the South, who hates slavery as bad as any abolitionist...", and in Washington, D. C. the Constitution warned its readers that Lincoln was "an anti-slavery zealot...a man who realises the expectation of his party by proclaiming uncompromising hostility to the distinguishing institution of the South..."[1]

Still, though accusations of abolitionism were levelled at Lincoln by his Northern opponents during the secession crisis,[2] support for this concept of him was limited, partly because Republicans could quickly challenge such attacks. When anti-Republican papers in Pennsylvania published a New York paper's report which quoted Lincoln as saying that he intended to disturb the domestic institutions of the South, the Pennsylvania Weekly Telegraph denounced the quotation as : "A Base Forgery". Similarly, when the Boston Post referred to Lincoln as "the unscrupulous Abolitionist, whose ambition will not be satiated until he shall see a red line of human blood drawn as the dividing line between the North and South", the Providence Journal countered: "That will do for Hambleton (sic) of Georgia; but is it not a little strong for these Northern latitudes?"[3]

In both sections the term abolitionist was at times used with intent to defame rather than to present an accurate description; in the North, with regard to Lincoln, this seems to have been more often the case. Certainly those who supported the Union while still finding much to admire in the South and its cause felt, like Mrs. Daly of New York, that Lincoln was too easily influenced by the abolitionists. Yet Mrs. Daly, though she disliked Lincoln amd his administration, did not accuse him of being a member of a sect she

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1 Sidney Noble to Davis, Dec. 12, 1860, in Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers and Speeches, 10 vols. (Jackson, Miss., 1923), IV, 554, hereafter cited as Davis, Letters, Papers and Speeches; Washington Constitution, Sept. 6, 1860, quoted in Howard C. Perkins, ed., Northern Editorials on Secession (New York, 1942), 1, 34.

2 Cole, "Lincoln s Election an Immediate Menace..?", op.cit., 743

3 Pennsylvania Weekly Telegraph, May 30, 1860; Liberator, Sept. 7, 1860.

loathed.[1]

Countering the development of the tradition in the North was the attitude of those who might have been thought most likely to acclaim the election of a President determined to destroy slavery, the highly vocal abolitionists themselves, who totally rejected any idea that he was one of them. The American Anti-Slavery Society spoke for most moderate abolitionists when it described Lincoln as "a sort of bland, respectable middle-man, between a very modest right and the most arrogant and exacting wrong; a convenient hook whereon to hang appeals at once to a moderate anti-slavery feeling and to a timid conservatism practically pro-slavery..." Wendell Phillips, one of abolitionism's more uncompromising leaders put the matter succinctly: "Not an Abolitionist, hardly an antislavery man, Mr. Lincoln consents to represent an antislavery idea." Many abolitionists campaigned for Lincoln in 1860, but seldom because they believed that his election would bring about slavery's destruction.

The abolitionists were, however, divided over Lincoln. Some, perhaps reacting against the tradition viewing him as an abolitionist, claimed that far from intending to destroy slavery, Lincoln displayed an attitude towards the South so moderate as to verge on pro-slavery. This theory, in its conception and in the sections of American society from which it drew support the exact antithesis of the abolitionist tradition, was the brain-child of abolitionist extremists, many of whom used praise and vicious criticism interchangeably as they sought to drive Lincoln and his party into a more aggressive stand against slavery. Thus Wendell Phillips castigated the President-elect as "the slave-hound of Illinois", and a group of Iowa abolitionists attributed Lincoln's failure to adopt emancipation to "his sympathies with the owners of slaves..." Similarly, Illinois black leader Henry Ford Douglas, referring particularly to Lincoln's support for the

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1 Harold Earl Hammon, Ed., Diary of a Union Lady, 1861-1865 (New York, 1962) 179, entry for Sept. 28, 1862. Hereafter cited as Daly, Diary.

Fugitive Slave, Law, attacked him for his "pro-slavery character and principles".[1]

More than anything else the theory that Lincoln was virtually pro-slavery reflected abolitionists' exasperation when he moved with what seemed to them incrediable slowness towards emancipation, or, worse still, appeared not to move at all. So, in early 1862, irritated by the call for gradual and compensated rather than immediate emancipation to Lincoln's March 6 Message to Congress, Orson S. Murray of Ohio asked, "Did anybody ever see any evidence, or hear of any evidence, in word or in deed, that Abraham Lincoln wants slavery abolished? When? Where? Where-in? Itis not in this message." The ruin of slavery was, said Murray, "a thing he (Lincoln) appears to deprecate more than the ruin of all else." The reason for this outburst is clear from his letter: "For ten months he (Lincoln) has had the power in hid hands to abolish slavery, and has refused to use it, and still persists in refusing to use it." There was no reason for such sentiments to find adherents outside anti-slavery circles, and many abolitionists followed Garrison's lead and avoided such extremes when criticizing Lincoln. Indeed, some found the idea that Lincoln was pro-slavery absurd, and would have agreed with Garrisonian Oliver Johnson, editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard, who stated that it seemed to him "utterly preposterous to deny that Lincoln's election will indicate growth in the right direction."[2]

One other group in the North might have wished that Lincoln were an abolitionist, but Northern free blacks do not appear to have had any doubts

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1 Liberator, June 22, 1860; Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 20; Benjamin Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro (New York, 1962), 55. Many abolitionists were especially alienated by Lincoln's apparent willingness to sustain the Fugitive Slave Law, under which slaves escaping to free states were returned to their owners, as one of the constitutional guarantees of slavery in the South. A number of abolitionist societies condemned the nomination by the Republicans of a presidential candidate "who endorses all the pro-slavery compromises of the Constitution...": resolution introduced by Pillsbury at meeting of Middlesex County Anti-Slavery Society Concord, July 15, 1860. For this and similar resolutions adopted at other abolitionist meetings see Liberator, Aug.17, Sept.28, 1860; Jan. 4, 1861.

2 Murray to Editor (italics added), March 12, 1862, Liberator, March 28,1862; Johnson to J. Miller McKim, Oct. 11, 1860, McPherson, Struggle for Equality 14.

on this score, and generally expected less from Lincoln with regard to emancipation than did those in bondage in the South. The attitude of Northern Negroes to Lincoln will be discussed in detail later;[1] it is enough to say here that while many had faith in Lincoln's humanitarianism and believed that he was sufficiently anti-slavery to welcome any constitutional steps that might in future be taken towards the destruction of slavery, they had no concept of him as an abolitionist, and frequently criticized his moderation on the slavery issue. Indeed, though most supported the Republicans as the one political party opposed to slavery, some refused to do so. With reference to the tradition of Lincoln the Abolitionist the words of black abolitionist Robert Purvis of Philadelphia are significant: "How could I, an Abolitionist, belong to a party that is and must of necessity be a pro-slaveryparty? The Republicans may be, and doubtless are opposed to the extension of slavery, but they are sworn to support, and the will support, slavery where it already exists." Nowhere in this speech did Purvis imply that Lincoln could be exempted from this verdict.[2]

Outside America, the Southern cause did not lack sympathizers, and in Great Britain particularly the Confederacy had numerous, and some influential, friends. This was especially the case during the early years of the war, and, since there is some evidence of pro-slavery sentiments amongst Southern partisans in Britain, it might be supposed that they would have adopted the tradition of Lincoln the Abolitionist as part of a pro-Southern interpretation of the war. This did not happen.

In 1860 and early 1861, when the tradition was at its strongest in the slaveholding states, British opinion was at its most neutral concerning the conflict between North and South. Unable to grasp that this conflict was serious, both future friends and future critics of the South denied that Lincoln represented a real threat to slavery in the states.[3]

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1 See below, Chapter Seven.

2 Purvis, speech at New York, May 8, 1860: Herbert Aptheker, ed., A documentary history of the Negro people in the United States (New York, 1968), I, 454.

3 British attitudes to the Civil War and to Lincoln are discussed in Chapter Seven.

The London Times, shaping and reflecting the views of the British upper middle class, and sometimes, though not always, speaking for the Liberal Ministry of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, noted Lincoln's "strong anti-slavery opinions" but consistently rejected in late 1860 and 1861 any idea that Lincoln could be considered an abolitionist. Far from seeing Lincoln as the abolitionist leader of an extreme anti-slavery party the paper discounted Southern fears, believing that he had been elected because he represented the moderate wing of the Republican Party and would put the preservation of the Union above all else.

The attitude of the Times suggests that the tradition found no favour amongst the British social classes to which Confederates later looked for sympathy. That of the Economist indicates that the British commercial classes also rejected this concept of Lincoln in 1860-1861. As the presidential election drew near and Southern charges of abolitionist became more frenzied the Economist was talking about Lincoln's "mild type of Anti-Slavery policy." This anti-slavery journal did see Lincoln's election as a moral victory for the cause of freedom, but for any who might hope for radical measures against slavery, the Economist had discouraging news: "It would be a great mistake to suppose that Mr. Abraham Lincoln is an extreme man. His views seem to us to fall far short of what may fairly be termed even a statesmanlike Anti-Slavery creed."[1] Nor could the strongly anti-slavery Spectator detect in Lincoln any signs of the abolitionist. Articles of late 1860 referred to the "essentially conservative policy" he was expected to pursue and explained to its readers that "At present, not slavery, but the limitation of slavery, is in question...At present, a broad line separates the Republicans from the Abolitionists. From the Abolitionists the Republicans received no support. Over their success there was no Abolitionist song of triumph."[2]

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1 Economist, Sept. 8, Nov. 3, 24, 1860; April 13, 1861.
2 Spectator, Nov. 24, Dec. 8, 1860.

Provincial newspapers followed Loncoln's lead in dismissing the tradition. The tendency of secessionists to identify Lincoln with abolitionism, ignoring his declarations to the contrary, was deplored. According to a Birmingham newspaper, "the President's aversion to slavery is not of an aggressive character...he is...anything but a model Abolitionist, professing simply a personal dislike to the idea of slavery, together with a disposition to be highly charitable towards those whose interests run in the opposite direction." Lincoln, it was asserted, "is not an Abolitionist;...a rampant demagogue;...a rash and desperate man." "Passion and politics apart," declared one paper, "he is just the man the South ought to support."[1]

In Britain as in America anti-slavery men in general rejected the idea that Lincoln was an abolitionist. Close contacts with abolitionism in America ensured that the Anti-Slavery Reporter, organ of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, would do so. In November 1860 the journal noted that Frederick Douglass, a prominent black abolitionist in the Northern States, opposed Lincoln's candidature "because Mr. Lincoln is only a non-extensionist, and not an abolitionist." When the election results were known, the Reporter commented, "Our readers will scarcely required to be reminded, that the Republican party is not, as a party, what is termed abolitionist, though it is to a certain extent anti-slavery." The annual report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society for 1860 confirmed this view of Lincoln. Though it loosely described the Republican Party as including "all shades of abolitionism" and believed its victory would be a step in the right direction, the report continued, "Your committee are quite aware that a President elected by the Republicans would not represent thoroughly anti-slavery principles..." When British anti-slavery

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1 Manchester Guardian, March 26, 1861; Birmingham Daily Post, Nov. 27, 1860; Liverpool Daily Post, Nov. 28, 1860. All were Liberal organs. Lincoln's first inaugural address, viewed by many Southerners as final proof that he threatened slavery and the South, did not change the British press view of his attitude to slavery, and no charges of abolitionism resulted from it in any leading paper.

circles celebrated Lincoln's election they did so not because they thought him an abolitionist, but because he was "a Presidential candidate representing the 'anti-slavery' idea..."[1]

Except through the press, little can be learned of the British public's attitude to Lincoln at this time.[2] When the Liverpool Daily Post quoted a letter from New York describing Lincoln as having been "a strong Abolitionist" during his congressional career, reader "Anti-Abolition" replied: "This is decidedly erroneous. Mr. Lincoln is not and never was an Abolitionist." The second letter was, however, so well-informed as to raise suspicions that the writer was an American resident in or visiting Britain.[3]

Thus allegations such as those of the Star's American correspondent, Frederick Milnes Edge, that Lincoln was an abolitionist who would be the first anti-slavery president of the United States, or those of American Hiram Fuller that Lincoln represented political abolitionism were rare, and seem to have made little impact. Edge, writing in 1860, hoped to win sympathy amongst British philanthropists and statesmen by presenting the North's cause as anti-slavery. Perhaps he did so; but politicians and other prominent men who spoke in favour of the North, while they often hoped to see the Federal Government move against slavery, tended to accept at face value Lincoln's protests that his administration represented no threat to that institution in the South. It seems likely that Hiram Fuller's 1861 lecture had even less influence on British opinion. Drawing a distinction between the abolitionist movement proper and political anti-slavery in America, Fuller described the latter, as represented by Lincoln's administration, as far more dangerous to the South. At times Fuller's language became highly reminiscent of that used in Southern editorials and speeches at the time of secession crisis, and in his attempt to stimulate

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1 Anti-Slavery Reporter, Nov. 1, 1860, Dec. 1, 1860; 21st Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (London, 1860): Anti-Slavery Reporter, VIII, 3 Ser. (1860), supplement, 160-161; George Thompson to Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Nov. 23, 1860: Liberator, Dec. 14, 1860.

2 See below, Chapter Eight.

3 Liverpool Daily Post, Nov. 26, 27, 1860

pro-Southern feeling in Britain Fuller was attempting to use the kind of anti-abolition arguments, modified so as not to alienate anti-slavery feeling in Britain, which had served secessionists well in the South a year earlier. However, the audience, which included Yancey, was "very small".[1] All the evidence suggests that those who spoke in Britain in favour of the seceding states did not find the concept of Lincoln as an abolitionist a useful one in a society which took pride in the destruction of slavery in its own territories almost thirty years earlier. They generally preferred to play upon the lack of anti-slavery action by the Northern Government in order to embarrass its protagonists in Britain. Since the latter were only too well aware of the Lincoln Administration's failings on this matter, the words used by one Member of Parliament could have been spoken on behalf of either North or South: "True it was", he said, "that there was a party in the Northern States who were abolitionist, who looked at the question of slavery with the same abhorrence we did. But they were not the government."[2]

Occasional attacks on Lincoln and his party as abolitionists did appear in Britain during the war, as in 1863, when Marylander Mrs. Greenhow had published in London her work on the Civil War which described Lincoln as "the Abolition Irrepressible conflict chief" elected by "the Abolition party" and attacked the Republicans for seeking "to deprive the South of her sovereign equal rights, and to reduce her to a state of vassalage..."[3] Nevertheless, it seems clear that there never was any significant support in Britain for the concept of Lincoln. Thus though the emergence of the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist serves as a case-study in myth-making and so as an introduction to the development of Lincoln myths elsewhere, it originated as and remained a political myth of the white South.

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1 Frederick M. Edge, Slavery Doomed; Or, The Contest Between Free and Slave Labour in the United States (London, 1860), 216-17; viii; Hiram Fuller, The Causes and Consequences of The Civil War in America. An Address Delivered in St. James Hall, Dec. 19, 1861 (London, 186(2)), 11,13; London Observer quoted in Ibid., 30.

2 Frederick Peel, speech at Bury, Dec. 11, 1861: Manchester Guardian, Dec. 12, 1861. Peel was pro-South.

3 Mrs. Greenhow, My Imprisonment and the First Year of Abolition Rule at Washington, (London, 1863), 12-13.

Chapter Two

American Responses to the Emancipation Proclamations

> The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as a liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Plainly the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty; and precisely the same difference prevails today among us human creatures, even in the North, and all professing to love liberty. - Address by Abraham Lincoln at Baltimore, April 18, 1864.[1]

The enduring image of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator of the Negro slave undoubtedly represents fundamental themes and values in American society. Yet within that society few saw Lincoln as a hero of liberty when the Proclamations of Emancipation were issued. A study of white American responses to the proclamations will indicate why this was so.[2]

Given the relationship of slavery to the economic and social organization of their section, white Southerners' reactions to the emancipation edicts were as predictable as they are well known. They will be glanced at briefly because the proclamations became symbols for the South, condensing its fears, and reinforcing the mythical images of Lincoln and of its own society which had represented those fears in secessionist rhetoric and were now used to endorse and stimulate the Confederate war effort.

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1 Lincoln, Works, VII, 302.

2 American responses to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamations are discussed briefly in Randall and Donald, 380-81, 387-90, and in greater detail in John Hope Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation (Edinburgh, 1963), Chapters Three and Four. For abolitionists' reactions see McPherson, Struggle for Equality, 117-22.

Southern leaders and the Confederate press denounced the decision to adopt emancipation as a "fiendish" act and the "last extremity of wickedness". Paradoxically, it was insisted that the measure would have no effect upon the Confederacy. Depicted as a surrender to anti-slavery radicalism, the 1862 edict was said to have dropped Lincoln into the hands of the "radical revolutionary party" of the North, but Confederate newspapers denied that it would spark off a revolution in the South.[1] The mass of Confederates shared these views: a Union general, released from a Southern prisoner of war camp in October 1862, told how "many of the (Confederate) officers with whom he had conversed blasphemously condemned it, saying that it was damnable and could never be enforced.[2] Such was the outcry from the Confederacy that an anti-slavery Chaplain with Federal troops in Tennessee could note with satisfaction the "hoarse bellowings and deep groanings of Secessiondom over the Proclamation."[3]

To those imbued with an ideology justifying slavery as a positive good,[4] emancipation was a disaster for white and black alike, ending forever the way of life cherished by a people already creating the powerful myth of the Old South with its tranquil plantation life, benevolent masters and happy slaves. Thus a young Confederate girl could write of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation:

> And to think old Abe wants to deprive us of all that fun! No more cotton, sugar-cane, or rice! No more old black aunties or uncles! No more rides in mule teams, no more songs in the cane-fields, no more steaming kettles, no more black faces and shining teeth around the furnace fires! If Lincoln could spend the grinding season on a plantation, he would recall his proclamation.

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1 The (London) Anti-Slavery Reporter, Nov. 1, 1862; Richmond Enquirer, Sept. 30, 1862, quoted in Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 68, Houston (Texas) Tri-Weekly Telegraph, Oct. 1862; Arkansas State Gazette, Oct. 4, 11, 1862.

2 The Boston Commonwealth, Nov. 1,1862.

3 Samuel Day, Chaplain 8th, Illinois Infantry, to Editors, Sept. 3, 1862, reprinted from The Congregationalist in the New Orleans Daily Picayune, Oct. 22, 1862.

4 Eric L. McKitrick, ed., Slavery Defended: the views of the Old South (Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963), esp. pp. 86-98, 126-138.

For her, and for many Southerners, it was impossible to imagine a South without Negro slaves.[1] Moreover, in the racially-prejudiced ideology of the antebellum South, blacks were unfit - or at best unready - for freedom: according to Confederate nurse Kate Cumming "eat, sleep, and no work" was the Negro's motto. Confederate officer Richard Corbin shared the belief of many Southerners that emancipation would not benefit the blacks because it would take them without preparation, from a sheltered life to the responsibilities of providing for themselves: in 1864 he wrote, "the negro's happiest condition is slavery. You have only to go over the country to convince you of that; ... from a humanitarian point of view I deprecate the abolition of slavery; ..."[2]

Fundamental, however, to the South's bitter response to the proclamation was the belief that in declaring free Southern slaves Lincoln sought to weaken the Confederacy by inciting servile revolt. Fear of slave rebellion was a constant factor in the life of the antebellum South, and reflected the ambivalence of Southerners towards their "peculiar institution". The justification of slavery as a positive good for master and slave alike demanded that slaves be pictured as contented. Yet with the image of the indolent and happy slave there co-existed a contradictory belief in the bestial ferocity of the half-savage African, a hidden violence that would burst forth if freed from the restraints of slavery.[3] From the white

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1 James I. Robertson, Jr., ed., A Confederate Girl's Diary. Sarah Morgan Dawson (Bloomington, III., 1960), 277: entry for Nov. 9, 1862.

2 Richard B. Harwell, ed., Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse, by Kate Cumming (Baton Rouge, 1959), 176: entry for Nov. 29, 1863; hereafter cited as Cumming, Journal. Corbin to his mother, Dec. 29, 1864, in Letters of a Confederate Officer to his Family in Europe During the Last Year of the War of Secession (New York, 1913 ed.): Magazine of History, Extra Numbers, VI, No. 24, p. 91, hereafter cited as Corbin, Letters.

3 Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life (Chicago, 1968 ed.), 217-22; see also George M. Frederickson, The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914 (New York, 1971).

Southerner's concern about a dangerous and concealed side to the character of the Negro sprang fear - and sometimes hysteria.[1] During the Civil War such fear was accentuated by the absence of large numbers of adult white males in the Confederate Army. Thus Lincoln's proclamation of 1862 touched an exposed nerve. In the Confederate Congress the edict was denounced as "an invitation to an atrocious servile war, ... (that) should be held up to the execration of mankind ...", and the Southern press savagely attacked the Northern President whose edict, it was asserted, sought "to deluge the South in the blood of a servile insurrection ..."[2]

That some leading Confederates genuinely feared slave risings resulting from the proclamation need not be doubted.[3] At the same time, even if they denied that the proclamation would be effective, they had good reason to promote the idea that Lincoln was inciting the slaves to revolt. Since Southerners had long accused abolitionists of doing so, this view of Lincoln was consistent with the image of him as an anti-slavery fanatic exploited during the Secession Crisis. The vision of Lincoln calling upon the slaves to murder their masters thus complemented and confirmed the validity of the mythic themes permeating the South's interpretation of secessions and, by reinforcing fears that had played a part in the establishment of the Confederacy and by exciting moral outrage, stimulated the Southern war effort. The Arkansas State Gazette made clear the effect this interpretation of Lincoln's motives was expected and intended to have: "... just and holy as our cause has heretofore been, it is now more so than ever, because our soldiers are

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1 Anti-abolitionist hysteria resulted partly from this fear: see William L. Garrison to John Oliver of Richmond, April 18, 1870, Carter G. Woodson Papers, Library of Congress.

2 Resolution introduced in the Confederate Senate by Mr. Semmes of Louisiana, Sept. 29, 1862: Proceedings of the First Confederate Congress, Southern Historical Society Papers, XLVII (Dec., 1930), 7; Richmond Dispatch, Oct. 4, 1862.

3 L'Union, Jan. 15, 1863.

not only fighting for the right of governing themselves and controlling their own property, but for the lives and honor of helpless women and children."[1] This explanation of Lincoln's policy was also meant for use by critics of the Federal Government in the North and in Europe to counteract claims by Lincoln's supporters that he had adopted emancipation for humanitarian reasons, for the image of him as an Emancipator might weaken sympathy for the Confederacy, particularly in anti-slavery Britain. Thus the South tried to turn upon the North its own weapon, and by symbolizing in Lincoln and his emancipation edicts the fears of the South, to ensure that emancipation would have an effect upon the Confederacy predicted by Confederate war clerk J.B. Jones when he wrote of the September edict, "This will only intensify the war, and add largely to our numbers in the field." [2]

There were, indeed, Southerners in areas occupied by Federal troops who openly welcomed the edicts. One reason why some may have done so is suggested by Union General Robert McAllister's description of "a strong Union lady" in Virginia: "She goes in for the President's proclamation and all, though she was a large slave owner. But most of her negroes have run off." [3]

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1 Arkansas State Gazette, Oct. 4, 1862

2 Howard Swiggett, ed., A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital, by John B. Jones, 2 vols. (New York, 1935), I, 157. Hereafter cited as Jones, Diary. A circular from President Davis to Confederate governors (Nov. 26, 1862) depicted theFederal Government as "trying to inflict on the non-combatant population all the horrors of a servile war." Allen D. Candler, comp., The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia (Atlanta, 1910), I, 305. This idea was a double-edged weapon politically. In a letter to Davis (Oct. 18, 1862) Governor Brown of Georgia also spoke of the danger of servile revolt "which our insidious foe now proclaims to the world it is his intention to incite, which if done may result in an indiscriminate massacre of helpless women and children." Brown, however, was using the alleged threat to justify Georgia's opposition to the Confederate draft. Ibid., I, 295.

3 McAllister to his daughter, Sept. 28, 1862, in James I. Robertson, Jr., ed., The Civil War Letters of General Robert McAllister (New Brunswick N.J., 1965), 212. Hereafter cited as McAllister, Letters.

Nonetheless, most Southerners could not take the proclamations in such a spirit. "Sur le plus grand nombre ...", commented L'Union, "elle est tombée comme un torrent d'huile sur une ville en feu ..."[1] Widespread fears of slave revolts were reported in late 1862 and early 1863.[2] "I wonder" wrote Kate Stone in her diary, "What will be the result of this diabolical move. Surely not as bad for us as they intend it to be. I think there is little chance of a happy hereafter for President Lincoln. A thousand years of repentance would be but brief time to wipe out his sins against the South."[3] For the people of the Confederacy emancipation could have no hereoes.

Slavery was legal in only four of the twenty-two states which remained in the Union in 1861. Yet the angry outbursts of Southerners were matched by widespread condemnation of Lincoln's edicts in the Free States. For in 1862 and 1863 few Northerners were ready for emancipation on moral grounds, and the demands of Northern politics made it difficult for either opponents or friends of the Administration to see in Lincoln the hero of emancipation.

Divided on sectional lines following the withdrawal of Southern radicals at the Charleston and Baltimore conventions of 1860,[4] and consequently defeated in the presidential election of that year, the Democracy was still a significant force in the politics of the wartime North. During the war, the party drew its strength from North-Eastern cities and Midwestern states, and its platform and policies reflected the hostility towards emancipation

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1 L'Union, Jan. 15, 1863, describes measures urged by the Governors of Georgia and South Carolina to protect against slave revolts in their states.

2 Daily Picayune, Oct. 18, 1862: Manchester (New Hampshire) American, Oct. 14, 1862 quoted in L'Union, Nov. 8, 1862; Cairo City Gazette, Oct. 23, 1862. See also Harvey Wish, "Slave Disloyalty Under the Confederacy", JNH, XXIII (Oct. 1938), 438-39.

3 John Q. Anderson, ed., Brokenburn, The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868 (Baton Rouge, 1955), 145-146: entry for Oct. 1, 1862. Hereafter cited as Stone, Journal.

4 Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, 288-304, 312-18.

prevalent in these areas. This was sound tactics. With Republicans clearly identified as representing politically all shades of Northern anti-slavery feeling, Democrats, who often retained considerable sympathy with former colleagues in the South, were bound to exploit anti-emancipation and anti-Negro sentiment to win votes from the Government. When opposition to the war effort was easily equated with treason, to the advantage of the Republican Party, emancipation was one issue on which the Government could be safely assailed. Also, Northern Democrats saw reunion with the South as a necessary condition for the restoration of their party to power. This would be imperilled if emancipation were adopted as a war measure, prolonging and embittering Confederate resistance and, if effective, destroying the powerful slave-owning class in which lay the strength of the Southern Democracy. Thus many Northern Democrats supported the war effort, but the party had both short-term and long-term reasons for opposing the Federal Government's emancipation policy whether or not this was presented as a military necessity.[1]

Richard O'Gorman spoke for numerous Northern Democrats when he told a New York audience that he objected to Lincoln's emancipation policy "because in my humble judgement, it is a violation of the Constitution ..." Many denied that it was a necessary war measure, undermining the Republican defence of its constitutionality. As the New York World pointed out, the proclamation could not be necessary to military success if military success was necessary to make emancipation effective. This paper and Democratic

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1 There is no major study of the Democratic Party during the Civil War, but on the Peace Democrats, who opposed the Union war effort, see Frank L. Klement, The Copperheads of the Middle West (Chicago, 1960) and The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Vallandigham and the Civil War (Lexington, 1970), and on the War Democrats, who sustained the Union war effort, see Christopher Dell, Lincoln and the War Democrats (Rutherford, 1975). J. Jacque Voegeli's Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War (Chicago, 1970 ed.) deals with the wartime attitudes of Midwestern Republicans and Democrats towards the Negro and emancipation. A recently published history of the Democratic Party which covers this period briefly is Ralph M. Goldman, Search for Consensus: The Story of the Democratic Party (Philadelphia, 1979).

opinion in general held that the proclamation would not free the slaves. John D. Caton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois, lent legal weight to this argument. In the eyes of his Democratic critics, Lincoln, far from being a great emancipator, could not claim to have emancipated anyone; for them the act was simply a "brutum fulmen".[1]

Leading Democrats used the emancipation edicts to drive home their interpretation of the war. Without disputing the legitimacy of the Northern war effort, they were anxious to lay primary responsibility for the war upon anti-slavery radicals. At the same time Democratic speakers frequently and deliberately drew no distinction between extreme abolitionists and anti-slavery Republicans. This discredited the Republican Party as a whole, by association, and enabled Democrats, whenever the Government moved against slavery, to depict the country as passing under the control of fanatics whose extremism had made compromise with the South impossible during the Secession Crisis. Lincoln's emancipation edicts were presented as the culmination of this process, showing Lincoln to be finally under the control of anti-slavery extremists. So in January, 1863 a leading organ of Midwestern Democracy, the Chicago Times, told how two years earlier bitter hatred between Northern abolitionists and ultra slaveholders had nullified attempts at conciliation and war had been unavoidable because of "the asinine rancor of the blood-letting Chandlers controlling the abolition delegation in Congress". Lincoln and Seward, then advocating compromise, had been overruled by the fanatics "who have since taken possession of the Executive." Once the danger of compromise was past, the "abolition press

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1 New York Tribune, Oct. 10, 1862; New York World, Jan. 3, 1863, quoted in James G. Randall, Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln (Urbana, 1961 ed.) 379; resolution adopted at meeting of the democracy, Murphysboro, Illinois, Aug. 1, 1863 and correspondence of Caton in Chicago Times, Aug. 8, 1863, Sept. 26, 1862; Picayune, Oct. 9, 1862 quoting Louisville Journal; Chicago Times, Sept. 23, 1862.

and pulpit demanded a more vigorous policy", and, with Congress instigating and condoning what the Times called an attack on private property, the emancipation programme was gradually enacted, to climax with "the crowning infamy of the proclamation of January 1st."[1]

In terms of his analysis, the Democratic Party could present itself as the lone but consistent defender of Union and Constitution against anti-slavery fanaticism. The emancipation policy laid an extra burden upon loyal men, said Caton, but "May God in His mercy to our bleeding country and endangered constitution, grant that it may have no worse results than to meet the disapproval of democrats in the free States, ... They cannot be drawn from this support." Democrats would not, the Party claimed, abandon the Union cause because of the President's action, however much they deplored it. As the Cairo City Gazette had said succinctly: "loyalty can exist without Lincolnism."[2]

While politically advantageous, such arguments doubtless reflected genuine concern that Government policy was becoming increasingly radical. The attack upon emancipation was not, however, confined to such themes. Democrats simply could not afford to ignore the opportunity presented by Lincoln's emancipation edicts to exploit Northern prejudice against the black race. Abolitionists, politicians and ordinary citizens alike admitted that, as Harper's Weekly said in 1862, "a mortal antipathy for the negro is entertained by a large class of persons at the North."[3] Though fear of social equality with blacks and of miscegenation played a part in racial hostility, it was most marked in cities and midwestern states where Negro labour could potentially compete with white, and amongst urban, and particularly immigrant, labourers most likely to face such

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1 Chicago Times, Jan. 5, 1863.
2 Ibid., Sept. 26, 1862; Cairo City (Illinois) Gazette, July 4, 1861. Thus Democrats sought to exploit anti-emancipation feeling without alienating staunch unionists.
3 Paul M. Angle and Earl Schenck Miers, Tragic Years, 1860-1865. A Documentary History of the American Civil War, 2 vols. (New York, 1960), I, 402.

competition.[1] The war intensified existing anti-Negro sentiments. Black army surgeon A.T. Augusta had always known Baltimore "as a place where it is considered a virtue to mob colored people ...", but blacks resident in that and other cities recorded increasing white hostility to their race during the war.[2] Such antagonism did not necessarily result in support for slavery. Many who voted for Republicanism and against slavery extension did so to keep Negroes out of the Territories, as the Republican Party recognized when it claimed to be "the only white man's party in the country."[3] But during the war it became clear that Republican anti-slavery went beyond non-extension, and though Republican leaders sought to present emancipation in terms which appealed to racialist assumptions, it was the Democrats who were able increasingly to make of racialism a political weapon.[4]

The Democratic press overflowed with racialist notions. Though anti-emancipation propaganda normally stopped short of the South's assertion that slavery was a positive good, its emphasis on slaves' loyalty to their owners, sufficient to induce them to fight for the Confederacy despite cowardly natures which shrank from self-dependence, implied that the institution was something less than an evil.[5] As this suggests, if Democratic opponents of emancipation were fairly consistently hostile towards blacks, there were glaring inconsistencies in racialist arguments. In particular, while abolition was denounced as unnecessary since slaves did not desire freedom, it was stressed that if adopted emancipation would flood free states with ex-slaves, threatening their economic and social organization. The economic

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1 Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago, 1961); V. Jacque Voegeli, Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War (Chicago, 1970 ed.), esp. pp. 1-9.

2 Voegeli, Free but Not Equal, 1-2; Augusta to Editor, Lyceum Observer, June 5, 1863, Christian A. Fleetwood Papers, Library of Congress; Jacob White to Joseph C. Bustill, Aug.19, 1862, Carter G. Woodson Papers.

3 Foner, Free Soil, 265.

4 For a definition of the term racialism as used in this thesis see above, p.v.

5 Cairo City Gazette, Aug. 15, Dec. 5, 1861 and May 15, 29, (quoting Boston Courier), 1862.

basis and political usefulness of Northern prejudice against black people were indicated in the warning by Pennsylvania Democrats that the Republican Party"seeks to turn the slaves of the Southern States loose to overrun the North and enter into competition with the white laboring masses, thus degrading and insulting their manhood by placing them on an equality in their occupations ..."[1] That such claims reflected real economic and social fears is suggested by attacks on Negro labourers by whites in Midwestern and Eastern towns during the summer of 1863,[2] and by incidents such as that when a black minister was forced off a Phoenix omnibus because of his colour.[3]

Lincoln's emancipation announcement enabled Democrats to exploit further anti-Negro feeling and the Chicago Times immediately published letters warning that the predicted influx of Negro "paupers" had begun. Racial prejudice was blended with the idea that the September proclamation turned the war into an abolitionist crusade. In a series of "Pertinent Questions and Answers" the Times asked its readers, represented by an anonymous soldier, "would you be willing to have your throat cut, and the throats of all other loyal citizens, in order to let the negroes free?"[4]

Initially adopted as part of the Democracy's 1862 election campaign racialist attacks on the emancipation edicts continued throughout 1863. The Lansing Journal offered readers a lurid example of what happened when Northerners fought to free slaves. Reporting the attempted rape of a German woman by a Negro, the paper declared, "This is the first emancipated 'American citizen of African descent'who has made his way into this community. How tolerable will be the condition when the country is filled with them."

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1 Liberator, Aug. 8, 1862 quoted in Williston H. Lofton, "Northern Labor and the Negro", JNH, XXXIV, no. 3 (July, 1949), 254.

2 Democratic newspapers seem, however, to have incited such attacks; Lofton op.cit., 259.

3 Pine and Palm, July 6, 1861. A pro-Negro Boston weekly which promoted colonization.

4 Chicago Times, Sept. 23, 26, 27, 1862.

A comment attributed to the black might have led cynics to suspect a Democrat in disguise: "When on his way to jail, the prisoner very coolly told the office in charge of him, 'that Father Abraham had made him free and he only wanted his rights.'" "Oh," mourned the Journal, "the beauties of emancipation!" The piece was entitled: "Brutal Outrage by a Negro - First Fruits of Emancipation."[1]

Discontent over the draft act gave opponents of the Administration new opportunities to exploit racial prejudice, and with an eye to state and local elections, many Democrats linked emancipation and conscription in a joint attack aimed at winning votes amongst traditionally anti-Negro elements of the electorate. In July 1863 a meeting of Chicago Democrats which discussed raising funds to exempt members from the draft, declared its opposition to a war conducted "for the purpose of depressing the white man to the level of the negro." A separate, brilliantly worded resolution linked genuine class resentments aroused by the exemption clause permitting the wealthy to avoid conscription with anti-emancipation feeling when it declared that the association intended to protect its members from the draft law, thus "by combined contributions putting the poor man on a pecuniary equality, so far as this law is concerned with the starched abolition aristocrats of the (avenue?) who surpass us only in the accumulation of that capital which our labors have created and whose nefarious efforts since this war began have contributed so largely to bringing the affairs of the country to their present unhappy condition." A similar meeting emphasized the necessity "for all good democrats, who had no wish to sacrifice everything dear to them in the world, politically and domestically, by going South and fighting for the negro" to avoid the draft.[2] The effectiveness of this

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1 Chicago Times, June 30, 1863 quoting Lansing (Michigan) Journal, June 24, 1863.

2 Resolutions adopted at meeting of 3rd, Ward Democrats, Chicago, and comments of P. Cudmore at meeting of 8th, Ward Democrats, Chicago, July 17, 24, 1863: Chicago Times, July 20, 25, 1863.

propaganda was indicated by the bitter complaint of an Illinois Republican newspaper in July 1863 that urban Irish "are distinguished here by negro-hatred and haughty contempt of all men of color, wallow in dirt and whisky, fill the jails, and vote the democratic ticket from head to tail."[1]

The attack upon Lincoln's proclamations was crucial to the Democratic Party's bid for increased power in the 1862 and 1863 elections.[2] With anti-slavery men almost certain to vote Republican, the Democracy's response to emancipation was determined by the need not only to retain the support of the Democratic masses but also to win votes amongst those elements hostile to the Negro and emancipation which might nevertheless, out of Unionism, sustain the Government. Hostile as a matter of principle or policy, or both, to attacks upon slavery, Democratic opponents of the Government could have no concept of the President as an heroic emancipator.

Their campaign did not go unchallenged. Across the Union, Republicans rallied to the support of Lincoln's proclamation. With them stood war Democrats, Border-State Unionists and other non-Republicans who for their own reasons chose to declare for Union and emancipation.

Overall party unity was reflected in the Republican press response to emancipation. Commenting upon the preliminary edict, the Chicago Journal,

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1 Illinois State Zeitung, July 23, 1863 in Chicago Times, July 25, 1863.
2 Lincoln to Carl Schurz, Nov. 10, 1862: Lincoln, Works, V, 493-494.

a leading organ of Midwestern conservative Republicanism,[1] expressed a fear that the "wise, statesmanlike and patriotic" measure "will of course not satisfy the ultras of either political extreme, and we shall be prepared for a renewal of the usual howl of denunciation." It came, however, only from opposition Democrats. If ultra anti-slavery Republicans had hoped for a more forceful measure, they accepted what was given with a good grace. "It is the beginning of the end of the rebellion;" declared the leading Republican nespaper, the New York Tribune, which had long represented Radical demands that the President move against slavery. "(It is) the beginning of the new life of the nation. God bless Abraham Lincoln!"[2] There were variations in the extent to which Republican editors felt bound to support the edict. What for Radical organs was "a blessed boom" received more reserved approval in many non-Radical papers. Yet even the conservative New York Times described the proclamation as "a sublime act".[3]

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1 Republicans are usually classified as Radical, moderate or conservative, but neither contemporaries nor historians have always agreed over such classifications. The Liberator and Eric Foner call Charles F. Adams, Sr., Radical, but Hans L. Trefousse sees him as moderate. William R. Brock, Mark M. Krug and Trefousse describe Orville H. Browning as conservative; Randall and Donald and T. Harry Williams view him as moderate. Foner has stressed the problems of classifying men like Doolittle, Fessenden, Greeley, Grimes and Yates, all of whom co-operated with the Radicals at times but often showed conservative tendencies. For a discussion of this problem and an illuminating survey of Radical leadership see William R. Brock, An American Crisis: Congress and Reconstruction, 1865-1867 (London, 1963), 67-94. The problem of classification is linked with disagreement over what constitutes Radicalism or conservatism, and is complicated by the fact that, as Brock points out, individual Republicans might be Radical on on one issue but conservative on another, and that the 1860's were years of rapid change during which the positions taken by individuals and groups within the Republican Party on issues connected with the War and Reconstruction also changed. Nevertheless, it is possible to define broadly Radical, moderate and conservative attitudes on slavery and emancipation. Radicals sought to abolish slavery, and, as Margaret Shortreed points out, the slaveholding aristocracy, through political action. Emancipation on military and moral grounds was central to their wartime programme. Not all who were Radicals before the War remained so, and many not formerly Radical became so during the War or Reconstruction. Moderates were opposed to slavery but also to a direct attack upon it in the South. They generally accepted abolition when this was urged as a war measure. Conservatives opposed any interference with slavery in the states and hoped to see the slavery question played down by the Government. See also p. 143.

2 Chicago Journal quoted in New Orleans Daily Delta, Oct. 9, 1862; New York Tribune (Sept. 23) quoted in Baltimore Sun, Sept. 24, 1862.

3 Harper's Weekly (Oct. 4, 1862) quoted in Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, 63; New York Times, Sept. 23, 1862, quoted in Roland C. McConnell, "From Preliminary to Final Emancipation: The First Hundred Days", JNH, XLVIII (April, 1963), 261. The Republican press gave a warm reception to the final edict too: see Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 118-21.

Two factors shaped the pro-emancipation stand of Republican leadership. One was the origin of their party as the culmination of the political anti-slavery movement. The other was political necessity. Hostility to slavery, the driving force of Republican Radicalism, found expression in warm support for Lincoln's proclamation from Radical leaders including John Andrew, Zachariah Chandler, Salmon P. Chase, Cassius M. Clay, Hannibal Hamlin, Jacob Howard, Charles Sumner and Henry Wilson. A similar reaction might have been anticipated from moderates whose strong anti-slavery sentiments frequently led them to co-operate with the Radicals. Such was the case with James Doolittle, William P. Fessenden, Horace Greeley, James W. Grimes, Lyman Trumbull and Richard Yates. Antipathy towards slavery probably also influenced the pro-emancipation stand of such moderate Republicans as Francis W. Kellogg, and Oliver P. Morton, and conservatives such as Jacob Collamer. At the same time, the need for party unity in the election months of 1862 was evident to all. As opposition Democrats denounced the proclamation in a carefully combined appeal to war weariness, racial prejudice, anti-Radical sentiment and mid-term dissatisfaction with the party in power, Republican leaders had little choice but to confirm the anti-slavery sentiments of their organization and sustain the President's measure. Thus even in the key city of New York and the pivotal state of Illinois, where anti-Negro feeling and hostility towards abolitionism traditionally played a vital role in politics, Republicans and their allies stood firmly for emancipation.[1]

The Syracuse Republican Union Convention of September 1862 endorsed a ticket which nominated a militant emancipationist Republican general, James Wadsworth, for governor on a platform strongly supporting the proclamation. No doubt Republican leaders hoped thus to exploit upstate anti-slavery sentiment, but the need to carry New York City, where their opponents were certain to take a strong stand against emancipation, was not forgotten. As a journalist attending the convention observed:

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1 It was a pattern reflected in other states, for example, Ohio, Massachusetts and Michigan.

> the proclamation of the President (is) being used effectually by Wadsworth's friends, who insist that the candidate and the platform at this time must strongly back up the President. Their argument is that every Democrat will denounce the proclamation, and no temporizing or compromise will do with regard to the candidate or platform.

In the campaign that followed in the city many meetings specifically declared for emancipation as they endorsed the Republican ticket. Prominent Republicans and other Administration supporters spoke in support of the edict.[1] Though hampered by the refusal of influential New York Republicans William H. Seward and Thurlow Weed to support Wadsworth, the party fought the New York elections on the basis of a Union and emancipation appeal.[2]

Similarly the 1862 Republican Union State Convention at Springfield, Illinois strongly supported the Emancipation Proclamation. The Democratic Chicago Times, described those attending as ultra-Radicals, jubilant over the President's decree and "bolder in their fanaticism ..." In fact, appearing alongside Illinois Radicals Butz and Owen Lovejoy were moderate Republicans and War Democrats. Individual speakers and the convention as a whole "heartily endorsed" the proclamation.[3] A further demonstration of support was a Chicago Emancipation Mass Meeting, addressed by prominent War Democrats and Republicans, "all eloquent and earnest in their support for the proclamation and the war, and each applauded to the echo." The political nature of this gathering, reportedly attended by two thousand Republicans, was confirmed by war Democrat Stephen A. Goodwin who called the meeting to order. Its purpose, he said, was to endorse emancipation and demonstrate that those present had no sympathy with fault-finders or rebels and were ready to use any means judged necessary to end the Rebellion.[4]

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1 New York Tribune, Sept. 24, 25, and Oct. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 1862; Baltimore Sun, Sept. 26, 1862; Commonwealth, Oct. 18, 1862.

2 Mark M. Krug, "The Republican Party and the Emancipation Proclamation", JNH, XLVIII, (October, 1963), 112. See also resolutions of 10th. Ward Wadsworth Club and 16th. Ward Republican Association Meeting (Sept. 30), 15th Ward Union Men (Oct. 6) and 18th Ward Wadsworth Club Germans (Oct. 13). Details of these and other meetings from the files of the New York Tribune.

3 Chicago Times, Sept. 24, 26, 1862; New York Tribune, Oct. 3, 1862.

4 New Orleans Daily Delta, Oct. 18, 1862; New York Tribune, Sept. 29, 1862; Krug, op.cit., 109 citing ibid., Sept. 27, 1862.

This does not mean that there was no opposition within the party to the President's measure. Certain leading conservative Republicans were less than pleased with it. Orville H. Browning, and Judge David Davis of Illinois, and Thomas Corwin and Thomas Ewing of New York had been prominent in urging Lincoln to oppose sweeping measures for the confiscation of rebels' slaves favoured by congressional Radicals,[1] and were bitterly disappointed when the President produced his own emancipation edict. They were conspicuously absent from Unionist meetings called to endorse emancipation. Browning, Davis and Judge Benjamin F. Thomas were otherwise engaged, trying to persuade the President not to issue the final proclamation, but finding him "fatally bent upon his course ..." When Browning did appear at a Union meeting in Quincy, Illinois, on election eve, he "astonished his hearers" by his failure to endorse the Republican ticket and by his "sneer at proclamations."[2] The objections of these conservatives to Lincoln's policy[3] were probably shared by moderate Republicans such as Weed and Blair.[4] Some Radicals were also dissatisfied with the edict, feeling, unlike its conservative critics, that it did not go far enough.[5]

Yet, presumably in the interests of party unity, most important Republican critics of the edict refrained from publicly denouncing it. Forster of North Carolina indicated the conservatives' dilemma: personally opposed to the measure, he was embarrassed by demands from pro-emancipation constituents that he should comment upon the proclamation. Unable to condone it, he preferred to remain silent.[6] Radical leaders had especially little to gain by publicly criticizing a measure they had urged, whatever its limitations, and seemed anxious to give Lincoln all possible support at a time when anti-

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1 Hans L. Trefousse, Lincoln's Decision for Emancipation (Philadelphia, 1975) 34.

2 Theodore C. Pease and James C. Randall, The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning (Chicago, 1927-33), I, 606-7: entry for Dec. 31, 1862; Quincy Whig, (Republican) Nov. 10, 1862 quoted in Randall and Donald, 389-90.

3 Browning's Diary, I, quoted in ibid., 389.

4 Randall and Donald, 389.

5 McConnell, op. cit., 274.

6 New York Tribune, Oct. 1, 1862.

emancipation propaganda might weaken his determination to issue the final proclamation. That Republican leaders were intent upon preserving a united front was shown when in Congress on December 11, 1862 Kentuckian George Yeaman introduced resolutions that the proclamation was neither warranted by the Constitution nor likely to promote peace. The House of Representatives split on party lines, with Republican support for Radical Owen Lovejoy's proposal to table the motion indicating that for most Republican congressmen party loyalty took precedence over opposition to Lincoln's edict.[1] That some who voted against Yeaman's motion nevertheless had misgivings about the proclamation is suggested by the significantly lower Republican vote in favour of a resolution introduced by Fessenden, a moderate who sometimes acted with the Radicals, declaring the edict well suited to hastening peace.[2]

Joining Republicans in this Union and emancipation campaign were Democrats who, committed to the war effort, rejected the policies of their own party as strengthening Peace Democrats.[3] Anti-slavery feeling had rarely played a key role in their politics. Democrats who sought a political outlet for anti-slavery convictions or were unable to reconcile these with their party's pre-war efforts to retain its pro-Southern wing, had in most cases already moved into the Republican ranks,[4] and the conspicuous activity on behalf of congressional compromise measures during the Secession Crisis of anti-slavery War Democrat Andrew Johnson suggests that party and national unity were at this time the paramount concerns of those who later became War Democrats. This reflected the conservatism which made these men fear extremism whether for or against slavery, and

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1 Congressional Globe, 37 Cong., 3 sess., 76.
2 Randall and Donald, 388.
3 Peace Democrats, or "Copperheads", opposed the Union war effort. They were strongest in the Midwest where their leader was Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio. See also above, p. 45 n. 1.
4 For example, James Doolittle, Hannibal Hamlin, Preston King, George Opdyke, James Wadsworth and David Wilmot.

the nationalism which led them to condemn Republican sectionalism before 1861, Southern sectionalism in 1860-1861, and what they saw as the traitorous stand of anti-Administration Democrats during the war.[1]

The nationalism which caused War Democrats to break with their party in 1861 undoubtedly influenced their attitudes on emancipation. His loyalty to slavery had ended, claimed A. J. Hamilton, a Southern exile and former congressman from Texas, when secession had shown him that the issue was slavery or Union, and his was not an isolated experience. By September 1862 most War Democrats were convinced, like General Wilcox, that the "hydra-headed monster" of slavery had caused the war, which in turn was crushing slavery, and that "We Democrats and Abolitionists can shake hands on that subject." On emancipation as on the war, such Democrats stood behind Lincoln and what Wilcox called a killing policy.[2]

Thus Autumn 1862 saw many leading War Democrats ready to endorse emancipation. As well as civilians such as Governor Brownlow of Tennessee, E. Clark Ingersoll of Illinois and Daniel S. Dickinson of New York, these included some prominent Army supporters of the proclamation - John Cochrane, Colonels Eastman and Hamilton, and Generals Logan, McClevernand, Lew Wallace and Wilcox - and several took time off fighting to enlist in a different type of campaign,[3] appearing at pro-emancipation meetings throughout the North.[4]

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1 For such men it seemed in 1861 that "the South even more than the abolitionists was threatening the conservative ideal of government." George M. Fredrickson, The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union (New York, 1968 ed.), 45.

2 Hamilton, speeches at Brooklyn and Cooper Institute, New York, Oct. 2, 3, 1862 and Dickinson, speech at New York, Oct. 8, 1862: New York Tribune, Oct, 3, 4, 9, 1862; Ibid., Sept. 3, 1862 and New Orleans Daily Delta, Sept. 23, 1862.

3 For some a campaign better suited to their talents. Their usefulness to the Republicans in the 1862 elections is clear: fresh from the front, they could speak with authority of the military necessity for emancipation, and opponents could not easily accuse them of abolitionism or question their loyalty.

4 New York Tribune, Sept. 29, Oct. 13, 14, 1862.

Recognition early in the war that slavery was unlikely to survive it may have influenced such willingness to accept and condone emancipation in 1862. Equally, approval of Lincoln's edict reflected acceptance of his claim that it was necessary to end the war.[1] There was, however, another factor involved in the decision against slavery by War Democratic leadership. By breaking with their party and taking an uncompromising Union stand War Democrats had burned their boats politically. They could expect no future sympathy from their own party any more than from Confederates.[2] Their political future depended upon a re-alignment of parties, and they pinned their hopes upon an alliance of conservative Unionists providing a basis for the emergence, initially in the Northern states, of a fusion party which might later draw in those Southern Unionists who through secession had become reluctant rebels. Such a party would need the backing of many who were anti-slavery as well as all who put Union above slavery. War Democrats' support for the Lincoln Administration as the legitimate government therefore extended to its emancipation policy, not only because this was considered necessary to save the Union, but also because acceptance of emancipation was fundamental to their political survival.

This explains why War Democrats constantly called for non-partisan endorsement of the Government and emancipation. Defending Lincoln's proclamation, Lyman Tremain lashed out at those who pretended the Democratic Party alone could save the Union, and Ingersoll similarly attacked his own party when,as Illinois' Republican-Union candidate for Congress, he declared that no Democrat wanted peace unless he also wanted Jefferson Davis in power.[3]

Unionist meetings indicate that the War Democrats' hopes for political realignment were not unreal. Republicans joining them on such occasions

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1 Charles D. Robinson to Lincoln, Aug. 7, 1864, Lincoln,Works, VII, 501n.

2 A New York Times leader of September 24, 1868 claimed that "no Democrat ever came out openly against the rebellion without forfeiting his position as a party man." In a letter published in the New York Tribune on October 27, 1868, War Democrat General O.B. Cox commented that, "the present (Democratic) party managers have never forgiven the War Democrats."

3 Tremain at New York Republican Union Convention and Ingersoll in speech of Sept. 25, 1862: New York Tribune, Oct. 1, 3, 1862; Chicago Times, Sept. 29, 1862.

were influenced by their party's need to appeal to the 1862 electorate on the broadest possible basis,[1] and certainly in the past the party had frequently gone to the polls under different names in different states.[2] Nevertheless, there may well have been sympathy for a non-partisan stand amongst those Republicans whose views were closer to those of moderates outside than radicals within their own party.

Similarly sustaining the Republican-Union platform were many who had supported the Constitutional Union candidate in 1860. Like War Democrats, John Bell's followers were essentially conservative-nationalists and had deplored the growth of the disruptive forces of sectional extremism in American politics during the 1850's. Their party had accordingly appealed to the electorate in 1860 on the basis of Union, Constitution and the laws alone, ignoring the slavery issue. Its gains had been greatest in the Border States where for many Unionism precluded support for secession while conservatism, especially concerning slavery which was part of the region's economic and social structure, discouraged the spread of Republicanism. It was here that, after secession, a distinctive group of Union men emerged.[3]

Leading Border State Unionists were therefore predisposed to take a non-partisan stand during the war, sure of the support of men like Marylander Isaac Nesbitt, who expressed to Unionist Governor Augustus W. Bradford, a fellow former Whig, his delight that "we both stand together

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1 As the New York Tribune (Sept. 29, 1862) commented of the Ingersoll-Bateman-Butler ticket: "And now, if any one supposes that ticket can be beaten, let him look on and be enlightened!"

2 George W. Julian, "The First Republican National Convention", AHR, IV (Jan., 1899), 313-22.

3 For an excellent guide to secondary literature on the Border States during this period and including early works such as Edward C. Smith's The Borderland in the Civil War (New York, 1927) as well as the best studies of individual states, see Richard O. Curry, ed., Radicalism, Racism and Party Realignments: The Border States during Reconstruction (Baltimore, 1969), 305-17.

again upon the same platform, in defence of the 'Union the Constitution, and the enforcement of the Laws.'"[1] Their position was, however, complicated by the existence of slavery within their states, and resultant hostility towards any step which might seem directly or indirectly to affect their claim to slave property. Unionist Thomas T. Gantt described how he had found it necessary to reassure a fellow Missoruian "of the highest respectability" that the Government would protect slave property in Missouri.[2] Interest in slaves did not necessarily conflict with Unionism in the Border States. While the rejection of secession in 1861 may for some have represented a decision for Union against slavery, others probably hoped to protect this interest through loyalty, and Unionist leaders made a calculated appeal to such sentiments.[3]

Bradford probably spoke for many Border slave-owners when, in January 1862, he rejoiced that the President continued to put Union above slavery and that the war was not being transformed into an abolition crusade.[4] No doubt natural conservatism caused Border State Unionists to oppose an emancipation policy as the triumph of abolition extremism, but their opposition was sharpened by fears that uncompensated emancipation applied to states in revolt might well be extended to loyal slave states. Yet in spite of widely-held fears that freeing Southern slaves would alienate Border loyalists,[5] and reports that Lincoln's proclamation had done so,[6] this does not appear to have been the case. Loyal slaveholders may have felt sympathy

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1 Nesbitt to Bradford, Aug. 26, 1861, Bradford Papers, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.

2 Gantt to Brig. Gen. W.S. Harney, May 14, 1861: O.R., Ser. 1, Vol. III, 372-3.

3 Draft of a gubernatorial campaign speech, Baltimore, 1861, Bradford Papers.

4 Inaugural Address, Jan. 8, 1862, pp. 11-12, Bradford Papers. Quoting Andrew Johnson's warning that "Secession is abolition!" The Westminster American Sentinel (Dec. 28, 1860) commented, "Maryland understands that perfectly, and will, therefore, never give up the Union, come what may."

5 Letter of Henry V. Ward, Dec. 2, 1862, Bradford Papers; New York Evangelist, Dec. 19, 1861 quoted in Liberator, Jan. 3, 1862; Lincoln to Orville H. Browning, Sept. 22, 1861, Lincoln, Works, 532.

6 Gen. Horatio G. Wright to Gen. Henry W. Halleck, Dec. 30, 1862, quoted in Lincoln, Works, VI, 42n.

for those hit by the proclamation, but their acceptance of the edict must have been influenced by the fact that it did not directly affect their own claims to slave property. What really concerned them by September 1862 was less emancipation in the South than problems within their own states, where the constant loss of escaping slaves disrupted agriculture and farmers faced not only the disappearance of capital in slaves but also losses due to falling crop production.[1] From such problems came the realization that the war was destroying slavery in loyal as well as disloyal states. Conceding the necessity for emancipation, Unionist slaveowners became preoccupied with fears that anti-slavery radicalism in the North and within their own states would bring about abolition before they could, through loyalty, secure compensation for their slaves. Former Governor Thomas Hicks supported the emancipation policy but opposed the methods of extreme anti-slavery men in Maryland; he was "infavor (sic) of letting everything but principle go to save the Union by crushing out the accursed Rebellion that brot (sic) all our national and individual woes upon us, but these mad men are determined to do things in their own way or not do at all ...[2] Nevertheless, as this letter indicates, strong Unionists blamed the rebellion for their problems, and this shaped their acceptance of what followed from rebellion and from the need to suppress it.

It would be unfair to dismiss the influence of genuine Unionist sentiment in this matter. In spite of his fears that the edict did not help the Union cause, Bradford would not attack it, for "I should feel that I were giving very equivocal proofs of an unqualified loyalty by making that proclamation a peretual (sic) theme of declamation and thus aid and comfort the (rebel) sympathisers hereabouts by joining them in denouncing the administration."[3]

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1 Dr. John H. Bayne to Lincoln, March 17, 1862 (typed copy), Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
2 Hicks to Bradford, Oct. 20, 1863, Bradford Papers.
3 Bradford to Thomas H. Hicks, Dec. 29, 1862, Bradford Papers.

A Maryland State Senator gave evidence that not even the infringement of supposed rights of loyal slaveholders could shake the loyalty of a staunch Unionist. He thought the army's policy of sheltering fugitive slaves in Maryland unconstitutional, "but if it shall contribute in any way to the restoration of our glorious Union - I say sweep away every foot-print of slavery from this side of the Atlantic Ocean -"[1] Thus a blend of Unionism and economic self-interest was the key to Border State acceptance of emancipation.

That Republicans, War Democrats and Border-State men who campaigned with other Unionists and abolitionists[2] to secure a Republican or Republican-Union victory in the 1862 elections had good reasons for welcoming or accepting emancipation has already been shown. It is now necessary to consider why their pro-emancipation campaign did not result in any significant emergence of the tradition of the Great Emancipator which was to become a nationally popular image of Lincoln only two years later.

There were those who in 1862 hailed the Emancipation Proclamation as a great moral act. Radical Republicans were prominent amongst them. Addressing serenaders in Washington, Salmon P. Chase declared the proclamation "an act of humanity and justice which the latest generations will celebrate." "The whole world", said a voice from the crowd, the unknown emancipationist thus adding to the edict's fame a dimension which was not to be realised until 1865. Cassius Clay told the same audience that, "For the first time there was a proclamation in behalf of down-trodden humanity." Caspar Butz spoke of the "glorious decree" and Henry Wilson of Lincoln's "immortal proclamation". The Radical press praised the "sublime" act "so fraught with good for the sons of men in all time to come." It seemed that, "So splendid a vision has

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1 Dr. John H. Bayne to Bradford, Oct. 9, 1863, Bradford Papers.
2 See below.

hardly shone upon the world since the day of the Messiah."[1]

Some abolitionists used similar language, particularly in the first flush of their enthusiasm for the edict. The Commonwealth hailed "this noble voice of your President ... the great Emancipation Edict of Abraham Lincoln..." The proclamation, said the New York Independent, had both "moral grandeur and sublime importance ...", and Samuel J. May, Jr. referred to "this great Act of Justice." Garrison's Liberator called the January edict "a great and historical event, sublime in its magnitude, momentous and beneficent in its far-reaching consequences, and eminently just and right alike to the oppressor and the oppressed." Writing to the President in December 1863 Henry C. Wright began his letter : "God bless thee, Abraham Lincoln! With all my heart, & bless thee, in the name of God and Humanity!"[2]

There were isolated instances when the Emancipator image seemed to emerge. "Abraham Lincoln", said the Washington Morning Chronicle, "is entitled to the everlasting gratitude of a race enfranchised, ... and an inscription of undying fame in the impartial records of history." The New York Tribune believed that the greatest humanitarian act of the age would place Lincoln among America's greatest men. "This is the act of Abraham Lincoln's life," said the anti-slavery Free Nation, anticipating for him a fame equal to that of Washington. From his home in Maine, vice-President Hannibal Hamlin, a Radical, wrote to Lincoln to praise "the great act of the

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1 Baltimore Sun, Sept. 25, 1862; Butz speaking at the Republican State Convention, Illinois, Chicago Times, Sept. 26, 1862; Commonwealth, Nov. 1, 1862, quoting from Wilson's speech, Boston, Oct. 7, 1862; New York Tribune, Sept. 24, 1862 in Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 62; Chicago Tribune, quoted in Liberator, Oct. 3, 1862.

2 Commonwealth, Sept. 27, 1862; Liberator, Sept. 26, Oct. 3 (quoting New York Independent), 1862; Liberator, Jan 2, 1863 quoted in Walter M. Merrill, Against Wind and Tide: A Biography of Wm. Lloyd Garrison (Cambridge, 1963), 283; Wright to Lincoln, Dec. 16, 1863, Lincoln, Works, VII, 81 n.

age." He predicted that, "future generations will, as I do, say God bless you for this great and noble act."[1]

Such praise, suggestive of eulogies of Lincoln in 1865, was rare because when the Emancipation Proclamations were issued the image of him as an Emancipator was not politically useful. It was to be developed, after Lincoln's death, as part of the campaign by Radical Republicans and others to ensure the perpetuation of the Republican Party in government and the ascendancy of Radical policies within that party and so to secure also the permanence of emancipation and the dominance of a free labour society, North and South. The total and permanent abolition of slavery was central to this Radical programme for both moral and political reasons.[2] In late 1862 and early 1863 some anti-slavery men did urge support for emancipation in terms of the developing Radical programme,[3] but they made no attempt to present Lincoln as the Great Emancipator.

This was partly because Lincoln was not seen as a hero by radical anti-slavery men inside or outside the Republican Party. Certainly the idea that the President was constantly on bad terms with the radical wing of his party has been discredited. If some radical leaders bitterly condemned him, as did Henry Winter Davis, his relations with others, notably the influential Sumner, were cordial.[4] Yet Radicals were keenly aware of what they considered his shortcomings. Implementation of their programme depended upon their securing control through Congress over the war and any post-war settlements. In this Lincoln, neither a weak nor an easily

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1 Washington Daily Morning Chronicle, Jan. 2, 1863 quoted in Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 119; New York Tribune quoted in L'Union, Jan. 13, 1863; Free Nation quoted in New Orleans Daily Delta, Oct. 9, 1862; Hamlin to Lincoln, Sept. 25, 1862, Lincoln, Works, V, 444n

2 See below, pp. 85-88.

3 See below, pp. 89.

4 See Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 103-27. Of Lovejoy Lincoln wrote: "he was my most generous friend." Lincoln to John H. Bryant, May 30, 1864, Lincoln, Works, VII, 366.

manipulated president, and one who showed a marked lack of enthusiasm for some Radical policies, might well prove an obstacle. Even if this was not fully realised in 1862, Radicals could not be unaware that their pressure had influenced at least the timing of Lincoln's decision to emancipate. The man who in their view had needed to be pushed into emancipation was hardly likely to be seen by them as its hero.[1] Nevertheless, the Radicals were politicians. They used the concept of the Great Emancipator in 1865 because it had become politically valuable, and not because their attitude towards Lincoln had fundamentally changed. Had it been useful or necessary to view Lincoln as the Emancipator in 1862, Radicals would surely have done so.

Even less likely than Radicals to see Lincoln as a hero of emancipation in 1862 were abolitionist leaders who co-operated with them in the campaign to win support for the Emancipation Proclamation. They too attributed Lincoln's decision to emancipate in part to anti-slavery pressure upon him, and their fears that he might not issue the final proclamation reflected a lack of faith in his anti-slavery convictions which militated against any concept of him as the Emancipator.[2] In addition, distaste for politics combined with the belief that slavery ought to be treated as a sin, caused abolitionists to regret that Lincoln had adopted emancipation as primarily a war measure, and that "no recognition of principles of justice or humanity surrounded the politic act with a halo of moral glory." In early 1863, as relief that the final proclamation had been issued faded, abolitionists began to critize the edict. "It must have required considerable ingenuity", said the Commonwealth, "to give two and a half millions of human beings the

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1 Martin F. Conway told the House of Representatives "Mr. Lincoln is a politician of a past age ... He is anti-slavery, but of a genial southern type. His emancipation is that of Henry Clay ... All this was ... well enough in its day and generation. And so was Mr. Lincoln. But we are now in a new world; ..." Commonwealth, Feb. 14, 1863. Once the elections were over, Radical criticism was more freely expressed.

2 Commonwealth, Jan. 10, 1863.

priceless boon of Liberty in such a cold ungraceful way ... One could scarcely imagine that the herald of so blessed a dawn should have caught none of its glow." Lincoln, the paper said tartly, "does indeed call it 'an act of justice,' but if he had been in a dentist's chair he could not have made a worse face as it was extracted from him."[1]

For abolitionists, then, Lincoln had taken a step in the right direction, and while he needed their support, as during the 1862 elections, they were prepared to sustain him. Still they remained disappointed by the terms of the emancipation edict.[2] No such act could make the President they had frequently and bitterly condemned the Great Emancipator. Lincoln still had no place in the list of abolitionist saints.

Nor, in September 1862, was Lincoln a national hero. This was of vital importance. When the image of the Great Emancipator was incorporated into Reconstruction propaganda, it was an image made credible, and so useful, by Lincoln's emergence as a national hero. In 1862 war weariness made effective the bitter anti-Lincoln propaganda of Peace Democrats and precluded widespread hero-worship of him. At this time, the work of anti-slavery men was to secure a favourable reception for the emancipation edict in spite of the shortcomings, in their eyes and in those of the nation, of the President who issued it.

Though those who later promoted the Emancipator tradition were disinclined to do so in 1862, the fundamental reason for its non-emergence when Lincoln actually issued the Emancipation Proclamations lay in the necessities of the 1862 Republican election campaign. For it was not simply anti-Lincoln

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1 Lydia Maria Child to Mrs. S.B. Shaw, 1863, in Letters of Lydia Maria Child (Boston, 1883), 171; Commonwealth, Jan. 10, 1863.

2 As early as Jan. 6, 1863 anti-slavery ministers in New York petitioned Congress for a more vigorous war and emancipation policy: Commonwealth, Jan. 17, 1863.

feeling against which Republicans struggled to win support for the Government's emancipation policy. More crucial to the party's presentation of emancipation in 1862, which involved virtually no concept of Lincoln as the Emancipator, was anti-emancipation and anti-Negro feeling. While, as indicated earlier, Republicans did not abandon support for the proclamation even in crucially important areas easily inflamed upon racial issues,[1] care was taken to present the edict in terms likely to appeal to those upon whom the racist, anti-emancipation attacks of Democrats were expected to have telling results.

Throughout the North, therefore, and particularly in the Midwest, the key to the Republican-Union campaign on behalf of the Government and its emancipation policy was Unionism. This had several advantages. In all states it made good sense to exploit the party's one great advantage that opposition to the acts of the Republican Administration could be denounced as treason. Republicans and their allies consequently presented emancipation as a test not of Republicanism but of loyalty to the Union. This gave them their only real means of meeting and turning to their own advantage opponents' attacks upon the proclamation. In addition, this approach to emancipation offered the best hope for securing party solidarity and fitted in well with the non-partisan stand which allowed Republicans to unitewith war Democrats and other non-Republican supporters of the Administration and which was crucial in doubtful states or constituencies where an appeal to the electorate's lowest common denominator, Union sentiment, was essential.

The President, announced one conservative Republican paper, "ill be sustained by all who are truly loyal, and whose patriotism is not squared by party prejudice or narrow notions of 'policy'."[2] "STAND BY THE PRESIDENT", urged the Commonwealth in an appeal to the "honest and patriotic masses", and

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1 See above pp. 53-54.

2 Chicago Journal quoted in New Orleans Daily Delta, Oct. 9, 1862.

the paper called upon inhabitants of Massachusetts to put aside party considerations.[1] What Unionist could condemn the proclamation when its message was, in the words of the Tribune, "SUPPORT ARMS AND ADVANCE!"[2] Other Republican papers made the same point, and it was safe ground on which even Unionists in slave states could stand.[3] Republican politicians and their Unionist allies spread the message. George Opdyke, Republican Mayor of New York, emphasised that the edict, applying only to areas in rebellion, "injures no one who is loyal; it is only treason and traitors that are to suffer from it; ..." The implication was that only traitors would oppose the measure. The New York State Republican Union platform, said its nominee for Lieutenant-Governor, war Democrat Lyman Tremain, invited all patriotic citizens, regardless of past political status, to support the Government in overthrowing rebellion; Mr. Lincoln was the President of Democrats as well as Republicans, and all should sustain him. Laying aside party had become a duty.[4]

Fundamental to this call upon patriotism was the claim that emancipation was a necessary war measure. According to the Philadelphia Press: "If slavery lives the republic dies. The republic must live, and so slavery must die. This is the meaning of the President's proclamation, and his words record slavery's inevitable doom." Democratic allegations that the edict would be inoperative were forcefully rejected. The New York Tribune could detect results only five days after the proclamation had been issued: "you have only to read the Rebel-sympathizing journals in the Free States to realise that Treason has its death-wound in this Proclamation. The serpent Secession already writhes in mortal agony." War Democrat Ingersoll

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1 Commonwealth, Sept. 27, 1862.
2 New York Tribune, Sept. 29, 1862.
3 Pittsburgh Gazette (Repub.), Sandusky Register (Repub.), and Wheeling (West Virginia) Intelligencer (Repub.) quoted in New Orleans Daily Delta, Oct. 9, 1862.
4 New York Tribune, Oct. 1, 2, 1862.

summarised the Unionist argument: "No one cried out against the proclamation", he claimed, "who had a brother or a sister or a child in the army." "Slavery was the life of the rebellion," said war Democrat Goodwin, "and Lincoln would crush it."[1]

This argument that emancipation was a military necessity rested upon several assumptions. Claims that slavery was a source of strength to the Confederacy or that Negroes were useful to the Federal Army could be substantiated by the testimony of anti-slavery commanders. A third assumption, that slavery was a major if not the sole cause of the war, was vital to the pro-emancipation campaign and allowed the proclamation to be integrated into the Republican Party's interpretation of the war. The ideology developed by Republicans in the late 1850's, with its emphasis on antagonism between free and slave societies, its theory of a Southern slave power which by its aggressions threatened Northern liberties and the future of the Union,[2] and a critique of the Southern slave system owing much to abolitionist thought,[3] had been the justification for the party's bid for power in 1860. With the South's secession and resultant civil war following Republican victory, this ideology was easily adapted to explain the crisis which the Union faced.

As early as April 1861 the Republican North American Review described slavery as "the source and cause of the evils we experience and dread." Garrison's Liberator, reporting in January 1862 a speech by Radical James M. Ashley, commented approvingly that it fully demonstrated "that slavery, and slavery alone, is the cause of this Rebellion;..."[4] Secession and war

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1 Philadelphia Press quoted in Baltimore Sun, Sept. 24, 1862; New York Tribune, Sept. 27, 1862; Ingersoll and Goodwin at Emancipation Mass Meeting, Chicago, quoted in Chicago Times, Sept. 29, 1862.
2 Foner, Free Soil, 97-102, 119-20, esp. pp.
3 Foner, Free Soil, 40-72.
4 North American Review, CXCI, April 1861, 445; Liberator, Jan. 3, 1862.

gave new life to the slave power conspiracy theory. Lincoln's Message to Congress of July 4, 1861 told the nation that the secession leaders had been "drugging the public mind of their section for more than thirty years; ..." The Liberator talked of the attempt by the slave oligarchy to overthrow the Government.[1]

From such arguments there emerged a theory of the conflict as a struggle between freedom and slavery, a theory which both abolitionists and anti-slavery politicians were anxious to promote.[2] In these terms, emancipation became a necessity. The Chicago Christians who on September 13, 1862 present Lincoln with a memorial urging emancipation argued that, "the virus of secession is found wherever the virus of slavery extends, and no farther; so that there is the amplest reason for expecting to avert Divine judgements by putting away the sin, and for hoping to remedy national troubles by striking at their cause." Lincoln, with the emancipation proclamation up his sleeve, agreed that slavery was "the root of the rebellion, or at least its sine qua non."[3] Those who justified the edict as a war measure frequently utilised this interpretation of the war. Preparing Louisianans for emancipation, the Daily Delta published a letter declaring: "... if slavery lives the Republic dies; ... The slave oligarchists have themselves appealed from the Constitution to the rifle - from the Senate-chamber to the battle field. They have taken the sword. They shall perish by the sword."[4] In Congress on December 11, 1862 Republican John Hutchins declared that the question posed by the Proclamation was "shall slavery, whose supporters have

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1 Lincoln, Works, IV, 433; Liberator quoted in Wendell P. Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879: The Story of His Life Told by His Children, 4 vols. (Boston, 1889) IV, 20.

2 See files of the Liberator for many examples.

3 Lincoln, Works, V, 422-23.

4 New Orleans Daily Delta, Sept. 28, 1862. It seems possible that the Delta's editors suspended news of the edict while they worked to prepare their readers for emancipation.

conspired against the life of the nation, and who are using slavery to strengthen their military power, be destroyed, that the nation, with its free institutions, may live?"[1]

It was not solely as a war measure that emancipation fitted into Republican Party ideology as adapted to meet the demands of war. In developing the free labour ideology, Republican leaders had stressed appropriate themes in the American experience. In particular, they had emphasised the concept of America as a land of liberty, and a land with a mission to establish a free and democratic society with opportunity for all, however humble, to rise by their own efforts. In such a land slavery stood out as at best the cherished labour system of an anachronistic society and at worst as a barrier to national progress. Nor was this only in economic terms, although free labour was alleged to be superior to slave; slavery was also depicted as a barrier to the fulfilment of the American mission. Once war made possible a direct attack upon Southern slavery, emancipation could be integrated into this ideology: sweeping away the barrier to progress, it would open the way to a more glorious future. Not surprisingly in a country where religion played a vital role in contemporary thought, the process was frequently interpreted in terms of the judgement of an all-wise Providence, which touched upon the theme of sin and redemption that saw the war as God's punishment of America for the sin of slavery.[2]

Republican James Wadsworth combined his party's interpretation of the war with the concept of slavery as a stain on the nation, in a speech defending the emancipation edict. While he was, he said devoted to the Constitution, "... Secession and War, bloody and relentless war, have changed

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1 Cong. Globe, 37 Cong., 3 seas., 76

2 Pre-war Republican ideology is analysed in Foner, Free Soil.

our relations to that which is the cause and source of the war ... If we would save ourselves, we must cast out the devil which has tormented and disgraced us from the hour of our national birth." Abolitionist Wendell Phillips promised that the proclamation would abolish "a system found inconsistent with the perpetuity of the Republic." To Governor Yates it seemed that Providence has protracted the war "for the purpose of making the destruction of slavery inevitable." A few days before announcing Lincoln's decision to emancipate, the Daily Delta declared: "God has decreed that their (the rebels') sin shall perish with them. This is Freedom's grand opportunity; and no man not himself tyrannic at heart, dishonest and cruel, but will rejoice that the Republic of America is ere long to be disenthralled by the genius of universal emancipation."[1]

This grand opportunity was, as indicated, presented as the means by which America could fulfil its God-given mission. Lincoln, claimed Greeley, stressing that the edict represented progress, had transformed a state "sunk in the semi-barbarism of a medieval age to the light and civilization of the Nineteenth Christian Century." Owen Lovejoy pictured the proclamation as the triumph of democracy: he promised, said the hostile Chicago Times, that it brought "the glorious day of universal citizenship."[2] It was, of course, the triumph of liberty too. Cassius M. Clay utilized the concept of America as a land committed to freedom when in an appeal to working men, many of whom were immigrants, to support emancipation, he declared: "Germans, Irishmen, Frenchmen, why are you here at all? It is because you here find a government

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1 Wadsworth, speech at Washington, Sept. 27, 1862, New York Tribune, Sept. 29, 1862; Phillips, speech at Boston, Jan. 4, 1863 quoted from Liberator, Jan. 9, 1863 in Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 113; Chicago Times, Jan. 6, 1862 quoting Yates' Message to the General Assembly, Illinois; New Orleans Daily Delta, Sept. 28, 1862.

2 New York Tribune, Sept. 24, 1862 quoted in Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 62; Lovejoy, speech at Springfield, Illinois, Sept. 24, 1862 quoted in Chicago Times, Sept. 26, 1862.

based upon the broad principle of liberty to all humanity." This was the ideal which emancipation alone could preserve: it was the grand scheme "which, in the termination of the war, will strike the chains of a cruel bondage from three million human beings, restore freedom to a race, secure peace to a continent, and 'nobly save the last, best hope of earth' - the Republic of the United States."[1] Abolitionist Theodore Tilton drew applause when, in an appeal for the Union and emancipation ticket, he told a Republican meeting in New York, "The air of America will yet be so pure that no slave can breath it." On the same day Sumner expressed the same idea in very similar language before a Boston audience.[2] Emancipation represented for the Commonwealth, the Second Birth of the Nation: born on July 4, 1776, it would be reborn on January 1, 1863.[3] The edict was, said the Cleveland Leader, "a magnificent stride in the march of national progress toward the day of Universal Love and Brotherhood." So emancipation was presented by Republicans and their allies as America's great opportunity, and if the nation rose to its duty it would become, "the Polestar of Mankind, the leading race of Humanity, the christianizing people of the earth." The mission would be fulfilled.[4]

If such eulogies of emancipation prepared the way for the later emergence of the Emancipator tradition, it was incidental to their purpose. Little enough of the glory went to Lincoln in 1862. The aim was to give emancipation a wider appeal by associating it with fundamental themes in the American experience. Even so, moral arguments for emancipation took second place to presentation of it as a necessary war measure, and when Lincoln's act was described as a product of military necessity rather than of moral antagonism

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1 Clay, speech at Brooklyn, Commonwealth, Oct. 25, 1862; John Hutchins, speech of Dec. 11, 1862, Cong. Globe, 37 Cong., 3 seas., 79.
2 Tilton, speech of Oct. 6, 1862, New York Tribune, Oct. 7, 1862; Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 60-61.
3 Commonwealth, Dec. 13, 1862.
4 Cleveland Leader, Jan. 3, 1863 quoted in Voegeli, Free but Not Equal, 79; James Freeman Clark, "Ten Plagues of Egypt and America", Commonwealth, Oct. 11, 1862.

to slavery, emancipation could still be seen as a great moral act but it became difficult to view Lincoln himself as the Great Emancipator. Instead he became, almost accidentally, the author of a momentous deed. This in turn meant that for anti-slavery extremists, the moral glory of Lincoln's action was tarnished by the alloy of expediency. Thus because of the need to present diverse arguments in favour of emancipation, Lincoln's role as the Emancipator tended to be obscured.

Fear of alienating voters resulted in other trends in pro-emancipation arguments of 1862 which in any case more than offset any tendency to see emancipation as a great moral act. In 1862, with the support of strong anti-slavery men for Lincoln's edict more or less certain, Republican leaders in the cities and the Middle West set out to woo the masses with whom the Democrats' racialist anti-emancipation campaign was calculated to find an enthusiastic response. Emphasis upon the proclamation as a war measure was not enough, although calculated to appeal to a people visibly suffering from war weariness. What was needed was to present support for emancipation in racialist terms, and midwestern and urban Republican leaders and their allies descended to the task.

War Democrat David Tod managed to appeal to both anti-Negro feeling and war weariness. The proclamation, he said, "is the very thing to weaken the rebels in a most vital part. Stupid though he may be, yet only let this African be made free, and, my word for it, they will soon give these rebel rascals enough to do to take care of their own homes and families."[1] This was mild enough. A more direct appeal to racial prejudice was made when Republicans tried to counter Democratic claims that emancipation would flood free states with former slaves who would degrade white labour by competing for jobs and through the threatened evils of miscegenation. Wadsworth also made a combined appeal to Northern racialism and war weariness when in a published letter to Republican editor Henry J. Raymond he argued:

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1 London Anti-Slavery Reporter, Dec. 1, 1862.

> The emancipation once effected, the Northern States would be forever relieved, as it is right that they should be, from the fears of a great influx of African laborers disturbing the relations of those Northern industrial classes who have so freely given their lives to the support of the government.
>
> This done, the whole African population will drift to the South, where it will find a congenial climate and vast tracts of land never yet cultivated.

The vast tracts of land never yet cultivated further North were to be reserved for whites. Likewise pitching his appeal at labour in New York City, war Democrat Dickinson employed similar arguments to sooth labour fears.[1] In order further to reassure those who feared a Negro exodus from the South, some Republicans raised the issue of colonization. Resolutions passed at Chicago's Emancipation Mass Meeting endorsed the proclamation as necessary and lawful measure, but made no reference to the morality of abolishing slavery. Instead it was emphasized that, since climatic laws and their physical attributes peculiarly suited blacks to the South, and since their labour was crucial to that region's economic development and welfare, homes should be secured for emancipated slaves in the land of their birth, the South. No doubt it seemed fitting that the free labour of ex-slaves should regenerate the South, but the underlying racial prejudice was clear. If blacks preferred, continued the resolutions, they were to be colonized in settlements outside the United States. No reference was made to a possible third alternative that blacks might have preferred, namely movement to the Northern States. Even Radicals recognized the necessity to utilize racialist arguments, and Lincoln thought it appropriate to use them in his December 1, 1862 Message to Congress. That those who used such arguments did not necessarily subscribe to them is, however, clear. Addressing the Illinois State Republican Union Convention on September 25, 1862, B.C. Cook, a war Democrat, declared that, "Some say the negro is not

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1 Wadsworth to Raymond, Oct. 2, 1862, in Commonwealth, Oct. 18, 1862; Dickinson, speech in New York, Oct. 8, 1862, New York Tribune, Oct. 9, 1862

a man; he would not argue the point, but grant it for a moment, then certainly we should do as did Abraham of old, sacrifice a beast instead of a beloved."[1]

Some Republicans presented emancipation as a great moral set before one audience while utilizing racialist arguments before another. Before pro-emancipation serenaders in Washington Radical Cassius Clay eulogized the proclamation, echoing Greeley's prayer that God bless Abraham Lincoln. To a Brooklyn audience he stressed that liberty was fundamental to American life and declared, "it is not true that this interference with your labor will take place in consequence of Emancipation. Emancipation will, in fact, but concentrate black labor in the South.[2] What was more difficult was to combine such a defence of Lincoln's edict with a vision of him as the Great Emancipator, particularly when the President too was prominent in countering racism with racism. Thus the Democracy's attack upon Lincoln's proclamation not only made it impossible for most Democrats to view him as the hero of emancipation, but also, indicrectly, helped to ensure that Republicans and others who sustained the edict did not do so. In 1862 no major group capable of shaping public opinion viewed Lincoln as the Great Emancipator or found it expedient to encourage others to do so.

What emancipation meant for the average Northerner is impossible to assess. In the campaign preceding the 1862 elections the attitudes of prominent citizens were published by Republican papers if they supported emancipation, or Democratic papers if they did not. Many Northern churches and individual

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1 Chicago Times, Sept. 29, 1862; Voegeli, Free but Not Equal, 57-59; Lincoln, Works, 535-36 cited in ibid., 66-67; New York Tribune, Oct. 3, 1862.

2 Baltimore Sun, Sept. 25, 1862; Commonwealth, Oct. 25, 1862.

churchmen endorsed the proclamation.[1] The opinions of ordinary men and women remain obscure. Clearly anti-slavery people were usually pleased with Lincoln's action,[2] but the masses were not anti-slavery.

Evidence from Union armies is readily available but not particularly illuminating.[3] There were certainly army officers who opposed the edict, not least the Union commander in the East, General McClellan. A few commanders continued to order the return of fugitive slaves to their owners or otherwise made public their disapproval of emancipation. Republican and anti-slavery papers were forced to admit that there was some army hostility to the proclamation. The Commonwealth recorded resignations over it, and the New York Tribune reported attacks by officers upon Negroes.[4] Equally there is evidence of army officers who supported emancipation. A number of commanders publicly endorsed the edict, and some officers and regiments joined in emancipation celebrations.[5] The Democratic Chicago Times recorded

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1 The proclamation was approved by, for example, the General Association of the Congregational Churches of New Hampshire and of New York State, conferences of Wesleyan Methodists in Ohio and Wisconsin, and the 1st United Presbyterian Synod of the West. Church journals such as the American Wesleyan and the Presbyterian Quarterly Review endorsed the edict. Sos did the Rev. Dr. Bellows, Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio, Professor H.B. Smith, other prominent churchmen, and many lesser ministers. New York Tribune, Sept. 27, Oct. 9. 13, 1862; Commonwealth, Sept. 27, 1862; McConnell, op.cit., 269-70; Lorraine A. Williams, "Northern Intellectual Reaction to the Policy of Emancipation", JNH, XLVI (July, 1961), 182-3.

2 The Commonwealth claimed that letters it received were pro-emancipation by a ratio of 20 to 1 (Oct. 4, 1862).

3 Predictably press reports on army opinion reflect editorial prejudices. Republican and Democratic papers recording a favourable and hostile reaction respectively, and each supporting the analysis with appropriate letters from named or anonymous soldiers. In the discussion that follows I have used press reports only when they seem not to reflect such prejudices.

4 Letter from Smith D. Atkins, Col. 92nd Ill. Vol. Inf. to Owen Lovejoy, Dec. 11, 1862, read in Senate, Dec. 22, 1862, Cong. Globe, 37 Cong., 3 sess., 165; Commonwealth, Jan. 3, 24, 1863; New York Tribune, Sept. 25, 1862.

5 Chicago Times, Sept. 24, 1862; Commonwealth, Jan. 17, 1863.

that in Washington, D.C., army officers approved of the proclamation, and by October the Commonwealth felt it could afford a little irony on the subject of army opposition to emancipation "'How is this?' said an old friend of Col. Blank ... 'I thought you declared you would resign if the President issued an anti-slavery proclamation, and yet you wear your shoulder-straps still.' 'Oh,' replied the colonel. 'I meant that I would resign myself to it, and I have done so.'"[1]

The mass of soldiers seem to have been similarly divided. Opposition to emancipation was probably strongest in regiments drawn from regions where Democrats were powerful. One Midwestern recruit wrote to his father: "You can judge how we feel here in the 86th (Illinois) when I tell you that only 8 men in Co. K approve the policy and proclamation of Mr. Lincoln."[2] Yet though the Democratic Party made substantial gains in Indiana in the 1862 elections, at least one Indiana regiment came out strongly in favour of emancipation. When the Rushville Jacksonian published two letters allegedly from the 16th. Indiana and hostile to the Government and emancipation, a vote was called in the regiment "and not a man endorsed them. They said they were willing to fight the rebels until they laid down their arms. They endorsed Gov. Morton and the President in all their endeavours to put (down) the rebellion. They offered $100 for the writer of the letter."[3] War weariness was clearly a factor in anti-administration, anti-emancipation sentiment in the army,[4] and in late 1862 army morale was low. Yet while the

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1 Commonwealth, Oct. 18, 1862.
2 Levi Ross to his father, Feb. 3, 1863 quoted in Bell Irvin Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis, Indiana; 1952), 280.
3 Joseph O. Jackson, ed., "Some of the Boys ...": The Civil War Letters of Isaac Jackson, 1862-1865 (Carbondale, Ill. 1960), 80. Hereafter cited as Jackson, Letters.
4 Wiley, Billy Yank, 281.

Commonwealth's claim that no Federal soldiers had laid down arms because of the proclamation was not strictly true, it seems that no mass desertions resulted from the adoption of emancipation. For most soldiers experience at the front encouraged Unionism, already strong in an army which originated in volunteer forces. Feeling against Copperheads, seen as stabbing the army in the back, ran high. Soldiers were therefore probably less receptive to Democratic propaganda against the Government and emancipation than civilians. On March 23, 1863 Ohio private Isaac Jackson wrote to his father: "All we ask of you at home is to attend to the double dyed traitors at home. Teach them (to) know that the government must be supported at any and every cost, even if (it) does free the negro."[1] Above all, the argument that emancipation was a military necessity predisposed soldiers to accept Lincoln's measure. According to an Illinois soldier, "when Old Abe carries out his Proclamation he kills this Rebellion and not before. I am henceforth an Abolitionist and I entend to practice what I preach." From hospital in Illinois another soldier, replying to a letter from his brother criticising emancipation, wrote: "you wanted to know what I and my comrads thot (sic) of the negro question I think old Abes proclamation is allright (sic) and there is very few old soldiers that is against it it is my opinion that yourself and the greater part of your Regiment will be in favor of it before you are in the service six months(.)"[2]

There is, however, no evidence that the average soldier had any concept of Lincoln as the Emancipator. Those who approved the edict did so sometimes out of anti-slavery conviction or because they accepted Republican

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1 Commonwealth, Oct. 25, 1862; Jackson, Letters, 78; Daniel Wait Howe, Civil War Times (Indianapolis, Ind., 1902), 134-35.

2 A.W. Hostetter to Mr. and Mrs. O.P. Miles, Jan. 29, 1863 and Jasper Bar-(?) to his brother, Oct. 24, 1862, MS. letters in Illinois State Historical Society Library, Springfield.

Party ideology,[1] but more often in the hope that it would aid the war effort. Many soldiers expressed affection and admiration for the President, particularly later in the war, but in 1862 circumstances in no way favoured the development of a heroic concept of him.

Army attitudes may reflect national opinion to some extent, but were, as suggested, modified by military experience. Other evidence of public opinion is scanty. There were popular demonstrations in favour of the 1862 edict, and the Commonwealth was gratified by another sign of anti-slavery feelings: "Over the door of a church near the battle field of Antietam, which during the battle was completely riddled with balls, someone wrote in large letters: 'THIS IS THE RESULT OF SLAVERY.' Many hundreds of names have been written under the words showing the approval of the sentiment by soldiers and citizens."[2] Private citizens sometimes wrote to Lincoln to express support for the measure.[3] The opinion of the masses remains a matter for conjecture.

As Republican James G. Blaine later recalled, the labouring man does not appear to have favoured emancipation.[4] The threat of Negro competition for jobs was a real one, though much exaggerated by opposition Democrats, and the contemporary observer who suggested that working men would not oppose emancipation if Negroes could be made to stay in the South was probably correct.[5] The key to labour's response to the Civil War seems to have been a blend of Unionism and economic interest. 1861 worker support for compromise measures reflects both the desire to preserve the Union and concern to prevent a war which was certain to affect adversely those earning low

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1 Hough to his wife, March 13, 1864 in Robert G. Athearn, ed., Soldier in the West: The Civil War Letters of Alfred Lacey Hough (Philadelphia, 1957), 178; letters of Lieut. Timberlake (Nov. 9, 1861) and Byron B. Wilson (n.p., n.d.) in Lydia Post, ed., Soldiers' letters, from camp battle-field and prison ... (New York, 1865), 69, 100.

2 Chicago Times, Sept. 26, 1862; Baltimore Sun, Sept. 25, 29, 1862; Commonwealth, Nov. 8, 1862.

3 McConnell, op.cit., 270-271.

4 Voegeli, Free but Not Equal, 17.

5 Loften, op.cit., 252-53, 257-62, 273.

incomes. Working men were well aware of and hostile to the fact that many capitalists were profiting by the war which brought them hardship.[1] Opposition Democrats therefore had good reason to suppose that their racialist and anti-emancipation appeal would win a favourable response from white labour.

Economic factors must also have dominated the wartime thought of small farmers, still a majority of the population. In many rural areas of the Northeast, and in Northern parts of Midwestern states, anti-slavery was strong. The spread of New England settlers and the religious movements of the early Nineteenth Century produced a frame of mind responsive to abolitionism, and Republicans offered various economic inducements to win small farmer support. In such regions the emancipation proclamations were probably welcomed. From Alleghany County, New York, abolitionist Henry C. Wright wrote to Garrison, "I cannot tell you the feeling with which the Proclamation of Emancipation is hailed in this region. The people talk and act as if a load was lifted from their hearts. They sing, they shout over it. They think the day of redemption has dawned."[2] At the same time, the Democratic Party had traditionally won much support in the rural Middle West, and the 1862 elections strengthened its power in this region. Yet it is not certain how far this reflected opposition to emancipation. It has been suggested that Copperheadism and opposition to the Government was prevalent among small homesteaders farming poor soils in the Midwest.[3] The war doubtless brought considerable hardship to such people living at subsistence level, a family farm being ill-equipped to sustain the loss of even one male to the army, and lacking capital to invest in the labour-saving machinery which helped larger farms to survive and thrive during the war. Hit by the draft and inflation, small homesteaders had every reason, emancipation aside, to vote Democratic in 1862.

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1 See resolution of 8th. Ward Chicago meeting meeting quoted above p. 52; speech of Enoch S. Davis at meeting of Lynn working men, Dec. 29, 1864, Boston Daily Evening Voice, Dec. 30, 1864.

2 Wright to Garrison, Sept. 26, 1862, Liberator, Oct. 3, 1862.

3 Frank L. Klement, The Copperheads, 13; Frank L. Klement, "Middle Western Copperheadism and the Genesis of the Granger Movement, MVHR, XXXVIII (1951-2).

Nor are the 1862 elections a satisfactory guide to civilian public opinion on emancipation. Democrats claimed that their party's successes represented popular rejection of the emancipation policy, and certainly Republican losses were heavy in areas where anti-emancipation, anti-Negro sentiments were strong, and where Democrats had launched an all-out attack upon the proclamation.[1] But it is impossible to tell how far other factors, such as war weariness and opposition to the draft took their toll on Republican votes. Some Republicans blamed the proclamation for the Administration reverses; others, including Lincoln, did not.[2] In Massachusetts and Michigan Republican successes were also attributed to the Emancipation edict.[3] Yet Lincoln could not claim popular support for emancipation; his opponents could and did more easily argue that the nation had voted against the edict. Whatever the opinion of the average Northerner, he clearly was not in a frame of mind to give the Government firm support on any of its policies, let alone view its President as a hero.

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1 There were heavy Republican losses in the congressional elections in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and Democratic candidates replaced Republican governors in New York and New Jersey.

2 Lincoln to Carl Schurz, Nov. 10, 1862, Lincoln, Works, V, 493-95.

3 Krug, op.cit., 112-13.

Chapter Three

The Martyr-Emancipator as Political Myth: 1865

> He had shed his own blood for the cause of universal liberty, and it had not been shed in vain ...[1]

It was with the death of Lincoln in 1865 that the concept of the Great Emancipator caught the popular imagination in America. To explain this, it is necessary to consider firstly who promoted such an image of Lincoln and why they did so. This will involve studying a number of associated concepts of Lincoln. For the Emancipator image did not emerge in isolation, but was closely linked with the development of traditions depicting Lincoln as a hero of black freedom, notably that viewing him as a martyr to liberty, and with the Lincoln Legend as a whole. In the development of these traditions, Republican Radicals and anti-slavery churchmen sympathetic to Radical aims played a crucial role.

During the Civil War men such as Henry Winter Davis, Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner and Benjamin Wade had formed a small but highly vocal pressure group within the Republican Party. Totally committed to the preservation of the Union, a vigorous prosecution of the War, and from the first - unlike moderate anti-slavery men within their party - to the destruction of slavery, these Radicals, as contemporaries labelled them, were sometimes harsh critics of the Lincoln Administration's policies, and in particular denounced its initial reluctance to adopt emancipation as a war measure. As has been seen, Radicals sustained the Emancipation Proclamations, but had no concept at the time when these were issued of their author as an heroic Emancipator. To

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1 Rev. E. G. Taylor, Address at the First Baptist Church, Chicago, April 19, 1865, Chicago Times, April 20, 1865.

understand why their attitude towards his role in emancipation apparently changed, it is necessary to consider Radical aims in Reconstruction, for Radical eulogies of Lincoln as a hero of freedom reflect more than the desire to speak well of the dead.[1]

In common with the Administration, Radicals turned their attention during latter part of the War to the problem of reconstructing the Union, but were critical of the moderate terms on which, by Lincoln's Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863, former rebel states might establish governments which the Executive would recognize as legal, and the Radical-inspired Wade-Davis bill outlining more severe terms was adopted by Congress in July 1864.[2] It was one indication that the terms offered to ex-rebel states could become an area of conflict between the President and the Radical wing of his party. Lincoln refused to sign the bill, claiming that he did not wish to be committed to any single restoration programme, but endorsed the Congressional plan as one proper for any state choosing to adopt it, knowing very well that none would do so in preference to his own

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1 The secondary literature on Reconstruction is extensive and still growing. For brief surveys see Randall and Donald, Chapters 31-39, which has good bibliographical guides to works published before 1961; Roy E. Nichols, The Stakes of Power, 1845-1877 (New York, 1961, 1964), Chapters 12-15; and a more recent work by W. R. Brock, Conflict and Transformation: The United States, 1844-1877 (Middlesex, England, 1973), Chapters 8 and 9, which also has a useful bibliography. Important general accounts of Reconstruction include John Hope Franklin, Reconstruction After the Civil War (Chicago, 1961); Rembert E. Patrick, The Reconstruction of a Nation (New York, 1967) and Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-77 (New York, 1965). Also valuable is the older work by W. E. Dubois, Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880 (New York, 1935, 1956). For monograph and periodical articles on Radical efforts to secure control of Reconstruction and other aspects of Reconstruction, see the footnotes to Chapters Three, Four and Five of this thesis and bibliographies in the work cited.

2 Lincoln, Works, 53-56.

more generous terms.[1] It cannot be known whether if he had lived, Lincoln would have been able to pursue the moderate and merciful line on Reconstruction which he favoured and avoid an open breach with Congressional Radicals. What is certain is that by the time of his death, the Radicals spearheaded a drive for Congressional control of the postwar settlement, and were urging an approach to Reconstruction which emphasised the necessity for the total and permanent abolition of slavery and destruction of the power of the slaveholding elite.

Radicals' motives have been much debated, but the sincerity of their hostility to slavery, though questioned by their political opponents and older histories of Reconstruction, is no longer in doubt. Like Republicans generally they saw slavery as an anachronistic economic system which depressed Southern white labour and prevented the emergence of a diversified free labour economy, so trapping the South in a state of economic backwardness.[2] For Radicals, however, the institution was more crucially a denial of human rights. Idealism played a fundamental role in shaping the political thought of Radicals, as their leaders proudly asserted. Thus William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania told the House of Representatives that, "I am denounced as a radical. Thank God! the term is coming to be honorable. Men know that he only is a radical

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1 On Lincoln's Reconstruction policy see Charles H. McCarthy, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction (New York, 1901) and William B. Hesseltine, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1960). On Lincoln's relationships with the Radicals see T. Harry Williams, Lincoln and the Radicals (Madison, Wis., 1941), Hans L. Trefousse, The Radical Republicans, Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice (New York, 1969), and David Donald "The Radicals and Lincoln" in Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 103-27.

2 Margaret Shortreed, "The Anti-Slavery Radicals: From Crusade to Revolution 1840-1868", Past andPresent, XVI (Nov., 1959), 65-89; Foner Free Soil, 40-72. In 1865 Carl Schurz of Wisconsin, an influential German-American Radical Republican, wrote, "The Union must be reconstructed upon the basis of the results of the great social revolution brought about during the war in the South. A free labor society must be established and built up on the ruins of the slave labor society." Joseph Schafer, ed., Intimate Letters of Carl Schurz 1840-1869 (Madison, Wis., 1928), 341. Hereafter cited as Schurz, Intimate Letters.

who stands on the eternal principles which God ordained..."[1] The line between Moderate and Radical Republicans, especially after 1865, was not always clear. Those who became Radicals during the Civil War or Reconstruction were not united by political background, occupation outside politics, or economic interests.[2] What linked together this loose and far from static group in the Reconstruction era was, in the view of W.R. Brock, "a number of propositions about equality, rights, and national power."[3] For them the Civil War had been a glorious struggle not only to preserve the nation but also to abolish slavery and establish republican government firmly on the basis of equal human rights.[4] To ensure the enduring success of that struggle was the Radical mission in Reconstruction, and in their eyes it could only be achieved if Congress, representing the will of the people, played a central role in determining the conditions on which state governments were to be reconstructed in the South. What distinguished Radicals as a group from those Moderate Republicans who expressed concern for the rights of humanity and protection of the freedmen, was that the former were always to be found in the vanguard of the movement to secure these things, and advocated far-reaching measures to achieve their aims.

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1 Cong. Globe, 39 Cong., 2 sess., 180 (Jan. 10, 1866). Works emphasizing Radical idealism include Brock, An American Crisis; David L. Montgomery, Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872 (New York, 1967), Stampp, Reconstruction; and Trefousse, The Radical Republicans. See also two valuable articles on changing attitudes towards Radicals in works on Reconstruction:- LaWanda and John Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography", JSH, XXXIII (August, 1967), 303-30, reprinted in Frank Otto Gatell and Allen Weinstein, eds., American Themes: Essays in Historiography (New York, 1968), 232-60; and Larry Kinkaid, "Victims of Circumstance: An Interpretation of Changing Attitudes Toward Republican PPolicy Makers and Reconstruction", JAH, LVII (June, 1970), 48-66.

2 Some Radicals entered political life as Free-Soilers or Republicans, others as Whigs or Democrats. Radicalism was strongest in rural and recently settled areas, and its strongholds were in Pennsylvania and the more recently settled regions of the Midwest in particular, and in rural New England, Maryland and Missouri. Many Radicals were lawyers or newspaper editors, but while many represented the business interests of clients or constituents, there was no unity amongst Congressional Radicals on any particular economic policy. On this and on the nature of Radicalism generally, see Brock, An American Crisis, esp. pp.68-94; Foner, Free Soil, esp. pp.103-148; Montgomery, Beyond Equality, 72-89; and Stanley Cobden, "Northeastern Business and Radical Reconstruction: A Re-Examination", MVHR, XLVI (July, 1959), 67-90.

3 Brock, An American Crisis, 75.

4 These rights were not always clearly defined. See below, p. 181.

For the Radicals, then, emancipation was a moral necessity, and it seemed fitting that with the institution of slavery should perish the wealth and power created by it. At the same time, it was essential to their plans that the slaveholding classes of the South should be deprived of economic and political power. What Reconstruction involved for the Radicals, who acknowledged the revolutionary nature of their plans, was dismantling of the Southern economic and social systems which were to be remodelled on Northern lines. To Radicals, and for most Republicans, slaveholders were an aristocracy hostile to the values of the progressive society of the Northern States and determined to preserve the South's outdated economic and social organization in order to perpetuate their own economic and political power. For this reason, they barred the way to reorganization of the South, and must be swept away.

Radicals could not have acquired influence within their party had they not possessed some awareness of political realities, and concern for the future of the Republican Party, on which would depend the long-term success of any Radical measures which Congress might adopt, also underlay Radical insistence upon the destruction of the economic and political power of the slaveholding classes. This was clear from Radical hostility to what George W. Julian called, "Mr.Lincoln's known policy of tenderness to the Rebels..."[1] It was not simply that extreme anti-slavery men feared that a policy of reconciliation rather than retribution might result in a revival of slavery. Doubtless some of Lincoln's Radical and abolitionist critics remained suspicious of the intensity of his anti-slavery feeling, but Lincoln had been publicly committed to permanent emancipation since January 1, 1863, and his

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1 George W. Julian, Political Recollections, 1840 to 1872 (Chicago,1923), 255-56, quoted in Randall and Donald, 568.

use of presidential influence had played a key role in the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment.[1] The real danger of his Reconstruction policy for Radicals, was that it denied to Congress sole authority over the peace settlement, and through leniency threatened to open the way for a return to positions of influence in the reconstructed South of pre-war and wartime leaders of that section. This in turn would make possible a revival of the Southern Democracy, and so the re-emergence of the Democratic Party as a national organisation. Meanwhile, the Republicans, with little chance of securing significant support in a South once more firmly under the control of the Democracy, would remain a sectional party. Inevitably this would threaten the Republican Party with political eclipse, for its success in 1860 had been largely due to the breakdown on sectional lines of the Democracy. In this way the victory of 1865 would be turned into a defeat for the party that had directed the war effort. Not only would the Reconstruction programme be put at risk, but the Southern wing might once more dominate the Democratic Party and so the policies of the National Government to the detriment of Northern interests. The fate of the Southern Negro might rest with former slave-owners. The stability of the Union might once again be threatened. To Republicans, it seemed vital that the peace should be such as to prevent any repetition of the crisis that had led to war.

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1 See Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln, 335-36; Oates, With Malice Toward None, 404-5.

Emancipation and destruction of the slaveholders' power were complementary. The total, permanent and uncompensated abolition of slavery, confirming the War's emancipatory trends, would, combined with wartime devastation in the South, ensure the collapse of the economic basis of the political power of that region's ruling elite. This in turn would help to ensure the permanence of emancipation. These themes in Radical thought had been clearly articulated during the War. Radical George Boutwell had in 1862 defended the Emancipation Proclamation in terms of Radical beliefs in a speech delivered at Washington in September 1862. Stressing that peace could be achieved only through the destruction of slaveholders, Boutwell declared that Lincoln's proclamation was, "the first great step...toward the extermination of the race of slaveholders...", and that once it was made effective "the dawn of the day of peace will have appeared and not before." In a similar speech at Brooklyn, anti-slavery churchman Dr. Henry W. Bellows declared that, "the most human, the most economical, the most statesman-like policy now (is) to take the most radical ground possible - to assume that this is a war for the subjugation or the extermination of all persons who wish to maintain the slave power - a war to get rid of slavery and of slaveholders, whether it be constitutional or not." Bellows' use of the term 'radical' can hardly have been accidental since in presenting such an interpretation of the War as the proper basis for Government policy he echoed congressional Radicals. The alliance of Radical Republicans and anti-slavery preachers had already begun.[1]

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1 Boutwell's speech and that of the Rev. Bellows delivered on October 15, 1862, were reported in Commonwealth, Oct. 11, 25, 1862 respectively.

While Radicals generally were committed to securing freedom and basic civil rights- or equality before the law - for black Americans, by 1865 some Radical leaders, for example, B. Gratz Brown, Sumner and Stevens, sought to add another and controversial dimension to their approach to Reconstruction: the call for Negro suffrage. Some Moderate Republicans and Lincoln himself, also supported limited voting rights for blacks, and especially for soldiers, as simple justice and as politically expedient. However, whether their demand was for "universal" suffrage or was restricted to "impartial" suffrage imposing voting qualifications on black and white equally, Radical support for black political rights in the face of Northern, as well as Southern, hostility undoubtedly reflected an idealistic commitment to the equality of all men.[1] Thus in 1866 James W. Wilson of Iowa called for the enfranchisement of blacks in the District of Columbia "in the interests of freedom, humanity, justice and the true principles of popular government."[2] However, some Radicals also favoured Negro suffrage in the South, and others presented it to the Northern electorate as desirable, for political reasons. As Radicals had been quick to realise, the return to power of the Old South's leaders could only be prevented if they could be replaced with leaders who would support Radical policies. In short, it would be necessary to establish a Southern wing of the Republican Party in the states formerly in rebellion. Since ex-Confederates would be unlikely to vote for such a party they were to be disfranchised, and a favourable electorate was to be established by giving voting rights to all or some of the Southern black men whose support for the party whose President had freed them was considered to be more or less

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1 Cox and Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics", op.cit., 243-52,
2 Remarks in House of Representatives, Jan 10, 1866, Cong. Globe, 39 Cong., 2 sess., 174.
3 In The Right to Vote : Politics and the Passage of the Fifteenth Amendment (Baltimore, 1965), William Gillette argues that Republican leaders framed the Fifteenth Amendment with a view to securing the small but important black vote in several Northern States where support for the Republican and Democratic Parties was more or less evenly divided.

certain. As Charles Sumner pointed out "without their votes we cannot establish stable governments in the rebel States. Their votes are as necessary as their muskets."[1]

The implementation of Radical ideas on Reconstruction depended, in 1865, upon three factors. Firstly, it was necessary that the Radicals should dominate Congress. Their influence throughout the war had been considerable and out of proportion to their members owing to their energy and their control of vital congressional committees.[2] In the last year of war this influence had steadily increased. Congress had already passed several important measures dear to the Radicals,[3] who could reasonably hope for sufficient congressional support to secure some of their aims. Secondly, it was vital that either Congress should have sole responsibility for Reconstruction or the co-operation of the President. In 1865 many Radicals feared that Lincoln might hinder the implementation of their policies by his insistence that Reconstruction was an executive task and by his policy of reconciliation towards the South. Consequently there was some feeling among Radicals that his assassination, though deplorable, might prove a blessing. On the afternoon of Lincoln's death, Republican congressmen met in caucus in Washington, D.C. Radical George Julian described how: "while everybody was shocked at his murder, the feeling was nearly universal that the accession of Johnson to the Presidency would prove a godsend to the country. What this meant was

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1 Sumner to Bright, March 13, 1865, in Edward L. Pierce, Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner, 4 vols. (London, 1878), IV, 229, quoted in Shortreed, op.cit., 78.

2 For example, the Committee on the Conduct of the War established in December 1862. Five of the Committee's seven members (Chandler, Covode, Gooch, Julian and Wade) were Radicals, and Wade was its chairman.

3 Notably the Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862, and the Wade-Davis Bill of 1864. William R. Brock points out that the Reconstruction measures promoted by Radicals were in fact compromises with moderates in Congress: Brock, Conflict and Transformation: 324.

indicated in Ben Wade's comment to Andrew Johnson that, "there will be no trouble now in running the government."[1] Lincoln's timely removal and the accession to the Presidency of Johnson, whose ideas at this time appeared to tally with their own, seemed to Radicals to open the way to the implementation of their approach to the problem of reconstructing the Union. Nevertheless, and thirdly, it was important that they should make an effort to win further support for their views from their congressional colleagues and amongst the electorate which would be given a chance to express its opinion on any Reconstruction policies adopted when the mid-term congressional elections took place in Autumn, 1866. The Radicals' efforts to win such support were marked by a determination that Lincoln would be more use to his party dead than he could have been had he lived.

For Lincoln dead could be exploited in ways which would not have been possible had he still been alive. The symbolic hero Lincoln, whose creation owed much to the Radicals and their allies, could be used to win support for an approach to Reconstruction which the President had not favoured. So, though Lincoln had stressed the need to begin the task of rebuilding the nation, "with malice toward none, and with charity for all",[2] Radicals and their allies, determined to crush the defeated rebel leadership economically and politically before readmitting the ex-Confederate States to their proper places in the Union, urged that Lincoln was a martyr whose death demanded revenge against those who crowned with his murder a rebellion which had threatened the Union. Shaping their interpretation of Lincoln's life and death to suit their needs, Radicals and those who co-operated with them made a contribution of considerable significance to the development of Lincoln myths.

Vitally involved in this process of creating myths, and especially the tradition of the Emancipator, were many anti-slavery Northern ministers.

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1 Randall and Donald, 568; Williams, Lincoln and the Radicals, 375.
2 Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865: Lincoln, Works, VIII, 333.

These men, who throughout the War had hoped for and urged the adoption by the Government of a policy of emancipation, and who had supported Lincoln when he issued the emancipation proclamations, were well fitted by both temperament and vocation to undertake the work of winning popular support for the Radical interpretation of the Civil War and of Lincoln's murder and its message for Reconstruction. Like political Radicals, they were convinced that emancipation was morally imperative, and their ecclesiastical background made them especially inclined to see in the destruction of slavery the will of God. To such men the act of emancipation was bound to confer moral glory upon its author, and doubtless as war made effective Lincoln's promise of freedom for the slaves, his status in their eyes rose. Thus, though they do not appear to have been ready to view Lincoln as the Emancipator in 1862-1863, their retrospective praise of the heroic nature of his stand against slavery was probably genuine. At the same time, there can be no doubt that these anti-slavery preachers set out, deliberately, to win support for a Radical approach to Reconstruction. Again the sincerity of their motives is not in question. Like its authors, and for the same reasons, they believed that such an approach offered the only real hope for the total and permanent destruction of slavery in America.

Their role as men of God would in any case have given anti-slavery ministers both the opportunity and the influence necessary to a successful promotion of Radical views on Reconstruction, but Lincoln's assassination facilitated their task. For in the days that followed their President's death, stricken Northerners, barely able to comprehend the tragedy that had befallen them in the very hour when they had at last felt their trials and tribulations to be over, sought what consolation and explanations their churches could offer them. Almost with one accord, anti-slavery preachers thundered out the message. Lincoln had been a hero of Union, democracy and liberty; now he was a martyr, killed by those who would destroy the causes for which he stood.

The Southern rebellion against the United States Government to preserve slavery had killed Lincoln, making him a martyr to the nation and liberty. The blood of this martyr demanded not simply vengeance, but rather a policy that would preserve the results of his work and of the struggle in which he had fallen. The memory of the heroic Lincoln would be best revered by a determination to ensure that never again would slavery threaten the life of the nation. There was no need to be more explicit.[1] The message of the anti-slavery ministers could not be misunderstood: it was identical to that of the Radicals in Congress.

If the radical anti-slavery analysis of the Civil War was to make sense of Lincoln's assassination, it was vital that he should be seen as the Great Emancipator of American slaves. Once he was thus established as a hero of anti-slavery, national grief and gratitude focussed upon the assassinated wartime leader could be exploited to sanctify a Reconstruction policy committed to the extermination of slavery.

Lincoln's heroic status, now that he was dead, was not in doubt. In sermon after sermon delivered upon the assassination, ministers echoed in one form or another the belief of the Reverend Samuel T. Spear that the late President had been both "a great and good man."[2] Many linked his name with those of earlier American heroes, and it was a comparison with George Washington that sprang most obviously and most usefully, to mind.[3] Lincoln was, said the Reverend Henry W. Bellows, "the heir of Washington's place at the hearths and altars of the land ..."[4] Others looked to a fame beyond the

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1 Nevertheless, some sermons were very explicit. See, for example, Richard Eddy, "The Martyr to Liberty" Three Sermons Preached in The First Universalist Church, Philadelphia, Sunday, April 16, Wed.,April 19, and Thursday, June 1st, by Richard Eddy, Pastor (Philadelphia, 1865).

2 Our Martyr President, Abraham Lincoln. Voices from the Pulpit of New York and Brooklyn (New York, 1865), 296.

3 Usefully because association with Washington, America's first, and at that time greatest, hero, acted as a further endorsement of Lincoln and, in turn, of any policies associated with his name.

4 Our Martyr President, 56.

confines of the American continent. Lincoln was associated with the heroes of Europe, and his place amongst the world's great men was confidently claimed.[1] According to the Reverend Professor Thomas Chase, Booth had struck down, "the foremost man of all this world ..."[2]

In political myth, the importance of the hero stems from his role as the symbolic representative of his people, and many ministers laid emphasis upon an image of Lincoln as the servant and leader of the nation. He was, said the Reverend George W. Colman, "the man ... whose labors for the public welfare were almost crushing ..." The Reverend Theodore Cuyler described him as "the great, the good, the honest, the patient, the gentle-hearted, the beloved head of our national family..." In the words of another minister, "grand in his consecration to his Country and to God, he rises above the great in genius ..."[3] None wished to pretend that Lincoln had been set apart by intellect. On the contrary, the preachers were, as indicated, anxious to stress that the hero had been a man of the people, and so contributed to the development of a vital and enduring theme in Lincoln mythology. Lincoln had been, said Bellows, "the people's President". Henry Ward Beecher saw him as "a man from the common people that never forgot his kind." Abraham Lincoln, said another minister, "was thoroughly a man of the people. The common people of America saw the very best that was in themselves when they looked at him. So plebian a President we have never had."[4]

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1 William Wilberforce was frequently mentioned, see below, p. 97.

2 Professor Thomas Chase An Address on the Character and Example of President Lincoln, delivered before the Athenaeum and Everett Societies of Haverford College ... on ... Seventh Month 6th, 1865 (Philadelphia, 1865), 5.

3 Rev. George W. Colman, Assassination of the President ... A Discourse ... Delivered of Action, Mass., April 16, 1865 ... (Boston, 1865), 4; Our Martyr President, 162; Joseph P. Thompson, Abraham Lincoln; His Life and Its Lessons. A Sermon ... in Frank Freidel, Union Pamphlets of the Civil War, 1861-1865, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), II, 1150.

4 Our Martyr President, 40, 56, 163.

It was natural enough that Northern preachers, products of and addressing their sermons to a society which took pride in the opportunities it offered to the individual to rise through merit to wealth and influence, should stress the humble origins of the late President. The image of Lincoln as a hero of democracy,[1] a man of the people who was yet their representative, was, however, fundamental to the development of the political theme in many anti-slavery sermons upon the assassination. Emphasis upon the humble background of a political leader in order to predispose an audience to accept his ideas was a familiar tactic in American politics.[2] In 1865, the men who allegedly represented the very best that was in Americans was simultaneously being presented as an anti-slavery hero, and the implication was clear. At the same time emphasis upon Lincoln as the people's president and the hero and saviour of the nation in the crisis of war was evidently intended to make those who heard such sermons gratefully receptive to the policy of reconstruction associated with his name. In the same way, Lincoln's role as the representative of republicanism, by virtue of his status as President and as "the man who rose from a log cabin to the Presidential chair",[3] thus embodying the fundamental republican themes of poor boy made good and self-made man, was exploited to win support for policies associated with his name. The favour of the people was then sought in the name of the man who was praised as their best representative, and the influence of his memory was further reinforced by subtle phrases. The Reverend John McClintock intended something more than simple eulogy when he

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1 Thomas Chase, Address, 17.

2 So at a union meeting at Indianapolis, Feb. 26, 1863, Governor Joseph A. Wright chose to introduce speaker Andrew Johnson of Tennessee as "a representative of one of the features of our free institutions, rising from poor boy to the highest position, learning us that the humblest may equal the wealthiest in position." The Great Union Meeting. Held at Indianapolis, February 26, 1863 ... (Indianapolis, 1863), in Freidel, Union Pamphlets, II, 570.

3 Our Martyr President, 165.

told his congregation that, "There is little fear of us forgetting - there is little fear of the world forgetting the name of ABRAHAM LINCOLN."[1]

It was, however, as an anti-slavery hero that Lincoln was most useful to those seeking to ensure the permanent abolition of slavery. His career had, according to some preachers, been founded upon hatred of that institution. Using Lincoln's life to emphasise that slavery clashed with the meaning of America, Thomas Chase alleged that Lincoln "very early saw the flagrant inconsistency of human slavery with the theory of our institutions, as well as its inherent injustice. In his political campaigns, said Chase, Lincoln was faithful to his anti-slavery principles, even in the most uncultivated and benighted districts, where their advocacy called forth the bitterest prejudice and odium." Richard Eddy drew a potent image of the early career of the future emancipator:[2]

> Politics engage his attention ... Soon he enters more active life as a legislator; and ere long he stands in the hall of the National Congress to give his voice and his vote against the threatening flood of Slavery. As this great evil becomes more insolent in its demands, and more open in the manifestation of its brutal spirit, he steps forth into the arena of popular debate, and taking as his antagonist the Giant of the West, goes with him before the people, to the discussion of the great questions of that hour.

Lincoln was associated with the British anti-slavery hero, William Wilberforce, and hailed as a hero of humanity, for "humanity broad as all continents, and all islands, and enduring as all time, owes more to Abraham Lincoln than to any other man of his generation."[3] He was, then, a hero of liberty, and, predicted the Reverend Maxwell P. Gaddis, "the freed nations of earth shall make their way across thousands of liberty's triumphant battlefields, across freed continents and empires, to pay their grateful homage at the shrine of

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1 Ibid., 129.

2 Chase, Address, 18; Eddy, The Martyr to Liberty, 9-10; Thompson, Abraham Lincoln, in Freidel, Union Pamphlets, 1159.

3 Our Martyr President, 130, 169; Eddy, The Martyr to Liberty, 18; C.P. Krauth, The Two Pageants, A Discourse Delivered in the First Eng. Evan. Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh, Pa., (Pittsburgh, 1865), 10, 15.

the glorious superstructure of Liberty, erected on this continent by the lives, suffering, and death of such as Abraham Lincoln ..."[1]

Thus Lincoln had won at last the fame that had eluded him in life. He had become the Great Emancipator. It was as the "author of the Proclamation of Emancipation" that he was now hailed, as his anti-slavery eulogists recalled that "when the day of duty and of opportunity came, how firmly did he deal the last great blow for liberty, striking the shackles from three million slaves ..." Once Lincoln was granted a major share in the moral glory attached to emancipation, earlier suggestions that he had been a reluctant emancipator disappeared. The President, said Thomas Chase, had gladly used his authority to perform, "one of the sublimest acts in history - the act which struck the shackles from four millions of slaves." No more approving page would be written in the history of the world, declared Richard Eddy, than that which records this just and solemn act. For this, if he had never done more, the name of Abraham Lincoln would shine with glorious immortality!" One preacher predicted that, "fifty years hence, the foremost name in America will be the name that was signed to the Edict of Emancipation." That proclamation, said another, "will make Mr. Lincoln's name dear in all ages."[2]

There was no doubt now that the edict of emancipation had been effective. "The proclamation was not only written," said Gaddis, "but the chains had fallen, under its power, from over three millions of enslaved men ..." The slaves were emancipated, and it was Lincoln "whose hand it was struck off from them their fetters, and whose voice it was proclaimed them free." He had become "the great LIBERATOR" who had "died amid the ringing of fetters

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1 Rev. M.P. Gaddis, Sermon upon the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln by Rev. M.P. Gaddis, Pastor 6th St. M.P. Church, delivered in Pikes Opera House, April 16, 1865 (Cincinnati, 1865), 13.

2 Our Martyr President, 56, 165, 296; Thompson, Abraham Lincoln, in Freidel, Union Pamphlets, 1170; Chase, Address, 24; Eddy, The Martyr to Liberty, 18; Our Martyr President, 172; Chase, Address, 25.

as they fell from the enslaved millions of the South; as the cruel crack of the overseer's lash fell for the last time upon the back of the last slave of America." Lincoln was dead; but his eulogists looked to a glory beyond the grave. For his integrity in the cause of emancipation, said Eddy, "what was long ago said of Wilberforce, now applies with intenser emphasis to President Lincoln: 'He ascended to the throne of God with a million of broken shackles in his hands as the evidence of a life well spent!'" Theodore Cuyler visualised how, on the Day of Judgement, Lincoln would stand before God as the Great Emancipator: "Around him are the tens of thousands from whom he struck the oppressors' chain. Methinks I hear their grateful voices..." Cuyler seemed also to hear the voice of God, welcoming the good and faithful servant. In Heaven, the act described by Thomas Chase as "one of the most brilliant in history" was apparently, as Chase predicted with regard to its earthly fame, to "carry the name of its author with honor down to the end of time."[1]

The tradition of the Great Emancipator, by glorifying through Lincoln the cause of abolition, served to predispose loyal Northerners towards the political policies advocated by anti-slavery men. It was also fundamental to the concept of him as the Martyr-Emancipator which converted eulogies of a lamented President shockingly murdered into telling arguments for Radical Reconstruction. For once Lincoln's role as the Emancipator had been firmly established, anti-slavery preachers could progress to the key assumption underlying their interpretation of Lincoln's death. Anxious to stimulate antipathy towards slavery, and those who had, in their view, rebelled to preserve that institution, and thus to prejudice their congregations in favour of Radical Reconstruction, they placed the blame for Lincoln's

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1 Gaddis, Sermon, 6, 12; Colman, Discourse, 10; Eddy, The Martyr to Liberty, 18; Our Martyr President, 172; Chase, Address, 25.

assassination upon the Southern slaveholders and their peculiar institution. Thus emerged a crucial refinement of the Emancipator tradition, as the hero of Negro freedom was translated by death, at the hands of those who had fought for slavery, into the Martyr for Liberty.

Of the "Black Sunday" of April 16, 1865, Mrs. Daly wrote in her diary, "Easter morning, instead of the Resurrection and Christ has Arisen, the clergymen began with Abraham Lincoln, mentioning that he was sacrificed on Good Friday, and it seemed to me that they gave Our Lord only the second place in his own house." Of the assassination itself she had already noted that, "It will make a martyr of Abraham Lincoln, whose death will make all the shortcomings of his life and Presidential career forgotten in, as Shakespeare says, 'the deep damnation of his taking off.'" Mrs. Daly was right on both counts: Lincoln had become a martyr because of Booth's action, and on that Easter Sunday, the day after his death, Lincoln's martyrdom was the topic with which the preachers were pre-eminently concerned. The image of the martyred Christ, when it emerged at all, was in most cases used to make stronger and more poignantthe image of the martyred President.[1]

In the South Baptist Church of Hartford, Connecticut, the Reverend C. B. Crane, solemnly declaring that the "last and costliest offering which God demanded has been taken", expressed simply but effectively the widely-held conception of Lincoln dying for his country to become, as the Reverend Theodore Cuyler described him, "our beloved and martyred ruler." To the anguished cry of 'Why was Lincoln shot?' this image of him as the Union's martyr provided an answer. Booth had not, the preachers claimed, struck at Lincoln the man but at the representative and leader of the Union and nation. Lincoln died, according to Henry Bellows:

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1 Daly, Diary, 354-55.

> as truly as any warrior dies on the battle-field, in the nation's service, and shed his blood for her sake! It was the nation that was aimed at by the bullet that stilled his aching brain. As the representative of a cause, the type of a victory, he was singled out and slain! His life and career now have the martyr's palm added to the statesman's, philanthropist's, and patriot's crown. His place is sure in the innermost shrine of his country's gratitude.

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With contrasting brevity the Reverend Samuel T. Spear expressed the same idea when he declared: "The pistol-shot that hurried him (Lincoln) to his doom was fired into the heart of the nation."[1]

The idea that Booth had struck at the nation rather than at Lincoln personally led naturally to a key assumption in the Radical interpretation of Lincoln's death. Instead of the inexplicable act of a madman, the assassination became the final blow struck at the nation by the spirit of rebellion. Anticipating the question which their congregations would inevitably ask, the preachers went on to explain why it was that God had allowed Lincoln and the nation whose cause he had vindicated by giving it victory to be assailed in the very hour of triumph. The answer to this vital question formed the central theme of their sermons. Essentially this answer was that God had intended that Lincoln's death should be a lesson to America as a whole, but particularly to the people of the Northern States who had vanquished secession and with whom lay the responsibility for reconstructing the Union, a lesson designed to show them that rebellion, though defeated, was not yet destroyed, and that stern measures were yet necessary if its total destruction were to be accomplished.

In a sermon carefully framed to arouse hostility to a policy of leniency and reconciliation in reconstruction, G.W. Colman claimed that the assassination had no motive but "the misguided theories and passions by which this rebellion has been engendered ..." Playing upon the emotions of his audience by blaming the rebellion for the "barbarities of Southern prisons"

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1 Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln: The War Years, 4 vols. (New York, 1939), IV, 361; Our Martyr President, 59, 167, 291.

as well as Lincoln's murder, Colman returned to the assassination to conclude: "If any have been disposed to treat it (rebellion) lightly, to be lenient towards it, look at this example, and decide now what it merits from you."[1] The Reverend E.B. Webb, though he did not actually imply that they had arranged Lincoln's assassination, alleged that the Southern leaders incarnated what he called, "the same hell-born spirit that dastardly takes the life of our beloved President." The moral of Lincoln's death was clear to him: it should check any tendency towards lenient terms of reconstruction, for Lincoln's magnanimous and clement attitude toward the rebels had resulted in his murder at the hands of a Southerner:

> The idea to me, of placing the leaders of this diabolical rebellion in a position where they might come again red-handed into the councils of the nation, is revolting and sacrilegious. It makes me shudder. And yet I think there was an indecent leniency beginning to manifest itself towards them, which would have allowed to these men, by and by, votes and honours and lionizing.

The reference to votes was not casual; disenfranchisement of rebels was to be fundamental to Radical Reconstruction. So Webb exploited Lincoln's murder in order to win support for Radical policies and to condemn as 'indecent' the Reconstruction policy of the man whom his sermon was intended to eulogize.[2]

The hand of God was detected in this grim lesson of Lincoln's death. "May it not be," asked the Reverend Joel E. Rockwell, "that God has permitted this great crime to awaken us to a sense of justice and to a full exaction of God's law upon those who have planned and accomplished the horrible scenes of the past four years?" In Troy, New York, the Reverend S.D. Brown urged upon his congregation a similar interpretation of Lincoln's death:

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1 Colman, Discourse, 6-7. Colman's emphasis on the need for an immediate decision by his audience with regard to Reconstruction is interesting. It reveals how clearly he understood his own role in exploiting the passions aroused by Lincoln's assassination, before these faded, to secure support for harsh policies towards the rebels. See also Henry Ward Beecher's attempt to swear his inflamed audience to Radical policies, below p. 109.

2 Sandburg, War Years, IV, 362.

> Our late President has nobly acted his part and carried us successfully through the struggle. And his name shall be honoured by the latest generations of men. But may not another instrument, a man of different character, be needed at the present moment? It is a singular fact that the two most favorable to leniency to the rebels, Lincoln and Seward, have been stricken.

Making the lesson more explicit, the Reverend Maxwell P. Gaddis indicated the sort of policies he expected from the "man of different character", Andrew Johnson:

> One of the results of this excrable act is the opening of our eyes to the fact that in the midst of our joy we were about to take to our bosom a half frozen adder, only frozen by the power of our arms, to warm it to life again ... Now, the adder must die! ... For every drop of blood that flowed from the veins of this great and good man, at least one leading Rebel must die, or be banished from this country forever.

With characteristic force and brevity, John Chase Lord made clear to his Buffalo, New York, congregation the results Lincoln's death should have for the South. Contrasting the martyred Lincoln with Johnson, he proclaimed that: "The South has put away a Son of Consolation and taken in exchange a Son of Thunder."[1]

One danger facing preachers who indulged in this line of anti-Southern propaganda was that their thesis that Lincoln's death revealed the need for harsher policies towards the ex-rebel states might seem to imply criticism of Lincoln, and, though anti-slavery men attacked Lincoln's policies while he was alive, they were fully aware of the rashness of doing so now that he had become a dead hero. Their problem was, then, to make it clear that the lenient reconstruction programme advocated by the late President was a mistake, without suggesting that this reflected badly upon him. In the event they did so quite successfully in one of two ways. If like the Reverend Webb or the Reverend S.D. Brown they did by implication criticize Lincoln, they usually made up for this by emphasizing those aspects of his career which they

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1 Lloyd Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 70-71; Gaddis, Sermon, 11.

could with an easy conscience eulogize, notably his work for emancipation. Alternatively they stressed that leniency was a virtue in Lincoln, but pointed out that such a virtuous, merciful man was too gentle and good for the task of punishing traitors and that an all-wise God had removed this perfect man to make way for one less perfect, perhaps, but better suited to the task at hand. According to the Reverend J.E. Todd, Lincoln's "grave faults" were "over-leniency and generosity, deliberation and patience", and these were faults "Which even in these times have probably been our salvation." Not even the most sensitive hero-worshipper of Lincoln could take exception to hearing that the President's worst faults were actually recognized virtues, so Todd could go on to make his point and, without offending his congregation, assert that "secession is not to be vanquished by leniency and kindness, but is to be stamped out with the iron heel." God's motives were, said Todd, hidden and inscrutable, but he, like most of his fellow preachers, could detect a probable explanation of Lincoln's death in that fatal quality of mercy: "This awful crime perhaps was needed to bring the people to some desired point; perhaps He had a work to be done fitter for some other hands than those which have done so much noble work, and are now forever still ..." So too, in a masterly and unexceptionable fashion, the Reverend J.M. Manning of Boston repudiated Lincoln's lenient policy without in any way maligning the late President when he declared that, "His paternal heart, had it still throbbed in life, might have proved too tender for the stern work we are yet to do." Thus in view of anti-slavery ministers, Lincoln the great, the good and the benevolent had offered the olive branch to the South and had received in return the assassin's bullet. There was now, the preachers stormed no course open to the North but the total destruction of the spirit which had brought about this tragedy. As William

Budington prophesied: "the spirit of Rebellion, in its dying throes, mad with shame and despair, has stung itself to death by striking at the sacred person of the chief Magistrate."[1]

For these Northern preachers the "spirit of rebellion" did not simply mean the determination of the Southern States to establish an independent confederacy. Committed to the cause of emancipation, and many of them forming the very backbone of the abolitionist movement, these men of God, perhaps more than any group before or after them, saw slavery as the fundamental cause of the Civil War. For them slavery was the spirit of the rebellion. Like many Southerners, they did not question the truth of the maxim that slavery was the basis of Southern civilization. The men who had attempted to destroy the Union they saw as products of that civilization, and they believed the supreme object of these men to be the preservation of an institution which was, in the preachers' eyes, against the laws of God and humanity. It was their firm belief that former Confederates allowed to regain economic or political influence within the reconstructed Union would hamper any measures taken by the Federal Government for the final destruction of slavery that made the anti-slavery ministers auxilliaries of the Radical Republicans in the campaign to promote Radical Reconstruction. That the fundamental interest in Reconstruction of these churchmen concerned slavery can be seen from the fact that they continually emphasized that the rebels had fought against freedom and that the Union stood as the bastion of liberty. This would in itself have helped to link slavery with secession and rebellion in the minds of Northerners, but in order to ensure that slavery would be totally destroyed, the preachers used the opportunity of Lincoln's death to rouse to an even greater pitch the anti-slavery sentiment in the Northern States. In doing so they exploited not only the concept

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1 Sandburg, War Years, IV, 362; Our Martyr President, 113.

of Lincoln the martyr for Union, but also a vision of him even better suited to their purpose, that of the Martyr to Liberty.

Quite often Lincoln appeared in sermons, speeches and poetry of this time as the hero and martyr of liberty in a very general sense, and this undoubtedly appealed to a people who liked to think of America as the land of the free; but anti-slavery men were concerned to present Lincoln as a martyr to liberty in a more specific sense as well. If they were successfully to stir up the North against slavery, Lincoln had to become the martyr of Negro emancipation, and so he did. When so much that was spoken or written about Lincoln's death was concerned with the image of him as the Great Emancipator, it probably would not in any case have taken a grateful people long to recognize that he had not died for the Union alone, but from the moment Black Sunday dawned, anti-slavery eulogists were ready to convince any doubters, and the preachers led the way.

The first essential was to drive home the idea that slavery had killed Lincoln. At Clark Street Church in Chicago, the Reverend Charles Shelling took as the subject of his address on Lincoln's death, "The Blow of the Assassin - The Spirit of Slavery." In Brooklyn the Reverend Theodore Cuyler warned his congregation that Lincoln "was slain by the accursed spirit of slavery yet lurking in the North." Similarly the Reverend William Ives Budington declared that, "the fell spirit of slavery had stricken down our President, and draped a nation in the emblems of mourning." Devoting much of a stirring sermon on Lincoln's death to the concept of the martyr to liberty, Henry Ward Beecher presented, in emotive terms, his indictment of slavery. Like many anti-slavery contemporaries, clerical and lay, he tended to minimize Booth's personal role in the assassination, for his chief concern was to reveal the assassin as an instrument of slavery. Only then could he prepare the way for Radical Reconstruction with his message that the terrible crime inspired by slavery should never be allowed to fade into oblivion:

> We needed not that he (Booth) should put on paper that he believed in slavery, who, with treason, with murder, with cruelty infernal, hovered around that majestic man to destroy his life. He was himself but the long sting with which slavery struck at liberty; and he carried the poison that belonged to slavery. And as long as this nation lasts, it will never be forgotten that we have had one martyred President - never! Never, while time lasts, while heaven lasts, while hell rocks and groans, will it be forgotten that slavery, by its minions, slew him, and, in slaying him, made manifest its whole nature and tendency.

Throughout the sermon Beecher impressed upon his congregation that Lincoln's murder had been brought about by "the venomous hatred of Liberty wielded by an avowed advocate of slavery."[1]

Just as Lincoln's death at the hands of the spirit of rebellion had been presented as a lesson against leniency towards rebels, so now the preachers used the concept of the Martyr to Liberty to urge the total destruction of slavery. Having ensured that their congregations understood that Booth, damned though he might be, was but the instrument of the evil and malicious spirit of slavery striking a last blow at liberty personified in Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, they made clear their answer to a question which would logically arise for those who believed that a Divine force for good controlled the destinies of men. In their view, God had allowed slavery, an institution which He had, in giving victory to the North, condemned as evil, to destroy a great man, because only through the martyrdom of Lincoln could the iniquity of slavery be fully revealed and the hearts of Americans hardened against any further tolerance of Negro servitude. Might it not be, speculated the Reverend William R. Williams, that God "saw that - much as the nation had already learned ... of the inherent evils, and of the ineradicable barbarism of Slavery - it yet needed, by a more malign outbreak, and a more distinguished sacrifice, to have its holy wrath aroused and intensified into a deadly and uncompromising decision against all further tolerance of the system ..." Williams left his audience to decide for themselves whether or not this was so, but he made it clear that he had

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1 Chicago Times, April 20, 1865; Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 101; Our Martyr President, 42-44, 119.

no doubts on this score, and his emphasis upon such an interpretation of Lincoln's death, combined with his powerful imagery, would doubtless have had the desired effect upon an already emotional audience. Picturing Lincoln virtually prophesying his own death at the hands of slavery, Williams declared:

> In a document, which was his own last message, Abraham Lincoln had spoken of God's possible purpose to compensate each drop of blood drawn by the driver's lash, by another drop of blood streaming from the soldier's sword. Might not an All-Wise God emphasize and rubricate that message, so as to speak, by allowing the dying spasms of the tyranny which wielded that driver's lash, to dash, as it were, upon the face of this prophetic admonition, the blood of its utterer; and thus leave it, for all after-time of our national history, slavery's bloody hand set at its own clumsy seal, slavery's crimson endorsement of its own indictment?

John Chase Lord, allowing for no other interpretation of Lincoln's death, asserted, "God has permitted him to die a martyr because He wished to consecrate the works, the policy and proclamations of our President as the political gospel of our country, sealed in blood." The works, policies and proclamations foremost in the minds of anti-slavery preachers were, of course, those connected with emancipation, and the idea that the blood of the martyred Lincoln ratified his acts as President, and especially the proclamations of emancipation, proved immensely popular with his eulogists because of its obvious emotional impact upon their audiences. The martyrdom of Lincoln in the cause of freedom meant, they claimed, that the nation could never retreat from the path of emancipation. In the words of the Reverend Charles S. Robinson, "The documents he (Lincoln) has added to the archives of the nation are sealed with blood."[1]

This comforting belief that Lincoln's martyrdom was ordained by God in order to secure the total destruction of slavery and that the wisdom of its timing could not therefore be disputed, was widely accepted. The Reverend Cuyler did indeed ask, "Did Lincoln die too soon?", and in reply declared, "For us and the world he did ...", but Cuyler stressed that in a wider sense,

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1 Our Martyr President, 20-21, 105; Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 96.

"Our father died at the right time; for his mighty work was done." The great work referred to by Cuyler was that of emancipation, and once they had established that God intended Lincoln's murder to be the final arraignment of slavery, these anti-slavery zealots, with the fiery oratory common to Northern evangelists, and accentuated by their abolitionism, hammered home the message of their sermons: destroy slavery as slavery had destroyed Lincoln. In killing the President slavery had struck at America, the Government and liberty, declared Beecher, but, "The blow has signally failed. The cause is not stricken; it is strengthened. The nation had dissolved - but in tears only ... This people are neither wasted, nor daunted, nor disordered. Men hate slavery and love liberty with stronger hate and love to-day than ever before." Urgently, compellingly, Beecher prophesied the effects that the assassination would have, pointing out the road that he desired the North should follow:

> Men will receive a new impulse of patriotism for his (Lincoln's) sake, and will guard with zeal the whole of the country which he loved so well. I swear you, on the altar of his memory, to be more faithful to the country for which he perished. /Applause./ They will, as they follow his hearse, swear a new hatred to that slavery against which he warred, and which, in vanquishing him, has made him a martyr and a conqueror. I swear you, by the memory of this martyr, to hate slavery with an unappeasable hatred.

Calling upon the nation to complete and make sacred the work of the martyr President, Beecher evoked a dramatic image of the funeral procession then in progress across the North, proving as he did so that a dead hero was, as the Radicals who had arranged the procession had anticipated, a potent weapon in the hands of anti-slavery men:

> And now the martyr is moving in triumphal march, mightier than when alive. The nation rises up at every stage of his coming. Cities and states are his pall-bearers, and the cannon beats the hours with solemn progression. Dead, dead, DEAD, he yet speaketh! Is Washington dead? ... Is any man that ever was fit to live dead? Disenthralled of flesh, and risen in the unobstructed sphere where passion never comes, he begins his illimitable work. His life is now grafted upon the infinite, and will be fruitful as no earthly life can be. Pass on, thou that hast overcome! ... Ye people, behold a martyr whose blood, as so many articulate words, pleads for fidelity, for law, for liberty!

Above all, Lincoln's blood pleaded for liberty. As the Reverend Shelling had declared a few days earlier, "the great and good president, the second Washington, ... had fallen a martyr to the spirit of slavery, ... the same spirit that had lashed the backs of black men and women, that had sold children into bondage, and inaugurated the accursed rebellion." Was it right, in the sight of God, asked Shelling rhetorically, to longer endure it, "or should we appeal to Him to lead us on, and wipe the curse of human slavery from the face of our land forever?"[1]

At this point, reflecting the preachers' belief that the total and permanent abolition of slavery could be secured only through the policies of the Radical Republicans, exploitation of Lincoln as a martyr for the nation and for liberty merged. Picturing slavery as synonymous with the spirit of rebellion, anti-slavery ministers used the image of the Martyr to Liberty as they had used that of Lincoln murdered by rebellion to strengthen the North's determination to punish the defeated rebels. Through the assassination of Lincoln, said the Reverend Budington, the wrath of man would praise God by revealing the wickedness of the rebellion and of slavery and by checking any tendency on the part of the North towards over-leniency in the treatment of former Confederates. So that there should be no mistake in the meaning of his message, Budington called for support for the new President who was thought to be in favour of Radical Reconstruction. Expressing a similar faith in the radicalism of Andrew Johnson, the Reverend Stephen Tyng predicted that the assassination of Lincoln, "the last great sacrifice upon the altar of liberty", had "introduced a ruler whose stern experience of Southern wickedness will cut off all pleas of leniency to the base destroyers of their country."[2]

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1 Our Martyr President, 45-48, 171; Chicago Times, April 20, 1865.
2 Our Martyr President, 71, 75, 113-127.

Often the course of action demanded was made more explicit. Using the death of Lincoln to inflame anti-Southern, anti-slavery sentiments, these ministers urged upon their congregations the main themes in the Radical approach to Reconstruction, the total abolition of slavery, political and economic penalties for rebels, and Negro suffrage. Recalling the night of the attacks upon Lincoln and Seward by Booth and his fellow-conspirators, the Reverend Williams declared, "The bullet-shot and the knife-stab, that evening delivered, have effectually nailed to the mast of the ship of state the banner of Emancipation - of universal - unconditional - uncompensated and unrepealable enfranchisement." Appealing to the emotions, and especially to the Unionist sentiment, of his audience, Theodore Cuyler utilized concepts of Lincoln, "that dear departed father," as the representative of republicanism, the Great Emancipator, and the martyr of both the nation and liberty, when he demanded that slavery and slaveholders should be crushed:

> This astounding tragedy at Washington is but the legitimate product of the same accursed system that tore down the nation's standard at Sumter, that massacred the heroic garrison of Fort Pillow, that starved the thousands of Union soldiers at Belle Isle, Andersonville, and on the Charleston race-course, and had been for a century, maiming, and branding, and torturing God's poor bond-children on innumerable plantations. Abraham Lincoln, holding the pen that pierced oppression through with its edict of emancipation, is the embodiment of Christian democracy. John Wilkes Booth, wielding the assassin's weapon, is the embodiment of the bowie-knife barbarism of the slaveholding aristocracy.

The message lay in the comment that followed. "Thanks be to God", exclaimed Cuyler, "that the days of that oligarchy are numbered!" Joseph P. Thompson's sermon on the assassination revealed how the end of the slave-oligarchy could be secured. After dwelling upon the image of Lincoln as the hero and martyr of emancipation, Thompson came to the crux of his sermon, alleging that Lincoln's grand life "imposes upon us lessons of duty, ...And we best honor the life itself by worthily fulfilling its lessons." The greatest lesson was, of course, that:

> We must take measures for the utter extinction of slavery, by severing every tie of the slave-oligarchy to the polity and to the soil of the country. We must end this rebellion so effectually that not a solitary root or fibre of it shall remain to plague us in the future. We owe it to ourselves in view of all that we have done and suffered in the cause; we owe it to our dead, who gave themselves for our salvation; we owe it to our posterity, who shall reap what we now sow; we owe it to mankind, to whom we should now furnish an example of a free, just, and peaceful government; and we owe it to the memory of the leader and martyr who hath consecrated our cause by his great sacrifice, that we guard effectually against the recurrence of a war of opposing sections or civilizations. And for this it is indispensable that we stamp this rebellion as a crime, that we measure out to its sponsors and abettors appropriate penalties, and that we root out the whole system of society by which it was inspired, and for which it has been maintained ...

Thompson's repeated emphasis that it was necessary to "root out" the rebellion and slavery was deliberate. Like the Reverend James Freeman Clarke's demand for a "radical" cure for the South, it was intended to implant the idea of radicalism in the minds of those who heard his sermon. Speaking in Boston, Clarke used Lincoln, as a hero of liberty and martyr, in a plea for the three main policies associated with the Radicals, urging the destruction of slavery and the power of slaveholders, and the adoption of Negro suffrage:[1]

> Throughout the North this murder will arouse such a stern purpose not of revenge, we trust, or only such a revenge as will be consistent with the memory of Lincoln. The revenge we shall take for the murder of Lincoln will be to raise the loyal black population of the South not only to the position of free men but of voters, to shut out from power, forever, the leaders of the rebellion; to re-admit no Southern State into the union until it has adopted a free State constitution and passed that anti-slavery amendment so dear to Abraham Lincoln's heart ... We need guarantees that the substantial results of the war shall not be lost, that the cure of the South shall be radical, that there shall be no more treasons, no more rebellions.

No matter how sincerely they hailed Lincoln as the hero and martyr of liberty, anti-slavery churchmen must have been fully aware they were exploiting a dead president and a nation's grief to secure a particular political programme. This awareness was reflected in a concern that by seeking to inflame their congregations against slaveholders and rebels, they

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1 Our Martyr President, 26, 159, 162-63, 204-6; Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 76-77.

were guilty of conduct unsuited to their spiritual calling. The Reverend John McClintock indicated such concern when at the close of a sermon designed to promote Radical arguments, he invoked Lincoln's spirit in the name of mercy, telling his audience that, "If anything I have said, or anything you read or hear in these sad days, breeds within you a single revengeful feeling, even towards the leaders of this rebellion, then think of Abraham Lincoln, and pray God to make you merciful." Another minister urged that for the rebel masses, if not their leaders, justice should be tempered with mercy: though hardly phrased so as to promote a spirit of charity, the plea was made for kindness towards "those who honestly desire to return to their loyalty and duty to the nation which they have outraged, and the Government which they have insulted and despised." Not all Radical churchmen were troubled by considerations of mercy. One in Boston called for multiple hangings of Southern traitors, while another minister noting the popular desire for revenge commented, "vengeance is an extreme, but no more so than indiscriminate pardon." In any case, few anti-slavery ministers tried to exercise any real influence in promoting a merciful attitude towards the South. Pleas for mercy were inserted only after the radical message of the sermon had been driven home. The Reverend Beecher turned to thoughts of mercy only after his invective against slavery and the South must have destroyed any such thoughts in the minds of his congregation, and, significantly, the appeal won little response from an audience which had enthusiastically applauded his earlier oratory. Yet, in fairness, these men did not play upon anti-slavery sentiments, long-standing Northern prejudices against the South and Lincoln's assassination in order to excite bloody revenge. In their eyes there was a difference between merciful justice and the leniency towards the rebels favoured by Lincoln, and an even stronger distinction between justice and vengeance. As the Reverend Charles S. Robinson expressed the latter idea, "there is no revenge in the popular heart to-day, but only

retribution." The slight conflict perceived between Christian duty and anti-slavery or Unionist principles was easily resolved in favour of the latter.[1]

The efforts of anti-slavery preachers to win support for a Radical approach to Reconstruction were complemented by those of Radical Republican politicians, who similarly found useful and were not backward in exploiting images of Lincoln as the heroic emancipator and the Martyr for Liberty. Some such eulogies were surely sincere. Writing to her Radical husband, Mrs. Carl Schurz consoled herself in her grief at Lincoln's death with the thought thst, "What you have always said is true; that, after Washington, he is our greatest President and the greatest emancipator." Schurz, always given to exaggeration, probably did express some such view of Lincoln. Moreover, while most leading Radicals had tempered support of the President when he moved in an anti-slavery direction with criticism of his slowness in doing so, and showed no concept of him as the Great Emancipator before he died, their anti-slavery sentiments predisposed them to see in his death the hand of slavery in rebellion striking down the representative of Union and liberty. Three days after the assassination, Charles Sumner wrote to English politician John Bright that, "You will be shocked by the crime in which belligerent slavery, crushed in arms, has sought to revenge itself ..." Nevertheless, it was as a hero, and especially an anti-slavery hero, that Lincoln became politically exploitable after the assassination, and no anti-slavery politician could afford to have scruples about presenting him as such.[2]

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1 Our Martyr President, 46, 100, 123, 82-83, 143; Sandburg, War Years, IV, 363.

2 Mrs. Schurz to her husband, April 21, 1865, in Schurz, Intimate Letters, 334; Sumner to Bright, April 18, 1865, in Pierce, Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner, IV, 239.

The spirit of Lincoln had barely left his body before it was impressed into the service of the Radical cause. In a preamble and resolutions introduced by Governor Morton at a public meeting in Indianapolis on April 15, the nation was called upon to mourn "one of the great and good men of the world", the "beloved president", the "second Washington". At the moment of victory, said the preamble to these resolutions, "the same spirit which has attempted the life of the nation has now succeeded in the assassination of our great and good chief magistrate ..." The future of the nation was committed to the care of Divine Providence and Andrew Johnson. In an address at this meeting, Morton declared that, "tho' the magnanimity of the North could overlook most things, the time was now come for decisive action. The olive branch had been presented to the rebels, but to us they had presented the dagger." Thus at his state's earliest meeting to mourn the dead President, the sometimes Radical Governor of Indiana sought to establish Lincoln as the hero and martyr of the nation, destroyed by the spirit of rebellion, and so to discredit the policy of leniency which Lincoln had favoured, and, by implication, to endorse the Radical approach towards Reconstruction which it was assumed Johnson would implement.[1]

A public meeting at Chicago, also held on the day of Lincoln's death, clearly demonstrated the alliance of Radical politicians and anti-slavery churchmen. The first speaker, a minister, used the Mosaic concept of Lincoln the Emancipator in a strong appeal for Radical Reconstruction. The thought must suggest itself, he said, that there had been no hour at which the President could better have been spared, and "He thought there was something sublime in the thought that the man who had parted the waters which allowed the colored people to pass into freedom, who had led them onward so far through the wilderness, and pointed out the way, that he himself should only be

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1 Chicago, Times, April 17, 1865, New Orleans Black Republican, April 29, 1865

permitted to reach the top of the mountain from which he could see the promised land which he was never to attain." It was fortunate that a Joshua was ready to take over Lincoln's work, for the late President's very qualities "might even have disqualified so great and good a man from doing what yet remained to be done." The task Joshua, by whom was meant Andrew Johnson, was to complete was made clear as the minister used Lincoln's death to call for punishment not upon one assassin but "upon the system, upon the people, upon the power" responsible. This appeal for Radical Reconstruction was endorsed by the next speaker, the Reverend Robert Collyer, who urged Northerners to "rise up indignant and be prepared to acquit themselves like men, to search out this foul deed to the bottom, and, wherever a guilty spot was found, to root it out to the uttermost." Collyer did not hesitate to point a finger at the South, demanding that if Southerners did not disavow all knowledge of the act, "let the entire race be subjugated to the last man." The basic appeal of the ministers was echoed in the eulogy delivered by Lyman Trumbull, in which Lincoln quickly emerged as the heroic emancipator. According to Trumbull:

> his history is made up, and he will go down to posterity as one of the greatest apostles of human liberty who ever lived. (Immense applause). Nothing can change it: The record is completed! The name of Abraham Lincoln will be cherished by the friends of liberty and freedom throughout the world,as long as freedom has a votary upon it.

Moving on to implicate the slaveholding aristocracy - the Davises and the Toombses, said Trumbull cleverly - in the assassination, this speech prepared those listening to it to favour an approach to Reconstruction which would preserve the work of the Great Emancipator. The success of the efforts of the speakers was reflected in the adoption by the meeting of a Radical-inspired resolution, "That the death of Abraham Lincoln shall be avenged, and that we will stand by Andrew Johnson ... in all his efforts to put down this wicked rebellion and to eradicate slavery from the bounds of this republic."[1]

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1 Chicago Times, April 17, 1865.

In New York, on the same day, advocates of Radical Reconstruction addressed street meetings, using Lincoln's death to stir up feeling against the rebel leaders. In that city, General Benjamin F. Butler, "military aide to the civilian Radicals", asserted: "If he (Lincoln) could have forseen that forgiveness meant assassination, that clemency meant death, if he could have forseen that the devilish spirit of rebellion would have gone into the sick-room and stricken down the man (Seward) whom God had spared a little longer, he would have known that mildness and clemency to traitors is cruelty to thousands."[1]

Radical determination to exploit fully the opportunity offered by Lincoln's assassination was soon expressed in the organization by Congress of a funeral procession across the Northern States and designed to give the Presidential remains maximum public exposure. On April 21, the funeral train bearing Lincoln's body pulled slowly out of Washington on the first stage of a journey which brought the President's death home with fresh impact to the inhabitants of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. According to Herndon,

> The passage of the funeral train westward through country, village, and city, winding across the territory of vast States, along a track of more than fifteen hundred miles, was a pageant without a parallel in the history of the continent or the world. At every halt in the sombre march vast crowds, such as never before had collected together filed past the catafalque for a glimpse of the dead chieftain's face. Farmers left their farms, workmen left their shops, societies and soldiers marched in solid columns, and the great cities poured forth their population in countless masses.

It was estimated that at each major city thousands paid a last tribute to the late President: 30,000 in Harrisburg, 500,000 in Philadelphia, 100,000 in the procession alone in New York City, 1,000,000 in Cleveland, over 50,000 in Columbus, and 150,000 or more in Chicago. At each small town, draped in

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1 Chicago, Times, April 17, 1865; Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 64.

mourning, thousands turned out to see the train pass through, even by torchlight in the early hours of the morning. On the train, and doubtless both gratified and impressed by the power exercised by the dead President, were leading Radicals Washburne, Arnold, Harlan, Julian and Trumbull, and their allies Yates of Illinois and Governors Morton of Indiana and Stone of Iowa. At major cities, pertinent addresses were delivered. Well aware that only the Republican Party could profit from this prolonged mourning for and hero-worship of a Republican President, Democrat Charles Mason bitterly described the three week long procession as similar to the "crafty skill of Mark Anthony (sic) in displaying to the Roman people the bloody mantle of Caesar." The Radicals, he alleged wished "to make ... political capital out of the murder. They wished to strengthen their hands and brutalize the hearts of the Northern people till there shall be general concurrence in all measures of confiscation and extermination." The funeral sermon delivered by Schuyler Colfax when the funeral train reached Chicago, which exploited the martyred Great Emancipator and merciful Lincoln in a call for Radical Reconstruction, suggests that Mason's analysis was correct.[1]

Eulogies such as that of Colfax played a vital role in Radical propaganda in 1865. Indeed, the task of blending myth and reality in a closely sustained argument on behalf of Radical Reconstruction gave Charles Sumner the opportunity to reveal his consummate skill as a political orator. In his Lincoln Oration in Boston in the summer of 1865, Sumner exploited the variety of Lincoln myths, but especially those of the Great Emancipator and the Martyr to Liberty, in an appeal for Radical policies in general and Negro suffrage in particular which even admiring Republican colleagues found cunning.[2] In addition, there was clearly co-operation with anti-slavery

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1 Sandburg, War Years, IV, 393-412; Paul M. Angle, Herndon's Life of Lincoln (Greenwich, Conn., 1961 ed.), 438; Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 5.

2 See below, pp. 134-35.

preachers, whose influence made them valuable allies. The influential Reverend Phillips Brooks, invited to address a meeting of the Union League in Philadelphia, did good service to the Radical cause when he declared: "O God, Thou has Thy martyr for Thy cause, assert that cause until slavery be rooted out from all the borders of our land." Sermons promoting Radical policies were published so that they might reach the widest possible audience. Thus the Loyal League Society, under the direction of its president Francis Lieber, intellectual ally of the Radicals, published Joseph Parrish Thompson's sermon of April 30, "Abraham Lincoln; his Life and Its Lessons." Also aimed at a wide audience was a proclamation from President Johnson, clearly owing much to Radical inspiration, which declared that the Government had evidence that Southern rebels had conspired to assassinate Lincoln. The Radical press also promoted the Lincoln myths. The Chicago Tribune told its readers that, "The nation mourns. Its agony is great. Its grief is dumb. Never before have the American people been so stricken. Our President has fallen in the prime of his energy and usefulness, another martyr to the demon - Slavery." No chance to publicize Radical arguments was lost.[1]

Radical exploitation of myths about Lincoln was not confined to the Northern States. At public meetings held in the occupied South, following Lincoln's death, Northern white orators and Southern black spokesmen, with an eye to both black votes in the South and public opinion in the North, eulogized Lincoln in terms calculated to aid the cause of Radical Reconstruction.

At a meeting in Lafayette Square, New Orleans, on April 22, at which several anti-slavery Union generals spoke, many themes in the Radical analysis of Lincoln's death were subtly raised. The death of Lincoln, a

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1 Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 75; Freidel, Union Pamphlets, II, 1149; Thomas J. Pressly, Americans Interpret Their Civil War (Princeton, 1965), 59; Chicago Tribune, April 17, 1865, quoted in Hazel Catherine Wolf, On Freedom's Altar: The Martyr Complex in the Abolition Movement (Madison, Wis., 1952), 144-45.

hero of liberty, was condemned as the act of those in rebellion. Though General Hurlbut trusted the murder would prove "an act of individual baseness", he made clear his view that it was "the result of the great crime which four years ago was aimed at the life of the nation ..." The Great Emancipator was presented as the nation's martyr. "As an individual", said General Banks, "Mr. Lincoln had no enemy. He died because he represented us." Those "loyal hearts" for whom Lincoln died were offered the consolation that, "It was for our good that God took him; it was the great crowning act of his career that he should die." One reason it might have been an appropriate time for Lincoln to die was implied in General Hurlbut's assertion that Lincoln had been above politics. None before Lincoln had proved so pure, so gentle and so good, said Hurlbut. "There were no politics, no party in his administration. Elected as the representative of a party, he at once became the representative of all loyal hearts." Such an interpretation of Lincoln's presidency was commonly used by advocates of Radical Reconstruction to suggest that Lincoln had been too holy to understand the nature of the rebels to whom he had shown undue leniency. A more direct use of Lincoln on behalf of the Radical programme came in Banks' somewhat inaccurate assertion, addressed to blacks in the audience, that, "Abraham Lincoln gave his word that you will be free, and enjoy all the rights invested in all citizens."[1]

In Mobile on April 23, a meeting was called by the state superintendent of free labour, Chaplain Thomas W. Conway, so that coloured inhabitants of that city might learn their rights and privileges. Conway, who was to play an important role in the implementation of Radical Reconstruction in Louisiana, addressed this significant meeting for one and a half hours. In the course of this speech, Lincoln emerged as the Great Emancipator who had been killed

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1 Black Republican, April 29, 1865; New Orleans Tribune, April 23, 1865.

by rebels, but whose works - the Emancipation Proclamation was singled out - would live on:[1] "The great President - the true friend of the oppressed - the defender of human rights - the author of the Emancipation Proclamation is gone - gone to the eternal rest of the righteous ... He has been murdered by a rebel, in whose heart the devil had a dwelling, and whose soul was fired with the worst flames of hell. But his works will live, ... (and) will be a monument that will rise higher as human life goes on."

Once Radical Reconstruction was under way in the South, the myths relating to Lincoln were utilized to win black support for the newly established Southern wing of the Republican Party. Thus in South Carolina in 1867, Radicals used the image of the Emancipator in a blatant attempt to play upon the ex-slaves' affection for and gratitude towards Lincoln. Anxious to carry the entire Negro vote in the fall elections in Lexington, they printed their own ballots to be distributed on election day. These ballots, according to an informant of Charles Sumner, "were to contain a sign ... and by it, we hoped to conquer." "I enclose a ticket," he continued, "and you will see the sign - no less than Abraham Lincoln, the martyr to Liberty -". Apparently the stratagem proved successful, for he was able to add, "no coloured man dared refuse it - nor did one single one fail to vote it ... When our ticket distributors ... showed their tickets with the face of Lincoln, their eyes beamed with gratitude, and one worn out freedman exclaimed 'Tank God, I tought he would send you to us!'"[2]

As part of the campaign to organize black votes, pro-Republican Black papers were established in the South. One of the most notable of these, the New Orleans Black Republican was founded with the assistance of Thomas W. Conway in 1865. Representing the opinion of whites involved in the

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1 Black Republican, April 29, 1865.
2 Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 7.

organization of Reconstruction in Louisiana and of conservative blacks, the paper served as a vehicle for Radical Republican propaganda. In its pages were frequent references to the hero of emancipation, and the paper made much use of the developing mythical images of Lincoln. Three years later, a gropp of white and black men in Texas established a newspaper which aimed, as its first editorial announced, to act as a friend and adviser in every coloured man's home. The image of the Great Emancipator was used to win black support for the paper and for the Republican Party.[1]

The concepts of the Great Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty were central to the manipulation of his death by those who advocated a Radical approach to Reconstruction. Other relevant images of the late President were, however, also exploited for this purpose, giving rise to the development of a number of lesser myths loosely associated with that of the Martyr-Emancipator. Once again, sermons on Lincoln's death proved fertile ground for the growth of such myths, and this in part explains the Biblical character of such images of Lincoln as the divinely inspired emancipator, the Moses and the Messiah of the black race.

Just as it was not hard for a people accustomed to seeing God's will in contemporary events to recognize that the Almighty had had his reasons for removing Lincoln, so it was not difficult for them, and especially for churchmen, to detect in retrospect the will of God manifesting itself in Lincoln's life. To those who hated slavery, there could be no clearer example of this than the late President's decision to emancipate the slaves.

The concept of Lincoln as a divinely inspired emancipator had, however, emerged well before his death. Garrison used the image in a very general

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1 John W. Blassingame, Black New Orleans, 1860-1880 (Chicago, 1976 ed.), 54; The Freedman's Press, July 18, August 15, 1868.

sense when in a letter to fellow abolitionist Oliver Johnson he urged that there should be no trivial criticism by anti-slavery men of Lincoln and the Republican Party, or of other parties involved in the struggle against the slave-oligarchy, "for they are instruments in the hands of God to carry forward and help achieve the great object of emancipation for which we have so long been striving." The image was used more specifically of Lincoln as anti-slavery forces struggled to persuade the President that it was God's will that he should free the slaves. William Barnard, member of a delegation of Progressive Friends which called upon the President in June 1862 to present an emancipation memorial expressed a wish that Lincoln "might, under divine guidance, be led to free the slaves and thus save the nation from destruction." The same blend of national saviour and divinely inspired emancipator appeared in a memorial drawn up at a meeting of Chicago Christians and presented to Lincoln on September 13, 1862, which put forward the belief of the memorialists that, "in Divine Providence you have been called to the Presidency to speak the word of justice and authority which shall free the bondman and save the nation." The issuing of the proclamations of emancipation confirmed this view of Lincoln. In August 1863 Quakeress Eliza P. Gurney wrote to him to express both her gratitude for the anti-slavery edicts and her hope "that the Almighty ... may strengthen thee to accomplish all the blessed purposes, which, in the unerring counsel of his will and wisdom, I do assuredly believe he did design to make thee instrumental in accomplishing, when he appointed thee ... Chief Magistrate ..."[1]

After the assassination, this concept was incorporated into Lincoln mythology. It suited anti-slavery preachers' purposes very well that Lincoln should be viewed as an instrument of God. For whether applied to saving the nation or freeing the slaves - and for the anti-slavery man these two roles

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1 Garrison to Oliver Johnson, April 19, 1861, in Garrison, Life, IV, 21; New York Tribune, June 21, 1862, in Lincoln, Works, V, 279; Richard B. Harwell, ed., The Union Reader (New York, 1958), 153; Eliza P. Gurney to Lincoln, Aug. 8, 1863, Lincoln, Works, VII, 536.

attributed to the heroic Lincoln were inseparable - this image of the late President gave, as it were, Divine endorsement to the abolition of slavery. Illinois minister the Reverend Dr. Kidder was convinced, "that Abraham Lincoln was a man of destiny raised up by the Almighty for the national salvation", and Theodore Cuyler stressed that there had been no mistake "when the Almighty made Abraham Lincoln for this great national crisis, ..." Lincoln's decision to free the slaves certainly influenced Cuyler's view. Referring more specifically to emancipation, Joseph Parrish Thompson described Lincoln as "trained of God for his great work, and called of God in the fullness of time", a Biblical phrase which conjured up images of Hebrew prophets. In Boston City Council's memorial Alexander H. Rice declared that, "God revealed him to us as a great instrument of his power in delivering the oppressed from their bondage ..." It was an image that remained popular. The following year, as Congress officially mourned Lincoln, strong expression was given to the concept of the divinely inspired Great Emancipator in the prayer of the Chaplain of the House of Representatives. Reinforcing, by implication, Radical emphasis upon emancipation as crucial to the existence and future of America, Dr. Boynton thanked God for leading Lincoln through the trials and sorrow of war "until he saw that our cause would prosper only by justice; and then, inspired by Thee, he uttered those words of power that changed three million slaves into men - the one act that has made his name illustrious forever."[1]

This theory of divine inspiration fitted in admirably with a Radical interpretation of why the President had to die. It could be easily reconciled with the argument that his death was in accordance with divine purposes.

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1 Chicago Times, April 18, 1865; Our Martyr President, 167; Thompson, Abraham Lincoln, in Freidel, Union Pamphlets, 1170; Hon. Alexander H. Rice, address at public meeting, Boston, April 17, 1865, in (Boston City Council), A Memorial of Abraham Lincoln (Boston, 1865), 53; Cong. Globe, 39 Cong. I sess., 799.

In short, the Union had been saved, the slaves had been freed, and thus Lincoln had completed the work ordained by God and his life had served its purpose. This also fitted in with the private view of many Radicals, mentioned earlier, that Lincoln would not have been likely to co-operate with them over reconstruction. In a letter to his wife, Zachariah Chandler gave expression to the latter interpretation when he wrote that God kept Lincoln in office as long as he was useful and then had placed a better man in his place. Eulogists using the tradition in sermons or speeches designed to win support for Radical Reconstruction preferred to emphasize that God wisely removed him at the height of his glory. As one eulogist expressed this idea:

> God ... removes his own useful and honored instruments, at dates which seem to us untimely, and in modes, that, although painful and even shocking to themselves and to the survivors and friends who mourn them, yet do, in reality, round the course of the departed as into a more epic symmetry, and crown the hero's or statesman's career of enfranchisement and victory, as with something that resembles the palm of religious martyrdom.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that the preachers did not take this line of reasoning any further. Had they done so, they might have undermined their powerful argument that a representative of the Southern slaveholding rebels had killed Lincoln, and to conclude that John Wilkes Booth, too, was simply an instrument of Divine Providence.[1]

From the tradition that Lincoln had been divinely inspired it was but a short step, especially for those steeped in Biblical imagery, to the view that God had called Lincoln and watched over him in much the same way as he had the Old Testament heroes and prophets. This line of thought was indicated in the text chosen for his sermon on the President's death by Theodore Cuyler:

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1 Chandler to his wife, April 22, 1865, quoted in Williams, Lincoln and the Radicals, 374; Our Martyr President, 23.

"And the Lord Blessed Abraham in all things." Some linked the former Chief Magistrate with one Biblical figure, some with several; Abraham, David and Joshua were frequently mentioned. It was, however, with one prophet in particular that his eulogists were concerned to associate Lincoln, and there emerged in 1865 a tradition which presented Lincoln as the Moses of the nation and of the Black race.[1]

There had been precedents for this during Lincoln's lifetime. In May 1861, abolitionist Samuel J. May urged Northerners to uphold the President as the Jews had upheld Moses. In August 1862, the Reverend Moncure D. Conway linked Lincoln with Moses in an ironic attack upon presidential slowness in adopting emancipation. The emancipation edict brought this image once more to the minds of those who opposed slavery. The Commonwealth informed its readers that, "It was not long ago that the President of the United States seemed to be the second Pharaoh, refusing every sign and in the presence of the Destroying Angel, to let God's people go. But now he has changed the character; now he seems to be the Moses leading Israel as far as Pisgah, - where he stands in full view of the distant Promised Land." The paper doubted whether Lincoln would ever see that promised land of emancipation: like Moses, it was alleged, he lacked faith." Other references to Moses were more charitable to both the prophet and Lincoln. War Democrat E.C. Ingersoll urged a mass meeting at Chicago to support emancipation, arguing that, "God commanded Moses to whip the Egyptians and every means was used to crush them. Fire, flood and thunder were used, and the first-born smitten. Whatever means were necessary and decided upon by the President

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1 Our Martyr President, 159; Eddy, The Martyr to Liberty, 18; Prayer of Rev. C. Boynton in House of Representatives, February 12, 1866; Cong. Globe, 39 Cong., I sess., 799; Rev. J.E. Rankin, Moses and Joshua, Discourse on the Death of Lincoln, Winthrop Church, Charlestown ... April 19, 1865 (Boston, 186-).

every loyal man was bound to obey." From Iowa, Caleb Russell and Sallis A. Fenton wrote to express the approval of Iowa Quakers for his emancipation proclamation, and to promise that they, "like Aaron and Him of old would gladly hold up thy hands as they did the hands of Moses."[1]

It was, however, in 1865 that the Mosaic concept of Lincoln found widespread support among anti-slavery eulogists, and many a congregation which might otherwise have missed the point was brought to recognize in Lincoln a modern Moses, though whether he was visualized leading the Negroes out of slavery or his people through the wilderness of civil war into the promised land of reconstruction was a matter of taste. Many stressed that he was the nation's Moses, the man "who led a vast republic through its wilderness of perilous confusions, and its Red Sea of horrible carnage...." Henry Ward Beecher's Mosaic image of Lincoln is typical of many such, although Beecher also inserts into this section of his sermon an appeal to the traditions of Lincoln the hero-martyr and man of the people:

> Again a great leader of the people has passed through toil, sorrow, battle, and war, and come near to the promised land of peace, into which he might not pass over. Who shall recount our martyr's sufferings for this people?

Beecher went on to do just that, giving a list of trials and sufferings which made the problems of the Biblical Moses seem relatively insignificant. Few eulogists failed to point out the major parallel between the careers of the President and the prophet, namely, as Beecher noted, that both had, after saving their people, died at the very moment of their ultimate triumph. Clearly many anticipated a favourable response to the image of Lincoln as the hero who had guided the nation through the secession crisis and civil

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1 Samuel J. May, "A Sermon on our Civil War", Preached at Syracuse, May 5, 1861, Liberator, May 24, 1861; Commonwealth, Sept. 13, Oct. 11, 1862; Remarks of E.C. Ingersoll at Emancipation Mass Meeting, Chicago, Sept. 27, 1862, in Chicago Times, Sept. 29, 1862; Caleb Russell and Sallie A. Fenton to Lincoln, Dec. 27, 1862, Lincoln, Works, VI, 39n.

war until, as E. Nason declared, he "like Moses on the summit of Mount Pisgah, came to die in the prospect of that promised land which Heaven did not permit him, while on earth, to enter."[1]

The idea that Lincoln had not been allowed to enter the promised land of reconstruction was especially relevant to the purposes of anti-slavery eulogists who argued in favour of Radical Reconstruction, for it implied that God considered other hands better fitted for the work that was to follow the defeat of the South. This tied in particularly well with the concept of a gentle, merciful President who had been an instrument of God both in freeing the slaves and, through martyrdom, in confirming forever their emancipation. In terms of this analysis, Lincoln the divinely inspired Emancipator soon merged with Lincoln the Black Man's Moses, whose great work was complete. In Englishwoman E. Hardinge's "Great Funeral Oration", delivered in New York, Lincoln was both the Great Emancipator and the Moses of the slaves:

> above the murmur of the storm arose in his ear the grand Mosaic cry of "Let my people go!" and although that voice has been thundering down the ages, and a burning bush and a fire-crowned Sinai has flashed before the eyes of despots in every century of time, whenever God's oppressed and captive people cried to Him for deliverance, three thousand years has seen that awful charge held disregarded, mocked and spit upon, until good Abraham Lincoln, in 1863, proclaimed it in "Liberty throughout the land, to every inhabitant thereof!" God bless him for it!

The President had become the "modern Moses" of the black race. According to the Reverend C.S. Robinson, the slaves had expected Lincoln as the Israelites did Moses, and Henry Ward Beecher confirmed that, "the dusky children, ... looked upon him as that Moses whom God sent before them to lead them out of the land of bondage ..." Richard Eddy looked into the future to see the black race turning to Lincoln's grave as the Hebrews turn

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1 Our Martyr President, 34, 55, 81, 165; Elias Nason, Eulogy on Abraham Lincoln ... Boston, May 3, 1865 (Boston, 1865), 14.

to Mount Sion, and in Dr. Gaddis' sermon the images of the martyr and Moses were combined for even greater effect when the minister cried out, "O, Liberty! here tonight, on thy bloody but triumphant altar, we offer thee the Moses of the nineteenth century ... the idol of freemen everywhere..."[1]

Satisfying and useful as the Mosaic concept of Lincoln proved for anti-slavery eulogists, it gave way to an even more glorious image as his admirers recognized that there existed a strong parallel between the martyred President and Christ. In this case, there were no precedents. The act of emancipation had brought visions of the coming of Christ to the anti-slavery New York Independent and the Radical Chicago Tribune, but there was no suggestion that Lincoln had become a Messiah figure. In 1865, however, as the Elevator was to recall two years later:[2]

> Then in how many sermons did the ministers of the gospel recognize Christ as "proclaiming liberty to the captives, the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God," in the Proclamation of Emancipation and its military enforcement by the President; and after his martyrdom how many compared him with Chrise (sic.), and noted the coincidences of their deaths in respect to time and significance.

The concept of the dying god, which history and literature reveal to have been perenially popular with both primitive and civilized peoples is one into which Lincoln could quite easily be fitted.[3] Visualizing him as the one sent by God to save the Union or free the slaves, as the prophet, the Moses even, of his country or the Negro race gave Lincoln an aura of divinity, and this was strengthened by the rigorous exclusion by eulogists of any characteristic of the late President which might be considered less than

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1 Emma Hardinge, The Great Funeral Oration on Abraham Lincoln ... April 16, 1865, at Cooper Institute, New York (New York, n.d.), 17, Our Martyr President, 47, 91; Eddy, The Martyr to Liberty 18, Gaddis, Sermon, 9.

2 New York Independent and Chicago Tribune quoted in Liberator, Oct. 3, 1862; Elevator (San Francisco), June 21, 1867.

3 See Frazier, The Golden Bough, III.

godlike. No reference was ever made by them to, for example, his allegedly bawdy humour; the only faults deprecated qualities such as, in the eyes of the eulogists, his excessive mercy. Indeed, since being a god has tended to be a serious matter ever since the Greek and Roman gods went out of fashion, and especially among Christians, Lincoln's humour was lost in the overwhelming emphasis upon his gravity and melancholy. Similarly, Lincoln's doubts and fears were forgotten and his political sagacity ignored or denied, and reverend minds contorted themselves in the struggle to explain away the undeniable and, to the preachers, distressing fact that this most holy of men had been killed in such a den of vice as a theatre.[1] What was to churchmen perhaps Lincoln's most serious fault, the obscurity of his religious beliefs, was either glossed over by pointing out that his actions were proof enough of his Christianity, or eradicated by quoting from some conversation which the speaker had heard or had been told of in which Lincoln had declared himself wholly committed to the Christian faith. Finally, the superhuman being thus created was shown to have laid down his life in retribution for the sins of his people, slavery generally being seen as the foremost of these, so that they might be saved from Civil War and disunion, the consequences of their evil ways.

Once Lincoln had been transformed into a dying god, it was inevitable that he should be viewed as a kind of second Messiah, particularly since he died at the very time when thoughts of Christ's martyrdom filled the minds of the faithful. If he had not, like Christ, risen from total obscurity, at least his rise to national prominence had been sudden compared to that of most politicians. Little was known of his childhood and youth, and his father, like the Biblical Joseph, though a somewhat shadowy figure, was known

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1 Sandburg, War Years, IV, 358.

to have been a carpenter. Lincoln had come at the hour of his country's need, and if Americans had not recognized their saviour as such that was entirely in keeping with the parallel, for neither had Christ been recognized by those He had come to save. Like Christ, Lincoln had died a violent martyr's death, and Fate, playing into the hands of the myth-makers, had decreed that he should be shot on Good Friday. With this amazing evidence at hand it would have been surprising if those surveying Lincoln's life had not recognized the significance of his Second Inaugural Address. No longer were its closing lines simply an eloquent plea on the part of a victorious leader for mercy. They were, rather, tantamount to the President forgiving his killer - the preachers felt certain he would have done so had he ever regained consciousness - for it was, as many eulogists had pointed out, slavery by its servant Booth that had murdered Lincoln, and in the Inaugural Lincoln had forgiven the South and so the slaveholders.[1] For Boston's Reverend Warren E. Cudworth, and others, there could be no doubt that,"could our President have spoken after he was shot, he would have forgiven the cowardly perpetrator of this inhuman act, and rounded the parallel with a final and complete imitation of our Lord's example."[2]

Reflecting the influence which the timing of the assassination had in shaping the growth of the Messiah image of Lincoln, Henry Bellows observed that: "Meanwhile Heaven rejoices this Easter morning in the resurrection of our lost leader, honored in the day of his death; dying on the anniversary of our Lord's great sacrifice, a mighty sacrifice himself for the sins of a whole people." The particular sin with which Bellows was concerned was slavery, and the Messiah image of Lincoln, like that of the Great Emancipator and Martyr-Emancipator was being used by Bellows as part of his sustained plea

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1 Basler, Lincoln Legend, 180.
2 Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 95.

for the anti-slavery policies later associated with Radical Reconstruction. Some preachers drew more clearly the implications for Reconstruction of this association of Lincoln with Christ. The Reverend Crane, arguing in favour of Radical policies first presented Lincoln as a second Messiah:

> It is no blasphemy against the Son of God and the Saviour of men that we declare the fitness of the slaying of the second Father of our Republic on the anniversary of the day on which He was slain. Jesus Christ died for the world, Abraham Lincoln for his country.

The parallel thus established was then used to secure support for a firm but just attitude to Reconstruction:

> As the tragedy of the cross has startled tens of thousands of sinners into a recognition of their sins, while it expressed the inflexibility of God's law and authority, so we may hope that the tragedy of last Friday night will startle the multitude of rebels, North as well as South, into a recognition of their crime, stiffen the government, which might otherwise bend, into requisite rigidness, and hasten the consummation of peace for which we devoutly pray.

Similarly, Joseph Medill, editor of the radical Chicago Tribune, published an editorial which declared: "our hearts instinctively recognize the relation of leader and follower between our martyred Lord and all those who die because the wicked hate righteousness."[1]

Emerging simultaneously with this image of Lincoln as America's new Messiah, dying for the sins of the nation or of the South, both of which in Radical terminology equated with slavery, was that of the Black Man's Messiah. Most anti-slavery preachers were quite sure that Negro Americans would see him as such. Richard Eddy predicted that blacks would turn to the grave of the Emancipator as Christians turned to Gethsemane, and G.W. Colman agreed that Lincoln had been a man "whom an enfranchised race have looked up to as their liberator, their earthly saviour next to Him who died for all mankind..." Recalling the emotional reception given to Lincoln by Negro slaves in Richmond shortly before his death, Charles S. Robinson claimed that the slaves:

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1 Our Martyr President, 62; Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, 97-98.

> expected him, as the Israelites did Moses. Some, no doubt, imagined he was a deity. They were unsophisticated and ignorant, and that good, kind man seemed so like a being from heaven. They said he would come. They prayed he would come. They waited for him to come. And then he came. When those untutored sons of slavery saw him in the streets of the rebel capital, after its capture, they fairly blasphemed, without being aware of it. He seemed to them and their children a second Messiah. He never broke a promise to their hope. When they were certain he had uttered one word, they rested on it, as they would do on God's.

Robinson clearly intended to arouse in his audience a feeling that Lincoln's promises to the blacks, or the promises he was alleged to have represented, had a quasi-divine quality and could not be broken. At the same time, by dwelling on such touching images of black hero-worship of Lincoln, anti-slavery men sought to excite sympathy for the freedmen amongst white Americans who mourned the President. The concept of Lincoln as the Moses and Messiah of the black race was also used by Robinson, as by other ministers, to confirm his status as their emancipator, reinforcing the traditions of the Great Emancipator and Martyr-Emancipator and imputing an aura of divinity to the act of emancipation.[1]

Thus all such images of Lincoln - the divinely-inspired Great Emancipator and Martyr, the Moses and Messiah of America and the Negro slaves - were grist to the mill of the Radicals and their allies. The myths were frequently blended for greater potency, but whatever the combination of images of Lincoln the message was the same. These emancipation traditions were used, then, to suggest that a seal had been set upon Lincoln's anti-slavery acts and upon the Reconstruction policies which those who exploited the traditions advocated. In the politics of the early Reconstruction era, Lincoln became the mythical hero of anti-slavery in America.

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1 Eddy, The Martyr to Liberty, 18; Colman, Discourse, 10; Our Martyr President, 91-92.

The mythical images of Lincoln developed by anti-slavery men at the time of his assassination were to play a significant role in political rhetoric, and particularly that of Republicans, during the important election campaigns of 1866 and 1868. Indications of their political usefulness, not only to Radicals but also to their opponents, were, however, apparent in the months between Lincoln's death and the opening of the 1866 campaign. This can be illustrated by glancing at a speech made by Charles Sumner during the summer of 1865 and political use of Lincoln in Congressional debates in this period.

On June 1, 1865, Charles Sumner delivered an eulogy of the late President in which he incorporated mythical images of Lincoln into a powerful appeal for equal rights for black Americans, and in particular for Negro suffrage. Many mythical and non-mythical themes, including the potent national myth of the Founding Fathers, were combined by Sumner to give force to his argument, but it was above all the heroic Lincoln who, appropriately, dominated the speech.

Tracing the course of Lincoln's life, Sumner presented him as the railsplitter, born in a log house, who rose from these humble circumstances to become President. In his political career he became, according to Sumner, a "champion of Liberty" and "champion of the Right", who would not see the black man excluded from the promises of the Declaration of Independence, and who was chosen by Providence "to wage the new battle for the liberty of the Republic on the foundation of Human Rights." This image of Lincoln fitted in well with the call for equal rights for black men central to Sumner's address, but this call was to be even more closely associated with the heroic Lincoln.

Developing an anti-slavery interpretation of the Rebellion as "nothing but Slavery in arms", Sumner prepared the way for the interpretation of Lincoln's assassination which was central to his argument by describing how from the first slavery pursued the life of the hero-President. A tribute to

Lincoln's role in emancipation followed as Sumner told how the President "who leaned so closely upon the popular heart" gave expression to the will of the nation by declaring the slaves free, and "thus enrolled himself among the world's Emancipators." Then, in Sumner's account, as peace returned, the saviour of the nation was struck down by "the minions of Slavery" to become the Martyr to Liberty. To Sumner it seemed that the assassination was a judgement of the Lord, perhaps sent "to set a sacred, irreversible seal upon the good he (Lincoln) had done, and to put Emancipation beyond all mortal question." However, to secure the permanence of emancipation was only part of the Radical mission. The images of Lincoln as Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty which he had developed were now used by Sumner to attack the former rebels who, he said, sought to deny to black men the rights promised by the Declaration of Independence. Emphasizing again that Lincoln had been murdered by "Traitorous Assassination", Sumner declared that it was not only slavery that had taken the hero's life, but also the belief that human rights could depend upon a man's colour. Thus depicting the murderers of Lincoln as those who sought to deny equal rights to black men, Sumner concluded his address by calling, in the name of the heroic and martyred Lincoln, for Negro suffrage.[1]

Radicals also played upon the images of Lincoln as Emancipator and Martyr in speeches delivered in Congress during the winter of 1865-1866. When Congress met in December 1865, the Radicals, who during the summer had become increasingly hostile towards President Johnson's policies regarding the states recently in rebellion, used the heroic Lincoln in attacks upon Executive Reconstruction and to endorse their own approach to the problem of reconstructing the nation.[2] Thus, for example, Henry Wilson, defending the necessity for a bill designed to protect the freedmen, referred to the

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1 "Promises of the Declaration of Independence, and Abraham Lincoln", an eulogy on Lincoln delivered before the Municipal Authorities of the City of Boston, by Charles Sumner, June 1, 1865, in The Works of Charles Sumner, 15 vols. (Boston, 1875-83), 369-428, pp. 374-79, 389-90, 397, 404-5, 407, 422-28.

2 On the development of opposition to Johnson's Reconstruction policy see below, pp. 142-45.

Black Codes[1] adopted in South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana, and commented, "Abraham Lincoln, in that proclamation that made his name dear to our common humanity, made the slaves of Louisiana free, forever free. Has that State a right to enact a measure to demean, degrade, enslave the men Abraham Lincoln made free?" In supporting this bill, Sumner similarly played upon the image of Lincoln as Emancipator when he argued that measures to protect at least the civil rights of black men would complete the work of the Emancipation Proclamation. The heroic Lincoln was also used in appeals for voting rights for blacks. Thus Josiah B. Grinnell of Iowa, speaking in the House of Representatives on behalf of a bill to provide for Negro suffrage in the District of Columbia and describing the ballot as a powerful means of protection for blacks, declared, "The late martyred President, who sounded forth the trumpet call, and never beat a retreat, meditated the joint gift of the ballot to the loyal, and amnesty to the denuded rebels..." [2]

The image of Lincoln as a merciful hero was, however, better suited to the rhetoric of those who favoured rapid restoration of the rebel states to their former place in the government of the nation and who consequently sustained President Johnson's Reconstruction policy. Indeed, Johnson's Republican and Democratic supporters were already presenting his lenient Reconstruction policy as the continuation of that of the martyred Lincoln,[3] a theme which would be central to their campaign in the election of 1866. The image of Lincoln as Emancipator was probably not, for the most part, politically useful to Johnson's supporters, most of whom were hostile to Radicalism and seemed to believe, or perhaps wished to believe, that, as New York Democrat John W. Chanler claimed, "The slave is free, and the

1 See below, p. 143.

2 Remarks of Henry Wilson in Senate, Dec. 13, 1865; Charles Sumner in Senate, Dec. 20, 1865 and Josiah B. Grinnell in House of Representatives, Jan. 12, 1866: Congressional Globe, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 39, 91, 224.

3 James Dixon of Connecticut referring to arguments raised by Senator James F. Doolittle, in Senate, Feb. 27, 1866, and Thomas T. Davis of New York speaking in House of Representatives, Feb. 28, 1866: Congressional Globe, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 1047, 1086.

freedman fully protected."[1] However, Representative Thomas T. Davis of New York, who made several appeals to the memory of Lincoln in a speech defending Johnson's Reconstruction policy delivered in Congress in February, 1866, developed the image of Lincoln as the Emancipator "whose fiat struck the shackles from three million bondmen", as, recalling Lincoln's prophecy that the nation could not endure half free and half slave, he expressed a hope that the time would never come when the nation could not exist "half white and half colored" and that legislation would not be adopted that was likely to provoke a collision of races.[2]

Thus mythical images of Lincoln were present in the rhetoric of both opponents and supporters of Johnson during the winter of 1865-1866. Doubtless appeals to Lincoln's memory were an effective form of argument, for heroic images of the late President were fresh in the minds of members of this Republican-dominated Congress. One example which illustrates this is that of Solomon Foot of Vermont taking the opportunity, during his remarks on the death of a fellow Senator, to recall "the poor Kentucky boy;...the martyr President, who, having saved his country from the great rebellion of all history, and redeemed a race from the bondage of centuries, falling by the assassin's hand of treason, went down to the grave amid a nation's tears..." [3] However, it was to be some months before the congressional elections of 1866 provided an opportunity to judge the effectiveness of such appeals in the wider context of a national campaign.

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1 John W. Chanler in House of Representatives, Jan. 12, 1866: Congressional Globe, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., 217.

2 Remarks quoted from speech of Feb. 28, 1866, op.cit.

3 Remarks of Dec. 7, 1865: Congressional Globe, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 51.

Chapter Four

The Heroic Lincoln as Political Myth

I: The Election of 1866

> The only trouble with a living President is that he lives. The virtue of a dead one is that he is gone, and can be praised with safety by those who were incapable of praising his virtues while he lived.[1]

In April, 1865 and during the summer that followed Appomattox, Radical Republicans and other anti-slavery men exploited Northern grief over Lincoln's assassination in their call for an approach to Reconstruction which would preserve the fruits of the Federal victory and ensure the permanence of emancipation. The potential political usefulness of mythical concepts of the late President was demonstrated in their addresses on his death, but in 1865 there were no national elections in which Republicans could determine the effectiveness of such concepts as political argument. Though Lincoln myths appeared in party rhetoric during the intervening months, it was not until the summer of 1866 that their use was demonstrated and usefulness tested in a national election campaign. The following analysis of political use of the heroic Lincoln during that campaign focusses upon the Northern States, for it was there, where mythical images of Lincoln represented fundamental values cherished by postwar society, that such images were widely utilized.

In his thoroughly researched 1930 monograph on Presidential Reconstruction under Andrew Johnson, Howard K. Beale wrote of the 1866 elections that, "Personal defamation, shouts of 'Copperhead' and 'traitor' against political and economic opponents, unreasoning passion, rodomotade,- claptrap rather than issues - dominated the campaign." He concluded that, "the Radicals forced their program upon the South by an evasion of issues and the clever use of propaganda in an election where the majority of the voters would have supported Johnson's policy had they been given a chance to express their preference on an issue squarely faced."[2] This echoed opinions

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1 William H. Seward at Niagara Falls, Sept. 1, 1866: New York World, Sept. 3, 1866, hereafter cited as World.

2 Howard K. Beale, The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction (New York, 1958 ed.), 9, 406.

expressed at the time of the campaign by such organs of anti-Radical sentiment as the New York Times and the New York World.[1] More recent studies of the period have inclined towards Eric L. McKitrick's view, put forward thirty years later, that the basic issue of 1866 was unusually clear-cut.[2] Yet Beale's point has been modified rather than dismissed. Kenneth M. Stampp in his 1965 history of Reconstruction stressed that demagoguery characterised the campaigns of both Johnson's friends and his victorious Republican opponents, a recent study of the election year by Patrick W. Riddleberger makes a similar point, and writing in 1970 David Donald summarized the contest of 1866 as follows: "Invoking the 'spirits of the martyred dead,' Republicans hostile to Johnson swept to victory in the fall congressional races, and it appeared that the new Congress would be overwhelmingly Radical."[3]

The fundamental issue of 1866 - the choice between Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction - was indeed clear-cut; but Congress had as yet no comprehensive programme of Reconstruction measures to present to the electorate. Republican leaders were well aware that their party, which at all levels of its organization had always represented a fusion of disparate interests, was divided over the issues involved in Reconstruction, and some measures which would later be seen by most Republican Congressmen as essential to the reorganization of the South were in 1866 played down. This was often true of Negro suffrage in particular, and even ardent advocates of black rights were prone to approach this still contentious issue indirectly.[4] Consequently, in order to encourage Republican unity and to enable the party to appeal to the electorate on the broadest possible basis, many Republican politicians and editors preferred carefully framed

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1 New York Times, Sept. 5, 8, 1866; World, Sept. 1, 7, 1866.

2 Eric L. McKitrick, Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction (Chicago and London, 1960), 421, 443; see also Stampp, op.cit., 118 and Allen W. Trelease, Reconstruction, The Great Experiment (New York, 1971), 66-67

3 Stampp, Reconstruction, 115-17; Patrick W. Riddleberger, 1866, The Critical Year Revisited (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1979), 202; David Donald, Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man (New York, 1970), 268

4 See below, p. 181.

appeals tovoters' emotions which played upon fundamental themes cherished by American society, and particularly those derived from the recent and highly emotive experience of war, to a calm and reasoned discussion of election issues. This made myth an especiallyuseful and potent form of political argument in 1866. However, as Stampp has pointed out,[1] the use of highly emotive language was not confined to Republicans. Analysis of the campaign waged by Johnson's adherents will show that political alignments prevailing in the summer and autumn of 1866 combined to produce a greater than usual similarity in both mythic and non-mythic themes in the rhetoric employed by politicians of opposing views.

This chapter sets out to analyse what Beale described as "claptrap", for the nature of the political rhetoric employed means that the elections of 1866 demonstrate more clearly than most the role played by myth in emotive appeals to voters. What a study of this rhetoric will suggest regarding the subject of this thesis is that because the political potency of myth depends upon its widespread acceptance, politicians of divergent and even conflicting views may seek to exploit the same mythic themes. As Seward recognized, attempts to capitalize politically on a dead hero are unlikely to be confined to those who recognized his virtues while he lived.[2]

From evidence presented it will be seen that several distinct groups used Lincoln myths in political argument in 1866. For the Republican Party the martyred hero was an integral part of a series of linked arguments and assertions which formed an arsenal of weapons to be used against Johnson and his allies. In addition the myths, particularly those relating to emancipation, were a tool of those politicians and anti-slavery preachers[3] who sought to win support for Radical policies and to create a state of mind in the North favourable to the idea of equal rights for

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1 Stampp, Reconstruction, 115-16.
2 See Seward's comment at Niagara Falls, Sept. 1, 1866, quoted above, p.138.
3 For example, Edward Beecher, George B. Cheever, Dr. Tiffany and Octavius B. Frothingham.

Southern blacks. At the same time, Johnson and his Republican supporters used the Martyr President in attacks upon opponents of Presidential Reconstruction. There was even the occasional attempt by a Democrat to exploit the heroic Lincoln. It will be shown that such use of the heroic Lincoln ranged from, at the simplest level, endorsement of party platforms and candidates by association with Lincoln either by means of a portrait or verbally, to the integration of mythic images of the late President, together with other mythic as well as non-mythic themes, into complex political arguments. Throughout the chapter it will be demonstrated that myths are adapted by divergent interests to suit the purposes of their political propaganda.

In such appeals to Lincoln's memory, politicians were seeking to exploit his role as heroic representative of the values of postwar Northern society, and in particular the ideals of patriotism and freedom. The New York Times revealed why all shades of opinion were anxious to do so when it described, "theveneration with which his name is regarded, and the respect which is all but universally expressed for his opinions."[1] For Republicans the heroic Lincoln also represented the ideal of party loyalty, which was of crucial importance to the leaders of an organization which had from its earliest days represented the fusion of disparate and sometimes conflicting views. In this respect the Times was again illuminating when it observed that, "it is undeniable that the great majority of the Republican Party revere the character and memory of the martyr President as the faithful exponent of their principles and purposes." Significantly this paper believed that the internal dissentions of the Republican Party had "strengthened rather than weakened the authority of his (Lincoln's) name."[2]

One reason why national myths are a favourite tool of politicians is because their appeal transcends social, economic, class and party

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1 New York Times, Oct. 13, 1866.
2 ibid.

distinctions, as political use of Lincoln myths in 1866 clearly shows. At the same time its' role in political debate may contribute to myth's popular growth, particularly when the myths concerned are associated with a dominant ideology. The basis of enduring mythical concepts of Lincoln should therefore be sought partly in political and especially Republican rhetoric of the years immediately following his death. Before this rhetoric and use of Lincoln myths is examined more closely, however, the events of the months between Lincoln's assassination and the 1866 congressional elections will be sketched.

By the time the campaign for these elections opened, there had been dramatic changes in the political situation in the North. During the summer and autumn of 1865 Lincoln's successor, President Andrew Johnson, had by public proclamations and private correspondence encouraged states formerly in rebellion to elect conventions which would draw up new state constitutions to meet certain basic requirements - repeal of the secession ordinances of 1861, repudiation of Confederate debts and agreement to honour the Union war debt, and recognition that slavery was permanently abolished.[1]

Due to a failure of communication between Johnson and prominent Southerners involved in the Reconstruction process,[2] the President's programme for the South, which was well under way by the time the Thirty-ninth Congress convened in December, displayed a number of features

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1 Four important works deal with Reconstruction during the presidency of Andrew Johnson: the monographs by Beale and McKitrick already cited; LaWanda Cox and John H. Cox, Politics, Principle and Prejudice 1865-1866, Dilemma of Reconstruction America (New York, 1963), and Brock, An American Crisis,

2 McKitrick, op.cit., 186-213

which both annoyed and disturbed many Republicans.[1] Southern quibbling over Johnson's moderate demands, the election to positions of trust in the new Southern governments of prominent former Confederates, the hostile treatment which Southern Unionists and Northerners who settled in the South claimed to meet at the hands of ex-rebels, and the so-called "black codes" defining the role of freedmen in the reconstructed South, seemed to many Northerners to reveal implacable hostility towards the North, a determination to cherish the values and heroes of the "Lost Cause", and an attempt to establish over Southern blacks a system of social and economic control close to that of slavery. It seemed, in short, that the South was unwilling to accept defeat and all that in

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1 Ibid., 175-84; John Hope Franklin, Reconstruction, chapter IV. Historians generally divide members of the Thirty-ninth Congress into four groups. Democrats, numerically the smallest of these, sustained the President's Reconstruction policy but many Unionists saw them as tainted with Copperheadism, a weakness opponents exploited. Conservative Republicans had shared the Democracy's distaste for many of Lincoln's wartime measures, including emancipation, and some had long favoured an alliance with Democrats which would strip the Radicals, a third group, of any influence in government and facilitate a rapid reconstruction of the Union. This aim underlay the movement in 1865-1866 to establish a new party, the National Union Party, to sustain Presidential Reconstruction. Such a party needed the support of members of the fourth group, the Moderate Republicans, who held the balance of power in the Thirty-ninth Congress. Most Moderates initially favoured Johnson's Reconstruction policy and abandoned it only when events in the South seemed to validate the claims of Johnson's Radical opponents that rapid Reconstruction would permit disloyal elements to regain control in the South, putting at risk the fruits of the Union war effort, and particularly emancipation. By late 1865 Radicals led the Republican attack upon Johnson's policies, and urged that no representatives from the ex-Confederate states should be admitted to Congress until the far-reaching measures of Reconstruction Radicals advocated had organized republican governments in the South putting the former rebel states under the control of men loyal to the Federal Union who would guarantee the permanence of emancipation and secure protection for the freedmen and equal rights for all men. On Radicalism in 1866 and afterwards see Brock, An American Crisis, Cox and Cox, Politics, Principle and Prejudice, and, for a different view, playing down the role played by Radicals in Reconstruction, Micheal Les Benedict, A Compromise of Principle: Congressional Republicans and Reconstruction, 1863-1869.

(New York, 1974)

Northern eyes ought to follow from the fact of defeat. The victors were to be denied the rituals of surrender which would set their minds at rest.[1]

With the exception of a few Radical critics, most Republicans consoled themselves with the belief that Presidential Reconstruction was only an experiment which Johnson would abandon once he realized that it had failed.[2] However, events during the winter of 1865-1866 did nothing to allay Northern fears. The determination of the Republican dominated Legislature to play a major role in Reconstruction was made clear when Congress refused to seat representatives from the Johnson states of the South and when in December Moderates and Radicals in Congress agreed upon the necessity for a Joint Committee of Fifteen which would investigate conditions in those states and make appropriate recommendations on Reconstruction. As a result of the report of this Committee, Congress passed a bill to extend the life of the Freedman's Bureau[3] and another to protect the rights of citizenship newly acquired by Southern blacks.[4]

Unfortunately Johnson, insensitive to warnings and to the mood of Congress and the North in general,[5] remained committed to his own Reconstruction programme. Ignoring the advice of Republican well-wishers[6], he showed no inclination to compromise with Congress, vetoed both the Freedmen's Bureau Bill and, more crucially, the Civil Rights Bill, and, stung by Radical criticism, lashed out at his opponents in intemperate language during a speech delivered on Washington's birthday.[7] When Congress

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1 See the discussion of the "symbolic requirements" of peace in McKitrick, op.cit., 21-41.
2 Stampp, Reconstruction, 85.
3 Established by Congress in May 1865 to aid Southern blacks in the transition from slavery to freedom. See George R. Bentley, A History of the Freedmen's Bureau (Philadelphia, 1955),and William S. McFeely, Yankee Stepfather: General O.O. Howard and the Freedman (New York, 1968).
4 The Civil Rights Bill.
5 Brock, Conflict and Transformation, 339.
6 For example, Oliver P. Morton, Governor of Indiana, Moderate leader Senator John Sherman of Ohio and the influential Senator William Pitt Fessenden of Maine, who was by nature conservative but often co-operated with the Radicals during Reconstruction.
7 Mckitrick, op. cit. 292-96 assesses the effect of his speech.

presented its Reconstruction policy in the form of a five clause Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, Johnson made his opposition to that policy quite clear. What to the President's admirers was a courageous stand in defence of principle, was now increasingly seen by others as a stubborn refusal to admit that his Reconstruction scheme had failed, and the ranks of his opponents were steadily swelled by the defection of disillusioned Moderates from his camp.

As Johnson was increasingly isolated from the Republican Party, the support which he had consistently received from Democrats, who saw in rapid readmission to Congress of representatives of the Confederate South - formerly a stronghold of the Democracy - their only hope of reviving their party's fortunes, seemed less and less to reflect the national appeal of his policies. Consequently there was widespread concern amongst Republicans that the "Democrat in the White House" was returning to his pre-war political affiliations, betraying the party which had raised him to power and which, as representative of the Union cause, had become for many Unionists the guardian of the national interest. As fears concerning the President's course multiplied, the 1866 election campaign inevitably became the arena in which the contest between Johnson and Congress for control of Reconstruction was fought out.

When the campaign opened two main groups sought endorsement at the polls for their Reconstruction programmes. On the one hand Republican Conservatives and Democrats, under the auspices of the new-born National Union Party, formed a loose and somewhat fragile alliance in support of the Reconstruction policies of Johnson.[1] On the other, in the ranks of the Union or Union Republican Party, some former War Democrats and a substantial body of

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1 On the attempt by those hostile to a Radical approach to Reconstruction to form a new party capable of attracting Conservative and Moderate Republican and Democratic support for a platform sustaining the President's policy see Cox and Cox, Politics, Principle and Prejudice, and Riddleberger, 1866, 203-13. The National Unionists presented their platform at the Philadelphia Convention in August, 1866.

Moderate Republicans, together with some Conservatives and spearheaded by the Radicals, stood firmly behind Congressional Reconstruction.[1] "Andrew Johnson has no right to a policy", delcared Radical Senator Zachariah Chandler, adding, "He is but the Executive;... he has no right to do other than to advise Congress ..." If Johnson did not execute the laws of Congress, warned Chandler, "he is a traitor, and we'll impeach him." "We are the United States, and not the President" confirmed Radical Congressman Hannibal Hamlin.[2] Johnson's opponents focussed their attack upon the leniency of his policies which were alleged to have allowed former rebels to regain power, ignoring the need to protect loyal Southerners and former slaves against their common enemy, the ex-Confederates. His supporters concentrated their opposition to Congressional Reconstruction upon the far-reaching programme associated with the Radicals which demanded what Charles Sumner called the "four E's", emancipation, enfranchisement, equality and education for black Americans,[3] plus the disfranchisement of disloyal Southern whites before representatives of the ex-rebel states could be admitted to Congress. These were the vital issues. Matters such as taxation or the national and rebel debts took a lesser place in most campaign speeches.

The elections were strongly contested because those involved fully understood their importance. Upon their results would rest the immediate future of Reconstruction and perhaps, since the victors would have two years to implement their policies, its long-term consequences. For each side there was an added factor. Exponents of Congressional Reconstruction needed an impressive victory at the polls if they were to secure the two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress which would enable them to override the vetoes of a hostile President. Equally, to prevent Radical

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1 For a discussion of the meaning of the terms Radical, Moderate and Conservative Republican during Reconstruction see above, p.143.

2 Chandler at a meeting in the Union League House, Philadelphia, Sept. 4, 1866; Hamlin at Philadelphia, Oct. 3, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 5, Oct. 4, 1866.

3 Lecture at Boston, Oct. 2, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Oct. 3, 1866.

talk about impeachment from becoming action, Johnson desperately needed conclusive proof of popular support. For these reasons, and because the elections were the first to be fought nationally since the war had ended, much thought was given to party tactics and rhetoric, and the arguments used by both supporters and opponents of Congressional Reconstruction became models for the presidential election two years later. The next section of this chapter will illustrate the major themes of political rhetoric in 1866 and the ways in which mythical images of Lincoln, and particularly those associated with emancipation, were integrated into political argument.

Both groups made extensive use of the late President in campaign rhetoric, seeking, in broad terms, to present themselves as the heirs of a newly established national hero. Clearly, less than eighteen months after his death, Lincoln's status as a hero was equivalent to that of Washington or Jackson and his political usefulness in this campaign was much greater. There was no need to relate his heroic deeds. In political use myth is often allusive in character, and the events in which Lincoln had played a central role were fresh in every mind. As the symbol of the Union, he represented both the struggle and the victory of the North in the Civil War as well as the centuries-old mythical theme of the hero who rose from obscurity to become the saviour of his nation, and all these images could be exploited by a simple appeal to "the patriot Lincoln"[1] Equally, it was not necessary for those who used myths associated with emancipation to tell the story of how Lincoln freed the slaves. The image of the champion of the oppressed who had

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1 Henry Wilson at Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.

struck the fetters from the Negro could be conjured up by a reference to "his great emancipation."[1]

This apparent simplicity of myth, which in fact condenses multiple images and themes, enhances its value as political argument. This was especially true in the campaign of 1866 when politicians seeking to convey to voters the crucial importance of the contest played upon Northern fears and so created a feeling of crisis in which myths flourished.[2] Mythical themes permeated the political rhetoric of all shades of opinion, and in order that Lincoln myths may be viewed in their proper perspective, some attempt will now be made to indicate the range of mythic themes utilized in this campaign.

Some such themes were of world-wide significance.[3] Many speakers implicitly and some explicitly developed a concept of the Civil War evocative of the enduring cosmic conflict between the forces of good and evil and the ultimate triumph of good which is a major element in many mythologies and one which, since it plays a crucial role in Judao-Christian thought,[4] was understandably popular with the inhabitants of a self-consciously Christian society. The introduction of Biblical imagery into political argument was common,[5] and the theme of sacrifice and redemption, crucial to sacred narratives, was much favoured as appropriate

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1 Gen. Woodford at Brooklyn, Oct. 1, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 2, 1866.

2 For example, George B. Loring addressing Republicans at Salem, Mass., Oct. 11, 1866: New York Times, Oct. 12, 1866.

3 On this subject see Clyde Kluckhohn, "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking" in Murray, ed., op.cit., 46-60 and Mircea Eliade, Le Myth de l'eternal retour (Paris, 1949) translated into English by W.R. Trask (New York, 1954).

4 Charles Gibbons welcoming Southern Loyalists at Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866; Benjamin Butler addressing the Massachusetts Republican State Convention, Boston, Sept. 13, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 14, 1866; Joseph Campbell, "The Historical Development of Mythology", in Murray, ed., op.cit., 25-26.

5 Senator Lane of Indiana warned that the promised land in sight must not be lost through the treachery of false prophets; Charles Sumner quoted from the Bible on the destruction of the Egyptians as he denounced Johnson who "promised to be Moses and became Pharaoh ...": New York Tribune, Sept. 3, 1866; New York Times, Oct. 3, 1866.

to the times. Democrat John T. Hoffman tried to counter Radical use of the theme of purification by sacrifice, telling the Albany Convention that, "when a distinguished Senator said that according to the old Puritan doctrine it would be necessary to shed more blood for the remission of sins, I took my stand and said; 'Blood enough has been shed to remit the sins of the universe.'"[1] The National Unionists' appeal for merciful Reconstruction in terms of Christianity was potentially powerful, but Johnson's crude interpretation of this in linking himself with Christ was no more successful than his earlier identification of his role with that of Moses had been.[2] Probably while the call for harsh policies could be presented in terms of sin and retribution,[3] a Biblical theme popular during the war, the call to loyal men to redeem the nation, or the South, was more potent in Radical propaganda.[4]

Other themes were of peculiar significance in the American context. The idea of progress was a crucial one in nineteenth century Western thought generally, but for Americans it gained even greater significance through its association with the mythical theme of the nation's glorious destiny. In 1866 politicians argued that this destiny could best be fulfilled through the Reconstruction policies they advocated. It was a theme perhaps best suited to Republican rhetoric which had long presented the party as "the party of progress, the party of liberty ... the party of to-day, and of its future."[5] According to one exponent of Radical Reconstruction, "The triumph of our cause was inevitable, because our cause was progress." The Union Party's victory would open "a glorious

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1 World, Sept. 13, 1866.
2 World, Sept. 1, 1866; Richard O'Gorman at New Rochelle, Sept. 3, 1866: ibid., Sept. 5, 1866; Johnson at St. Louis and Steubenville, Sept. 8, 13, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 14, 1866.
3 Prayer of Rev. Jackson at the Southern Loyalists' Convention, Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.
4 Henry Wilson at Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866, op.cit.
5 Henry Ward Beecher at Brooklyn, Oct. 15, 1866: World, Oct. 16, 1866.

epoch" in the Republic's history, and Radicals promised that America could prepare for "that grander manifestation of Christian civilization" to which God had called the Republic.[1] Opponents of Congressional policies also tried to exploit the popular idea of progress toward a more perfect Union,[2] but their association with the Democratic Party was no asset in this respect, for as the New York Times observed, the Democracy did not represent "the spirit of progress, of reform, and of political liberty" which the epoch demanded.[3]

Closely linked with visions of a glorious national future was the concept of America as a refuge and example for the oppressed of all nations which had developed from its origins in the experiences of some immigrants to become part of the nation's mythical interpretation of its world role. Picturing himself as "a confrere of the Red Republicans in Europe", one speaker told New York Republicans that, "nothing but the success of the Radical party could give aid and comfort to the struggling nationalities of Europe..."[4] Attacking Johnson's policies, Henry Wilson declared, in a clear call for Negro suffrage, that, "America must and shall be a republic of human equity, whither the oppressed shall turn in their desolation; it shall be in deed and in truth an asylum for the oppressed of all nations, where all shall enjoy equal civil and political rights and privileges."[5] National Unionists and Democrats played upon the same theme rather differently, the Massachusetts National Union State Convention warning that

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1 Senator Williams of Oregon at Cooper Institute meeting, Oct. 15, 1866; General Burley and Rev. Newman at the Southern Loyalists' Convention, Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 6, Oct. 16, 1866.

2 S.S. Cox and John T. Hoffman (Democrats) at Union rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.

3 New York Times, Sept. 25, 1866.

4 Col. Max Langenswatz at New York, Oct. 5, 1866: ibid., Oct. 6, 1866.

5 Address at Rock Island, Ill., Sept. 26, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 27, 1866.

under the Radicals America would become a land of the oppressed - another Ireland or Poland.[1] Resolutions of sympathy with the Irish, as suffering under British tyranny, were adopted by supporters and opponents of Presidential Reconstruction.[2] For the latter these were part of an attempt to win Irish votes away from the Democratic Party, but although racial prejudice still tarred the thought of many Republicans,[3] their party's record on emancipation and the call by some Radicals for Negro suffrage enabled its opponents to continue to exploit hostility to blacks, as they had before and during the War, in appeals to Western voters, to labour generally and in particular to immigrant Irish labour. "He said he knew he was speaking to people of Celtic origin", said the New York Times, reporting a campaign speech which revealed one function of mythical themes in politics as the speaker reduced the complex issues of the campaign into one potent image, the purpose of the Radicals "to drag his hearers down to the level of black laborers."[4] As Democratic oratory proved, the theme of American sympathy with the oppressed was a two-edged weapon which could tell against those who sought to extend human freedom.[5]

If the envisioned future of the Republic excited orators, the nation's past was an even greater source of inspiration. Many speakers drew a parallel between the situation of the Southern States and that of the American colonies under British rule, and the cry of no taxation without

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1 World, Oct. 4, 1866.

2 13th. resolution adopted at Union (Republican) Congressional Convention, Milwaukee, Sept. 5, 1866; 12th. resolution reported by Hamilton at the Southern Loyalists' Convention, Sept. 6, 1866; 7th. resolution of pro-Johnson meeting, New York, Sept. 3, 1866; 2nd. resolution of National Union Convention, Topeka, Kansas, Sept. 21, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 6, 7, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 4, 28, 1866.

3 Hon. H.P.H. Bromwell at Decatur, Ill., Sept. 25, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 26, 1866; Major D. Campbell at Union League Association meeting, New York, Oct. 12, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 13, 1866.

4 George M. Curtis at Union rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.

5 "They (Radicals) should know that Irishmen understand what it is to be pinned to a dominant power by the bayonet, and bear burdens which they have no part in imposing, and obey laws which they have no part in enacting. I think they will have a good time in inducing Irishmen to vote for such a system under this republican government." From speech of Hon. Francis Kernan at the Albany Convention, Sept. 12, 1866: World, Sept. 13, 1866.

representation was a much used weapon in the arsenal of those who opposed disfranchisement of Southern whites.[1] America's Revolutionary heritage was especially popular with speakers in Pennsylvania, but for politicians everywhere provided what had long been one of the most crucial themes in American politics - the myth of the Founding Fathers, whose work in American thought was far removed from that actually undertaken at Philadelphia - and one of the most potent symbols, the Declaration of Independence.

Johnson's Republican supporters and their Democratic allies made the greatest use of this theme, an appeal to preserve "the Constitution as the Fathers made it" being well suited to a conservative line on Reconstruction.[2] At one of the major rallies of the National Union Party's campaign, suggestively staged on the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, the nation was urged to keep faith with its illustrious ancestors.[3] Their cause was that of the Fathers of 1775, said a speaker at the Massachusetts National Union Convention, and the same spirit animated them.[4] The Radicals, whose policies were regularly denounced as unconstitutional, were accused of attempting to subvert the work of the Founding Fathers, and of deriding Washington's policy of reconciliation.[5] It was an attack which was expected to strike a responsive chord in the popular heart, and one its victims sought to counter. Welcoming to Philadelphia the Southern Loyalists who had chosen the city where the Constitution was framed as an appropriate setting for a convention to endorse Congressional Reconstruction, Radical William D. Kelley declared, "They had met here, as the Revolutionary Fathers then met, to proclaim

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1 For example, A. Oakey Hall at the Albany Convention, Sept. 12, 1866; ibid.
2 New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.
3 Major-General John A. Dix at Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: ibid.
4 Hon C. Woodbury quoted in World, Oct. 4, 1866.
5 New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.

liberty to all the world. They were engaged in as great a work as those who were now dead were once engaged."[1] At Cooper Union in New York, Senator Williams of Oregon preferred to take the offensive. "Adams, and Madison and Jackson were radicals," he declared, "and they revolutionized the country for the country's welfare."[2] However, any such attempt by the Radicals to appropriate not only the Founding Fathers but also President Andrew Jackson, long hero of the Democracy, was likely to fail. The best they could hope for was to convince their audiences that the Democratic Party of 1866 had strayed from the principles of its great men.[3]

Johnson's supporters were also more successful in exploiting America's first hero. At the Albany Convention of Democratic and National Union electors, influential New York Democrat Samuel J. Tilden saw "bending from on high the peerless form of Washington looking to see whether we of this generation are fit to restore that which he and his compatriots prepared for us ..." and barely a week later, ex-Governor Parsons told New Yorkers that "the Father of his Country" blessed the efforts of Johnson's supporters, and "his spirit now looks down from the abodes of bliss upon you, his children, and he calls on you once more to rally around the Constitution and the Union which he and the patriots of 1776 fought for."[4]

If Johnson's opponents occasionally challenged such exploitation of the myth of the Founding Fathers and of heroes such as Washington and Jackson, they preferred on the whole to turn instead to the nation's most recent hero. For whoever successfully blended Lincoln into their political rhetoric employed not only a hero of equal stature to Washington, but also one whose legend enshrined some of the fundamental

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1 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.
2 Ibid., Oct. 16, 1866.
3 "Jackson and Johnson", Chicago Tribune, Sept. 29, 1866.
4 World, Sept. 12, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866. Lewis E. Parsons was introduced as former and provisional Governor of Alabama.

mythical and non-mythical themes of American society. Nor surprisingly, representatives of all shades of political opinion tried to do so.

At the simplest level, platforms and candidates were endorsed by association with the heroic Lincoln. At Republican gatherings such endorsement was often non-verbal, a portrait or bust serving as a symbol of the claim to be heirs of the late President.[1] Mottoes and verses, referring to or quoting Lincoln, and inscribed beneath portraits of him or on banners, performed a similar function.[2] At the Loyal League Convention held at Syracuse early in September, the message was made even clearer when the Republican organizers hung 1864 campaign portraits of both Lincoln and his successor on the walls over the platform and pointedly covered Johnson's face with a copy of the New York Tribune, "so that he could neither look down on the Convention nor the members at it." The delegates present demonstrated another method of associating themselves with the heroic Lincoln and further endorsing themselves in the eyes of his admirers, while simultaneously stimulating party loyalty, when they stood in silence to adopt a resolution paying tribute to the Republican "martyr President."[3] Such forms of endorsement through Lincoln seem to have been used only rarely at National Union meetings, and not at all at gatherings of the Democracy,[4] but neither past nor current political affiliations prevented politicians from endorsing themselves or their fellow campaigners through association with Lincoln. At Cleveland President Johnson reminded his audience that in 1864 he had

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1 Decorations at National Hall, Philadelphia, on the occasion of the Southern Loyalists' Convention included a life-size painting of Lincoln with a verse suspended beneath and an inscribed marble bust of the late President. Firemen taking part in the procession which preceeded the first session of the Convention carried "a portrait of Abraham Lincoln on a large and handsome banner." Detail from New York Tribune, Sept.4,1866.

2 See, for example, the deocrations at a Union (Republican) meeting at Latimer Hall, Brooklyn, Oct. 1, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 2, 1866.

3 Ibid., Sept. 5, 1866

4 Of the numerous mottoes at the Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866 only one of those reported by the Democratic World and the conservative (Republican) New York Times was related to Lincoln: World, Sept. 18, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.

been placed on the Union ticket "with a distinguished fellow-citizen who is now no more." At Pittsburgh Johnsonite Judge M'Candless greeted Seward by referring to his role as Foreign Secretary under the President's "lamented and illustrious predecessor".[1] Those who supported Congressional Reconstruction policies sought the voters' approval in a similar fashion. Hannibal Hamlin was presented to a Union League mass meeting in Philadelphia as "one whose name was linked with that of Lincoln and made grand by the association." One journalist's report suggested that this form of introduction went down well with a Republican audience.[2] Newspapers often used the same form of endorsement. The Democratic New York World included among Democrat Robert H. Pruyn's qualifications as the Albany Convention's nominee for Lieutenant-Governor of New York the fact that he had been appointed minister to Japan by President Lincoln.[3] In similarly endorsing Montgomery Blair, the World not only implied that Lincoln's friends were to be found among Johnson's supporters, but also used the late President in an attempt to discredit the Radicals for their venom against "one of Mr. Lincoln's most trusted advisers".[4] Candidates could be endorsed in other ways - as, for example, by reference to their unionism, their services during the Civil War or their party loyalty - but association with Lincoln was valued as a means of ensuring popular acceptance.

Adopting a tactic which echoed the politically motivated visits to religious shrines or temples of gods in earlier times,[5] both the President and his opponents sought to endorse themselves and win popular approval by visiting the tomb of the martyred hero, However, Johnson's

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1 Johnson at Cleveland, Sept. 3, 1866; M'Candless at Pittsburgh, Sept. 13, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 14, 1866.
2 New York Tribune, Oct. 4, 1866
3 World, Sept. 13, 1866.
4 Ibid., Sept. 7, 1866.
5 Nilsson, op.cit., 19.

journey to Illinois in September 1866 provided his enemies with further opportunities to exploit Lincoln against him. Travelling to lay the corner-stone of a monument to Stephen A. Douglas, at Chicago, Johnson claimed that it was his intention "simply to pass through the country unobserved that I might perform what I conceived to be a duty to one now no more."[1] These words were, however, but the prelude to one of numerous speeches defending his policies and castigating his critics, which seemed to justify opponents' claims that he had "under the pretext of journeying to the tomb of the departed statesman, made a political stumping tour through the North and West ..."[2] As a campaign tactic, to demonstrate popular support for the President, the so-called "Swing around the Circle" was a miserable failure, and his enemies quickly turned it to their advantage. Wherever Radicals and their allies had influence over local authorities, Johnson's official reception was at least equivocal and sometimes hostile,[3] and his retaliatory claim that "the people" welcomed him was increasingly difficult to sustain. The President's heated exchanges with hecklers, a source of deep embarrassment to his friends,[4] were gloated over by his supporters who warned Johnson that "your trip around the circle is giving you h——, but it is the making of the Republican party."[5]

During this tour, Johnson chose to justify himself and his policies by associating them with Seward and Grant, who accompanied him, and with the Founding Fathers and Andrew Jackson, national heroes perhaps best suited to use by a politician who knew that his party needed Democratic votes. This gave the Radical Chicago Tribune an opportunity to use the memory of the martyr President against his successor. Ignoring Seward's

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1 Speech at Niagara Falls, Sept. 1, 1866: World, Sept. 3, 1866.
2 Charles S. Spencer at a Republican meeting, New York, Oct. 26, 1866: New York Times, Oct. 27, 1866.
3 At Pittsburgh the municipal authorities refused to welcome the President, and at Carlinville, Ill., the national flag was lowered so that he could not pass under it; New York Times, Sept. 14, 1866; Chicago Tribune, Sept. 10, 1866.
4 "The President's Mistake", New York Times, Sept. 7, 1866. This paper was described by the Chicago Tribune as "the semi-official organ of the Executive ..." (Sept. 10, 1866).
5 Judge Wm. S. Stokes of Tenn. at Chicago, Oct. 1, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Oct. 2, 1866.

frequent references to Lincoln and playing upon the allusive nature of Johnson's references to the late President, the Tribune explained that he had "studiously abstained from mentioning the name of Abraham Lincoln" because he and his supporters were afraid of damaging parallels being drawn between the two Chief Magistrates.[1]

Whether or not Johnson hoped that his presence, together with Grant, at Lincoln's tomb would win popular favour, the visit to Oak Ridge Cemetary allowed his opponents another chance to use the heroic Lincoln as a political weapon. Though an associated press report indicated that the Presidential party's behaviour was appropriate to the occasion, the Chicago Tribune described how on reaching "the sacred and hallowed spot", they "marched around the tomb" arm in arm, then returned to the carriages without a word being spoken. In fact, had Johnson failed to pay tribute to Lincoln, it would have brought him under fire from friends and enemies alike, but the latter could not resist a chance to expose him to public censure by placing the worst possible interpretation upon his action. According to the Tribune, "The motives that induced Andrew Johnson to visit the grave of Abraham Lincoln were the same that brought him to the grave of Douglas." It was not an act of respect, "it was to make political capital for Andrew Johnson and his policy." He would, warned the paper, gain no profit from such sacrilege: "for the country feels that the ashes of its sainted dead have been desecrated by the presence of an unworthy successor of its murdered President ..."[2]

In a Radical-inspired attempt to capitalize further on Johnson's political misfortunes, and to succeed where he had failed by appropriating the heroic Lincoln to their own cause, the Convention of Southern Loyalists

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1 Chicago, Tribune, Sept. 1, 1866.
2 Ibid., Sept. 8, 10, 1866.

held in Philadelphia early in September[1] decided to appoint a delegation to follow Johnson's route to St. Louis, and unanimously adopted a resolution introduced by Missourian Charles Branscomb that the journey should terminate at Lincoln's grave. When Branscombe, chairman of the special committee appointed to make the necessary arrangements reported back to the Convention, the delegates chosen to make what was now officially the visit to Lincoln's tomb were seen to include several of the Convention's most active exponents of Radical Reconstruction such as J.H. Bell and A.J. Hamilton of Texas, H.S. Bond and A.J. Cresswell of Maryland, the Reverend Dr. R.J.B. Breckinridge of Kentucky, Governor Brownlow of Tennessee, Thomas J. Durant of Louisiana, the Reverend J.W. Hunnicutt of West Virginia and Colonel Charles E. Moss of Missouri.[2] By the time the party reached Illinois it had expanded to include two other advocates of Negro suffrage, Governor Hahn of Louisiana and Judge Sherwood of Texas, and Illinois Radicals Governor Oglesby, Lieutenant-Governor Bross and General John A. Logan were members of the welcoming committee at Chicago, where the speeches in favour of Radical policies included potent appeals in the name of Lincoln.[3]

If the tactic of a pilgramage to the graves of Douglas and Lincoln had misfired for Johnson and his supporters, they nevertheless found successful an appeal to the nation's heroes to endorse Presidential policies. For a Tennessean and former Democrat who liked to picture himself as a poor boy made good, and to present his reconstruction programme as the sole means of preserving the Union against those who would undermine it, the parallel with Jackson was both obvious and

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1 This convention of Southerners who had been loyal to the Union during the War was hostile to Johnson's Reconstruction policy, and was intended to demonstrate the truth of his opponents' claims that loyal Southerners needed protection from ex-Confederates in the states formerely in rebellion

2 New York Tribune, Sept. 6, 7, 1866.

3 Chicago Tribune, Oct. 2, 1866.

frequently drawn. To Johnson it seemed that "he stood now ... where Jackson stood in 1832 ...", and his adherents rejoiced that "the official robes of Andrew Jackson had fallen where they fit so well."[1] However, if Johnson's policy of reconstruction was to triumph over that of Congress, he needed to secure the support of Conservative and Moderate Republican congressmen and to win the votes of the Republican masses. Appeals to the memory of Jackson might consolidate his support amongst the rank and file of the Democracy, and tributes to the patriot Douglas might counter Republican use of Lincoln in the crucial state of Illinois, but Lincoln could not be omitted. Not only was he the heroic representative of Republicanism, but, more important, he had become at the time of his death the personification of the Union cause, and it was the underlying concept of Lincoln's policy as that of the nation that National Unionists sought to exploit in claiming that their leader's policy was that of his predecessor.

Johnson himself insisted that this was so,[2] and Seward, playing on his late role as a member of Lincoln's Cabinet, confirmed that the policy carried out by the new President had been commenced by Lincoln.[3] The New York Times published letters from prominent men expressing similar ideas, and sometimes endorsed the authors by mentioning their past associations with the late President.[4] A letter from a relative of Lincoln was considered particularly valuable, and the Times reprinted it in full from an Illinois paper, so that a wider audience could read its attack on the Radicals and its claim that, "President Johnson's policy,

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1 Johnson at Alton, Ill., Sept. 8, 1866; Mayor of Rome, N.Y., on the President's arrival in that town, Aug. 31, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1866; World, Sept. 1, 1866.
2 Speech at Niagara Falls, Sept. 1, 1866, op.cit.
3 Seward at Niagara Falls, Sept. 1, 1866: World, Sept. 3, 1866.
4 New York Times, Sept. 16, 22, Oct. 6, 20, 24, 1866.

as now enunciated by him, would, ere this, have been carried into practical effect by Mr. Lincoln ..."[1] East and West, Republican or Democrat, speakers on National Union platforms, echoing resolutions adopted at their conventions, made the same point so frequently that it became a "stale assertion."[2] There were variants of the theme, as when Republican James Doolittle, addressing a western audience, blended heroes, declaring that, "the mantles of the dead Douglas and the dead Lincoln had fallen upon Andrew Johnson, and that his policy would have been theirs had they lived." The basic call was, however, summed up by a speaker in New York: "Andrew Johnson is simply following out the policy of President Lincoln. Why don't we support him, then? Let us do it."[3]

The same theme could be incorporated into an attack on Congressional policies. At a mass meeting Democrat A.B. Conger won loud applause when he declared that many in the party that had elected and re-elected Lincoln "have refused to give their support to the measures which he in his life time inaugurated, and which are now being carried out by his successor in office."[4] Another Democrat, Robert Pruyn, quoted Lincoln's proclamation of September 22, 1861 declaring that the war was fought to re-establish constitutional relations between the States, and commented, "Had Abraham Lincoln lived to this day he would never have been the man to have violated his faith and pledge to the South, and we have therefore a right to say that Andrew Johnson is simply carrying out the views of Mr. Lincoln."[5]

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1 Dennis Hanks to Editor, Springfield (Ill.) Register, Oct. 4, 1866, quoted in New York Times, Oct. 12, 1866.

2 Chicago Tribune, Oct. 4, 1866. See reports of the Second Congressional District National Union Convention, Auburn, Maine (New York Times, Sept. 1, 1866) and the Massachusetts National Union Convention at Boston (World, Oct. 4, 1866), and of speeches at the Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866 (New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866) and by John T. Hoffman at Brooklyn and Binghampton, Oct. 6, 24, 1866 (World, Oct. 8, 25, 1866).

3 Doolittle at Toledo, Ohio, Sept. 3, 1866; Col. Samuel J. Crook at Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.

4 Conger at Newburg, N.Y., Oct. 17, 1866: World, Oct. 18, 1866.

5 Pruyn at Binghampton, Oct. 24, 1866: World, Oct. 18, 1866.

Another way of using Lincoln to attack the Radicals which proved popular with Conservatives such as Orville H. Browning was drawn out of their wartime experience when, as supporters but critics of Lincoln's administration, they had denounced the Radicals for pushing the Executive into extreme measures such as emancipation.[1] The adaptation of this theme to the circumstances of 1866 was illustrated in a New York Times editorial which asserted that no criticism of President Johnson could be more severe than the manifesto against Lincoln issued in 1864 by Radicals Benjamin Wade and Henry Winter Davis, and that "all that the Radicals now say against President Johnson was in those days said by the Radicals against Mr. Lincoln." Denouncing the Southern Loyalists' adoption of resolutions eulogizing Stephen A. Douglas and Lincoln, the paper declared that, "The profession of love and admiration for the latter in which they indulge is, then, downright hypocrisy." Support for Radical principles was, the Times believed, incompatible with support for those of the late President, and the policy which had brought Radical wrath upon Lincoln's head was that now being followed by Mr. Johnson. "To be consistent," it was concluded, "the admirer of Mr. Lincoln must be the supporter of his successor..."[2]

This argument, together with a variant which distorted Lincoln's career into "a continual struggle against the rapacity, the cruelty and the recklessness of the Radical faction..."[3] was not easily met by Radicals, some of whom had indeed attacked Lincoln, sometimes bitterly, when they disapproved of his administration's policy. However, they quickly challenged the idea that Johnson was simply continuing that policy, thus revealing the importance they attached to the political value of the

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1 See above, p. 55, and Browning to Col. W. H. Benneson and Major M. V. Sullivan, Oct. 23, 1866 (New York Times, Oct. 24, 1866).
2 New York Times, Sept. 7, 1866.
3 Dennis Hanks to Editor, Springfield (Ill.) Register, op.cit.

heroic Lincoln. General Schenck illustrated one method of undermining the Johnsonites' assertions when, referring to leading commercial supporters of the President, he commented, "These men had supported Lincoln, now support Johnson, and would support Jeff. Davis if he was in power. They attached themselves to those who could give sops."[1] Radical leaders Thaddeus Stevens and Henry Wilson dealt rather differently with the matter, demanding to know why, if he was following Lincoln's policy, Johnson was dismissing all the men appointed by his predecessor.[2] The testimony of William H. Herndon, formerly Lincoln's Radically-minded partner at law, gave force to Radical protest. Speaking at Springfield, Illinois, Herndon "took direct issue with President Johnson in his oft repeated assertion that he was following in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, and characterized the assertion as a wilful and premeditated lie."[3]

To support his viewpoint, Herndon apparently produced evidence that Johnson had opposed Lincoln's policy throughout the War, and other speakers developed similar arguments.[4] In addition, he quoted from Lincoln's letters to show, it was reported, "that he (Lincoln) never assumed to have any right or authority to meddle in the matter of reconstruction." That was a matter for Congress.[5] This endorsement through Lincoln of congressional control over Reconstruction was a vital theme in Republican Party rhetoric in 1866. "President Lincoln recognized the power of Congress over the subject of representation...", said War Democrat Lyman Tremaine, and the Radical New York Tribune confirmed that, "the late President believed that the power of reconstruction

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1 New York Times, Sept. 7, 1866.
2 Wilson at Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866; Stevens at Bedford, Pa., Sept. 4, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 11, 1866. On Johnson's use of patronage see Cox and Cox, Politics, Principle and Prejudice, Chapter Six.
3 Herndon's speech of Oct. 2, 1866 as reported in Chicago Tribune, Oct. 3, 1866.
4 For example, Hon. Andrew J. Fletcher of Tennessee at meeting in Union League House, Philadelphia, Sept. 4, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1866.
5 Herndon at Springfield, Oct. 2, 1866, op.cit.

rested with Congress."[1] Radical leaders knew very well that Lincoln's recorded views on reconstruction were more conservative than their own, but this did not prevent them from exploting national admiration for the heroic Lincoln on behalf of the policies they advocated. In their rhetoric not Johnson's policy but that of Congress represented the continuation of Lincoln's policies, and his supporters were to be found standing not with Johnson but with his opponents. Describing a quasi-military Republican campaign organization, the "Invincibles", the New York Tribune commented: "The club was organized in 1860 to help elect the immortal Lincoln, reorganized in 1864 to reelect Mr. Lincoln, and is now again reorganized to aid in carrying out the principles of the man they first helped to make President."[2] Campaign clubs played an important part in electioneering and those whose members wore uniform and drilled had enormous visual impact as part of the processions which preceeded important political gatherings. When connected with the heroic Lincoln, they were, in 1866, an even more potent tool for stirring up popular feeling in favour of the cause they endorsed, as the New York Times recognised when it described a torchlight procession of "The Invincibles, or as they are more politically (sic.) called, the Wide-Awakes of Philadelphia ..."[3] However subtly presented, the message of those who opposed presidential reconstruction was essentially that of a banner displayed at a Republican meeting in Illinois. It read simply: "'Congress is vested with the power' - A. Lincoln."[4]

The ease with which endorsement through Lincoln blended with non-mythic themes increased its importance in campaign rhetoric for both Johnson's supporters and his opponents. For while the policies

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1. Tremaine speaking at the New York State (Republican Union) Convention at Syracuse, Sept. 5, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 6, 1866; New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1866.
2. New York Tribune, Sept.4,1866.
3. New York Times, Sept. 5, 1866. Lincoln's supporters had campaigned as 'Wide-Awakes' in 1860 and 1864.
4. Chicago Tribune, Oct. 3, 1866, reporting a Union rally at Morrison, Ill. Oct. 2, 1866.

advocated might differ greatly, the themes exploited by political speakers were in the main strikingly similar, and with rebellion and its consequences fresh in every mind, the major themes were the Union and war. The appeal to patriotism permeated every political meeting. National flags hung over and endorsed representatives of every shade of opinion, and patriotic songs entertained both those who cheered for President Johnson and those who groaned at the mention of his name. [1] While all declared themselves "Unionists", [2] it was the National Union Party which, standing on the rock of the Constitution, protected by the flag, [3] called upon all true Union men [4] to support policies which would re-unite the country as quickly as possible, [5] while condemming their opponents, and Radicals especially, as disunionists, men who dishonoured the Constitution and decried the great indivisible Union and the great American nationality, who were, in short, "completely un-American." [6] In the rhetoric of his supporters, Johnson became the patriot who would be found "standing by the flag, which in death shall be his winding sheet." [7] At Pittsburgh, pointing to the word "Union" inscribed in gaslight, the President appealed as representative of the whole Union against those who would strike out eleven of the national flag's thirty-six stars, [8] an image which found its corollary in another theme popular with his supporters. In denying that the issues of the war had been settled, [9]

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1 See reports of a pro-Johnson rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866, and a Union Republican mass meeting, Brooklyn, a month later: World, Sept. 18, 1866; New York Times, Oct. 18, 1866.

2 Meeting of "Union-loving citizens" (pro-Johnson) in the 12th. Assembly District, New York, Aug. 31, 1866, and meeting of "Unionists" (pro-Congress) at Ellenville, New York, Aug.27, 1866: New York Times, Sept.2, 1866; New York Tribune, Sept.1, 1866.

3 Sandford E. Church at the Albany Convention, Sept. 11, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 12, 1866.

4 Resolution adopted by St. Clair County (Ill.) Democrats at their Convention, quoted in World, Sept.7, 1866.

5 S.S. Cox at Johnson and Hoffman meeting, New York, Oct. 9, 1866: World, Oct. 10, 1866.

6 "The New Disunion Party", New York Times, Sept. 9, 1866.

7 Judge Embury at Ky at Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.

8 Johnson at Pittsburgh, Sept. 13, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 14, 1866.

9 See below p.174-75.

and especially that of slavery which gave the Republican Party its raison D'etre, Radicals sought, said their opponents, to perpetuate their own power by keeping the Union broken.[1]

Into this theme Lincoln the national hero, symbol of the integrity of the Union, was successfully integrated by Johnson's supporters. At a meeting in New York, one speaker reminded his audience that both Congress and the late President had repeatedly declared that war had been waged solely to preserve the Union and Constitution, and that when it was over all the states should retain their rights and dignities unimpaired. The patriot Johnson had, he asserted, done all in his power to continue this policy.[2] Addressing a pro-Johnson rally, John G. Saxe made a similar point: "The last utterance Abraham Lincoln gave us was that as soon as the South laid down arms they should be restored to the Union ... what did Andrew Johnson do? The South had laid arms - the rebellion was at an end."[3] Putting the argument into its simplest form, the chairman of a meeting of New York Conservative Republicans "alluded to the Radicals as the disunion party of the country, and as being in their policy and views directly antagonistic to the platform of the Union party which elected Lincoln and Johnson in 1864."[4]

Allied with this appeal to Union and patriotism by Johnson's supporters was the call for a non-partisan approach to reconstruction. Fully alive to the potency of the Republicans' claim that their party had

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1 Richard O'Gorman at New Rochelle, Sept. 3, 1866 and Judge Moore addressing New York Democrats, Oct. 22, 1866: World, Sept.5, Oct.23, 1866.
2 Judge Loew at New York, Aug. 31, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 2,1866.
3 Saxe at New York, Sept. 17, 1866: ibid., Sept. 18, 1866.
4. Mr. Herring speaking at Morrisania, New York, Sept. 8, 1866:ibid., Sept. 11, 1866.

saved the Union,[1] conservatives sought to counter it with the President's rallying cry that, "It is time, to throw off party shackles and stand by the country."[2] Thus under the auspices of the National Union Party conservatives of all political affiliations sought to appropriate the mantle of the wartime organization which as the Union Party had enabled War Democrats and Republicans to capitalize, with considerable success, on national sentiment. Explaining its decision to leave what during the war had been the Union Party but was now in sympathy with disunionists such as Stephens and Sumner, the War Democratic Huntingdon (Pennsylvania) Globe declared: "We simply stand now where we stood during the war - for the Union - with a National Union organization."[3] "Let us drop the names Democrat and Republican," urged a New York speaker, "and go in for Union."[4] Party passions were to be laid "a sacrifice upon the altar of our country ..."[5]

Unfortunately, while Robert Pruyn might win applause from the Albany Convention by asking, "What is a name? What are party names, what are party ties compared with our beloved country ...?"[6], Democrats had no intention of abandoning their party organisation at either the national or the local level. Equally, Republicans who supported Johnson were not prepared to sustain a non-partisan call simply to benefit the Democratic Party and were fully aware that the theme of nationalism could not be used successfully on behalf of the party that in the eyes of many Northerners had betrayed the nation by its association with rebellion in

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1 Lyman Tremaine at the Syracuse Convention, Sept. 5, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 6 1866.
2 Johnson at Cincinnati, Sept. 12, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 13, 1866.
3 Quoted in New York Times, Sept. 2, 1866.
4 Judge Penney at meeting of 19th. ward Johnson Club, New York, Sept. 13, 1866, ibid., Sept. 15, 1866.
5 Andrew J. Rogers of N.J. speaking at the Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: ibid., Sept. 18, 1866.
6 World, Sept. 13, 1866.

the South and Copperheadism in the North.[1] As conservative Republican Thurlow Weed, using nationalism to attack the Albany Convention's decision to nominate an old-line Democrat, Hoffman, rather than court the followers of Weed, Seward and Henry J. Raymond with the "genuine Conservative Johnson war Democrat" General John Dix[2] observed, that party's "odor of disloyalty restrained Republicans, however opposed to Radicalism, from uniting with it, AS A PARTY."[3] The conservatives' attempt to make patriotism not party the key to winning votes was largely unsuccessful, and they were reduced to using national sentiment as a weapon against Democratic extremists as well as Radicals.[4]

The claims by advocates of presidential Reconstruction to be Union men were rejected as impudent by those who, endorsing Reconstruction by Congress, also saw themselves as the true guardians of the Constitution,[5] and who called for the support of all who were sincerely faithful to the Union.[6] The Republican Party was the only true National Union Party, asserted Lyman Trumbull, denying his opponents the right to exploit Unionist sentiment by giving their oganization any such name.[7] In Republican eyes their party's ticket was unquestionably "the loyal ticket",[8] their speakers were "unionists of an uncompromising stripe",[9] their party creed was synonymous with support for the Union.[10]

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1 New York Times, Sept. 25, 1866.
2 New York Herald quoted in Chicago Tribune, Sept. 17, 1866.
3 Weed to Editor, New York Times, Oct. 9, 1866.
4 New York Times, Oct. 10, 1866.
5 Hon. Horace Maynard of Tenn. at Shelbyville, Tenn., Aug. 24, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 1, 1866.
6 Resolution introduced by George W. Curtus at the Syracuse (Republican Union) Convention, Sept. 5, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 5, 1866.
7 Trumbull at Clinton, Ill., Sept. 13, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 14, 1866.
8 Chicago Tribune, Oct. 4, 1866.
9 New York Tribune, Sept. 3, 1866.
10 Hon. John V. Eustace at Dixon, Ill., Sept. 24, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 27, 1866.

Except in so far as they stressed that those who had once supported Lincoln now stood for Johnson, the President's adherents found his famous predecessor of little value in a non-partisan call. He was, indeed, much more useful to Republicans who countered this call to put Union above party by asserting that Johnson and his Republican followers had failed in their duty to the Union, and to the memory of Lincoln, by disloyalty to the party that had fought the war. Johnson had been elected with Lincoln to carry out certain principles, said Thaddeus Stevens, but he "determined to betray those principles, and discard the men and the party which had elected him ..."[1] Not the President, but his opponents, represented the cause for which Lincoln had stood. Attacking the Philadelphia Convention, which endorsed Presidential Reconstruction, as dominated by Copperheads and rebels, Illinois' Radical Congressman, Elihu B. Washburne, declared that, "To the honor of the great Union party, be it said, that the number of delegates there who had ever belonged to the Union party and had voted for Lincoln were few indeed."[2] The New York Tribune published a letter of Hannibal Hamlin resigning his office as Collector of the Port of Boston and making heavy use of Lincoln's memory to imply that no-one who had associated with the late President could bear to be linked with Johnson. Summing up this letter of "Abraham Lincoln's first Vice-President", the Tribune commented, "In effect, he says to the President, 'I gave all my influence to uphold the Union party, and I will not help you now to destroy it.'"[3]

In Republican rhetoric, then, support for Lincoln as the symbol of Unionism was equated with support for the party which made him President. The Tribune, expressing confidence that the Empire State would cast its

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1 Stevens at Bedford, Pa., Sept. 4, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 11, 1866.
2 Washburne at Galena, Ill., Sept. 13, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 17, 1866.
3 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.

vote against Presidential Reconstruction, declared that New York "will stand firm to the cause of Liberty and Loyalty - the cause which she had upheld in the last three presidential elections ..."[1] At the Pittsburgh Soldiers' and Sailors' Convention the Wisconsin delegation carried with it into City Hall a living symbol of the late President and the Union, the American eagle "Old Abe", which after the death in action of its soldier owner had become the property of his regiment, the Eighth Wisconsin. The enthusiastic response to "Old Abe's" appearance was a testimony to the potency of political symbolism: "The body rose and cheered him, the bands played, and the kingly bird flapped his wings lustily as if he recognized the old music, the old cheers, and the old flags." Assigned on the motion of Radical Hamlin to a post of honor on the platform, the bird was "again greeted with a storm of cheers."[2] The pro-Johnson Great Union Rally eight days earlier also had an eagle. Though made of gilt at a cost of $100, it was no match, politically, for the Lincoln eagle of the Eighth Wisconsin.

For Republicans, appeals to patriotism and Unionist sentiment were the more powerful for being linked with allied but less abstract themes emerging out of the national wartime experience, as this display of a regimental mascot at Pittsburgh reveals. Politicians of all persuasions were aware of what the New York Times called the instinct of the country that those who had stood by the nation in its peril should control it once that peril had passed, but while Johnson and his supporters hoped to exploit this instict on behalf of a broadly Union party,[3] no-one could doubt that it was the Republican Party proper

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1 Ibid., Sept. 3, 1866.
2 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 25, 1866; New York Tribune, Sept. 26, 1866; World, Sept. 26, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.
3 New York Times, Sept. 25, 1866.

which had the strongest claim to present itself as "that great and victorious party which successfully carried the flag and the Constitution through the perils of the Rebellion."[1] The fluidity of political affiliations in 1866 meant that conventional Republican Party rhetoric was used by both supporters and opponents of the policy of a Republican dominated Congress. But it was the former, remaining within the Republican organization, which had survived despite its temporary and widespread adoption during the war of the name Union Party, who were most likely to profit from declarations such as that of a conservative, attacking Radicalism, that the Republican Party "has carried the country through the war. It has proved its fidelity and power; it has earned in blood a right to prescribe for a bleeding country."[2]

If only one party could successfully exploit its collective war effort, individuals of every shade of opinion tried to endorse themselves, their associates and their policies by emphasizing their wartime records. At the national level, Andrew Johnson went to the country as one who had "fought traitors at the South", risking property, liberty and life for the Union and the Government.[3] At a local level, the World combined a tribute to military service with the long popular theme of success through individual effort when it described the organizer of a Schenectady Johnson club as having "served through the entire war, starting as a private soldier, and working his way, by his own merits, to the position of colonel.[4]

Opponents of Johnson also played upon their efforts in the war for the Union. Major-General Howard of the Freedmen's Bureau wore military uniform when he spoke at Brooklyn on behalf of Radical Reconstruction,

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1 Gen. H. Walbridge at a Fenton and Woodford meeting, New York, Oct. 15, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 16, 1866.

2 Gen. James Shields at a conservative mass meeting, Chillicothe, Mo., Oct. 5, 1866: New York Times, Oct. 16, 1866.

3 Johnson at Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 3, 1866, and Samuel J. Tilden and Judge Embury at Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866; World, Sept. 18, 1866.

4 World, Sept. 7, 1866.

causing the World to comment tartly that he apparently thought the war was not over.[1] This organ of the Democracy had reason to be annoyed. While Democrats had gone to the front in their thousands, the World could rarely endorse old-line Democrats who stood for office as the Radical New York Tribune did the Republican candidate for Governor of New York State when it proudly recorded that Woodford "entered the volunteer army and helped fight through the war for the Union; being one of the first to raise the National Flag over the ramparts of Charleston."[2] Tribune editor Horace Greeley touched the heart of the matter when, prior to nominating Woodford, he urged the necessity for adding a number of soldiers to the Republican state ticket. The rival nomination of the more widely known incumbent Thomas G. Alvord, favourite son of a county described as "one of the seats of power of the Republican party," met the more usual demands of practical politics, but in 1866, as Greeley observed, "Others did well, but... the country warmed more glowingly for those who had endured hardship on the field, and had thus illustrated their genuine American love of country." The fact that Woodford could be presented as one who had "done his best to elect Mr. Lincoln" in 1860 made him all the more valuable a candidate.[3] Southern Unionists campaigning against presidential Reconstruction were similarly endorsed as representing the twin themes of Union and wartime service, and prominent Northern Republicans offered "the right hand of fellowship" to "the tried and true patriots of the South" who had faced rebel bullets, and urged Congressional Reconstruction policies as the means to ensure that "these gallant fellow-soldiers of ours" who had risked all for the Union should not be put "under the heels of misreconstructed Rebels".[4]

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1 World, Oct. 21, 1866
2 New York Tribune, Sept. 3, 1866
3 Ibid., Sept. 6, 1866.
4 Henry Wilson at meeting in the League House, Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866; resolution of welcome adopted by the Select and Common Councils of Philadelphia and read to the Southern Loyalists' Convention, Sept. 5, 1866; remarks of Gen. Burley of Connecticut at meeting of Northern delegates to this convention, Sept. 5, 1866; New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 6, 1866.

The presentation of opponents as traitors to the Union was another theme common to the political rhetoric of most politicians. Republicans in particular seldom missed an opportunity to issue a warning about "the second rebellion headed by Andrew Johnson" and to label his adherents as half-reconstructed rebels together with their anti-war Northern allies and a few recreant Republicans betraying their party for the spoils of office, a band of "Democrats, Copperheads, Rebels and Bread-and-Butter Renegades."[1] Johnson's lenient Reconstruction programme, which had indeed permitted some former rebels to regain positions of influence in the South, became in Radical harangues a scheme to overthrow the Union Republican Party, usurp the powers of Congress and restore to power those who would destroy the American Government by admitting to its halls "traitors, their hands red with blood."[2] The Philadelphia Convention at which National Unionists presented their election platform was denounced as a conspiracy of rebels and traitors, "sympathizers with Dixie" gathered to plot the destruction of the Republic.[3] Johnson's own words on traitors were turned against him,[4] as signs of the new rebellion were found everywhere, and the threat of renewed civil war was held over those who would reject the Radical solution to Reconstruction.[5] If proof were needed, said the

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1 8th. resolution adopted at Loyal League Convention, Syracuse, Sept. 4, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1866; address of the Massachusetts Republican State Convention, Sept. 13, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 14, 1866; Chicago Tribune, Sept. 18, 20, and Oct. 4, 1866.

2 Benjamin Butler at meeting of Northern delegates to the Loyalists Convention, Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept 6, 1866.

3 Washburne speaking at the Jo Davies County Republican Convention, Galena, Ill., Sept. 13, 1866; Charles S. Spencer at an 8th. Assembly District (New York) Union Republican Fenton and Woodford Campaign Club meeting, Oct. 5, 1866; Address of Alabama Unionists read at the Southern Loyalists' Convention, Sept 6, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 17, 1866; New York Times, Oct. 6, 1866; New York Tribune, Sept. 7, 1866.

4 Banners carried by Republican ward delegations in the Southern Loyalists' procession, Sept. 3, 1866; Gen H. Walbridge at Brooklyn, Oct. 1, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, Oct. 2, 1866.

5 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 13, 1866.

President's assailants, it lay at hand in the daily outrages against Unionists in the South. Hecklers who, cheering for Thaddeus Stevens, met Andrew Johnson on his arrival at an Ohio township, carried placards which read simply "New-Orleans, New-Orleans."[1] The city where in riots six weeks earlier over thirty blacks had been killed and many more injured,[2] according to Johnson's enemies "because they were our friends, and our country's friends",[3] had become a symbol of the alleged attempt by former Confederates, sanctioned by the President, to regain power by a fresh resort to arms. The people must decide, said Republican speakers, whether the nation was to go "backward to the music of rebellion, or forward to the music of the Union."[4]

In this attack on Johnson and his allies as traitors, much use was made of Lincoln as a symbol of loyalty to the Union. Responding to W.M. Springer's claim that Johnson's policy was that of Lincoln, James Conkling of Illinois, "admitted that the policy of Lincoln was to preserve the Union, and wanted to know why Mr. S. did not support him in his efforts to that end. What glory had the Copperheads out of Mr. Lincoln's record, he would ask?"[5] According to a report in the Cleveland Leader, the men who cried out that hecklers in Cleveland had insulted the President were the same men "who during the war demonstrated their respect for the Presidential station by calling our beloved Abraham Lincoln the 'Illinois ape,' and our soldiers 'Lincoln's hirelings,' and 'Lincoln's pups' ..."[6] Horace Maynard used this form of attack as a subtle defence against the use of "Radical" as a pejorative term: "They call us Radicals. What do they mean by it? We knew when they called us Lincolnites, with a d—n to it, what they meant; but now they call us

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1 New York Times, Sept. 14, 1866.
2 Franklin, Reconstruction, 63-64.
3 Emory A. Storrs at Ottawa, Ill., Sept. 11, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 22, 1866.
4 Joshua M. Van Cott at Union Republican mass meeting, Brooklyn, Oct. 17, 1866: New York Times, Oct. 18, 1866.
5 Quoted from the Chicago Tribune's report (Oct. 4, 1866) of a joint political discussion between Springer and Conkling, Springfield, Ill., Oct. 4, 1866.
6 Quoted in New York Tribune, Sept. 7, 1866.

Radicals. We are the same men, and so are they, now as then".[1] Often such use of Lincoln was focussed against Johnson personally. Charles Sumner warned that personal experience of Johnson's policy and conduct produced "the painful conviction that his whole soul was set as flint against the good cause, and that by the assassination of Abraham Lincoln the rebellion had vaulted into the Presidential chair."[2] Republican speeches and newspaper articles attacking Johnson were heavy with the implication or explicit charge that traitors generally and Johnson in particular had profited from Lincoln's death. "We are not guilty in that A.J (Andrew Johnson) is President. Booth and the Copperheads made him that", said one speaker. "To the traiterous ball of Booth he owes his election...", confirmed General Logan, and Charles S. Spencer, another Radical, declared that Johnson was "now discharging a debt he owes to the rebels for placing him in the Presidential chair by the hand of an assassin."[3]

Closely associated with this theme was the claim that the issues of 1866 were those of 1860-1861 or of the Civil War generally. Supporters of the President sometimes also developed this theme, one writing to the New York Times that he could foresee "the same principles involved in the coming struggle as we fought for in the field."[4] It was, however, more popular with exponents of Congressional Reconstruction. According to General Logan, the treachery of a faithless President who had combined with traitors North and South had made it necessary to resettle the issues of the war on the stump and at the ballot-box,[5] a variant of the appeal from the bullet to the ballot which was one of the most favoured slogans of this campaign.[6] In this theme Lincoln memory was easily exploited.

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1 Speech at Shelbyville, Tenn., Aug.24, 1866: op.cit.
2 Sumner at Boston, Oct. 2, 1866: New York Times, Oct. 3, 1866.
3 Sigismund Kaufman at a Fenton and Woodford meeting, New York, Oct.15, 1866: Logan at Ottawa. Ill., Sept.11, 1866; Spencer at 8th. Assembly District Union Republican meeting, New York, Sept.5, 1866:New York Tribune, Oct. 16, 1866; Chicago Tribune, Sept. 12, 1866; New York Times, Oct. 6, 1866.
4 Letter from a "a Soldier"(Brig.-Gen. J.William Hoffman) published in New York Times, Sept. 2, 1866.
5 Logan at Ottawa, Ill., Sept. 11, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept.11, 1866
6 At Cicero, Ind., Sept. 17, 1866, Gen. Willich, addressing a Union (Republican) meeting, "showed that it is now the duty of the citizen

At New York Henry Wilson told the men who had voted for Fremont and "who carried Abraham Lincoln in your hearts", that the great cause was still the same.[1] In the West, Herndon declared that, "the issues of 1861 and 1864 were again upon us, and we had to fight the battle over again upon the same line ..."[2] The people had elected and re-elected Lincoln, said the Chicago Tribune, and in 1866 they would again show that they would not submit to traitors.[3]

Johnson's visit to Illinois provided fresh chances to develop this theme while exploiting the state's new hero against him. Reflecting on the fitness of the day for the shedding by traitors of "such tears, as assassins may be supposed to shed" when they find that they have immortalized their victims, the paper editorially welcomed Johnson as the honourable man who had come "to weep for betrayed Douglas and slain Lincoln ..." Later the Tribune recorded Johnson's probable thoughts as he left Lincoln's tomb and "estimated how much assassination had done for him." His friends had removed Southern Unionists, Johnson had bought the support of rebels with pardons, and, concluded this particularly nasty attack upon the President, "Upon the whole, assassination had - not put him back any."[4] According to the Tribune, it expressed the popular attitude. Reporting the hostile reception accorded to the President at Bloomington, Illinois, the paper recorded the crowd's cry that, "We don't want traitors to desecrate the home of Abraham Lincoln ..." "Never", said the Tribune, "did traitor receive a more marked rebuke from a bereaved people."[5]

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soldiers to fight the same enemy with the ballot that they had once fought with the bullet ...": Chicago Tribune, Sept. 21, 1866.

1 Wilson at New York, Oct. 15, 1866: New York Times, Oct. 16, 1866.
2 Herndon at Springfield, Ill., Oct. 3, 1866: op.cit.
3 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 20, 1866.
4 Ibid., Sept. 6, 12, 1866.
5 Ibid., Sept. 8, 1866.

Some attempt was made to counter such use of Lincoln. "That no gentleman may think I am a Copperhead ..." declared one supporter of Johnson, "I will state that I canvassed my district for Abraham Lincoln ..."[1] Defending the President against Radical attacks, another demanded, "Did he not sign the death-warrant of the murderers of Lincoln?"[2] Denunciation of Lincoln by Radicals was recalled to discredit their claims that Johnson was a traitor. Thus Seward declared that, "I heard Abraham Lincoln denounced within three months of his death by the bullet of an assassin, worse and through a larger portion of the United States than Andrew Johnson is now denounced for treason to the Constitution and the Government ..."[3] The men who had attacked Lincoln now threatened to impeach Johnson, and "the same men who stood by Lincoln then stand by Johnson now", said General Ewing. "In the light of this recital", he asked, "is it Johnson or Congress that has turned traitor to the principles on which he and Lincoln and Congress were elected?"[4]

Johnson was particularly incensed by allegations that he was disloyal. "I will call upon any man here", he told the inhabitants of Cincinnati, "and defy him to put his finger upon an instance in which I have swerved a hair's breadth from the platform upon which the late lamented President and myself were elected."[5] If that was not enough to prove his case, he could point to his sacrifices during the war,[6] and if his opponents scoffed at these,[7] he could still turn to the sacrifices of the man who stood beside him throughout the "swing around the circle", William H. Seward.

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1 Judge Embury at Union Rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1866: World, Sept. 18, 1866.
2 Joseph P. Geiger at a Democratic meeting in the Brooklyn wigwam, Oct. 24, 1866: World, Oct. 25, 1866.
3 Speech at Niagara Falls, Sept. 1, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 3, 1866.
4 Ewing at the Cleveland Soldiers' and Sailors' Convention, Sept. 17, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 18, 1866.
5 Johnson at Cincinnati, Ohio, Sept. 12, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 13, 1866.
6 Johnson at Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 3, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1866.
7 Gen. Stokes at Troy, New York, Sept. 15, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 17, 1866.

For Seward had suffered at the hands of the men who had conspired to kill Lincoln, and this Johnson was fully prepared to exploit. At Cleveland he declared: "Let me ask this large and intelligent audience if your Secretary of State, who served four years under Mr. Lincoln, and who was placed upon the butcher's block, as it were, and hacked to pieces and scarred by the assassin's knife, when he turned traitor?" He would not, he said, "exhibit the bloody garments, saturated with gore" and then ask why Thaddeus Stevens and Wendell Phillips should not be hung,[1] but this clear intimation that the Radicals were implicated in the assassination plot or responsible for its outcome brought outraged protests from his opponents,[2] and such tasteless displays probably alienated the more sensitive of his supporters.

However obnoxious to its victim, the attack on the President as a traitor who had benefitted from Lincoln's assassination by a tool of the rebellion was a logical extension, once Johnson had fallen from Radical favour, of the interpretation of Lincoln's death developed by Radicals and their allies in 1865. Then, seeking to exploit a national tragedy on behalf of their call for an approach to Reconstruction which would ensure the total and permanent extirpation of slavery, they had depicted the assassinated President as a hero of the nation and freedom, struck down by the spirit of rebellion and slavery. Now advocates of Radical Reconstruction policies for the first time sought to utilize these themes, developed in sermons and orations on the assassination, in an election campaign.

As was the case with heroic images of Lincoln generally, use of the concepts of the Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty ranged from brief allusions to the most explicit presentation. At the Southern Loyalists'

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1 Johnson at Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 3, 1866: op.cit.
2 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 6, 1866.

Convention, references to Lincoln's heroic role were ambiguous. Over the frame of a portrait of Lincoln which looked down on the delegates in National Hall was inscribed a quotation from William Cullen Bryant's poetic tribute to the Martyr-Emancipator.[1] The lines chosen were, however,

> Pure was thy life; its bloody close hath placed thee with the sons of light
> Among the noble hosts of those who perished in the cause of right.

For Radicals, one of whose number was responsible for the mottoes decorating the hall, this might strongly suggest that it was the spirit of Lincoln as a hero of liberty whose presence endorsed the proceedings, and the appeal being made in that hero's name might seem to be driven home by a banner stretched across the stage in front of Lincoln's portrait demanding "LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY." The wording of the banner, as well as the appeal to the martyred Lincoln, was, however, so phrased that conservatives could if they chose to do so interpret it in a much more general sense.[2]

In the address adopted by a mass convention of soldiers and sailors at Syracuse in late September, a gathering which served as a platform for the promulgation of Radical doctrines by Woodford, Henry Wilson, Samuel C. Pomeroy of Kansas and others, the image of Lincoln as Emancipator was implicit but understated. According to the New York Tribune, which believed that the address issued by this convention would prove a valuable campaign document, "It gives a complete history of the issues before the people, recounting the movements made by the Southern States to render the action of President Lincoln and the Congress of the United States to secure freedom for the black race inoperative."[3]

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1 See below p. 247.

2 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.

3 New York Tribune, Sept. 21, 1866. The World (Sept. 1, 25, 1866). condemned such "so-called" soldiers' conventions, and the Grand Army of the Republic (a veterans' organization), as the products of Radical wire-pulling. They were undoubtedly a successful campaign tactic, and one that was used by Johnson's supporters also.

Other appeals to the memory of the Emancipator were more explicit. Lincoln was established in Radical rhetoric as a hero of liberty. His life-long antipathy to slavery was recalled. A review in the New York Tribune of Horace Greeley's literary exposition of the Radical interpretation of the crisis which had led to civil war told how: "Abraham Lincoln is President. Puritan intellect has at last gained a triumph worth the hundred victories of slavery. Little was known of Abraham Lincoln, but in his character exists an eternal emnity to Slavery."[1] That he nobly sought to strike a mortal blow at slavery was not in question. "We do not forget", said General Walbridge, "that at the darkest period of the struggle it was that act of universal emancipation of the departed Lincoln that diffused life and joy and gladness throughout the Republic."[2] The outraged protests which that act had provoked in 1862 and 1863 were, however, conveniently forgotten, except when Radicals chose to attack opponents for having opposed Lincoln's measure to save the Union,[3] The basic call was for preservation and continuance of Lincoln's work for the slaves. Fears were expressed that, "Slavery is not yet abolished. The negro is not yet free."[4] According to Lyman Trumbull, the situation in the rebel states proved the necessity for Congress to adopt a policy which would put them under the control of loyal men "who would afford protection to the Union men in their midst, and to the colored race, who, by the proclamations of the late President, by various acts of Congress, and lastly by the great Constitutional Amendment, had been declared forever free."[5] Thus would the policy of the hero of liberty be honoured:

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1 New York Tribune, Oct. 6, 1866, reviewing The American Conflict, 2 vols. (Hartford, Conn., 1864-66)

2 Walbridge at Fenton and Woodford meeting, New York, Oct. 15, 1866: New York Tribune. Oct. 16, 1866

3 Lyman Tremaine at Syracuse, Sept. 5, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 6, 1866

4 Emory A. Storrs at Ottawa, Ill., aug. 31, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 1, 1866.

5 Trumbull at Evanston, Ill., Aug. 31, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 1, 1866.

"What we know is this," said Henry Wilson, "Abraham Lincoln sought to put those States, and did as far as he could, into the hands of loyal men true to liberty."[1]

Many Radicals believed that in order to ensure the permanence of emancipation it would be necessary to introduce some degree of black enfranchisement, and to a number of their leaders it seemed increasingly obvious that Negro suffrage was the crucial plank in their programme. Radical motivation has been much debated,[2] but it is now generally conceded that the call for voting rights for black men had its origins in humanitarian concern for the freedmen, reflecting a conviction that only the ballot could guarantee their freedom, and an ideological commitment to equal rights for all men.[3] At the same time Radicals urged Negro suffrage as a political necessity. Seeking to achieve their ideals through political action, they were well aware of the necessity to preserve their party's ascendancy in national politics and shared the fears of Republican leadership generally that rapid readmission to the Union of the ex-Confederate States and the subsequent reunion of the Southern and Northern wings of the Democratic Party would present a serious challenge to Republican supremacy. The Radical solution, which they hoped would convert their party as a whole to Negro suffrage, was to create a Republican organization in the South on the basis of the votes of the freedmen who could be expected to support the party which had emancipated them. Such determination to preserve their party's power was not, then necessarily selfish. The Democratic Party's commitment to the Union as it has been before the War and its anti-war, pro-slavery, racialist stand, as well as the probability that a re-united Democracy

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1 Wilson at Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.
2 See Lawanda Cox and John H. Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics", op. cit.
3 Brock, An American Crisis, 67-94; Cox and Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics", op.cit., 241, and Politics, Principle and Prejudice, chapter 10.

would be dominated by a reactionary Southern wing, made the continuation of Republican rule a matter of principle and national safety for many Unionists.[1]

Yet if some Radicals were unafraid to demand Negro or "universal" suffrage, or at least to call for "impartial" suffrage with property or educational qualifications applying to black and white men equally,[2] others preferred to be less specific.[3] In all states politicians were accustomed to treading carefully in order to take account of "shifting crosscurrents of sectionalism, idealism, materialism, racism, nativism, and antimonopolism."[4] With anti-Negro feeling still prevalent throughout the North, especially in cities and the Mid-West,[5] there was a real and fully appreciated danger that any call for voting rights for blacks would divide the Republican Party or lose it votes, either directly or by giving force to Democratic charges that Republicans sought to bring about racial equality.[6] In order to counter such racialist thinking and to win the majorities needed, while at the same time preparing the way for adoption of measures they considered vital, Radicals sought to persuade their fellow Republicans and Northern voters generally that their programme of Reconstruction, with its emphasis on disfranchisement of former rebels and enfranchisement of former slaves, was crucial if the fruits of victory were to be preserved.[7] In this educative process[8] Radicals employed a

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1 Cox and Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics", op.cit., 234

2 Gov. Lane at Philadelphia, Sept. 4, 1866; Brownlow at Philadelphia, Sept. 6, 1866; Butler at Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1866 and at Berea, Ohio, Oct. 1, 1866; Carl Schurz at Fremont, Ohio, Sept. 30, 1866; Senator Williams at New York, Oct. 15, 1866; New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 6, 7, and Oct. 2, 16, 1866.

3 Trumbull at Evanston, Ill., Aug. 31, 1866, and Hamlin at Bangor, Me., Sept. 8, 1866; Chicago Tribune, Sept. 1, 8, 1866; Thaddeus Stevens at Bedford, Pa., Sept. 4, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 11, 1866.

4 Richard N. Current, "The Politics of Reconstruction in the North", in Leonard Dinnerstein and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds., American Vistas, 1607-1866 (New York, 1979).

5 Leslie H. Fischel, Jr., "Northern Prejudice and Negro Suffrage, 1865-1870", JNH, XXXIX (Jan., 1954), 12-15.

6 See speech of Stevens at Bedford, Pa., Sept. 4, 1866: op.cit.

7 See McPherson, Struggle for Equality, 334-36 on abolitionist Wendell Phillips' lecture, "The South Victorious".

8 Beale, op.cit., 64-73; McPherson, Struggle for Equality, 318-19.

a variety of political arguments, but the heroic Lincoln and myths associated with emancipation proved invaluable.

Radical measures, and Negro suffrage in particular, were presented as a necessary extension of Lincoln's edict abolishing slavery.[1] The spirit of the Great Emancipator was invoked in the demand that his work be concluded. Reporting a speech of Woodford at Brooklyn, the New York Tribune recorded that, "In closing, the speaker drew an eloquent and touching picture of that being in Heaven, whom we had learned to love, and whose memory we cherished, bending over us and pleading that his great emancipation shall not have been proclaimed in vain."[2] In the name of the Emancipator, Radical speakers demanded equal rights for Blacks. At a reunion of the Eighth Illinois Cavalry, an anti-slavery churchman told his audience that they would be able to tell their grandchildren with pride "that they were associated with the great Lincoln in the struggle for freedom..." but "would have to wait till the freedman had asserted his manhood ... Then would Abraham Lincoln's big Abolition regiment take first place among those that went forth to fight the battles of the country."[3]

Such exploitation of Lincoln as freedom's champion on behalf of Radical policies was particularly favoured by Henry Wilson. If Lincoln had lived, he told a meeting in Chicago, "this contest would have been closed, these States would have been represented in Congress, and the cause of the country and of liberty would be safe to-night." The reason for this was simple: "Abraham Lincoln was always patriotic, always true to liberty ..." This dual image of Lincoln as the hero of his nation and of freedom was continued as the implication that Lincoln's policy in Reconstruction would have coincided with the measures advocated by Radicals was developed

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1 Emory A. Storrstat Ottawa, Ill., Sept. 11, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 22, 1866.
2 New York Tribune, Oct. 2, 1866.
3 Rev. G. Matlock, speaker of the day, at reunion at St. Charles, Ill., Sept. 18, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 19, 1866.

further by Wilson. To great applause he declared that, "God never made any man more true to his country, or to liberty, than Abraham Lincoln." Moreover, continued Wilson, Lincoln "was true to his friends... If he moved slow, he always moved. His face was in the right direction, and if he had lived, the great work of his life would have been accomplished." As a damning attack on Johnson followed, none could doubt what Wilson, a firm advocate of Negro suffrage and other Radical measures to protect the freedmen, meant.[1]

In such speeches it was Wilson's intention to extend a theme well established in Republican campaign rhetoric generally and endorse his party and its policies not simply through the heroic Lincoln but, to suit Radical purposes, through the image of him as a hero of black emancipation. This would weaken the arguments of those conservatives who, recognising the potency of mythic images of Lincoln, sought to detach the hero from a party increasingly under the influence of its Radical faction. At a Union rally in Illinois, in a speech attacking Johnson and expressing that faction's demand for equal rights, Wilson recalled the election of Lincoln, commenting: "We remember that he was the great apostle of freedom in the Western world, and that he was the representative man of our party."[2] In this case the image of Lincoln as a hero of liberty was integrated into Wilson's thesis that only through Radical policies could America fulfil her destiny as a refuge for the oppressed. In a later speech, Wilson went a step further to credit the Republican party, without denigrating Lincoln's work for the slave, with the glory of emancipation. The party which had elected Illinois' own "glorious Lincoln", and which Johnson now attacked, had made America free. "The Republican party - the Union Republican party of the United States - betrayed, assailed and misrepresented -

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1 Speech at Chicago, Sept. 27, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 28, 1866.
2 Speech at Rock Island, Sept. 26, 1866: ibid., Sept. 27, 1866

stands before the nation and the world to-day the champion of the liberty of the Republic - the emancipator of a race."[1]

A speech delivered by Wilson on the occasion of a great Fenton and Woodford meeting at the Cooper Institute in New York illustrates how the fully-developed theme of the Emancipator was blended into the Radical interpretation of the Civil War and Reconstruction in campaign rhetoric of 1866. Following an attack upon the traitor Johnson which also played upon the memory of Lincoln, and depicting the issues of the present as representing the same struggle - against slavery - that had been fought by the Union soldiers, Wilson recalled how "before Abraham Lincoln had been laid away in his grave", Johnson had listened to advice to "cast off the radical anti-Slavery men of the North" and build up his own party. The President could not be convinced, said Wilson, that the people were against him, that "for many a long and many year (sic) Christian men and women have read their bibles, and on bended knees invoked the blessing of God upon the poor bondmen." This was an accurate description of abolitonist attitudes, but the implication that such behaviour characterized the Northern response to slavery was a gross distortion to suit the purposes of a call to "the people" as the final tribunal in republican America. As he developed this theme, a popular one with politicians generally, Wilson also turned the memory of the Emancipator against Johnson as he described how he had personally warned the President that "Abraham Lincoln ... pledged the faith of the nation that they (the bondmen) should be free; and ... Christian men and women of America are praying for it; they have struggled for it; they will fight for it."

Turning to his own party, Wilson presented Republicans as "the representatives of the unity of the country, the spirit of nationality,

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1 Speech at Chicago, Sept. 27, 1866; op.cit.

the spirit of liberty, of justice, humanity and Christian civilization." Of greater moral worth than any party before them, Republicans had been, he continued, "the champions of everything that is pure and holy in the Western world." Into this image of the Republican Party as manifesting Unionism, nationalism, progress and the various themes cherished by American society in its vision of the nation's glorious destiny, Wilson again blended Lincoln. As he recalled the party's long struggle against slavery and for the preservation of the Union, culminating in the election of Lincoln, and described how Republicans had sustained the cause of freedom throughout the war, Wilson once more evoked the image of the Emancipator. Republicans, he declared, "stamped 'freedom' on every foot of the national domain", armed the Negro and freed the wives and children of black soldiers, and "they stood by Abraham Lincoln when he issued that Proclamation of Emancipation that gave freedom to 3,000,000 of men (Loud and continuous cheering) and made the name of Lincoln the dearest name of the nineteenth century (Applause)". Having roused the audience's enthusiasms by this appeal to the memory of the Emancipator, Wilson made the fundamental point of his speech. Passing favourably over the legislation of Congress with regard to freedmen, he won applause with his declaration that, "I am for universal emancipation, universal suffrage."[1]

As in 1865, the image of Lincoln as a martyr to liberty was closely associated with the Emancipator tradition in Radical rhetoric. Appeals to the memory of the nation's "great martyred President"[2] were, however, commonly made by National Unionists as well as Republicans. The New York Times entitled an item attacking Radicalism "The Martyr President" and

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1 Speech of Oct. 15, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 16, 1866.
2 Seward at St. Louis, Sept. 8, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1866.

made heavy use of that image of Lincoln in an article supporting the view that Johnson's policy was that of his predecessor.[1] Similarly Democrat John T. Hoffman cried, "Out upon the men who violate the platform adopted by their martyred President and upheld by his constitutional successor...' "[2] Radicals and their allies were quick to exploit the same concept of Lincoln in countering such claims. In a letter read to a meeting to ratify the Republican ticket in New York, Governer Fenton declared that "the martyred Lincoln" recognised the authority of Congress over Reconstruction, and on the same occasion Hamlin was cheered when he stressed that, "We dare not agree to any terms that shall not vindicate our lamented and noble President, who went down a martyr."[3] Reporting a speech by the leading Massachusetts Radical, the New York Times recorded that, "Mr. Sumner said that it was claimed that Mr. Johnson was carrying out Mr. Lincoln's policy. It was not so, and he wished the martyr could rise from his grave to repel the calumny."[4] At the Pittsburgh Soldiers' and Sailors' Convention a resolution was offered "That the loyal soldiers of the Union profoundly cherish the memory of the last Chief Magistrate we aided to elect, the martyr hero, Abraham Lincoln; and we call upon our comrades in arms throughout the land to remember that his life was taken by the men who now clamour for equal rights with us in the administration of the Government."[5] In the name of the martyr, the call for Radical policies was made: appealing to Unionist sentiment as he denounced Johnson, General Walbridge demanded, "When we strain our minds to comprehend the enormity of President Lincoln's assassination, shall we

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1 New York Times, Sept. 7, 1866.Oct. 7, 1866.
2 Speech at Rochester, Sept. 28, 1866: World, Oct. 2, 1866.
3 New York Times, Oct.16, 1866.
4 Ibid., Sept. 27, 1866.
5 New York Times, Sept. 27, 1866.

allow the nation to be assassinated?"[1]

The martyred Lincoln was, however, more potent when he was merged into the mythic theme of sacrifice and redemption, which, as indicated earlier, was by itself playing an important role in Republican campaign rhetoric. Anti-slavery politicians and preachers had long exploited this theme, urging that the war must bring about liberty - the redemption of America from slavery - so that her martyrs might not have died in vain,[2] and it now became crucial to their campaign of 1866 as they called for Radical policies to secure the liberty for which so many had died. Replying to a welcome by Judge Kelley on the opening day of the Southern Loyalists' Convention, a Tennessee delegate "spoke of the great sacrifices already made for the country, and hoped that through similar sacrifices at this time the great cause of liberty might triumph."[3] For opponents of slavery all who had died fighting the rebellion were victims of that "monstrous iniquity" which the South had sought to preserve, and, as a prayer invoking God's blessing upon this convention of Southern Unionists declared: "The voice of the brother's blood, martyrs for liberty and law, crieth to Thee from the ground..."[4]

Of such martyrs the most renowned was undoubtedly Lincoln, and the distortion of past events in order to make comprehensible, or more potent, the call of a political campaign was once more illustrated as Lincoln became, as he had for those advocating Radical policies in 1865, the victim not of a madman but of slavery in rebellion. With Lincoln's

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1 Speech at Brooklyn, Oct. 1, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 2, 1866. For Radicals seldom missed a chance to evoke this image of Lincoln, The New York Tribune describing decorations at a meeting in Philadelphia mentioned that a set of blazing gas jets lit up the name of "the martyred Lincoln". Discussing local party organization in Cincinnati, the Chicago Tribune (Sept. 7, 1866) commented "The spirit and activity manifested, recall the memorable campaign of the Wide-Awakes, to whose perfect organization and patriotism the martyred Lincoln was largely indebted for sweeping majorities."

2 See above pp.70-71.

3 Chaplain Frierson at Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.

4 From prayer of Rev. J.W. Jackson of Philadelphia: ibid.

election the South's "aristocracy of Slavery" had appealed to arms claimed Woodford, and by his re-election loyal men had shown their determination to preserve the Government, destroy slavery, "and settle the war in favor of freedom." Rebellion had been defeated, but "Then treason with an assassins hand struck down the good President Lincoln, and as his lifeless corpse was borne through our streets, men whispered with white lips as they bent over his cold remains and swore that treason should gain no advantage by his death." Drawing out the moral for the present time - a moral that could hardly be missed by those repeatedly warned that treason had triumphed in the accession to the Presidency of Andrew Johnson - Woodford declared that traitors would find "that a nation, with freedom as its brightest jewel, regards a loyal black as at heart equal to a white Rebel."[1] Through this interpretation of Lincoln's assassination the events of the present could be understood. A motto at the Philadelphia Convention of Southern Loyalists drafted by Radical Thomas Webster read simply: "Rebel reconstruction, its first act the assassination of President Lincoln. Its latest the massacre at New-Orleans."[2] "If Hamblin had been elected Vice-President, " said a speaker in New York, "Abraham Lincoln would have been alive to-day." Repeating the sentence with emphasis, he added: "The friends of slavery had known the character of the man, the Union party had not."[3]

Radical John Logan also developed the same themes in an explicit attach upon Johnson. To put down rebellion, he recalled, "we fought, we bled and many noble soldiers died." Treason had been crushed, "and yet it had not filled its foul cup of black crimes till it murdered our

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1 Speech at Union meeting, Brooklyn, Sept. 12, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 13, 1866.

2 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.

3 Martin J. Townsend at Fenton and Woodford meeting, Oct. 15, 1866; ibid., Oct. 16, 1866.

noble President, Abraham Lincoln." Making a personal tribute to the noble deeds of "this noble man" Lincoln, Logan continued, "Booth in the interest of traitors murdered this man, and when in turn foul rebellion fell, had he made a will, he would have appointed Andrew Johnson the executor and finisher of his treason. The traitors of the South would have doubtless added the codicil, saying amen." Again the message for the present was made clear: Congress alone stood against the triumph of those who had murdered Lincoln. Traitors would find that Johnson's pardons were blasphemy - only God could forgive such crimes - and that only the Government, through Congress, could restore the forfeited rights of the South. Instead of giving the ballot to rebels, as Johnson proposed, Congress would, said Logan, as, like many advocates of Negro suffrage, he emphasized the war effort of blacks, "give the ballot to the loyal negro, who carried the musket." Appealing to unionism and the war services of Union soldiers generally, Logan closed by calling upon his old comrades in arms to be true to the great cause for which they had fought.[1]

Thus anti-slavery men confirmed their 1865 judgement that Lincoln had fallen a victim to slavery, and the spirit of this martyr to liberty was invoked by those who called for Radical policies. At the Southern Loyalists' Convention the portrait of Lincoln mentioned earlier was suggestively draped in mourning, and the visit to Lincoln's tomb by members of that convention was made as a tribute to the memory of "that illustrious martyr of liberty."[2] In a call for Radical Reconstruction delivered in Illinois, Wilson, having already established Lincoln as a champion of freedom, presented him as "the martyred hero",[3] and addressing a meeting

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1 Speech at Union rally, Ottawa, Sept. 11, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 12, 1866.

2 From a resolution adopted at the convention, Sept. 5, 1866. No objection was made to the phrasing of the resolution which was adopted unanimously. New York Tribune, Sept. 6, 1866.

3 Speech at Rock Island, Sept. 26, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 27, 1866.

in New York German Republican Alfred Erbe roused his audience to immense applause with his warning to Johnson and the rebels that, "The spirit of old John Brown is still marching on, and will march on together with that of the murdered Lincoln haunting the traitor Johnson to his grave."[1] General Butler also exploited the martyred President in an emotive appeal for equal rights addressed to the Massachusetts Republican Convention. After establishing Radical policies as the means to secure America's triumph in the struggle between "eternal right and unmeasured wrong" and appealing for equal rights in terms of Unionism, and the heritage of America generally and Massachusetts in particular, Butler made a clever attack upon Johnson as representing monarchy, a play upon the popular theme of republicanism. He then welded the themes of America's world mission and glorious future and of the martyred Lincoln to his enthusiastically received call for Radical policies as he declared that Republicans were pledged to equality under the law by their patriotism, and by their martyrs sacrificed on the altar of equal rights, "by the hallowed blood of our sons slain on the battlefield or starved in prison; by the sacred members of the bleeding corpse of the assassinated Lincoln." Butler promised these heroes and the "martyred President" that "the good work by you begun, for which you laid down your lives, shall go on until every footprint of oppression, by man to his fellow man, shall be blotted out forever."[2]

In the campaign on behalf of Radical Reconstruction, the themes of Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty were often combined to make more potent the appeal for equal rights. In an emotively written editorial attack on Johnson the Chicago Tribune stressed that in opposing the Radicals Johnson had abandoned the policy of the martyred Emancipator. "Twelve

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1 Speech at Fenton and Woodford meeting, Oct. 15, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 16, 1866.
2 Speech of Sept. 13, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 14, 1866.

months ago," declared the Tribune, "it was within the power of Andrew Johnson to write his name in history, side by side with the immortal name of Lincoln. It was in his power to gather in the rich harvest of unity and freedom, so faithfully sown by his predecessor ..." Had he done so, the nation would have rejoiced to see him pause at Lincoln's grave, and "to see the living champion of liberty weep by the tomb of its greatest martyr." But Johnson had proved unworthy. In a clear reference to the President's attack upon the Radical wing of the Republican Party, the editorial concluded that, "At the very shrine of the nation's martyr, he was plotting ... to wreak vengeance upon the friends of Abraham Lincoln..."[1]

The state where Lincoln had spent most of his adult life proved a popular location for the exploitation of such themes. Addressing a meeting in Olney, Illinois, a Chicago Republican, F.S. Taylor, appealed for liberty and equal rights in an attack upon Johnson which began by offering the anti-slavery interpretation of the Civil War as an explanation of current events and establishing Lincoln as the Emancipator. "He opened his address", reported the Chicago Tribune, "with a concise presentation of the issues of 1860 between slavery and freedom as those of the present day likewise, and uttered a magnificent eulogy of the great Champion of Freedom, Abraham Lincoln." Taylor went on to depict Lincoln as the victim of slavery's rebellion, which had "spared Andrew Johnson that he might do his villainous work" of suppressing liberty and loyalty. Playing upon Johnson's alleged drunkeness, another theme enormously popular with his enemies, Taylor warned that the policies of the "recreant inebriate Moses" would lead to revived civil war.[2]

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1 "At the Tomb of Lincoln", ibid., Sept. 10, 1866.
2 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 17, 1866.

The images of Martyr and Emancipator were similarly linked in speeches delivered by delegates from the Southern Loyalists' Convention when they visited Illinois. A brief address attacking Presidential Reconstruction made in Chicago by Charles Branscomb of Missouri included the comments, as reported by the Chicago Tribune, that:

> ...we are on our way to the tomb of the martyred Lincoln, there to pay the tribute of respect and adoration to the memory of that truly great and noble man. (Great cheers.) Standing there at his grave, remembering his sublime teachings, inspired by his great wisdom, his love of humanity, we will dedicate ourselves anew...to the cause of human liberty which he so ardently loved; but which, through the treachery of those that have come after him has been sacrificed.

In a speech on the same occasion, Michael Hahn of Louisiana played upon the war services of loyal Southern blacks and then recalled the words and writings of the martyred hero of liberty, Abraham Lincoln, to support an explicit demand for Negro suffrage.[1]

The ways in which mythical images of Lincoln were incorporated into political rhetoric, particularly by Johnson's opponents, have now been illustrated, and it only remains to consider how effective such political use of the heroic Lincoln proved. It is no easy matter to determine what influences voting behaviour, and even less so when the voters in question are dead. Certainly the congressional elections of 1866 gave Republican critics of the Administration the overwhelming majorities they had sought,[2] but historians have disagreed over the reasons for this, and few would follow Beale in placing primary emphasis on "skilful manipulation of popular passions and the employment of campaign propaganda."[3] Yet while recent works have demonstrated that a variety of factors influenced the outcome of the 1866 campaign, there is evidence to suggest that Republican rhetoric played a significant role and that appeals to myth, and in particular to mythical images of Lincoln, were a valuable campaign tool.

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1 Ibid., Oct. 2, 1866.

2 Brock, An American Crisis, 153-54.

3 Beale, op.cit., 5. For a critical discussion of historians' views on the causes of Republican success in 1866 see "How Johnson Lost - The Historical Debate", in Riddleberger, 1866, 230-49.

Many events and circumstances combined to bring about Republican victory in 1866 but the effect these had upon the Northern public depended to a considerable extent upon the way in which they were presented by Republican editors and politicians. By summer 1866 the President's course on Reconstruction was causing growing concern amongst those who during four years of war had come to associate the safety of their nation with the continued ascendancy of the Republican Party. Henry Ward Beecher, a strong anti-slavery man who, believing it to be the cause of North, South, freedom and civilization, sustained Johnson's policy, found this concern reflected in his often critical mail: he was "overwhelmed with letters full of fear - fear for the country, fear for the Republican party, fear for him and his future usefulness."[1] It was Republican rhetoric that successfully converted these fears into a weapon against Johnson and his allies.

Undoubtedly Johnson played into his enemies' hands. Beecher, who condoned Presidential Reconstruction while denying that he was a Johnson man, noted "the exasperation of the Northern mind with the President", and considered Johnson "the greatest obstacle in the way of his own views."[2] It was Johnson's lack of openness as much as the support he received from Democrats which created a distrust of his motives and alienated many of his Moderate Republican supporters, helping to doom the once seemingly hopeful attempt to undertake national reconstruction through an Executive supported by a broad coalition embracing conservatives from both parties. It was his failure to appreciate that a style of political oratory developed in rural Tennessee was unsuited to the national arena[3] which resulted in speeches that even those who approved of their content considered "unwise".[4]

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1 William C. Beecher and Rev. Samuel Scoville, A Biography of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (London, 1888), 469.
2 Beecher to Rev. Stephen H. Tyng, Sept. 6, 1866: ibid., 470-71.
3 Brock, An American Crisis, 167-68; McKitrick, op.cit., 429-30. But for a different view see Fawn M. Brodie, Thaddeus Stevens, Scourge of the South (New York, 1966), 281.
4 Beecher and Scoville, op.cit., 470.

According to Beecher, it mattered little that Johnson's views might have merit: "The mere fact that he holds them is their condemnation with a public utterly exasperated with his rudeness and violence."[1] The intemperate addresses delivered by the President on Washington's birthday and during his speaking tour in September were serious tactical errors. Senator Doolittle estimated that the former lost the Conservative cause two hundred thousand votes and Johnson's Swing Around the Circle undoubtedly helped to discredit that cause with voters, the Northern community being, said Beecher, "thoroughly alarmed" by Johnson's "temper, attitude, and unjudicious speeches."[2] To many it seemed that the office of President had been degraded, and appeals to the memory of the heroic Lincoln became an increasingly powerful form of attack upon his successor. At the same time, disillusionment with Johnson personally, together with his opposition to measures favoured by Radicals and Moderate Republicans alike, led to regular defections from the ranks of his Republican supporters.[3] "It appears", commented the Chicago Tribune, "that Mr. Johnson's course is absolutely forcing men into the Radical ranks against their wishes."[4] This in turn caused his national alliance of conservatives to appear little more than a front for a revived bid for power by Democrats assuming the name of National Unionists in order to escape the taint of their party's Copperhead associations, and this sharpened the Republican attack on Johnson and his allies as traitors. Thus Johnson's personal failings and tactical errors lost him invaluable support amongst Republican leaders and the party's rank and file, and increased the effectiveness of Republican rhetoric.

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1 Ibid., 471.
2 James R. Doolittle to Orville H. Browning, Oct. 7, 1866, quoted from Pease and Randall, ed., Diary of Orville Hickman Browning, II, 93n, in Brodie, Thaddeus Stevens, 255; Beecher and Scoville, op.cit., 472.
3 McKitrick, op.cit., 12, considers Johnson's vetoes to have been crucial.
4 Chicago Tribune, Oct. 4, 1866.

Yet Johnson alone was not to blame for the failures of Presidential Reconstruction or the collapse of the conservative alliance which initially sustained it. If the President had good reason to know that certain features of the newly-established Southern governments were unacceptable to many Republican leaders, Southerners cannot escape responsibility for their own failure to see the writing on the wall. They as much as Johnson and Northern Democrats were at fault for refusing to recognize that the war aims of the North had changed irrevocably between 1861 and 1865 and that there could be no return to the Union as it was. On the other hand it was the triumph of Republican rhetoric that in 1866 it articulated the feelings, fears and demands which grew out of this situation. The majority of Northerners might view Negroes as an inferior race but they would not condone blatant oppression of Southern blacks while this was being presented by Republicans as a symbol of the revived rule of the slaveholding elite blamed for secession. Given this, the report of the Joint Committee of Fifteen on conditions in the South - a vital Republican campaign document[1], the Black Codes and the riots at Memphis and New Orleans became in the hands of Republican politicians powerful tools for hardening Northern opinion on black rights and Reconstruction generally.

The Black Codes and the massacres at Memphis and New Orleans have been singled out by some historians as having had a particularly strong impact on the Northern mind in 1866,[2] but factors beyond the control of Johnson or the South influenced the outcome of the autumn elections. While Conservative Republicans and Democrats co-operated locally throughout the campaign,[3] and while Democrats chose to represent the Democratic Party

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1 Brodie, op.cit., 246.
2 Trelease, Reconstruction, 45; Beale, op.cit., 344-54; Brodie, op.cit., 266-80; Riddleberger, 1866, 177.
3 New York Times, Oct. 20, 1866.

and the Conservative cause as one,[1] it was increasingly clear that neither Democrats nor Republicans were prepared to abandon their distinct organizations even at the local level,[2] and this doomed from the first any attempt to establish a national conservative party.[3] This in turn ensured that in 1866 the advantage lay with the Republican Party. For while Democrats were condemned as the party which to the end would have sacrificed the nation's interests and the legitimate fruits of war to secure an immediate peace, the Republican Party drew moral strength and vigour from its wartime role as defender of the nation and emancipator of the black race, a role symbolized in party mythology and rhetoric by the heroic Lincoln. According to the New York Times, the public mind of the North dreaded most the renewed ascendancy of the Democracy because that party did not represent the spirit of the age and its rhetoric was out of tune with the popular mind.[4] In 1866 the Democratic Party could not hope to fulfil the role which the Republican Party was - as its rhetoric emphasized - by virtue of its origin, character and experience so admirably suited.

Both nationally and at a local level issues other than Reconstruction doubtless influenced voting patterns in a society composed of a variety of interest groups.[5] Both Democrats and Republicans made a sustained play for working men's and Irish votes.[6] In Massachusetts and New York liquor became a significant campaign issue and Republicans were concerned

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1 World, Sept. 17, 1866.
2 New York Times, Sept. 2, 1866.
3 On the problems faced by the National Union party as a third party movement see Brock, An American Crisis, 162-63.
4 "The Political Canvass - The Drift of Public Sentiment", New York Times, Sept. 25, 1866.
5 Current, "The Politics of Reconstruction in the North", op.cit., 291-292.
6 "Labor and Politics - a Word to Workmen", New York Times, Sept. 16, 1866; resolutions adopted at a Conservative Convention, Baltimore, Sept. 25, 1866; New York Times, Sept. 28, 1866; Carl Schurz at Fremont, Ohio, Sept. 30, 1866: New York Tribune, Oct. 2, 1866: resolution of sympathy with the Irish adopted at the National Union State Convention, Topeka, Kansas, Sept. 21, 1866: New York Times, Sept. 28, 1866; speech of Hoffman before the Democratic Convention at Albany: World, Sept. 13, 1866. Milwaukee Republicans were by no means novel in adopting resolutions appealing to both groups: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 6, 1866.

about whether their party was losing German-American votes over "the lager beer question".[1] Political speakers framed their speeches to appeal to the economic interests of their audiences, and often played upon local affairs.[2] The techniques and stratagems normally employed in practical politics, particularly at a local level, must also have had their effect. Radicals were attacked for using the Army as a political tool.[3] Democratic and Republican politicians accused each other of election frauds and sometimes blamed defeat on these.[4] In Missouri Conservatives and Democrats attributed Radical success to the exclusion of supposed Confederates from voting, claiming that, "The Registry act has laid us out cold. We went in lemons and came out squeezed."[5]

Whatever the effect of such factors locally or nationally, there can be little doubt that the election results of 1866 reflected the impact upon the popular mind of Republicn rhetoric. Johnson's supporters were undoubtedly disturbed by the war of words waged on the President and his adherents by Republican politicians and editors.[6] As early as September 5 the New York Times considered it undeniable that Radicals' appeals to emotion rather than to reason had been "alarmingly effective."[7] Misrepresentations and agitation was alleged to have raised public passions to "an intense and perilous height."[8] A month later the Times was equally concerned about noisy Democratic mischief-makers. Only Conservatism could act as a buffer between Copperheads and Radicals,[9] but,

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1 New York Times, Oct. 31, 1866; New York Tribune, Sept. 17, 22, 1866.
2 See, for example, speeches by S.S. Cox at Brunswick and Portland, Me., Sept. 3, 11, 1868: World, Sept. 7, 13, 1868.
3 World, Sept. 25, 1866. The World (Sept. 1, 1866) also attacked the veterans' organization the Grand Army of the Republic as a political organization claiming that "all the wire-working and scheming is done by the Radical leaders."
4 World, Oct. 29, 1866; circular of Indiana Republicans mentioned in Chicago Tribune, Sept. 26, 1866.
5 William E. Parrish, "Reconstruction Politics in Missouri, 1865-1870", in Curry, ed., Radicalism, Racism and Party Realignment, 19.
6 Col. William S. Hillyer at New York, Sept. 3, 1866 and Bishop of Connecticut at New York, Sept. 17, 1866: New York Times, Sept.4, 18, 1866.
7 "The Appeal to Passion and the Dangers of the Future", New York Times, Sept. 5, 1866.
8 "The Sources of Peril and the Means of Peace", New York Times, Sept.10,1866.
9 "The Ways and Means of Promoting Disunion,", New York Times, Sept. 22, 1866.

as the paper's frequent complaints show,[1] it was the inflammatory language of the latter which was seen as the greater threat by those seeking voters' approval for a Conservative Reconstruction programme. Nor was it simply the violence of Radical language which caused concern. The Republican claim to continued power rested upon a particular understanding of the past.[2] This interpretation their opponents sought to challenge, claiming that together with its attendant myths it was unsuited to a time when "the full blaze of history is illuminating the past ..."[3] However, as Republican success in 1866 suggests and the evidence presented below regarding popular attitudes to Lincoln myths confirms,[4] the Republican account of the past and the myths it created or perpetuated found widespread acceptance in the early years of Reconstruction.

There are other grounds for supposing that the appeals to mythic themes played a vital and effective role in political and especially Republican rhetoric in 1866. It has been demonstrated that both those who campaigned against and those who sought votes on behalf of Presidential Reconstruction invoked the memory of the late hero-President, and the very frequency with which they did so is evidence of, or testimony to their faith in, the potency of this tactic. Even the simplest forms of appeal to the hero were considered effective. After describing the painting of Lincoln and the statues and mottoes, many of which related to him with which Radical Thomas Webster had decorated the Southern Loyalists' Convention hall in Philadelphia, the New York Tribune declared that similar decorations by Webster had in the past proved "more eloquent than a hundred sermons and speeches."[5] Nor does this appear to have been merely wishful thinking. That Johnson's supporters thought such use of the late President effective is sufficiently clear from a lengthy

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1 New York Times, Sept. 5, 8, 22, 1862.
2 Brock, An American Crisis, 9-12, discusses this interpretation.
3 Judge Comstock at New York, Sept. 17, 1866: World, Sept. 18, 1866.
4 See below Chapter Six.
5 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.

editorial in the New York Times attacking Republican and especially Radical exploitation of the heroic Lincoln in political propaganda.[1]

No doubt appeals to mythic images of Lincoln were particularly effective in Illinois where he was a local as well as a national hero, but there is evidence of such appeals being used successfully in other states. Although it rained steadily on those attacking the cause of "His Accidency" before an audience of soldiers, veterans, townspeople and farmers gathered at Cicero, Indiana, on 17 September, 1866, the weather could not dampen the enthusiasm of those present, and the Chicago Tribune recorded that the remarks of one speaker with regard to Lincoln's murder, "were fury in their intensity, and thrilled the audience like an electrick shock."[2] While recording their own party's successful use of Lincoln myths, Republican newspaper men sometimes tried to imply that opponents' attempts to utilize the hero on behalf of Johnson's policy were doomed to fail. According to the Chicago Tribune an Illinois speaker's effort to do so "fell like lead upon the assembly ..."[3] In fact, references to the Martyr President seem usually to have won a favourable response from Northern audiences. Describing the oration on Douglas delivered by Johnsonite General Dix at Chicago, the city's Radical Tribune was forced to admit that, "His mention of the name of the great Lincoln was the occasion for an outburst of applause ...", although the paper managed to turn this against the President by adding that this "contrasted strongly with the silence that followed his eulogy on Mr. Johnson." Dix had tried to win favour for Johnson by presenting him as having completed, by the Thirteenth Amendment, the immortal Lincoln's glorious work on emancipation. Apparently the Tribune did not care for such an attempt to appropriate the Emancipator tradition, for it commented that the audience "did not see the point."[4]

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1 New York Times, Oct. 13, 1866.
2 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 21, 1866.
3 Ibid., Oct. 4, 1866.
4 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 17, 1866.

The call for equal rights for black Americans may have been rendered more acceptable to the Republican Party as a whole by being associated with Lincoln in his symbolic role as Emancipator. Butler's performance before the Massachusetts Republican State Association at which, Mark Antony like, he brought before the mind's eye of each Republican present the bleeding corpse of the party's murdered leader and pledged each one to continue the Martyr's work against oppression seems to have had the desired impact. The Chicago Tribune recorded that, "The most advanced sentiments in the orator's address were received with demonstrations of approval."[1] Republican leaders of Massachusetts were perhaps receptive to Butler's message, but most Mid-Western voters were not. Yet Radical leadership evidently had faith in the potency of Lincoln's name. Describing the contents of the Chicago Tribune's campaign document, the Bloomington Pantagraph noted that the tract ended with the late President's letters to Governor Hahn and General Wadsworth advocating impartial suffrage. "It is," added the Pantagraph, "just the thing for this locality."[2] The fact was that the Republican Party's rhetoric was nicely calculated to appeal to those "plain men" of the North for whom the assassinated President had become the supreme symbol of the Union against rebels and Copperheads,[3] and it seems that even an unpopular policy such as Negro suffrage was likely to win a hearing if it could be linked with this heroic Lincoln.

In 1866 Republicans framed their party rhetoric thoughtfully. With the central issue at stake - the future of Reconstruction - clear to all, party leaders sought to play down divisive questions and revive those issues which had enabled their organization to maintain its unity in wartime. In this process mythic themes and especially the symbolic Lincoln

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1 Ibid., Sept. 14, 1866.
2 Ibid., Sept. 24, 1866.
3 New York Times, Jan. 15, 1866.

played an important role. While the Radical wing of the party did not avoid the contentious issue of Negro suffrage, care was taken to present this to the electorate in ways which it was hoped would strike a responsive chord,overcoming racialist reservations. Again the image of the heroic President and the Martyr-Emancipator tradition in particular proved valuable. The overwhelming victory of the Republican Party and the Radicals' own successes suggest that the rhetoric employed was effective, and its revival in 1868 suggests that party leaders believed this to have been the case. Republican success in exploiting mythic images of Lincoln in political propaganda was also demonstrated by the movement - already clear in the 1866 election campaign - to detach Lincoln myths from their original political associations. Impressed by the success of the Republican Party's exploitation of its heroic President, opponents of Congressional Reconstruction sought to appropriate the cult of Lincoln on behalf of their own cause. As the following chapters will show, in 1868 this process was taken a step further by the revived Democracy, and during the early years of Reconstruction Lincoln was firmly established in national as well as Republican Party mythology as the supreme symbol of the twin themes of Union and Emancipation.

Chapter Five

The Heroic Lincoln as Political Myth

II: The Election of 1868

> ...a revolutionary faction has seized upon the Government, and used its great powers, not for the good of the nation, but for party purposes, and have attempted to hold on to power, by the use of the negro vote, and thus necessitated the abuses which have followed. They have changed the policy of Mr. Lincoln to their policy of reconstruction. Had Lincoln lived, six months would not have passed away but the whole Southern States would have been restored...[1]

The 1866 election campaigns had witnessed sustained exploitation of mythical images of Lincoln by Republicans with divergent views on Reconstruction, marking widening use of a hero whose potential political value had first been recognized in 1865 by anti-slavery advocates of a Radical approach to Reconstruction. During the 1868 presidential election this process was taken a step further. Lincoln's continuing importance in the political rhetoric of the Republican Party was to have been expected, but use of the mythical Lincoln in the election campaign staged by a revived Democratic Party represented a development of considerable significance. It revealed that a hero closely associated with one political party and its values could and indeed had to be utilized by that party's opponents once it had been demonstrated - in this case by the Republican majorities of 1866 - that the values represented by the hero had won widespread popular acceptance.

Consequently, Democratic politicians sought in 1868 to detach the heroic Lincoln from that close association with the Republican Party which opponents of Johnson in particular had exploited to good effect in 1866.

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1 Speech of Hon. J. W. Bradbury at Democratic mass meeting, Portland, Maine, Sept. 2, 1868; World, Sept. 5, 1868.

Concentrating upon his symbolic role as national leader, an image which the Republican Party's wartime appeals for support on a non-partisan basis had helped to develop, Democrats tried to create out of the man who had been a staunch Republican a hero who was above party. This was facilitated by the fact that Republicans, though profiting from the late President's relationship with their party, were also anxious to exploit his emergence as a national rather than a party hero in order to win support amongst his non-Republican admirers. In this sense, Democratic appeals to Lincoln's memory did not conflict with, but rather accentuated, existing trends in the development of mythical images of him.

A survey of Democratic and Republican rhetoric in the Northern States[1] during the election campaign of 1868 will illustrate this process and reveal that as in 1866 the heroic Lincoln performed a variety of functions in political argument. Once again, but now by Democrats as well as by Republicans, he was used to endorse candidates and policies and to attack opponents, and appeals to his memory were combined with non-mythical themes to give potency to the arguments presented. It will be seen, however, that the images of Lincoln favoured by Democratic politicians were those of national hero and merciful friend of the South. The image of the Emancipator was not politically useful to them because it had no appeal for the Southern wing of their party and clashed with Northern Democrats' traditional appeals to the anti-Negro sentiments prevalent amongst the party's rank and file supporters in the North.

This chapter deals with an election already subjected to careful scrutiny in a monograph by Charles H. Coleman.[2] However, it does not seek to challenge Coleman's analysis, for in discussing the role of mythical images of Lincoln in campaign rhetoric, it focusses upon an aspect of the campaign not previously studied.

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1 As in 1866, and for the same reasons, mythical images of Lincoln were most useful, in the case of white politicians, in the Northern States. On black political use of the heroic Lincoln see Chapter Seven.

2 Charles H. Coleman, The Election of 1868: The Democratic Effort to Regain Control (New York, 1933). See also Lawrence Grossman, The Democratic Party and the Negro: Northern and National Politics, 1866-92 (Urbana, 1976), 1-14.

"Old party politics are dead", declared War Democrat Edwards Pierrepont in October 1868;[1] but as Democrats once more engaged Republicans in a fierce contest for control of the Presidency, Congress and State Governments, it seemed that old party conflicts were very much alive. What had died - or rather had been still-born - was the incumbent President's National Union Party.[2] Conservative Republicans and War Democrats who in 1866 had abandoned the Republican or Union Party in an unsuccessful challenge to the Reconstruction programme of its Radical wing had since, like James Doolittle of Wisconsin, joined forces with the Democracy - in most cases a return to pre-Civil War political loyalties[3] - or, like John Dix of New York, had again thrown in their lot with their party's regular organization. President Andrew Johnson, having barely escaped impeachment in May 1868, was also politically defunct. Former friends and enemies alike seldom mentioned him except in passing. In July the Democracy prepared for its campaign to challenge Republicanism and Radicalism by selecting a presidential candidate from its own ranks, nominating, after some debate, Horatio Seymour, wartime Governor of New York, with former Democratic-Republican Frank P. Blair, Jr., of Missouri, as his running mate.

The lessons of 1866 had not been lost upon Democratic leadership. Time-honoured themes of party rhetoric, underplayed during the National Unionist campaign two years earlier, were revived in an attempt to consolidate traditional rank and file support. However, the overwhelming majorities of 1866 were sufficient proof that Republicanism's ideology and heroes enshrined accepted values of postwar Northern society. Nor did the swing

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1 Speech at a mass meeting of War Democrats who supported Grant and Colfax, New York, Oct. 21, 1868, New York Times, Oct. 22, 1868.

2 Democrats sometimes called themselves Constitutional Union Democrats, presumably in the hope of winning support from those who had favoured the National Union ticket in 1866: World, Sept. 15, 1868.

away from Radicalism reflected in the 1867 state elections[1], though encouraging to Democrats, necessarily alter this situation. Democratic orators turned their guns upon not the Republican Party but "that small and desperate faction", the "gang of political desperadoes" who formed its Radical wing.[2] For Democrats the "great battle" was "whether the Government of this Republic is to remain four years more in the hands of the Radical party..."[3] and they promised, if successful at the polls, "redemption from Radical rule, ruin and usurpation."[4]

At the heart of the Democracy's campaign propaganda was a detailed critique of its opponents' Reconstruction and financial policies. The disorders of Reconstruction were not of Democratic making said S.S. Cox, "but their physician must be Democratic."[5] Amongst these alleged disorders was the Reconstruction programme embodied in the Fourteenth Amendment and the financial legacy of eight years of Republican government. The Democratic Party's platform and its speakers condemned the extravagance of Republican administrations and called for the payment of government bonds in paper money rather than specie, urging one currency for all.[6] The "living questions" of the hour were, according to Doolittle, finance and Reconstruction.[7] The Democracy had decided, noted Republican James G. Blaine, "to fight its battle on the two issues of paying the debt in depreciated paper currency and overthrowing Reconstruction."[8]

This was in marked contrast to the National Unionist campaign two years earlier which had subordinated a somewhat generalized discussion of issues of policy to exploitation of Unionist sentiment and themes derived from the

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1 See Colman, Election of 1868, 48.
2 Hon. E. Cowan at a Democratic picnic at Hoffman's Woods, near Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 19, 1868, World, Sept. 22, 1868.
3 Address of the Democratic National Committee, Oct. 20, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 21, 1868.
4 Mobile (Ala.) Tribune quoted by Hon. Edwards Pierrpont at a mass meeting of War Democrats, New York, Oct. 21, 1868 New York Times, Oct. 22, 1868.
5 Speech at Portland, Me., Sept. 11, 1868: World, Sept. 13, 1868.
6 Democratic Party platform reported in Chicago Tribune, July 8, 1868.
7 Senator James R. Doolittle speaking at Shelbyville, Ind., Sept. 5, 1868: World, Sept. 23, 1868.
8 James G. Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress: From Lincoln to Garfield with a Review of the Events which led to the Political Revolution of 1860. 2 vols. (Norwich, Conn., 1884), II, 404, quoted in Robert P. Sharkey, Money, Class and Party: An Economic Study of Civil War and Reconstruction

(cont.)

experience of rebellion and civil war. In 1866 the presence amongst Johnson's adherents of a substantial body of Conservative Republicans had resulted in a striking similarity in the major themes dwelt upon by both supporters and opponents of Congressional Reconstruction as well as the suppression, to some extent, of traditional Democratic rhetoric. Once Democrats had broken free from their half-hearted and unprofitable alliance with Johnson's Republican followers, they could give freer rein to arguments which had long found favour with the Democratic rank and file, but at the same time their party's wartime record became an even greater embarrassment with regard to winning votes than had been the case in 1866. Consequently, though the Democratic Party made a characteristic call to the electorate presenting itself as the guardian of Union and Constitution, appeals to Unionist sentiment and retaliatory denunciation of opponents as traitors were far less frequent than in National Union rhetoric two years earlier.

The Democracy's assault upon Congressional Reconstruction policies was heavy with familiar themes of party rhetoric. Radicals were denounced as enemies of the Constitution, fanatics and revolutionaries,[1] and, blurring distinctions between the various shades of political opposition to slavery and abolitionism, Democratic speakers condemned all Radicals as anti-slavery extremists and Grant as the representative of "Radical abolition fanaticism".[2] Even more evident was the party's long-standing hostility to all efforts to improve the status of black Americans.

Focussing on Radical pressure for Negro suffrage in the former rebel states, Democrats asserted that their opponents schemed to place the South

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(Baltimore, 1967, ed.), 122. Nevertheless Democrats were divided on financial issues, see below, p. . For a detailed discussion of the issues of the 1868 campaign see Coleman, Election of 1868.

1 Robert Earl and Samuel J. Tilden addressing the New York Democratic State Convention at Albany, Sept. 2, 1868, and Tilden speaking to a Democratic mass meeting, New York, Sept. 15, 1868; Hon. Richard O'Gorman at a Democratic mass meeting, Portland, Me., Sept. 2, 1868; Hon. E. Corwan at a Democratic picnic, Hoffman's Woods, near Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 19, 1868; World, Sept. 3, 5, 16, 22, 1868.

2 Hon. Thomas J. Creamer speaking at a Democratic meeting, New York, Sept. 8, 1868: World, Sept. 9, 1868.

under black rule and ruin the Republic by giving the ballot to an inferior race.[1] The Government had been created for white men, said New York Congressman John W. Chandler, and he warned that Republicans sought to extend the suffrage to blacks, stirring up racial hostility for two reasons: "First to give the fanatical element, the Puritan Church, four millions of converts; secondly, because it gives to the Radicals four millions of people, born in a day, who are to be our equals in the North, and our masters in the South." If the people submitted to this, the result would be "centalized military despotism."[2] Thus Chandler cleverly explained and devalued support given to Radical policies by anti-slavery Northern churchmen, long a target of Democratic venom, and introduced into his speech several major themes of the party's rhetoric in 1868 - the threat that its opponents would bring about social and political equality of the races[3] and the correlated appeal for white supremacy,[4] long dear to Democratic hearts; the claim that Radicals favoured black suffrage not as a measure of justice but as a means to secure their party's ascendancy in the South,[5] and the warning that such a policy would end with the subjugation of Southern whites under Negro rule sustained by a standing army. Through Congressional Reconstruction policies, said Ellison S. Keitt of South Carolina, ten states had been replaced by five military despotisms, and now the issue was whether or not the people would sustain such a policy: "Will they impose, at the point of the bayonet, negro governments upon the Southern States? Will they Africanize the South? Will they give the negroes the balance of power in this great Republic?

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1 S.M. Ostrander speaking at a mass meeting of Democrats, Brooklyn, Sept. 5, 1868; R.L. Gibson of Louisiana speaking to a Young Men's Democratic Club, New York, Oct. 6, 1868; Wm. G. DeWitt addressing a citizens' meeting in the Democratic wigwam, Brooklyn, Sept. 9, 1868; Gen. Joel Parker addressing a meeting in the National Union Association's wigwam, New York, Oct. 1, 1868: World, Sept. 6, 12, and Oct. 2, 7, 1868.

2 Speech at a Democratic meeting, New York, Sept. 8, 1868: World, Sept. 9, 1868.

3 John Campbell at Doylestown, Pa., Sept. 21, 1868: World, Oct. 8, 1868.

4 Speech of Henry Stanbery (formerly Attorney-General under President Johnson, 1866-1868) at Lancaster, Ohio, Sept. 26, 1868: World, Sept. 30, 1868.

5 "A Negro on the Ballot", World, Sept. 5, 1868; Hon. J.W. Bradbury speaking at Portland, Me., Sept. 2, 1868: World, Sept. 5, 1868.

These are the great questions you will answer in November next..." In case any one should think of Voting Republican, Keitt issued a warning familiar to all who had listened to Democratic oratory over the years: "Already from the far off South we hear faint notes of a collision of races."[1]

Closely linked with this attack upon Negro suffrage was the Democratic Party's call for the abolition of the Freedmen's Bureau and all such "political instrumentalities designed to serve negro supremacy..."[2] The Bureau's work in caring for destitute former slaves was presented as both a cover for the organization of a party of Radical black voters in the reconstructed states and as incapable of looking after themselves and therefore unfit to vote.[3] At the same time, the cost of maintaining such an organization was emphasized. According to one Pennsylvania speaker, "It costs each voter in Philadelphia twelve dollars per annum to feed and clothe hordes of negroes in idleness."[4]

Thus financial arguments introduced to strengthen the Democratic critique of Radical Reconstruction were also tainted with the racial prejudice calculated to touch a responsive chord amongst urban, immigrant, and especially Irish, working class voters. While Northern workmen laboured, said Richard O'Gorman to a New York audience, "your negro brethren were lying on their backs, dozing under the blaze of a congenial sun, conning their ABC out of a primer you paid for, and being taught by some philanthropic school-marm whose salary comes out of your pockets."[5] Indeed, both parties shaped their arguments to appeal to labour. While Republicans promised to tax capital not labour and warned that a victory for their opponents would ruin the poor man,[6] Democrats denounced the Republican commitment to repay the National Debt

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1 Speech to Young Men'sDemocratic Union Club, New York, Sept. 15, 1868: World, Sept. 17, 1868. See also "War of Races Imminent."

2 Quoted from the Democratic national platform (resolution no. 6) as reported in the Chicago Tribune, July 8, 1868.

3 World, Sept. 17, 1868; Robert Earl addressing the New York Democratic State Convention, Albany, Sept. 2, 1868: World, Sept. 3, 1868.

4 John Campbell at Doylestown, Pa., Sept. 21, 1868: World, Oct. 8, 1868.

5 Richard O'Gorman addressing a Democratic mass meeting at Portland, Me., Sept. 2, 1868: World, Sept. 5, 1868.

6 Senator Morton speaking at Lafayette, Ind., Oct. 6, 1868; Hon. Butler C. Noble of Wisconsin speaking at a Grant and Colfax meeting, Brooklyn, in August: New York Times, Oct. 12, Sept. 1, 1868.

in specie as discrimination against ordinary working men who received their wages in greenback dollars, and took the tax-payer's part as they repeatedly condemned Radical extravagance in government spending.[1]

Yet the battle was not fought by Democrats solely on the grounds of policy. Integrated into their discussion of the issues of Reconstruction and finance were appeals to mythic themes. In most cases these were calculated to win a favourable response from Democratic voters, but some such themes illustrated the concern of Democratic leaders to pay tribute to basically Republicn values. The most striking example of this was acceptance of Abraham Lincoln as a national hero, and the use of this hero to endorse the Democrats' campaign of opposition to a Republican government.

Certain of the mythical themes woven into this attack upon Republican financial and Reconstruction policies were party perennials. Democrats had for many years met anti-slavery arguments by appealing to the theory of the superiority of the white over the black race. Toned down during, though not absent from, the 1866 campaign, racialism was often unrestrained in 1868. Equally dear to Democrats was the party's time-honoured invokation of the memory of the Founding Fathers, presented in 1868 as a promise that Democrats would restore the Union as its founders had made it, and re-establish government which observed the doctrines of Jefferson and was "what our fathers designed it should be..."[2] Sometimes these two mythic themes were combined for greater potency. Thus in a virulently racialst speech delivered at Indianapolis Frank P. Blair warned that black enfranchisement would bring "the taint of the diseased hordes" into the Republic established by the Founding Fathers.[3]

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1 Speech of Senator Doolittle at Shelbyville, Ind., Sept. 5, 1868; Samuel J. Tilden speaking at meetings in New York City and Chatham, N.Y., Sept. 15, 24, 1868; Joel Parker addressing a meeting in the National Union Association's wigwam, Brooklyn, Oct. 1, 1868: World, Sept. 23, 16, and Oct. 2, 1868.

2 Speech by Brig.-Gen. A.C. Davis at a Democratic mass meeting, Brooklyn, Oct. 8, 1868: World, Oct. 9, 1868; resolution introduced at the National Democratic Convention, New York, July 7, 1868: Chicago Tribune, July 8, 1868; Robert Earl speaking at the New York Democratic State Convention, Albany, Sept. 2, 1868: World, Sept. 3, 1868.

3 Speech of Sept. 23, 1868 at Indianapolis, Ind. reported in World, Sept. 26, 1868; Wm. C. DeWitt speaking at a citizens' meeting, Brooklyn, Sept. 10, 1868: World, Sept. 12, 1868.

As the campaign of 1866 had shown, the Founding Fathers were part of a national heritage which all Americans found meaningful and which politicians of all shades of opinion sought to exploit. So too was another mythical theme present in the rhetoric of those who advocated Congressional Reconstruction as well as its opponents both in 1866 and 1868, the image of America as a refuge for the world's oppressed.

Republicans had given this a fundamental inportance in their ideology, and it was not surprising that a speaker who described himself as a repentant Radical should claim that the present contest in which Democrats struggled to preserve the Constitution of their fathers, trampled on by those with whom he had lately been associated, "would be watched with interest by the oppressed in every part of the world."[1] However, it is clear that the apparent political adaptability of such mythical themes was not simply a product of the movement of former Republicans into the opposition ranks. Democrats of long standing were equally ready to exploit this theme, turning it against the Republicans as, with an eye on the immigrant vote, they warned that Radical Reconstruction policies in the South would create an oppressed land, "another Poland, another Hungary, another Ireland."[2] Men who had fled from tyranny in the Old World would not submit to it , said the Democratic candidate for the Lieutenant-Governorship of New York, Allen C. Beach. "They came to America for refuge," he continued, "and, having reached here, they find that there is a party determined to deprive them of their rights and privileges... They see their freedom in the party that sustains Seymour and Blair."[3]

Integrating this theme into an appeal to the spirits of the Founding Fathers which echoed speeches he had made in 1866, Tilden developed a vision of America under Democratic rule as "a star of hope to the toiling millions

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1 Hon. James F. Babcock of Connecticut addressing Constitutional Unionists, Brooklyn, Sept. 10, 1868: World, Sept. 11, 1868.

2 Samuel J. Tilden speaking at a mass meeting of Democrats, New York, Sept. 15, 1868: World, Sept. 16, 1868.

3 Speech at Democratic rally, Brooklyn, Sept. 21, 1868: World, Sept. 22, 1868

of other countries" and told Democrats gathered at Chatham, New York, that, "Fellow-citizens, I can imagine that from the etherial heights the men that made this Government - your Washington, your Jeffersons, your Madisons - look down to see whether this generation is to fail in transmitting to their descendants the priceless inheritance of constitutional government...Shall we prove ourselves worthy of our ancestry? If so, then there will be hope not only for this country but for the oppressed and downtrodden of every clime and in every age."[1]

Tilden's appeal contained a hint of the theme of America's glorious destiny which, as in 1866, also held meaning for men of conflicting political beliefs. Exploited in both Democratic and Republican promises that the future greatness of the nation lay in their party's success,[2] the theme was of crucial importance in the Republican - and especially Radical - vision of a society free from slavery.[3] Ironically it lent itself to a very different concept of the national destiny, as when combined with an appeal to the nation's heritage and the Founding Fathers in particular in a New York Democrat's panygeric to white supremacy: "Upon all the summits of power the Caucasian race stand masters of a continent, and yonder, in the glowing landscape, blend the heroic scenes of the war for independence, and the conclaves of its illustrious sages...Speak voices of the revolution...saying the work of the fathers must not perish, the old Republic shall yet live forever."[4]

Such frequent reference to the Founding Fathers indicate that appeals to traditional party heroes formed, as in 1866, a crucial part of the Democracy's campaign rhetoric. So, in a call for reduced government expenditure, S.S.Cox urged the nation to, "Come back to the Democratic policies of Jackson, Polk and Pierce...", while a speaker in Pennsylvania, glorifying

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1 Speech of Sept. 24, 1868: World, Oct. 2, 1868.

2 Schuyler Colfax addressing a business meeting of the Union Leage, New York, Sept. 24, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 25, 1868; Hon. S. S. Cox speaking at a mass meeting of Democrats at Brunswick, Me., Sept. 3, 1868: World, Sept. 7, 1868.

3 Henry Wilson addressing a Republican mass meeting, Philadelphia, Sept. 26, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 29, 1868.

4 Wm C. DeWitt speaking at Brooklyn, Sept. 10, 1868: World, Sept. 12, 1868.

the defection from his party in 1860 of the Little Giant of Illinois, presented the Democracy as, "that party which has for its apostle, Jefferson; for its hero, Jackson; and for its martyr, Douglas."[1] Andrew Jackson's name appeared less frequently than in 1866, but this was not surprising. The obvious parallels between Jackson and Johnson could not be extended to Horatio Seymour or Frank Blair.

Abraham Lincoln has not previously figured as a hero of the Democracy, and there was still occasional criticism of him and his policies by prominent Democrats.[2] Moreover, the party's bitter wartime opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation and its continued exploitation of anti-Negro sentiment made it unlikely that Democrats would find the image of the Emancipator, already an important component of the Lincoln Myth, politically useful. Nevertheless, by 1868 party leaders seem to have reached the conclusion that some recognition of Lincoln's heroic status was a political necessity, and they did not hesitate to appeal to the memory of the late Republican President in order to justify their own policies and condemn those of their Republican opponents. Endorsement of leading Democrats through Lincoln was admittedly rare. Most, including the 1868 presidential candidate, had been severe critics of the wartime President, although this did not prevent Democrat A.R. Lawrence, Jr., from recommending Seymour as, "One whose record will compare favorably with any of the so-called loyal Governors, and who deservedly received the thanks of Mr. Lincoln and the Secretary of War for his prompt and energetic action in forwarding the troops of this State to Pennsylvania in the gloomiest days of the conflict."[3] Much more common was the claim that the Reconstruction programme advocated by the Democratic Party and denounced by Radicals was that which Lincoln would have adopted had he lived. Fundamental to the interpretation of the immediate

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1 Speeches by Cox at Portland, Me., Sept. 11, 1868 and John Campbell at Doylestown, Pa., Sept. 21, 1868: World, Sept. 13, Oct. 8, 1868.

2 See, for example, speech of Frank P. Blair at Galion, Ohio, reported in New York Times, Sept. 25, 1868.

3 Address before a Democratic Club, Brooklyn, Sept. 30, 1868: World, Oct. 2, 1868.

past underlying this claim were the correlated themes already well-established by the National Unionist campaign of 1866 that Andrew Johnson had simply sought to follow his predecessor's Reconstruction policy, and that Lincoln's Radical critics, disappointed that his views were being sustained, had turned their guns upon the new President.

According to the Democratic presentation of this thesis, Radicals had broken faith with their own party, which had in 1864 rejected Radical Reconstruction schemes by nominating Andrew Johnson as Vice President and approving "the grand old reconstruction policy of Abraham Lincoln."[1] Frank Blair explained that Lincoln had been re-elected in that year upon "a proposition diametrically opposed to the present Reconstruction policy of Congress..." The election was "a condemnation of the reconstruction policy of the Radicals." In his last speech Lincoln, said Blair, "declared that these (ex-rebel) States ought to be admitted to their representation, each one of them, and denied to Congress the right to control that subject." After Lincoln's death, Johnson "had done nothing in the world except to adopt the policy which his predecessor, Mr. Lincoln, had announced..."[2] By December 1865, said Democrat Joel Parker, wartime Governor of New York, the Southern States had met the conditions laid down by a Republican government, elected Congressmen and organized State governments according to the plan of Lincoln. It was then, he continued, that Colfax first intimated "that this plan adopted by Mr. Lincoln and followed by Mr. Johnson, was not the Radical plan..."[3] Other Democrats, with greater accuracy, dated the Radical attack on Presidential Reconstruction from before Lincoln's death. Thus Blair recalled the Wade-Davis Manifesto and the Radicals' attempt to run their own candidate against Lincoln in 1864, and Doolittle asserted that,

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1 Speech of Thomas Ewing Jr., a former Republican who had become a Democrat in 1866, speaking at a Conservative Soldiers' and Sailors' Convention, New York, July 4, 1868: Chicago Tribune, July 5, 1868.

2 Speech at a Democratic meeting, Brooklyn, Oct. 28, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 29, 1868.

3 Speech at a meeting in the National Union Association's wigwam, Brooklyn Oct. 1, 1868: World, Oct. 2, 1868.

"I can show you that the Radicals in the Senate began their war on Mr. Lincoln's administration - on Mr. Lincoln's policy."[1]

Echoing National Unionist claims of 1866, Democrats used this notion of antagonism between Lincoln and the Radical wing of his party to discredit their opponents in the eyes of those who had made a hero of the late President. According to General Ewing, while Democrats fought for the Union, Radicals spent the war years intriguing against the Northern leader.[2] Fundamental to this theme was the idea that Lincoln and the Radicals had clashed over Reconstruction. "Mr. Lincoln was in favor of restoring the Southern States to their rights," said one speaker, "and it was in opposition to his wishes that Phillips, Stevens & Co. had radicalized the Republican Party."[3] In the Democratic account of events, the Radicals has abandoned Lincoln's programme which Johnson had tried to carry out, and which was identical with that of the Democratic Party. There was general agreement amongst leading exponents of that policy that, as Joel Parker asserted, "Mr. Lincoln, in the last speech he made, took the grounds which the Democratic party now take...", that Johnson had done as Lincoln would have wished, and that, "The Radicals oppose Johnson for advocating the legacy that Lincoln left."[4]

Implicit in this line of argument was the image of Lincoln as a merciful friend of the South who would have ensured the rapid restoration of the former rebel states to their proper place in the Union. As one Democrat asserted, "Had Lincoln lived, six months would not have passed away but the whole Southern States would have been restored..."[5] Attacking the Reconstruction policy of Congress, which was attributed wholly to Radical inspiration and influence, Democrats insisted that, in the words of Cowan, "Mr. Lincoln was opposed to the violence and vindictiveness of the extreme

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1 Speech of Frank P. Blair at a meeting of Democrats in Brooklyn, Oct. 28, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 29, 1868; Doolittle speaking at Shelbyville, Ind., Sept. 5, 1868: World, Sept. 23, 1868.

2 Speech at Portland, Me., Sept. 8, 1868: World, Sept. 12, 1868.

3 Hon. James F. Babcock addressing Constitutional Unionists, Brooklyn, Sept. 10, 1868: World, Sept. 11, 1868.

4 Speech at a meeting in the National Union Association's wigwam, Brooklyn, Oct. 1, 1868: World, Oct. 2, 1868.

5 Hon. J.W. Bradbury to Democrats at Portland, Me., Sept. 2, 1868: World, Sept. 5, 1868.

members of his party..." and that the Radicals "repudiated, from first to last, the whole policy of Mr. Lincoln's administration."[1] At the same time the image of Lincoln as the patriot-hero could also be incorporated into the attack on Radical policies. Thus Democratic speakers, conveniently passing over the fact that Union war aims had been broadened by Lincoln's decision to adopt emancipation, recalled that the late President had declared preservation of the Union to be the object of the Northern war effort and contrasted this with what they described as the Radical attempt to keep the Union divided while they secured their own power by stripping the Southern States of their rights. As one speaker at a Democratic meeting in Brooklyn put this, "Mr. Lincoln himself, and the Republican Party, proclaimed that the war was waged, not for conquest, not to subjugate, not to reduce the people of the South to vassalage and to serfdom, but...to preserve and uphold the Union with all the dignity and rights of the States unimpaired."[2]

The Democratic interpretation of what had happened with regard to Reconstruction since Lincoln's death illustrated the myth-making process in operation, for it grossly over-simplified and thus inevitably distorted the events of 1865-1868 in order to explain the present and give guidance for the future. At the same time it asserted that Lincoln, who in reality had put forward a number of proposals with regard to Reconstruction during the War but was uncommitted to any planat the time of his death,[3] could be firmly identified with the Reconstruction policy the Democratic Party advocated. The potency of this interpretation is clear from a speech in which Philadelphia Democrat John Campbell put the argument in its simplest form: "President Johnson endeavored to carry into effect the plans of President Lincoln. The political skies shone bright, peace and prosperity were about to shower their blessings on us; but Congress, by its interference, blasted all."[4]

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1 Hon. E. Cowan at Hoffman's Woods, near Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 19, 1868: World, Sept. 22, 1868.

2 Remarks of Hon. A.R. Lawrence, Jr., Sept. 30, 1868; Frank P. Blair, Jr., at Indianapolis, Sept. 23, 1868: World, Sept. 26, Oct. 2, 1868.

3 See Hesseltine, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction, especially pp. 139-40; and discussions of Lincoln's attitudes on Reconstruction in the general works on this period cited above.

4 Speech at Doylestown, Pa., Sept. 21, 1868: World, Oct. 8, 1868.

As they had done two years earlier, Republicans sustaining Congressional Reconstruction policies challenged such use of Lincoln, and denied that his Reconstruction policy would have conflicted with that of a Republican Congress. A Chicago Tribune editorial attacked Seward's claim that Johnson had followed his predecessor's plan of Reconstruction, arguing that Lincoln was not determined on a plan at the time when he was "assassinated by a 'Democrat'." Of one thing the Tribune professed itself to be quite certain: "it would never have entered his (Lincoln's) heart to undertake the job of constructing State Governments in the rebel South without consulting Congress, and in defiance of the law-making power."[1] Democratic use of the image of Lincoln as a merciful hero was also countered. Republicans insisted that they too cherished the value of mercy which Lincoln symbolized,[2] but to Democratic calls for speedy Reconstruction on the grounds of mercy, Republicans had an answer. As Colfax expressed this, "I am willing to forgive to the uttermost. God teaches us to forgive, but he forgives no one without repentence." Indicating why to Republicans the image of Lincoln as Emancipator proved more useful than that of the merciful hero in this campaign, Colfax stressed that only to those who repented would he say, "come back regenerated, redeemed, and disenthralled by genius of universal emancipation."[3] As this suggests, Republicans were fully alive to the danger of Democratic attempts to undermine their claims to be heirs of the heroic Lincoln. For exploitation of the memory of this hero had been clearly established as a valuable Republican campaign tactic in 1866, and as Republicans faced a renewed attack upon the policies of a Congress dominated by their party, the successful rhetoric of the earlier campaign, in which mythical images of Lincoln had played an important role, reappeared.

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1 Chicago Tribune, Nov. 2, 1868.
2 See, for example, report of speech by Frank P. Blair, Jr., at Galion, Ohio: New York Times, Sept. 28, 1868.
3 Speech at Detroit, Oct. 23, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 26, 1868.

Meeting the assault by a revived Democracy, Republicans often and necessarily sounded defensive. The Democrats were accused of seeking to overturn Reconstruction in spite of the "magnanimous clemency" shown towards defeated rebels; to disfranchise the Negro and re-establish slavery; denounced in the language traditionally adopted by Republicans as "a social, moral and political evil"; and to repudiate the Union war debt so tarnishing the nation's honour.[1] "Upon the banners of the Democracy", declared South Carolina Republicans, "we read only War, Slavery, Repudiation."[2] In response to their antagonists' charges, Republican speakers sometimes insisted that Lincoln had reduced the expenses of government, but more often assetted that the Democracy had caused the war and was therefore responsible for any extravagance in governmental expenditure resulting from it. However, on this issue the Republican Party was on weak ground, and it was stressed, and doubtless believed, that financial matters were of peripheral importance. In concentrating upon them Democrats were charged with attempting to divert attention from the process of rebuilding the Union.[3] In the words of a motto at one Republican rally at Chicago, Reconstruction was the "Real Issue" of the campaign.[4] Dismissing Democratic allegations that in the four years since Appomattox the Government had been unable to end unrest,[5] Republicans defended Congressional Reconstruction as the only path to peace and prosperity.[6]

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1 Hon. William Pitt Fessenden at Portland, Me., Aug. 31, 1868: Times, Sept. 3, 1868; Dr. A.H. Robinson addressing a Grant and Colfax Club, New York, Sept. 16, 1868; New York Tribune, Sept. 17, 1868; Gen. Thomas Hite of Missouri speaking to Republicans at New York, Sept. 8, 1868: New York Times, Sept. 9, 1868; Gen. Banks at Republican mass meeting, York, Pa., Oct. 8, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 9, 1868.

2 Address of the Republican State Convention to the People of South Carolina: New York Tribune, Sept. 17, 1868. The Convention met at Columbia, S.C., Sept. 8, 1868.

3 See "Specia Payments - The Essential Preliminary" and "Democratic Responsibility and Republican Management", New York Times, Sept. 1, 2, 1868. Hon. Elihu B. Washburne at Galena, Ill., Sept. 5, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 7, 1868; Butler addressing the Republican State Convention, Worcester, Mass., Sept. 9, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.

4 Transparency carried in procession at a great Republican mass meeting, Chicago, Sept. 23, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24, 1868.

5 Ex-Governor Bigler of Pennsylvania speaking at a great Democratic picnic at Hoffman's Woods, near Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 19, 1868: World, Sept. 22, 1868.

6 Hon. James M. Ashley addressing a Grant and Colfax Club, Jersey City, New York, Sept. 4, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1868; Senator Morton at Lafayette, Ind., Oct. 6, 1868: New York Times, Oct. 12, 1868.

Opponents' sneers at "carpet-bag" governments established by those who sought to enrich themselves at the expense of the prostrated South were met: even the Pilgrim Fathers had been carpet-baggers said Republicans.[1] Negro suffrage, target of many Democratic appeals to Northern racialism,[2] was endorsed by Radicals and their allies as a necessary response to the activities of former rebels and the only means to ensure loyalty in states lately in rebellion.[3] Racial prejudice still tinged the Republican defence of black rights at times,[4] and demands for equality and justice were often one way of avoiding a direct call for Negro suffrage, but on this issue at least some Radicals were prepared to take the offensive and to stand on the high moral ground of "equal justice to all men, irrespective of color, race, or creed"[5] in opposition to the Democrats' "unholy crusade" against mankind and civilization.[6] According to its Vice-Presidential candidate, Colfax, the Republican Party stood for the rights of man, "the noblest inspiration that ever fired the heart of a great political party."[7]

The military language used by General Pleasenton illustrates the combination of defensiveness and aggression which characterized Republican rhetoric in 1868. The enemy's assault was being met East and West, he said, and it needed only "one strong, vigorous charge in November to complete the rout..."[8] Perhaps even more so than in 1866 the crucial themes of the

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1 Gen. Sicles at meeting of war veterans (Boys in Blue), New York, Sept. 17, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 18, 1868.

2 See above pp. 206-8.

3 Hon John Conness at Irish Republican mass meeting, New York, Sept. 30, 1868; Gen. Banks at Republican mass meeting, York, Pa., Oct. 8, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 1, 9, 1868.

4 See Carl Schurz's comments to German-Americans at New York: New York Times, Sept. 6, 1868.

5 Col. Fred A. Conkling at Union Republican Association meeting, New York, Sept. 10, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 11, 1868.

6 Address of the Republican State Convention to the People of South Carolina, op.cit.

7 Hon. Schuyler Colfax at Republican mass meeting, Detroit, Oct. 23, 1868. New York Tribune, Oct. 26, 1868.

8 Speech at meeting of war veterans (Boys in Blue), New York, Sept. 17, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 18, 1868.

Republican attack upon opponents were those derived from the experience of civil war. Claims developed during the earlier campaign that those who opposed the Republican Party were traitors to the Union which it had preserved were strengthened not only by the reappearance of the Democracy under its old colours, but also by the widespread support for the Republican ticket amongst war veterans. According to Mrs. Logan, "The ex-Union soldiers were everywhere wild with delight over the nomination of General Grant as the leader of the party. Every political demonstration was participated in by them."[1] Rallies by quasi-military organizations of ex-soldiers - Boys in Blue, Tanners, Lancers and Invincibles - were indeed a useful political tool underlining Republican claims that the issues of 1868 were those of the War and that the Union was once more in danger from a "New Rebellion" by former Confederates and their Democratic sympathizers in the North.[2]

Thus the interpretation of post-war politics developed by exponents of Congressional Reconstruction in 1866 was carried over into Republican political rhetoric of 1868. Once again the claim by their opponents to be the party of Union and Constitution was scornfully rejected by Republicans.[3] It was the Republican Party, said Colfax, which stood as "the party of loyalty and peace - the party that seems, under the providence of God, to be intrusted with the salvation of the American Union."[4] Both parties sought public approval by claiming to stand by the national flag which decorated their platforms, but according to Republicans they alone had the right to do so, for, "No Republican ever fired upon that flag."[5] If Democrats had abandoned

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1 Mary Logan, Reminiscences of the Civil War and the Reconstruction. Edited by George Worthington Adams (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill., 1970), 160. Mrs. Logan was the wife of Gen. John A. Logan.

2 Butler addressing the Republican State Convention, Worcester, Mass., Sept. 9, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868; "TENNESSEE- The Preparations for a New Rebellion", Chicago Tribune, Sept. 9, 1868; "The New Rebellion", New York Tribune, Sept. 29, 1868; James Ashley at Mahatten, Ohio, Sept. 8, 1868: World, Sept. 10, 1868. By 1868 "Boys in Blue" were not always former soldiers or sailors: see circular issued by the Secretary of the Soldiers' and Sailors' State Central Committee of Connecticut, Aug. 22, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1868.

3 Letter of George Wm. Curtis to Editor, New York Tribune, July 30, 1868.

4 Remarks at business meeting of Union League, New York, Sept. 24, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 25, 1868.

5 Colfax speaking at Republican mass meeting, Detroit, Oct. 23, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 26, 1868.

"the stars and bars" of the Confederacy in favour of "the stars and stripes", they had done so, argued Ben Butler, "as they would 'steal the livery of Heaven to serve the Devil in.'"[1] As this comment indicates, Republicans once again denounced their opponents as ex-rebels and traitors: the "Copperhead, traitor's party of the North" had presented "the Rebel Democratic ticket", their platform was "a Rebel platform", and they stood under the banner of disunion and rebellion, "more thoroughly committed to overthrow Government than in 1860."[2] "Look", urged Sumner, "at the history of their leaders. Rebels all, Rebels all."[3]

In thus denouncing Democrats, Republicans made frequent and heavily emotive appeals to the North's wartime experience, developing a tactic used to a lesser extent in 1866.[4] At Republican rallies war relics, disabled veterans with torn battle flags, and transparencies depicting such horrors as the Confederacy's notorious prisoner-of-war camp at Andersonville were tellingly displayed, while orators demanded, in the name of the nation's bereaved, that the Government should not be entrusted to hands still red with the blood of those whom the loyal masses mourned.[5] To these martyrs of the war were added all who had died in the "reign of terror" by which, it was alleged, former rebels sought to destroy the reconstructed governments of the South,[6] until exasperated Democrats cried out against the attempt by their opponents to exploit real and "pretended" outrages, as they had the Memphis

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1 Speech before the Republican State Convention, Worcester, Mass., Sept. 9 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.

2 Gen. Kilpatrick to Jersey City (N.Y.) Republicans, New York Times, Oct. 1, 1868; Hon. S.B. Chittenden at Brooklyn, Sept. 3, 1868; Gen. Pleasenton speaking at a great meeting of war veterans (Boys in Blue), Cooper Institute, New York, Sept. 17, 1868; Edwin M. Stanton (Secretary of War, 1862-1867) at a Republican mass meeting, Cleveland, Ohio, Oct. 8, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 18, and Oct. 9 1868.

3 Remarks to Boston Republicans, Sept. 14, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 15, 1868.

4 See, for example, speeches of Horace Maynard at Shelbyville, Tenn., Aug. 24, 1866 and Gen. Banks at a Convention of Soldiers and Sailors of Massachusetts at Boston, Sept. 18, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept 1, 1866, New York Times, Sept. 19, 1866.

5 See the New York Times, report (Oct. 2, 1868) of the procession at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Convention, Philadelphia, Oct. 1, 1868; address by Bayard Taylor at a Union League mass meeting, Philadelphia, Oct. 8, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 9, 1868; James Ashley speaking at Mahatten, Ohio, Sept. 8, 1868: World, Sept. 10, 1868.

6 New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.

and New Orleans riots - "the bloody shirts" of 1866 - to divert attention from their own crimes. With some justice a letter published in the World condemned the use of such tactics by Republicans, complaining that: "Blood, not truth, is their capital in trade..."[1]

As Republican rhetoric of 1866 was revived and expanded, the mythical themes which had permeated it reappeared. Once more mythical concepts of the nation's role, fundamental to American thought, were found to be peculiarly suited to a call for equal rights on behalf of recently emancipated blacks. Democratic victory would bring about "national degredation" warned Republicans, but through "the world's great party of progress" and its platform demanding "the elevation of all men", America would succeed in her mission for mankind and would establish self-government on the basis of human liberty and a refuge for the oppressed of all lands, thus perfecting her "mighty empire" and fulfilling the "glorious destiny" of both party and nation.[2] Once more the party whose policies would achieve these great ends was endorsed by association with the nation's heroes. The arguments of 1866 were revived as Republicans sought to disassociate the Democracy from its traditional heroes, claiming that "there is no similarity in principle between the old Republican party headed by Jefferson or the Democratic party of Jackson's day, and the Democratic party of the present time".[3] Republicanism was presented as representing the principles which had inspired true Democrats. "Thos. Jefferson was an original Democrat, and he drew with his own hand the Declaration of Independence, which announces that all men are

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1 "Radical Riots at the South", and letter of Gen. John B. Gordon, Aug. 17, 1868: World, Sept. 1, 9, 1868.

2 Dr. Frederick Schuetz addressing Grant and Colfax Campaign Club, New York, Sept. 21, 1868; speech of Hon. Henry O'Connor at an Irish American Republican mass meeting, Sept. 18, 1868; Mayor Morton McMichael speaking at a meeting of loyal soldiers and sailors, Philadelphia, Oct. 1, 1868; Butler addressing the Republican State Convention, Worcester, Mass. Sept. 9, 1868; Colfax speaking at a business meeting of the Union League, New York, Sept. 24, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 22, 25, and Oct. 2, 1868; Chicago Tribune, Sept. 19, 1868.

3 Senator Lyman Trumbull at Springfield, Ill., Oct. 14, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Oct. 16, 1868.

equal in rights..." observed that ardent exponent of black suffrage, Charles Sumner.[1] The Founding Fathers had given the nation the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, General Kilpatrick told a Republican audience, but "we have rewritten and purified the one and made a living reality of the other."[2] Grant was offered to the nation as a second Washington.[3]

As in 1866 the hero whose memory was most often invoked by Republicans was Lincoln. While likenesses of Grant now regularly filled the place occupied by pictures of the late President at major rallies two years before, Lincoln's portrait, sometimes draped in mourning, and mottoes quoting his words, lent the hero's support to Republican meetings. The New York Tribune's description of decorations at a soldiers' and sailors' club meeting in New York in late August 1868 illustrates how such use of Lincoln was united with exploitation of other symbols to make a potent message: "Upon the stage which was canopied and festooned with the national colors, were placed two brass field-pieces, and in front of the speaker's stand were portraits of Grant, Colfax, Sherman, and Sheriden, while above them, draped in mourning, was suspended the likeness of the late lamented President Lincoln. In the rear of the stage was a portrait of Washington, and encircling it the motto, "We have attacked the enemy's breast-works, and are bound to carry them"."[4]

Following the practice established two years earlier, Republican speakers and candidates were endorsed or endorsed themselves, their policies and their support for Grant through Lincoln. The New York Tribune commented of one candidate: "Mr. Judd was an intimate friend of Mr. Lincoln..." and the Chicago Tribune said of Colfax, "As President, Mr. Lincoln had no dearer friend or

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1 Speech to Boston Republicans, Sept. 14, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 15, 1868.

2 Speech at North Orange, New Jersey, Sept. 16, 1868: New York Tribune, 1868.

3 Hon. Edwards Pierrpont at a meeting at Cooper Institute, New York, Oct. 21, 1868: New York Times, Oct. 22, 1868.

4 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866. See also descriptions in the New York Times, Sept. 14, 1868 and Chicago Tribune, Oct. 13, 1868 of Republican meetings at Newburg, New York, Sept. 11, 1868 and Hannibal, Mo., Oct. 10, 1868.

more trusted adviser."[1] Addressing his constituents in the ward where he had been born, Charles Sumner prefaced a stirring call for the victory of Republicanism, loyalty and equal rights with the declaration that, "Here I voted twice for Abraham Lincoln, and here I expect tovote for Grant and Colfax."[2] In the midst of an anti-slavery interpretation of the war designed to win support for the policies of liberty and equality allegedly represented by Grant, a former Democrat declared, "...I did not vote for Abraham Lincoln when first elected, but I did vote for him when last elected. Had I had a million of votes then he should have had them."[3] Just as the Republican Party had chosen Lincoln and Grant to destroy rebellion, so now they would elect Grant to restore peace, said German Republican leader Dr. Frederick Schuetz.[4] The party's presidential nominee was also associated with Lincoln to increase his already substantial popularity. Addressing a Union League meeting in Philadelphia, Bayard Taylor won applause when he declared that the leading men of Europe believed that the safety of the American nation demanded the election of Grant and Colfax, adding "They associate the names of Lincoln and Grant, and I have told them that the latter possesses many of the virtues of the former."[5]

As in 1866 those who supported Congressional Reconstruction were or professed to be sure that their party had the sympathy of all who had sustained the late hero. Republican demonstrations in Ohio's largest city reminded the Cincinnati Commercial of "the magnificent Wide-Awake affairs" of the first Lincoln campaign in 1860, and according to the New York Tribune, the election result in Vermont in early September, "shows beyond cavil that those who supported Lincoln's reelection are rallying with unbroken ranks to elect

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1 New York Tribune, Oct. 3, 1868; Chicago Tribune, July 17, 1868.
2 Speech at a meeting of Sixth Ward Republicans, Boston, Sept. 14, 1868. New York Times, Sept. 16, 1868.
3 Hon. Benj. H. Brewster of Pennsylvania, speaking at Cooper Institute, New York, Oct. 20, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 21, 1868.
4 Speech at mass meeting of German Republicans, Cooper Institute, New York, Oct. 7, 1868; New York Tribune, Oct. 8, 1868.
5 Speech of Oct. 8, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 9, 1868.

Grant and Colfax."[1] At the same time, Republicans were seeking to widen support for their party by presenting its rank and file adherents as those who had given their allegiance to Lincoln. The memory of the quasi-military organisations which had marched for him in 1860 was invoked as the New York Tribune described the creation of a "Wide-Awake Grant and Colfax Club" in Rockland County, New York, a "wide-awake Grant club" in Pennsylvania, or "Wide Awake Tanners" in North Carolina.[2] It all seemed to suggest to hopeful Republicans that Grant would poll majorities equal to or greater than those of Lincoln in 1860 and 1864, and that, in party rhetoric, there was no need to fear that "the men who went to the ballot-boxes on the 6th of November, 1860, the hundreds and thousands of whom, with the fear of God and the love of man, went, from their bended knees, to the polls and gave Abraham Lincoln to the world, will, in 1868, put the Government of their country into the hands of Rebels, and the men who apologise for Rebels."[3]

As this indicates, the blending of the heroic Lincoln with other themes in the Republican Party's offensive, and in particular into denunciations of Democrats as traitors, was as important a feature of their 1868 campaign as it had been of that of 1866. Democratic criticism of Lincoln and opposition to the war effort of his administration was again recalled. The New York Tribune recalled Seymour's opposition to the Lincoln Administration, while Shuyler Colfax claimed that every act of Lincoln's government had been denounced by Democrats as usurpation, and, on another occasion when presenting the Republican Party as the guardian of the Union, urged Northerners to remember "as illustrating the spirit of the Rebellion, the invective that was poured upon the head of the lamented Lincoln..."[4]

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1 Cincinnati Commercial, Sept. 17, 1868 quoted in New York Tribune, Sept. 24, 1868; "Thanks to Vermont!", New York Tribune, Sept. 3, 1868.

2 New York Tribune, Sept. 11, 1868.

3 Henry Wilson speaking at Philadelphia, Sept. 26, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 29, 1868. See also speech of Judge Cox of Ohio to Chicago Republicans, Sept. 23, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24, 1868.

4 New York Tribune, Sept. 24, 1868, referring to Seymour; Colfax speaking at Detroit, Oct. 23, 1868, and at a business meeting of the Union League, Sept. 24, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 26, Sept. 25, 1868.

At an anniversary celebration of the Battle of Antietam held at the Cooper Institute, scene of New York's major Republican rallies, one speaker played upon the image of Democrats as Copperheads and rebels as he wondered how soon a Democratic administration would declare that it had been a crime to fight for the Union, and erect monuments inscribed, "Here fell, at the hands of chivalric warriors, so many of Lincoln's hirelings."[1] None need doubt that this would happen, for Republicans provided many examples of the enduring hatred that Democrats bore for Lincoln. According to Chittenden, a leading Democratic journal printed "column after column to prove that Abraham Lincoln, mourned, respected, and beloved by all civilized nations, is in hell..." and the New York Tribune quoted a Seymour and Blair organ in Ohio as observing of Lincoln, "Happily, he was embalmed, and 10 years hence his neck may be found strong enough to hold his body on the gallows tree, as has happened to dead tyrants heretofore."[2] All such use by Republicans of Lincoln's name was intended to impress upon Northern voters that to elect Democrats would be to dishonour the greatest of the nation's dead heroes. "You cannot do it." said Stanton. "How will you consent to join in disgracing the memory of Abraham Lincoln any more than the memories of your sons, friends and relations...?"[3]

Two years earlier, attacks upon Johnson and his Democratic friends as traitors had been linked with claims that the issues of 1866 were essentially those which had confronted the nation during the war,[4] and this theme re-emerged in 1868. Once again the cry that rebels were appealing from the bullet to the ballot was a popular slogan.[5] At Worcester, Massachusetts,

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1 Col. Edgar W. Dennis, Judge-Advocate, U.S.A., speaking on Sept. 17, 1868: New York Times, Sept. 18, 1868.

2 Speech of Chittenden at a meeting of the Central Union Club of Brooklyn, Sept. 3, 1868, New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1868, and The Bueyrus (Ohio) Forum quoted in ibid., Sept. 24, 1868.

3 Speech at Carlisle, Ohio, Oct. 3, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Oct. 7, 1868.

4 See above p. 174-75.

5 At a rally of Boys in Blue at Cooper Institute, New York, Sept. 17, 1868, Gen. Sickles warned that, "the Rebel bullet is transformed into the Democratic ballot." It was, he said, "the spirit of '61 revived in '68." New York Tribune, Sept. 18, 1868.

where the Republican State Convention was held in September 1868, a correspondent of the New York Tribune reported General Buller's warning that, "The issue now is precisely the same which was fought over in the war, and under the same leaders; the very men that were met in the field. The Forrests and the Lees are at this hour the leaders of the Democratic Party."[1] Exploitation of the heroic Lincoln was easily incorporated into such arguments. Thus the Tribune claimed that the issue of Sumter was again presented to the nation: "All that Lincoln wanted was peace, - all that Grant wants is peace. Now, as then, the country responds, 'Amen,'"[2] In a variant of this theme Senator Morton stated that the issues of 1868 were those of 1864 - the election would decide whether or not rebellion against the Government was to be crushed.[3] "If the election of Lincoln, four years ago, was a calamity," said Chittenden, "...patriots can now safely vote for the Rebel Democratic ticket..."[4]

Democrats, forewarned by the experience of the 1866 campaign, doubtless expected some such attack, but were nevertheless irritated by it. The only remaining war cry of the Radicals, said General Toombs, was "Wake up! the rebels be upon ye."[5] According to Hoffman, what he called "the hackneyed cry of rebel and traitor" had become "the standing argument." Democrats had no sympathy with rebellion, declared Doolittle, and he demanded of his audience, "Are there not as many Democratic soldiers that enlisted to fight the battles of the country as there were Republicans?...as many Democratic soldiers who have left an arm or a limb on the field of battle...? As many Democratic widows? As many Democratic orphans?"[6] With some justice, Richard O'Gorman complained that loyalty to the Union now meant fidelity to the Republican Party.[7]

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1 Speech of Sept. 9, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.
2 New York Tribune, Sept. 2, 1868.
3 Address of Senator Morton at Washington, D.C.: New York Times, Jan. 4, 1868
4 Speech at Brooklyn, Sept. 3, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1868.
5 Quoted from the Atlanta (Ga.) Daily Constitution, Sept. 6, 1868 in the World, Sept. 13, 1868.
6 Speech at Shelbyville, Ind., Sept. 5, 1868: World, Sept. 23, 1868.
7 Speech at Democratic mass meeting, Portland, Me., Sept. 2, 1868: World, Sept. 5, 1868.

Taking the offensive, Joel Parker denounced the Radicals as responsible for the Civil War and reminded his audience that wartime attacks on Democrats as traitors had been unable to drive the latter from their patriotic stand.[1] Such attacks now were depicted as a ploy by the Radicals who knew, said Hoffman, "that the only hope for perpetuating their power is to play upon the prejudice of the people, to delude them with the idea that the great rebellion still exists..."[2] It was a spirited counter-attack; but Republicans were convinced that their appeal to Unionist sentiment and in particular to Lincoln's memory would not fail. As one speaker promised a New York audience, "Right would triumph with Grant, as it had with Lincoln - the same issues were at stake."[3]

As in 1866 Republicans turned Lincoln's assassination to good account in campaign propaganda. Butler told his party that the election of Andrew Johnson as Vice-President had "introduced a new element into the politics of the United States - assassination...The bullet of Booth changed the Government of this country, and Andrew Johnson took the place of the lamented Lincoln." An attack on Johnson's Reconstruction policy followed, carrying the implication that it could never have happened if Lincoln had lived - that Lincoln would never have challenged Congress on Reconstruction.[4] Butler was using the assassination to attack Johnson and by association all who had supported the President's 1866 challenge to Congressional Reconstruction. Dr. Friedrich Schuetz similarly exploited Lincoln's murder to attack opponents of Radical Reconstruction and to urge the necessity for Radical measures to protect the freedmen when he claimed that, "the Democratic party received aid in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the person of Andrew Johnson, who, while he understood little else, gave the South hope to gain at the ballot-box

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1 Speech delivered in the National Union Association wigwam, Brooklyn, Oct. 1, 1868: World, Oct. 2, 1868.
2 Speech at Brooklyn, Sept. 21, 1868: World, Sept. 22, 1868.
3 Seymour Smith, State Senator from Delaware County, New York, speaking to a Grant and Colfax Club, New York, Sept. 10, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 11, 1868.
4 Speech before the Republican State Convention at Worcester, Massachusetts, Sept. 9, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.

what she could never gain in battle. By his aid the South has tried to reenslave the loyal blacks."[1] A rather different way of using Lincoln's death to attack the Democrats was illustrated by a campaign poem which recalled the opposition to the war of the "assassinating", "Booth admiring" Copperheads.[2] The Chicago Tribune warned its readers against Copperhead claims that the South sought peace and commented; "It pants for peace precisely as it did all the way from Fort Sumter and Bull Run to Lee's surrender and Lincoln's assassination."[3]

The Radical interpretation of Lincoln's assassination "by an instrument of the Rebellion",[4] together with its associated myths, was sustained in the propaganda of Radicalism in 1868. A reception given to the Vice-Presidential candidate Shuyler Colfax at his home at South Bend, Indiana, provided the ideal occasion for a revival of both. Prefacing its report of the proceedings with an account of Colfax's career, the Chicago Tribune recalled the time when "the rebellion struck its last desperate blow in the assassination of Mr. Lincoln."[5] In a speech welcoming Colfax, Governor Bross reminded his audience how in 1865 "concentrated treason at the North and the South seized the hand of Wilkes Booth as its instrument, and Abraham Lincoln perished by the bullet of the assassin."[6] The party to which Colfax and Grant belonged would, he promised, drive out the Copperheads and traitors raised to power by President Johnson.[7] The Radical message was reduced to its simplest form in a motto carried at a Republican rally held in Chicago in September. It read: "Remember Lincoln. Shall his Murderers Rule?" Among slogans displayed by Republicans taking part in a victory demonstration at the same city a month later was a variant: "Remember Lincoln, and who his

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1 Speech at a mass meeting of German Republicans, Cooper Institute, New York, Oct. 7, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 8, 1868.
2 "The Copperhead" by John Horley, quoted from a Campaign Minstrelsy in New York Herald, Sept. 2, 1868.
3 "Panting for Peace", Chicago Tribune, Sept. 1, 1868.
4 New York Tribune, Sept. 19, 1868.
5 Chicago Tribune, July 31, 1868.
6 Speech of July 30, 1868, in ibid.
7 Speech at South Bend, Indiana, July 30, 1868; ibid.

Murderers Were." On the reverse was written, "Fama semperviat (may their fame never be less)."[1]

The crucial role played in the Radical interpretation of Lincoln's death by the mythic theme representing him as a martyr was not the sole reason for its being much in evidence in Republican rhetoric of 1868. The continuing popularity of this image with the Northern masses is also indicated by the frequency with which Republican speakers chose to court public favour by means of tributes to the martyred President.

Sometimes memories of other martyrs were also invoked as speakers sought to make national pride serve the ends of Republican propaganda. In a letter published in the New York Tribune George Curtis warned that Democrats desired to "persuade the country to turn from the principles of Lincoln, of Lyon, of McPherson, or Sedgwick, of Wadsworth, of Winthrop and of Shaw, who sealed their devotion with their life-blood..." and adopt instead the principles of rebel and Copperhead leaders.[2] Similarly in a speech at New York during which he claimed that the men who had fought to crush rebellion and slavery now feared a revival of both through the activities of rebels and their Northern allies, General John B. M'Kean promised that the Union's ex-soldiers would be faithful to their duty and he aroused the enthusiasm of a crowded Cooper Institute meeting when he declared: "The hopes of the future and the memory of the past command it; the memory of youthful Ellsworth (applause), of the venerated Wadsworth (applause), of the steady Sedgwick (applause), of the chivalrous McPherson (applause), and of the martyred and glorified Lincoln, all command it. (Loud, prolonged and renewed applause.)"[3] However, the martyr Lincoln conveniently symbolized all who had given their lives whether for the nation alone or - like Shaw -in the cause of black rights also.

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1 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24 and Nov. 6, 1868.
2 George William Curtis to the Editor, New York Tribune, Sept. 1, 1868.
3 Speech of Sept. 22, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 23, 1868.

Such tributes to Lincoln seem to have been as acceptable to Easterners as they were to inhabitants of the section which had produced the President, and doubtless served to promote that party unity which the heroic Lincoln symbolized. They were also popular at rallies of former Union soldiers and sailors as politicians sought to capitalize upon the affection for Lincoln well-known to have existed widely at the front. Addressing a Republican mass meeting at Morris, Illinois, General Logan spoke of Lincoln as "one of the greatest men, in my judgment, that ever lived or died for his country..." A month later, according to a Chicago Tribune report, Logan closed a speech to Republicans at Cairo, Illinois, "with an eloquent and beautiful tribute to the patriot martyr of our land."[1] On the same day General Barnum addressed a soldiers' and sailors' convention at Philadelphia, and ended his appeal on behalf of liberty, justice and equal rights for all citizens, white and black, by quoting from the speech delivered at Gettysburg by "our martyr President."[2]

At such gatherings the memory of the martyred national hero was invoked as speakers sought to reanimate the wartime spirit of patriotic unity against the enemy and to encourage ex-soldiers to rally once more to the Union cause in the name of the army's murdered commander-in-chief. Thus General Sicles told a rally of Boys in Blue, staged on the anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, that, "It is time for us, comrades, to come together, and stand together, shoulder to shoulder, when we see a great party, gaining the possession and control of the Government, take the hand of Forrest, fresh from the massacre of Fort Pillow, and turn round to our honoured chieftain and call him a butcher! It is time for us to come together once more when we see Jeff Davis making the tour of Europe, and remember where Lincoln lies." According to the New York Times, the reference to the martyr President caused a sensation among the former soldiers.[3]

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1 Speeches of Sept. 1 and Oct. 1, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 2, Oct. 2, 1868.
2 Speech of Oct. 1, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Oct. 2, 1868.
3 Speech at New York, Sept. 17, 1868: New York Times, Sept. 18, 1868.

A campaign speech delivered at Cleveland, Ohio by former Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton strikingly illustrated the role of myth as political propaganda. Stanton appeared "ill, and worn with travel", but the brevity of his remarks accentuated rather than detracted from the impact of a forceful attempt to excite from his audience an emotional committment to support Grant. This address, which also played upon Irish and German nationalism and the myth of the Founding Fathers in its appeal to Unionist sentiment, culminated in a powerful invokation of the spirits of the nation's dead war heroes and above all that of the martyred Lincoln. According to the New York Tribune's report: "The speaker quoted from the remarks of President Lincoln at Gettysburg, and said, 'I ask you, in the voice of Abraham Lincoln, here to-day, if our dead died in vain? (A voice - "no, no!") Shall we not dedicate ourselves to the work they left unfinished! Let us here, every one, with uplifted hand, declare before God that the gift of this great heritage, consecrated in the blood of our soldiers, shall never perish from the earth. (Here the speaker raised his hand and said, "I swear," which was repeated by numbers of the audience.) Let your hearts speak as through Abraham Lincoln and declare that there is no one among you but will labor to complete the task of the illustrious dead by establishing the foundations of the Government again."[1]

Inherent in claims that Lincoln would have endorsed the Reconstruction programme adopted by his party after 1866, and indeed in any endorsement of that programme through the heroic Lincoln, was the implication that he would not have opposed or would have given active support to attempts to secure equal rights for black Americans. Although Democrats consistently and bitterly attacked exponents of Congressional Reconstruction, and Radical Republicans in particular, for seeking to introduce universal Negro suffrage and total equality between the black and white races, and although every Democratic state convention of 1868 condemned Radical Reconstruction and made specific

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1 Speech of Oct. 8, 1868 at a Republican mass meeting: New York Tribune, Oct. 9, 1868.

reference to black suffrage,[1] the Republican Party had not committed itself to enfranchising even Southern Negroes at this stage.[2] In fact, while some Southern Democrats conceded the necessity to give freedmen the vote,[3] and while there was some pressure for Negro suffrage amongst Radical leaders at a local level,[4] most Republicans who favoured giving voting rights to Southern blacks preferred a generalized call for equal rights to a specific demand for Negro suffrage which might clash with anti-Negro feeling still prevalent in the North and alienate the rank and file of the Republican party and drive away unattached voters. However, into such general appeals, and sometimes into specific appeals for Negro suffrage, heroic concepts of Lincoln relating to emancipation were successfully incorporated.

Sometimes the broad concept of Lincoln as a hero of liberty best suited a speaker's purposes. Recalling the election of 1860 General Pleasanton combined the concept of Lincoln as a symbol of national opposition to slavery with the ever popular mythical image of him as the People's President when he told a New York audience that eight years earlier the need for a representative man had arisen: "The instincts of the people read trouble in the issues which were made by the people of the South on the subject of slavery. Lincoln was therefore elected. Sprung from the people, identified with the great masses by thought, feeling and association, he showed throughout his whole Presidential career that his sole desire was to do their will." Because of this, said Pleasanton, Lincoln shared with Washington and Jackson the honour of being the nation's greatest heroes. "These three men - Washington, Jackson and Lincoln - occupy the highest niches in the temple of fame as representatives of the progressive spirit of the times in which they lived, and to which they gave such great impulsion by their own powerful characters." In

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1 Grossman, The Democratic Party and the Negro, 2.
2 C Vann Woodward, American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue (Boston and Toronto, 1971 ed.), 176-77, "Seeds of Failure in Radical Race Policy".
3 Coleman, Election of 1868, 21-22, 315-18.

drawing the moral for his own day, Pleasanton was content to issue a call for the election of Grant as the representative man of the times, but his well received address, in which the heroes Washington, Jackson and Lincoln were used to arouse patriotic sentiments and hostility to slavery, was the perfect introduction to a meeting at which other speakers spelt out the need for Radical policies and especially voting rights for black men.[1]

Making similar use of Lincoln alone, the New York Tribune celebrated Republican successes in Vermont as demonstrating that those who had supported Lincoln would elect Grant and Colfax, and that nothing could halt "the mighty column that is moving to reiterate and confirm the past triumphs of Freedom and the Union over Rebellion at the South and sympathizing Disloyalty at the North." Calling for unity and at the same time endorsing the Republican presidential candiate through Lincoln as a hero of freedom, the same paper on another occasion quoted Grant's 1863 toast: "God gave us Lincoln and Liberty: let us fight for both."[2]

More specific appeals for Radical policies made use of the more specific image of Lincoln as Emancipator.[3] Addressing the Massachusetts State Convention at Worcester in September 1868, Benjamin F. Butler opened his speech by recalling the slave power's rebellion against the constitutional election of a Republican President, and thus established Lincoln as the representative of the cause of freedom. According to Butler's narrative, slavery was the "first enemy" which the North had faced in the war and was "swept away by the immortal proclamation of Lincoln." By implication Butler was arguing that Democratic policies would, by denying black men the vote, destroy the hero's work because they would in effect restore slavery: "for any great community that have no political rights are slaves; for who is free who has not the right and the power to enforce his freedom?"[4]

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1 Speech at anniversary celebration of the Battle of Antietam, New York, Sept. 17, 1868: New York Times, Sept. 18, 1868.

2 "Thanks to Vermont" and "Grant's Patriotism": New York Tribune, Sept. 3, Oct. 28, 1868.

3 Exponents of Negro suffrage and their opponents occasionally quoted Lincoln on Negro suffrage (for example Doolittle at Shelbyville, Sept. 5, 1868: World, Sept. 23, 1868), but mythical images of him as the Emancipator seem to have been more useful as political argument.

4 Speech of Sept. 9, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.

Another prominent Radical, John Conness, similarly glorified Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation as he used the mythical image of Lincoln as Emancipator to stimulate support for Congressional Reconstruction policies. Seeking "to emancipate the Irish mind from Copperhead rule", Conness approached the difficult task of winning the sympathy and votes of Irish-Americans, who were traditionally anti-Negro and prone to support the Democratic Party, by developing an anti-slavery interpretation of the Civil War. While noting that anti-slavery opinion and the necessities imposed by war had put pressure on Lincoln to attack slavery, Conness depicted emancipation as a divinely-inspired act that had turned the tide of battle, and he recalled how in January 1863, "there came to us, ringing the New Year in, this great proclamation of freedom. (Applause.) After that we gained victories. Grant and his forces became invincible. Right and God were on our side, and Treason and Slavery went down. (Great cheering.) In a subtle attack upon the enemies of Radical Reconstruction, Conness described opponents of Lincoln's edict - which this advocate of Radical policies cleverly did not hesitate to call an "extreme" measure - as Conservative Republicans and the mass of Democrats who, he claimed, had aided the rebellion.

Having invoked the memory of Lincoln as the heroic Emancipator in an attack upon the Democracy, the speaker immediately went on to pledge his support to the party which, unlike the slave South, he said, took as the corner-stone of its doctrine and practice "the upholding of human rights and the defense of American citizenship..." Later in this speech Conness again linked Radical policies with emancipation as he declared: "Let us say to those who complain that Congress established a universal suffrage in the South, that it was provoked by the second attempt, as Slavery was destroyed by the first attempt of Rebellion. The concept of Lincoln as a divinely-inspired Emancipator also reappeared as, defending Radical Reconstruction policies, Conness told how rebellion had swept away the state governments of the South until there was, "only people and territory left, and men who had been slaves set free by the career of war and the edicts of God and Lincoln."

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1 Speech at New York, Sept. 30, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 1, 1868.

From time to time those who found images of Lincoln as Emancipator and Martyr politically useful combined these concepts as they took the anti-slavery interpretation of his death to its logical conclusion in the myth of his martyrdom in the cause of freedom. Campaigning for Grant in Illinois, Massachusetts Republican Charles Ladd paid tribute to the state's greatest hero as a token of goodwill and to emphasize bonds between party members East and West which would facilitate unity under a leader once more drawn from the West. Ladd promised that he would "go back to the East carrying with him the assurance that Illinois would be as true to liberty in 1868 as she was in 1860, when she gave to the country the martyred Lincoln."[1]

The myth of the martyred Emancipator emerged clearly when the Chicago Tribune made Schuyler Colfax's July visit to his home town of South Bend the occasion for a lengthy resume of the Indiana Radical's career in which Colfax and hence the policies he advocated were endorsed by repeatedly associating him with the heroic Lincoln. To re-establish in its readers' minds a relationship between Lincoln's assassination and the need for Radical policies, the paper recalled Colfax's 1865 speech at South Bend on Lincoln's death, which it described as "one of the most admirable eulogies upon the life and character of the martyr." The concluding passage of this oration depicting Lincoln as the heroic Emancipator of the black race and a martyr for his nation and liberty was reproduced in full. This was followed by denunciation of Johnson, the "faithless successor of Abraham Lincoln", whose dangerous course, said the Tribune, made imperative Colfax's demand for "irreversible guarantees of equal justice and the national authority." According to the Tribune, Congress met this demand by passing the Civil Rights Bill over Johnson's presidential veto. Continuing its justification through Lincoln of Radical Reconstruction, the paper developed its discussion of Colfax's role in securing Radical measures by quoting resolutions which he had introduced in the National Senate urging, "That the promise of Abraham Lincoln in his immortal proclamation, that the freedom of our emancipated millions should be maintained, must be fulfilled both in letter and in spirit, and guaranteed beyond any power of abridgment in our supreme law..." and demanding a

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1 Speech at Chicago, Sept. 23, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24, 1868.

constitutional amendment to secure to the freedmen their privileges and immunities.[1] The Tribune was not alone in viewing Colfax's tributes to the martyred Emancipator as useful Republican propaganda in 1868. A campaign life of Grant and Colfax published at Philadelphia closed with the text of his South Bend eulogy to Lincoln.[2]

A speech delivered at Lafayette in his home state of Indiana by Colfax shows how mythical images of Lincoln could be blended with other mytical and non-mythical themes of Republican rhetoric discussed earlier. In this address, Colfax also sought to increase the impact of his appeals on behalf of Radical Reconstruction by reviving the image of Lincoln as a martyr to liberty. Stressing that the Civil War had been above all the North's battle against slavery, he made a carefully thought out appeal to the image of the Emancipator which both defended and glorified the act of emancipation when he recalled that slavery had plunged the country into war and that, "after three years of forbearance, Mr. Lincoln issued his proclamation declaring if the Southern people continued to murder Union soldiers a hundred days more, he would strike that institution with the battle-axe of the war power, and shatter it from turret to foundation-stone." Reminding his audience how his party had supported the late President unswervingly, Colfax asked: "Do you not remember how faithfully every one of you Republicans stood by our noble and martyred standard-bearer?" The villification of those who did so was also remembered and, as Colfax had intended, few listening can have failed to draw a parallel between the language of opposition to Lincoln's emancipation edict in 1863 and Democratic rhetoric in 1868.

Other mythical and non-mythical arguments, such as Colfax's statement of his senatorial record, an appeal to Unionism which played heavily upon the symbolism of the national flag, a defence of Republican conscription and

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1 Chicago Tribune, July 31, 1868.
2 The Lives of General U.S. Grant, and Schuyler Colfax...With Portraits... (Philadelphia, 1868), 343-348

financial policies, a vision of America's glorious destiny and an attack upon the Ku Klux Klan, were mingled throughout the speech, but its central theme was an anti-slavery interpretation of the Civil War and Reconstruction in which the heroic Lincoln loomed large.

In a passage reminiscent of his 1865 eulogy, Colfax clarified the argument hinted at earlier in the speech that those who would honour the martyred President must disregard attacks by the Democracy and stand by the cause of equality for blacks. Looking back upon the glorious work of emancipation, Colfax developed the idea that it had become a matter of honour to vote for the party which had supported Lincoln during the war and so sustain the work of the hero who had freed the slaves and given his life in the cause of human liberty. Future ages would rise up and call blessed the generation that had destroyed slavery, said Colfax, "But we have still another honor in connection with this work." It was that the nation had had a President who was faithful to his duty despite constant abuse from a party opposed to his own and who "fell, pierced by the bullet of a Rebel assassin." The noblest President since Washington, he had, said Colfax, followed the course of duty unflinchingly:

> "Supported by a noble patriotism, his course was true and faithful to the day he was numbered with the dead. Dead, did I say? He is not dead. His is one of the few immortal names that were not born to die. (Prolonged cheering.) He lives to-day among the noble martyrs to liberty, justice and humanity, and in the recollections of the dark-browned race he lifted from Slavery to the full stature of manhood. It is with pride that we look back now upon the fact that we stood by him when the storm of war raged around him. We feel proud that we stood firm in the cause of justice and manhood against every wrong and oppression."

The message for all who revered the heroic Lincoln was clear: "To-day we feel proud that we have saved a nation and emancipated a race, and to-day we follow our great standard-bearer, the hero of the century, U.S. Grant."[1]

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1 Speech of October 1, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 5, 1868.

As was the case in discussing the 1866 elections, it is not easy to assess how effective Republican rhetoric, and in particular appeals to the heroic Lincoln, proved in securing support for the party's candidates and policies. Certainly the elections resulted in a Republican victory, and it was clear to some observers by the end of October that Grant would be President.[1] An abortive movement to change the Democracy's national ticket, reflecting fears that Seymour's war record was losing the party votes in the North, caused much excitement when exposed by the New York World on October 15, and can only have harmed the Democratic canvass.[2] The many other factors involved in Republican success have been the subject of careful analysis elsewhere,[3] and it is clear, for example, that the popular appeal of the party's presidential candidate, war hero Ulysses S. Grant,[4] its superior organization, and the strength of its position in the South where the Reconstruction Acts passed by a Republican dominated Congress told against the party's enemies, as well as the Democracy's errors and local factors, all helped to shape the results of the 1868 campaign. Nevertheless, the Democratic Party's attempt to utilize the heroic Lincoln in its own rhetoric suggests that contemporaries saw Republican appeals to his name as an effective form of political argument, which had to be countered. That Republicans believed their exploitation of the hero to be effective is clear, for they had already begun to guard jealously the concept of him as the father of their party, and would continue to do so throughout the Nineteenth Century. The record of the party, said Richard Oglesby of Illinois, was "a record of fidelity to human liberty and of attachment to the Union. Abraham Lincoln, its father, was a noble man, and his like had never been

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1 Republicans carried every state election in the North in September and October except California: Coleman, Election of 1868, 331-32. On Pacific Coast support for the Democracy see Burnham, Presidential Ballots, 106.

2 On October 12, Orville H. Browning wrote, "The radicals have...carried Penna, Ohio & Indiana. This settles the Presidential contest." Browning, Diary, II, 220.

2 Coleman, Election of 1868, 348-49.

3 Ibid., 368 ff.

4 One Republican recalled that, "The loyal people of the country looked to Grant with an almost superstitious hope." George F. Hoar, Autobiography of Seventy Years, 2 vols. (New York, 1903), I, 246.

born since the creation of the world."[1]

Certainly appeals to the heroic Lincoln appear to have found favour with the Republican Party's rank and file supporters, for mottoes carried at Republican demonstrations regularly invoked his memory. Moreover, tributes to him were expected to please Republicans in their hour of success. In November 1868, as Grant's victory was acclaimed by his party, the author of a poem written to celebrate Republican triumph at the polls dedicated a verse to the memory of "Just Lincoln" and of how:

> The arm that struck the shackles off a race
> Had scarce availed, when his the martyr's place!

The hero whose memory had so often been invoked during the Republican campaign of 1868 was not forgotten in victory.[1]

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1 Chicago Tribune, Nov. 4, 1868.

Chapter Six

Popular Development of the Lincoln Myths

> Strew over him flowers: Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the rich bright pink arbutus from the east, and from the west rich orange blossom, But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower; ... And beside it there lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia, Bitter for remembrance...[1]

If Lincoln myths, and particularly those relating to emancipation, were born or at least baptized in campaigns to win support for a Radical approach to Reconstruction, their survival and the success of political appeals which utilized them depended upon their securing widespread popular support. They appear to have done so, although, as will be shown, a number of groups within American society rejected heroic images of Lincoln.

In the weeks that followed Lincoln's death the North was ready and anxious to eulogize him. Heroic themes were prevalent in sermons preached, published, and clearly well received in every Northern State.[2] Ministers who failed to pay tribute to the lamented leader were sometimes unacceptable to congregations. At Medway in Massachusetts, a visiting clergyman who omitted any reference to Lincoln's martyrdom was "given fifteen minutes to leave town; he left instanter."[3] Praise was the order of the day, and Lincoln's heroic status was so firmly established that it became heresy to challenge this concept of him. "The gloom was universal," recalled a Northern woman, "and no one dared to whisper an approval of the horrible deed by which the nation was robbed of a loved chief, and the name of Abraham Lincoln was made synonymous with that of 'The Noble Martyr.'" Those who failed to mourn the passing of the hero-President were quickly shown the

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1 John Gould Fletcher, "Lincoln", quoted in Amy Lowell, Tendencies in Modern American Poetry (Oxford, (1917)?), 330.

2 See Jay Monaghan, ed., Lincoln Bibliography, 1839-1939, 2 vols. (New York, 1945). The number of copies issued of any single sermon varied between several hundred and several thousand, but five hundred was a common figure.

3 Wecter, The Hero in America, 260.

error of their ways. In such an atmosphere images of Lincoln as a hero and martyr of liberty flourished.[1]

Popular acceptance of these and other traditions was reflected in addresses and resolutions adopted by citizens' organizations throughout the Union. Chicago, plunged into extravagant mourning, hardly seemed a city where the late President's Administration had had more enemies than friends. Lincoln was hailed as a hero at mass meetings and by public bodies and local societies of all kinds, including the city's Common Council, the Board of Trade, the Stock Exchange, the Chicago Bar, the Chicago theatrical profession, teachers at the Chicago High School and public schools, the Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Fenian Brotherhood, and Chicago Poles and Bohemians.[2]

When the Chicago Bar met on April 17, 1865, Lincoln quickly emerged as a man raised by God to become the most prominent in the history of the world, winning immortal fame. In Thomas Hoyne's address, the late President was without "flaw, stain or blemish", a hero of democratic institutions, the saviour of his country, and a benefactor of mankind whom Hoyne linked with Christ. The concepts of the Great Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty were equally clear. Judge Higgins, who also described Lincoln as "emphatically a tribune of the people", claimed that the President had been an "ardent lover of liberty", the Negro's Friend and Emancipator, and a blessed martyr who had been killed by the representative of slaveholders and rebels and whose martyrdom in the cause of human freedom would be remembered for all time. The preamble to resolutions adopted by the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Chicago praised Lincoln as a hero of liberty. The Italian Opera Company, which had arrived in Chicago on the day of Lincoln's death, clearly expected to win public sympathy when it postponed its opening performance in order to

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1 Sylvia G. Dannett, ed. Noble Women of the North (New York, 1959), 366-67. There were many reports of crowds attacking individuals who publicly rejoiced at Lincoln's death, as in the Chicago Times, April 21, 1865.

2 Chicago Times, April 17, 18, 19, 24, 1865.

"pay our tribute of sorrow and tears to the memory of the martyr in a Divine cause, and the man that the history of America and the book of humanity will make immortal." In Chicago as elsewhere in the North immigrants who had fled oppression in Europe were particularly likely to honour Lincoln's work for liberty. The city's Bohemians and Poles illustrated this at their meeting on April 17, 1865 during which one speaker, in an emotional address, called Lincoln an immortal hero of humanity who had performed the greatest task on earth, while another told his audience that "they ought sincerely to lament the death of one who had liberated millions of people from slavery, and millions more from the slavery of prejudice."[1]

The broad nature of their appeal was also reflected in the traditions' appearance in the writings and speeches of prominent public figures who took no part in promoting Radical Reconstruction. The eulogy which, as official historian of the United States, George Bancroft delivered before Congress on February 12, 1866 illustrated this. Its opening paragraph, which placed responsibility for the war firmly upon the South's determination to preserve slavery, seemed to suggest that a Radical analysis of the war and of Lincoln's death might follow. This was not the case. Elements of the Lincoln Myth pervaded every section of the speech. Many images raised were those especially favoured in Radical propaganda, portraying Lincoln as the people's president, a pure and almost non-political hero and merciful leader. Moving from myth to myth, Bancroft never lost sight of the Emancipator. Lincoln was the hero who "took to heart the eternal truths of liberty, obeyed them as the commands of Providence, and accepted the human race as the judge of his fidelity." It was he who issued the proclamation "which struck the fetters from three million slaves" and so "wrote liberty on the banners of the armies." However, from a Radical standpoint the traditions were wasted. At no point is the divergence between Bancroft's approach to Lincoln mythology

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1 Chicago Times, April 17, 18, 1865.

and that of Radical propagandists better illustrated than in his treatment of Lincoln's death. The martyr concept was clear; according to Bancroft, "the only triumph awarded to him (Lincoln) was the march to the grave." The hero of liberty had become the chief martyr of "the myriads of nameless martyrs" who had died for popular government. Bancroft did not attempt to use this image to turn the mind of his audience towards Radical Reconstruction. Instead, in an appeal for mercy towards the defeated rebels, he declared that, "The assassination of Lincoln, who was so free from malice, has by some mysterious influence struck the country with solemn awe, and hushed, instead of exciting, the passion for revenge. It seems as if the just had died for the unjust." That Lincoln through martyrdom should redeem the South was no part of the Messiah tradition as it developed in Radical thought, and the address did not go down well with the Radicals. As Sumner's angry reaction to its plea for leniency indicates, Radicals saw Lincoln myths as a means to only one justifiable end, the promotion of their Reconstruction policies. Bancroft's address, on the other hand, clearly reveals that the concept of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation and other Lincoln myths, as products of an understanding of the war broadly shared by most Unionists, could exist independently of the Radical arguments with which their development was so clearly associated.[1]

An even clearer indication of the popularity of Lincoln myths in 1865 was the response of Northern Democrats to his assassination. Even those who had long attacked the President, often virulently, now found it expedient to recognize his qualities. As the paper which had described his Second Inaugural Address as hypocrisy and blasphemy blandly noted, "Lincoln's life has been more highly valued since the inaugural." Whether or not the

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1 Cong.Globe, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., 801-805; Pressly, Americans Interpret Their Civil War, 57. See also George Bancroft, "The Place of Abraham Lincoln in History", The Atlantic Monthly, XV, 1 (June 1865), 757-64. Bancroft had been a war Democrat.

editors of the Chicago Times had valued the President's life more highly between March 4 and April 14, 1865, they were too well aware of the trend to hero-worship the late President to appear to do otherwise after his murder.

The Times was a leading organ of the midwestern Democracy and its response to Lincoln's death is significant. At no point did this paper attempt to challenge developing Lincoln myths, an indication that such a move was considered politically unwise. On April 17, with one eye fixed perhaps upon Unionist attacks on Copperhead presses elsewhere, the Times paid tribute to the concept of the hero who, "having completed so far his labors, and laid down his life, a sacrifice for the cause for which he had fought, his name will now live forever among the heroes and martyrs of history."

Significantly, though the Times did try to counter Radical propaganda, it did so obliquely by accepting and even utilising Lincoln myths associated with the Radical programme. Thus an article with the carefully chosen title of "The Partisans and Opponents of the Late President", tried to adopt the hero on behalf of the Democracy. Picturing Lincoln as meriting and securing the commendation of the Democratic press for a Reconstruction policy which, it was alleged, had brought him under attack from within his own party, the Times claimed that there was reason to believe that, "so far as its political consequences are concerned, President Johnson, and the radical, which is the controlling element in the administration party, and with which he is most closely allied, do not regard the death of Mr. Lincoln as a national calamity..", commenting:

> Thus, while professing to mourn the late president, breaks out among his partisans the bold, bad, vindictive, fanatical spirit which so "pressed" and troubled him in the discharge of the presidential duties. It was a spirit that drove him to the adoption of measures which he was pledged to oppose at the commencement of his administration and from whose control, in the last days of his life, he clearly foreshadowed his intention to free himself.

Perhaps undermining, but involving no direct challenge to, the Emancipator tradition, the old Democratic claim that Lincoln had emancipated under Radical pressure, so long used to censure him was thus converted into a means of attacking the Radical wing of the Republican Party while praising Lincoln. This article also hinted that Lincoln was the best friend of the South, a tradition which politically was particularly versatile. While Radicals employed it in conjunction with the idea that Lincoln had been killed by the spirit of rebellion to call for harsh policies towards those who had met mercy with murder. Democrats, like former Confederates, sought to use the tradition to discredit Radicals by implying that the heroic Lincoln had differed sharply from them over Reconstruction.

More direct exploitation of Lincoln myths for Democratic ends was also attempted. The Times was prepared to admit that Booth was "the natural development of pro-slaveryism", a crucial theme in the Martyr-Emancipator tradition, but this apparent concession was converted into an attack upon the Radicals as similarities were noted between Booth and John Brown, "the natural development of abolitionism", and as the article stressed that "each had his origin in radicalism" and "they are precisely alike." Thus the paper did not seriously attempt to counter developing Lincoln myths, preferring to accept those which were compatible with the known attitudes of the Democracy or could be utilized in an attack upon the Radical Republicans. Clearly public opinion was too strongly in favour of the Lincoln myths for the Times to risk offending it.[1]

The attitude of the Times appears to have been representative. Prominent Democrats condemned the assassination, and Lincoln's heroic status was acknowledged. Even Copperhead leader Vallandigham sought to make his peace

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1 Chicago Times, April 15, 17, 18, 1865.

with the spirit of Lincoln. If not all Democrats were prepared to do so, party leaders were fully aware that the Republican Party, and particularly the Radicals, intended to exploit the heroic Lincoln for its own ends, and while they occasionally tried to lay bare this process, for the most part they found it easier to accept and work within the framework of the developing Lincoln traditions.[1]

Finally, general approval of images of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation and other aspects of the Lincoln Myth, found direct expression in poetry, at that time a medium both for voicing and influencing popular sentiment. Wartime poetry had made clear the conflict between anti-slavery sentiment and racism in the North. Where one poet had predicted with regard to the Confederacy,

> And this one line shall grace your grave:
> Your death gave freedom to the slave.

another had pleaded,

> Let us have no more agitation
> About the nigger ...

while an 1864 campaign song had promised that once Lincoln and Johnson were elected "negro agitation will be all in vain ..." In 1865 Lincoln was a hero even in the verse published by a paper such as the Chicago Times which had consistently condemned his emancipation policy, and the poetical outpourings of the nation on Lincoln's death suggest not only the scope which myths offer to literary talent or ambition, but also the prevalence of anti-slavery sentiments in the North by the end of the Civil War and the acceptability of the concept of Lincoln as a hero of freedom and, specifically, of the emancipation of the slaves. On April 23, Julia Ward Howe, whose "Battle Hymn of the Republic", published in February, 1862, had reflected and stimulated

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1 Washington Evening Star, April 21, 1865; Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 4-5.

developing anti-slavery feeling in the North, told Massachusetts school-children,

> Our first Hero, living,
> Made his country free;
> Heed the Second's giving,
> Death for Liberty.

In "The Death of Lincoln", also written in April, 1865, prominent poet William Cullen Bryant blended the traditions of Lincoln as an instrument of God for the freeing of the slaves, the Great Emancipator and the Martyr to Liberty:

> Thy task is done; the bond are free:
> We bear thee to an honored grave,
> Whose proudest monument shall be
> The broken fetters of the slave.
>
> Pure was they life; its bloody close
> Hath placed thee with the sons of light,
> Among the noble host of those
> who perished in the cause of right.

The popularity of such poetry was indicated in the publication, within a few months of the assassination, of a volume of verse entitled "Poetical Tributes" which gave frequent expression to Lincoln Myths, with the traditions of Lincoln as the hero of the nation and the Great Emancipator most prominent. The Mosaic concept of Lincoln was especially strong, and merged with that of the Emancipator in such lines as:

> The prayer of the bondman went up night and day,
> 'Lord, send us a Moses to show us the way.'
> Like Moses of old, thou didst lead them safe through,
> Till the fair land of Canaan each pilgrim could view.

So the poetry of the assassination played its part in expressing and creating popular support for the concepts of Lincoln as hero of his nation and of freedom, blending these to give an enduring strength to both traditions:[1]

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1 Yazoo Daily Yankee, July 20, 1863, quoted in Wiley, Billy Yank, 182; "The Union Forever" and "Lincoln and Johnson", in William H. Hayward, Camp Songs for the Soldier and Poems of Leisure Moments (Baltimore, 1864), 9, 62; Wild Edgerton, "Lincoln", Chicago Times, July 20, 1863; "April Fifteenth", by Julia Ward Howe, in Commonwealth, April 29, 1865; Roy P. Basler, The Lincoln Legend: A Study in Changing Conceptions (Boston, 1935), 36, 179, 214; "In Memorium", New Orleans Daily Delta, April 23, 1865.

He is gone - gone forever! go muffle the bell;
Go weep, for few spirits like his shall depart;
Let the loud, mournful wail of a great nation tell -
The grief that has shaken a nation's strong heart.
And bend the bright banner of freedom o'er him -
So willing to guard it, so mighty to save;
By its proud staff unshaken, its stars never dim -
Save when drooping and moistened with tears at his grave.

The promotion of such concepts of Lincoln as part of Radical propaganda helped to popularize them, but clearly Radicals and their associates anticipated a favourable response to heroic concepts of Lincoln. Moreover, not all who promoted the myths did so for narrowly political reasons, and the traditions themselves survived the political cause with which their early development was so closely associated to become part of America's mythological heritage. To understand why this was so, it is necessary to explain and to illustrate further popular Northern support for mythic images of Lincoln relating to emancipation and for the Lincoln Myth as a whole.

Part of the explanation lay in America's mythological requirements. The Republic needed a new hero, and even before his death Lincoln was beginning to fulfil this role. By exploiting an emergent hero, then, Radicals sought to make their policies more acceptable to the North. True the nation and other great men, and if Washington, the most renowned, seemed remote, the average Westward-looking American could identify himself instead with Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett or Andrew Jackson. But none of the country's earlier favourites, all of them Southerners, could represent fully the small farmer and industry orientated free labour society of the North and Northwest, whose interests, by the middle of the nineteenth century, increasingly dominated the nation. Lincoln, born in a Kentucky log cabin, moving from there through Indiana to Illinois, and travelling around that state firstly on horseback as an itinerant small-town lawyer and later by railroad as a local politician rising to national prominence, almost perfectly reflected the development of his section, whose patterns of thought he articulately expressed. Lincoln

could fulfil the role of hero because his life represented, or could be made to represent, fundamental themes in the society in which he lived.[1]

To a certain extent any political leader must try to do so, and this explains why elements of the Lincoln Myth can be found which pre-date the popular emergence of the heroic Lincoln. Campaign biographies produced by the Republican Party in 1860 stressed Lincoln's rise from humble origins and his frontier background, and Lincoln, too, emphasized his ability to represent these fundamental themes of American life and of the North's free labour society in particular.[2] What had been done during his lifetime with an eye to votes and to establishing his status as a popular leader, continued after his death, revealing the importance of confirming Lincoln as the representative of basic American themes in order to validate assertions regarding his heroic status. Those seeking to win support for anti-slavery policies by associating these with Lincoln the Emancipator seldom neglected to establish his credibility as a hero by developing other aspects of the Lincoln Myth.

As this suggests, the Emancipator tradition could exist in 1865 because Lincoln emerged as the heroic representation of major themes in American life and this in turn made all his acts seem in retrospect heroic. Abolitionists, anti-slavery politicians and Lincoln himself had indeed struggled to present emancipation as a development of the fundamental American value of liberty, but those who presented Lincoln as an anti-slavery champion in 1865 were in many senses continuing this struggle rather than profiting from its success. In 1865, with Lincoln established as a hero, and with all his deeds, including emancipation, thus sanctified, George Bancroft could expect a favourable response when he hailed Lincoln as the Emancipator. Nevertheless, he ended

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1 See above, p. 15.

2 William Dean Howells, Life of Abraham Lincoln (1860); John Locke Scripps, Life of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Roy P. Basler and Lloyd A. Dunlap (Bloomington, 1961), The Scripps biography was originally published in 1860.

his article in Atlantic Monthly with an appeal for the preservation of emancipation which was as much an attempt to stimulate as it was a reflection of public support for the idea that emancipation fulfilled fundamental American themes. Stressing the enduring values of equality, freedom, progress and America's world mission, he promised that when, as a result of slavery's abolition, the country's institutions were homogenous, the nations of the world would testify to the wealth and glory of the United States, and "its great principles of personal equality and freedom - freedom of conscience and mind, - freedom of speech and action, - freedom of government through ever-renewed common consent - will undulate through the world like the rays of light and heat from the sun ... (and) it will grow into a greatness of which the past has no parallel; and there can be no spot in Europe or Asia so remote or so secluded as to shut out its influence."[1]

If his anti-slavery eulogists recognized and exploited Lincoln's potential as the heroic representation of basic American themes, the heroic Lincoln was not wholly their creation, but had begun to emerge before the end of the war. This indeed helps to explain the popularity of Lincoln myths with both eulogists and their audiences, and was due to the role he played, or the particular themes he represented, as leader of his society in the crisis of the Civil War.

This role was reflected in the development in the North especially during the later war years, of a deep popular affection for Lincoln. Though fellow politicians, abolitionists and newspaper editors lashed the President verbally and in print, and though opponents did not shrink from scurrilous attacks upon him, it seems that Lincoln was viewed in an increasingly tolerant light by the masses in the North. This affection was the product of a development crucial to his emergence as a hero. For Lincoln's position as President, and as leader

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1 Bancroft, "The Place of Abraham Lincoln in History", op.cit., 764.

of a party which during the war appealed to the electorate on a non-partisan, national basis, his unfaltering dedication to the principle of Union and his unwavering determination to win the war, rejecting any suggestion of compromise with the Confederacy, resulted, perhaps inevitably, in his becoming the symbol of the Union cause. There was no-one to compete with him for this role. Union generals came and went. Lincoln alone stood throughout the war years as a constant figure in the Northern war effort.

The army tended from the first to view him as a symbol of Unionism. While there were certainly soldiers hostile towards Lincoln, the strong unionist sentiments prevalent at the front predisposed many to hold in high esteem a President who opposed compromise with rebels. "Mr. Lincoln was particularly endeared to the soldiers", recalled William T. Sherman, and it seems that he was right. In August 1861 Leo Faller described fellow soldiers cheering for "Old Abe" at a review: "I can tell you", he wrote, "it made some noise." Affectionate references to "Honest Old Abe", "Uncle Abe", and "Father Abraham" appear in soldiers' letters written throughout the war. In 1864 the army was overwhelmingly in favour of Lincoln's re-election, indicating how strongly he was, for the men at the front, identified with the war effort. "Lincoln says, unequivocally, that the Nation shall live," wrote Major James Connolly in September, 1864, and he continued "McClellan does not dare to say so, neither does he dare to say it shall not live. He lacks backbone. His nerves are not strong enough for the storm. We must have the man who dares to say: the Nation must live. We can trust ourselves to no other pilot." Connolly believed that there were comparatively few McClellan men in the Army, and many soldiers would have agreed with surgeon William Watson on the requirements for victory: "Grant will whip Lee, Old Abe will be re-elected and the Union preserved." Private Isaac Jackson confirmed that "As a general

thing the soldiers think Lincoln is the right man in the right place, ..."[1]

Army attitudes did not necessarily reflect feelings behind the lines, and Lincoln's stock was probably low with the masses in the North during late 1861 and most of 1862 when the Federal Army suffered repeated defeats. Amongst civilians, however, 1864 seems to have witnessed a significant growth in the President's popularity. Confederate Mrs. Chesnut noted in January, 1864 that, "You never hear now of Lincoln's nasty fun; only of his wisdom." In February, Northerner Ellis Yarnall confirmed that "Lincoln is the man Americans now delight to honour" and he described how "His (Lincoln's) popularity has become something surprising, so that in crowded assemblies every mention of his name sets people wild with delight." Earlier, as election year had loomed, Lincoln's admiring secretary, John Hay, had doubted whether the nation was worthy of another term of the President, but he had no doubt that this is what it desired: "I know the people want him. There is no mistaking that fact."[2]

As Lincoln became the symbol of the Union cause, so he began to emerge as its hero. For a number of Northerners he had appeared so even earlier. During the crisis of 1860-1861 he was, predictably, a hero for the young. Others detected heroic qualities in him as the war progressed. Union general Robert McAllister felt as early as 1862 that the President was destined to be amongst the world's greatest men, and Confederate soldier Edwin Fay recorded in May, 1862 the comment of a captured Illinois army chaplain that Lincoln was

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1 William T. Sherman, Memoirs of William T. Sherman. By Himself. 2 vols. (London, 1875), II, 349; Leo W. Faller to his mother, Aug. 23, 1861, in Milton E. Flower, ed., Dear Folks at Home: The Civil War Letters of Leo W. and John Faller ... (Carlisle, Penn., 1963), 26; Connolly to his wife, Sept. 18, 1864, in Paul M. Angle, ed., Three Years in the Army of the Cumberland. The Letters and Diary of Major A. Connolly (Bloomington, Ind., 1959), 262; Watson to his father, Sept. 30, 1864, in Paul Fatout, ed., Letters of a Civil War Surgeon (West Lafayette, Ind., 1961), 86; Jackson to his brother, John Jackson, Jr., Aug. 16, 1864, in Jackson, Letters, 196.

2 Chesnut, Diary, 270; entry for Jan. 1, 1864; Yarnall to John Coleridge, Feb. 11, 1864, in Ernest H. Coleridge, ed., Life and Correspondence of John Duke Lord Coleridge, 2 vols. (London, 1904), II, 31; Hay to John G. Nicolay, Sept. 11, 1863, in William R. Thayer, ed., The Life and Letters of John Hay, 2 vols. (London, 1960), I, 200.

the best man in the world. For John Hay, Lincoln was always a great man. In November, 1863 Hay happily recorded Republican John W. Forney's tribute to "that great wonderful mysterious inexplicable man who holds in his single hands the reins of the republic..." By 1864 such sentiments were becoming more general. A union mass meeting in New Orleans, called under the auspices of occupying Federal forces, hailed Lincoln as "the Greatest and Wisest Man of the age". It was an indication not only of army attitudes but also that those in occupied areas who were anxious to stress their Unionism thought it good policy to endorse Lincoln as a hero. In 1861 a young Northerner, Joseph Hodges Choate, had predicted of Lincoln that, "if he realises half the hopes we entertain for him we shall forget how bad looking he is."[1] As the war drew near its final stages these hopes were indeed realised, and two letters sent to Lincoln reflected his developing status as a popular hero. In early 1865 Mary A. Dodge of Massachusetts wrote, "You can't tell anything about it in Washington where they make a noise on the slightest provocation. But if you had been in this little speck of a village this morning and heard the soft, sweet music of unseen bells rippling through the morning silence from every quarter of the far-off horizon, you would have known what your name is to this nation." She echoed the sentiment expressed nine months earlier by a New Jersey woman: "no other President has come so near our hearts." Hero-worship had reached sufficient proportions to cause some churchmen to denounce it as the probable cause of the President's assassination. "I have often heard it remarked that Lincoln was the idol of the people. I fear this declaration was founded in truth. The people of this country are inclined to hero-worship ...

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1 Choate to his mother, Feb. 25, 1861, in Edward Sandford Martin, The Life of Joseph Hodges Choate, 2 vols. (London, 1920), I, 218.

God will punish idolatry."[1]

Far from checking hero-worship, the assassination played a catalytic role in its development. It has already been indicated that myths develop in times of national stress, and that the Civil War was the background to Lincoln's emergence as a hero of Union society under challenge from the South's rebellion. His assassination confirmed this trend because in the weeks following Lincoln's death the intense grief experienced by many Northerners, in itself a reflection of Lincoln's symbolic importance, created greater stresses than at any time during the war and so, accentuated by the novelty of political assassination, created an atmosphere in which myths flourished. With all criticism of the late President temporarily suspended, there was nothing to temper eulogistic extravagance or radical propaganda. In addition, the timing of the deed was such that it plunged the North from unrestrained joy over the Union victory into sudden and wild grief, creating an atmosphere of emotional instability likely to favour any person or group able to present a coherent interpretation of these events which would point to the appropriate action for the North to take. This was precisely what the Radicals and their allies offered. When their programme, especially as presented by anti-slavery ministers, also incorporated exaggerated praise of the late President, it could hardly fail to

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1 Letter of Louise Wigfall (daughter of Senator Louis Wigfall), dated April, May and June, 1861, in D. Giraud Wright (formerly Louise Wigfall), A Southern Girl in '61 (London, 1905), 59; Grace Bedell to Lincoln, Oct. 15, 1860, Lincoln, Works, IV, 130n; McAllister to his wife, April 2, 1862, in McAllister, Civil War Letters, 129; Fay to his wife, May 25, 1862, in Bell Irvin Wiley, ed., "This Infernal War" The Confederate Letters of Sgt. Edwin H. Fay (Austin, Texas, 1958), 59-60; Tyler Dennett, ed., Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay (New York, 1939) 120-21 quoted in Louis M. Starr Reporting the Civil War; The Bohemian Brigade in Action, 1861-65 (New York, 1962 ed.), 186; Isaac Jackson to his brother, Ethan A. Jackson, Feb. 12, 1864, in Jackson, Letters, 164; Sarah B. Howell to Lincoln, June 6, 1864, and Mary A. Dodge to Lincoln, March 4, 1865, quoted in Randall, Lincoln the President, IV, 366.

win a favourable response in the North, and in doing so to contribute significantly to the emergence of the Lincoln myths.

It was the assassination, too, that made Lincoln a martyr, and even more so than the heroic Lincoln, this image fulfilled an American need. For if before the war the United States had heroes, and had its Benedict Arnold, what it lacked was a satisfactory martyr, and if during the war those Americans who fought against the South had a great cause in the Union and, later, emancipation, what that cause lacked was a great martyr. There were lesser martyrs in the history of the nation and of the Civil War, but no great hero could represent the fundamental theme of martyrdom, since Puritan times "a revered American tradition."[1] In 1865, Lincoln's death must have seemed to Northerners the culmination of all that they had suffered during the war, either at the front or behind the lines, where civilians scanned the newspapers' long lists of dead and wounded as they searched anxiously for the names of fathers, sons and brothers. So in death, Lincoln, the hero of the Union war effort, became its martyr, the symbol of all who had died in their country's service. It was a potent image, and one which his eulogists were quick to exploit.

Developments in wartime thought in the North also predisposed Unionists to accept the particular concepts of Lincoln as a hero and martyr of liberty favoured by the Radicals. For by 1865 moderate anti-slavery sentiments had come to prevail in the North. Federal Army successes after 1862 had increasingly predisposed Northerners to accept the interpretation of the war presented by the party associated with the war effort and endorsed by Lincoln, popularising the conviction that the war was due to slavery. This, together with the successful employment of blacks as Federal soldiers, ensured a more

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1 Wolf, On Freedom's Altar, 7.

favourable public attitude towards the Government's emancipation policy, and by 1865 many Northerners were ready to hail Lincoln as the hero of both the nation and emancipation, accepting Radical implications that the two roles were interdependent. At the same time, the martyr concept of Lincoln, so crucial to Radical arguments, was fundamental to the general Republican analysis of the war in 1865. For Lincoln's martyrdom was the symbol of Southern pro-slavery aggression. By his promise of mercy Lincoln had confirmed his explicit acceptance, on behalf of the North, of part of the guilt for the war. In the martyr tradition, the South rejected this offer and killed Lincoln, relieving the North of any guilt. In the Radical analysis this justified revenge, but in a more general sense it was part of the North's justification of its own war effort. So, like the image of the Great Emancipator, the concept of a martyred Lincoln found general support in the North because it represented an important theme in the postwar Northern analysis of the war years.

For this reason widespread acceptance of these Lincoln traditions did not necessarily imply support for Radical policies. Nevertheless, the assassination did make staunch Unionists receptive to Radical arguments as a letter written by a Northern girl to her brother reveals:

> ... I presume you have long since heard of the assassination of our beloved President Dear brother I dont think I could have felt more, if it had been our own father than I did when I first heard the news. Our land mourns and well it may every loyal heart feels it keenly. And I think the South will feel it before this war closes I think the greater part of the South is sorry for it to day.

If Southerners were not sorry, they would soon be so. Later in the same letter she commented: "Had the Southern confederacy and northern traitors a little of Mr. Lincoln's disposition he might have killed them with his kindness But dont talk to me about pardoning traitors any more."[1]

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1 Jennie to her brother, George W. Brent, April 22, 1865, Byron E. Benton Papers, Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.

The letter of an inhabitant of Illinois indicates how completely some Northerners absorbed Radical propaganda and the traditions of the Great Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty. John Griffiths was an immigrant of English working class origin, and this may have predisposed him to view America as a land of liberty for the oppressed of Europe and to accept the view especially favoured by Radical Republicans that the war had been a struggle between a slaveholding aristocracy and the forces of freedom. If so, it is to be remembered that there were in America in the 1860's hundreds of thousands with a similar background, that the idea of America as a refuge from oppression was a fundamental theme in American society from the seventeenth century onwards and that Griffith's assumptions were probably shared by most Republicans. In this letter Griffiths told relatives in England that:[1]

> we the American people were contending for our Constitutional liberty against a Slaveholding Aristocracy which (h)as turned out to be one of the bloodiest wars that history (h)as recorded ... there has been great sacrifices made to preserve the life of the nation but I thank God it is safe and the victory is won and Liberty is triumphant and slavery is dead. but in dying it made some awful strugles. and has killed some of the noblest Champions of liberty that ever lived. and amongst them our Beloved President Abraham Lincoln a man that was Loved more than any other man in the nation. but though his body has fallen his Spirit lives in the hearts of the people ... So now we have a free country to offer the oppressed of all nations.

The role of Lincoln myths in representing fundamental themes and fulfilling fundamental needs in American society explains not only their acceptance in 1865 but also their ability to survive the collapse of the Radical Reconstruction programme with which they were at first so closely associated. For the myths could endure at two crucially related levels. Firstly, they would have meaning for Americans for as long as the basic values of society which they enshrined continued to have meaning. Secondly

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1 John Griffiths to relatives in Shropshire, April 23, 1865, ms letter in London School of Economics Library.

while they continued to have such meaning, they would be exploited by successive generations of American politicians, which in turn would give them fresh value for society. In the case of myths relating to the destruction of slavery, this meant that Americans would hail Lincoln as the Great Emancipator for as long as the freeing of the slaves during the Civil War was seen as representing the fundamental theme of liberty in America. This was to ensure the Emancipator tradition a long life amongst white Americans. The concept of the Martyr-Emancipator, though it did not entirely disappear, found less support once the Radical interpretation of Lincoln's death as the result of slavery lost favour. The enduring theme of martyrdom survived rather in the tradition viewing Lincoln as the nation's martyr.

At the same time, the survival of myths centering on Lincoln's role in emancipation suggests that as separate traditions and as part of the Lincoln Myth they had become integral to the thought patterns of the generation of Northern Unionists which had lived through the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction. It became natural for such Northerners, in recalling these years, to see Lincoln, in retrospect, in terms of the Lincoln Myth. Thus a Chicago Sanitary Commission worker who visited the White House during the war later recalled how on this occasion, "As we sat in silence, partaking of the general gloom, Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipator, the honest patriot, the Christlike man, entered." The recollection of prominent Chicago businessman Abraham Kohn that his first meeting with Lincoln in 1860 inspired him with admiration and a conviction that Lincoln was destined to be the Moses of the slaves and the saviour of his nation was in all probability influenced by the growth of mythical images of Lincoln after his assassination. Lucius E. Chittenden, a government official active in Republican Party politics during the Civil War, must have been well aware that there had been no general concept of emancipation as an heroic act in 1862. Yet in his reminiscences, too, the myths loomed large. Lincoln was, in

retrospect, the exalted Emancipator, representing the will of the people as he struck down slavery with a single blow: "On the 22nd day of September, 1862," wrote Chittenden, "when the shattered legions of rebellion were fleeing from their bloody defeat at Antietam, he issued the proclamation. It was no **brutum fulmen**. The loyal people gave him audience unto this word, emancipation: and they lifted up their voices and said, 'Away with such a monster from the earth! It is not fit that he should live.' And as they cried out, slavery fell by the hand of Abraham Lincoln!" Nothing better illustrates the hold which all these Lincoln traditions, the Lincoln Myth in general, and especially the concept of the Great Emancipator secured on the popular mind in the late 1860's than the survival of these traditions through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

A glance at some evidence from the post Civil War era will confirm the enduring character of mythical images of Lincoln including that of the Emancipator. Political use of Lincoln during the later 1860's suggests the popularity of Lincoln myths with the Northern masses, and, while the obsession with his memory which characterised the elections of 1866 and 1868 could not last, by the 1870's the heroic Lincoln was firmly established as part of national mythology. A few examples illustrating the survival of Lincoln myths into the 1880's and 1890's and beyond, while extending beyond the main chronological focus of this study, will illuminate the latter point.

The heavy exploitation of the heroic Lincoln during the election campaigns of 1866 and 1868 discussed earlier[1] is testimony to the potency of Lincoln myths during the remainder of the decade which witnessed the Civil War. Clearly politicians expected to win popular favour when they sought to endorse themselves and their policies by paying tribute to "the good President", "the purest of men", or, as John A. Logan of Illinois described Lincoln, "one of the

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1 Dannett, ed., Noble Women, 220-21, 313; Mrs. D.K. Adler (Abraham Kohn's daughter), to Isaac Markens, in Isaac Markens, Abraham Lincoln and the Jews (New York, 1909), 25; Lucius E. Chittenden, Personal Reminiscences, 1840-1890 (New York, 1893), 404.

2 See above, Chapters Four and Five.

greatest men, in my judgement, that ever lived or died for his country." Doubtless they were not disappointed, for the late 1860's were years when audiences were likely to burst into loud cheers at the mention of Lincoln's name.[1] Nor was it only Republicans who were influenced by appeals to Lincoln's memory. In this respect, the letter sent to the editor of the New York Times in 1866 by a correspondent signing himself "Free Soil" is revealing. Although he had not voted for Lincoln in 1860, said the writer, he had done so in 1864, "and if I had a thousand votes I would have given them for him." "Free Soil" described himself as representing a very large class of floating voters, and this makes his devotion to Lincoln's memory particularly significant. For it seems to suggest that, as those who exploited the heroic Lincoln in attacks upon Johnson hoped, such voters might have abandoned the President if convinced that the hero's work would be best completed by Johnson's opponents.[2]

Letters to Northern newspapers confirm that the myths which had been developed by anti-slavery men in 1865 had impressed themselves upon the minds of some Northerners. A correspondent of the New York Times, describing incidents in the life of the hero-President, presented him as "our second Washington" and the merciful leader who became the martyr of his nation, killed by secession and rebellion. The memory of the heroic Lincoln dominated letters published by Chicago's Radical Tribune just prior to Johnson's arrival at that city in September 1866, and it is clear that some Midwesterners were very receptive to that paper's policy of using the martyred President to attack his successor. From Wisconsin "An Old Wide-Awake" wrote on the measures

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1 Senator John Conness at New York, Sept. 30, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 1, 1868; General Logan at Morris, Ill., Sept. 1, 1868 and Hon. Henry O'Connor at Chicago, Sept. 18, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 2, 19, 1868.

2 New York Times, Sept. 14, 1866.

necessary to prevent traitors from profiting from the remainder of the "Booth-assassination Presidency". One inhabitant of Chicago urged that while Johnson was in the city all loyal men should wear mourning badges for Abraham Lincoln. Another, who signed himself "A Genuine War Democrat" wrote: "As the present dark political cloud, hanging over our country, caused by the traitorous course of our accidental Chief Magistrate is owing to the ... damning crime which placed him in the Presidential chair, I would suggest, as a fitting reception for his Accidency, that the loyal citizens of Chicago place at their windows the portrait of the assassinated patriot, draped in mourning."[1]

Probably the contrast between Lincoln and his successor, especially after Johnson's disastrous attempt to appeal to the people during his "swing around the circle", increased the late hero's stature. Northern schoolteacher Frances Willard's entry in her diary on the first national Thanksgiving Day appointed by the President in 1866 seems to confirm this, and at the same time indicates the survival at a popular level of the image of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation: "Alas", she wrote, "that 'my policy' Johnson, instead of our beloved Lincoln, the Emancipator, should have written the proclamation setting this day aside to its delightful uses."[2]

As a new decade opened, a speech delivered by Republican Isaac N. Arnold at his home city of Chicago on January 3, 1870 confirmed that mythical images of Lincoln as hero and martyr of his nation and emancipation still found strong support. The occasion was a gathering of the city's black inhabitants to commemorate the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, and Arnold's oration confirmed that in the eyes of white Americans who took pride in the

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1 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 8, 1866.

2 Frances E. Cook, ed., My Happy Half-Century: The Autobiography of an American Woman, by Frances E. Willard (London, 1894 ed.), 194. Hereafter cited as Willard, Autobiography.

North's drive against slavery during the Civil War, Lincoln remained a hero whose memory should be cherished by black and white men alike. It was right and proper, Arnold told his largely black audience, that they should thank God for their deliverance from slavery, and express their gratitude to him "for sending the great liberator, Abraham Lincoln."

Though dominated, appropriately to the occasion, by the concept of Lincoln as the Emancipator, this speech gave expression to other mythical concepts of the late President. Playing upon the themes of the poor boy who had made good and the United States as the land of opportunity, both still crucial to Northern society's understanding of the meaning of America, Arnold described how, while slavery was growing stronger, "there was born in Kentucky a rude boy who was to overthrow the gigantic system of oppression." Fittingly, "God had selected not the son of President or Senator, but the offspring of the humble pioneer, to guide his country through the most terrible war of modern times, and to emancipate a race." Thus Arnold developed also the image of Lincoln as a divinely-inspired hero of his nation and freedom, one who "little dreamed that he was to be the instrument in the hands of God which should, by emancipating a race, save his country." Two other images of Lincoln inherited from the myth-making days of 1865 also appeared in Arnold's speech. Recalling the assassination, Arnold remembered that "with a magnanimity and elevation almost superhuman" Lincoln had declared a policy of mercy towards the defeated South just before he had been assassinated. Nevertheless, he had been murdered, and although the belief that Confederate leaders were implicated in Lincoln's death had been discredited, Arnold had no doubt that "the assassination was the outgrowth of the vindictive and barbarous feelings growing out of his overthrow of slavery. "This great and good man", Arnold told the blacks present, "died a martyr to your freedom!"[1]

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1 Chicago Tribune, Jan. 3, 1870.

Nor was it only as the saviour of his nation, merciful hero and Great Emancipator of the slaves that the mythical Lincoln survived in the decades following the Civil War. Another image equally enduring was that of Lincoln as a hero of the broad values of democracy. As early as 1860 he was seen as a symbol of democratic government. Writing to his wife in June 1860, Republican Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa commented on his party's selection of Lincoln as its presidential candidate: "The nomination of Lincoln strikes the mass of people with great favor. He is universally regarded as a scrupulously honest man, a genuine man of the people."[1] The day after Lincoln's election Frances Willard wrote, "I was not allowed to vote for him, but I am as glad on account of this Republican triumph as any man who exercised the elective franchise can be." A picture representing the scene in her classroom that morning, as a small girl surrounded by a dozen others danced up and down with excitement at the news of Lincoln's election would, Miss Willard felt, "not inaptly indicate the genius of a Republican government ..."[2]

Lincoln's wartime role as the champion of Republican government under challenge from the South's rebellion confirmed his status as a symbol of democracy. The New York Times, commenting in 1866 that every schoolboy, and every one who read a newspaper, had become acquainted with the heroes of the Civil War, mentioned Lincoln amongst others and probably had him above all in mind when it added, "it is becoming apparent to learners at home and abroad that the people's dynasty is not less dignified than those of crowned kings."[3] It was indeed because the heroic Lincoln symbolized the values of democratic, republican government in the United States that Americans were so gratified by

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1 Grimes to Mrs. Grimes, June 4, 1860, in William Salter, The Life of James W. Grimes (New York, 1876), 128.
2 Willard, Autobiography, 150-51.
3 New York Times, Jan. 1, 1866.

European recognition of his heroic status. It was surely pleasant for American citizens to hear the man they presented to the world as the greatest representative of their form of government eulogized by the Republic's former critics in England and elsewhere. Henry Wilson gave expression to the heroic Lincoln's role as a symbol of democracy when he addressed the New England Genealogical Society in May 1865. The late President, said Wilson, "would pass into history as the foremost man of his age. He was a genuine product of our democratic institutions, and had a living faith in their permanency."[1] A few examples will indicate that this was an enduring concept of Lincoln. Speaking in Detroit in 1888 General Ben Harrison, newly-elected Republican Senator from Indiana, revealed the part played by Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in the development of his role as a symbol of democracy when, speaking of the country and form of government he loved and the flag which was its symbol, he commented, "It is what Mr. Lincoln so tersely, yet so felicitously, described as the government of the people, by the people and for the people ..."[2] The image of Lincoln as a hero and symbol of democracy was clearly expressed in a speech made by prominent New York lawyer Joseph Hodges Choate in the same year. Quoting James Russell Lowell on Lincoln, Choate declared: "I am thankful to have been the contemporary of one of the greatest of men, of whom I think it is safe to say that no other country and no other form of government could have fashioned him, and whom posterity will recognize as the wisest and most bravely human of modern times. It is a benediction to have lived in the same age and country with Abraham Lincoln. Had democracy borne only this consummate flower and then perished like the century-plant it would have discharged one of its noblest functions."[3]

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1 Address of May 3, 1865 quoted in Rev. Elias Nason, The Life and Public Services of Henry Wilson (Boston, 1876), 340.

2 Speech of Feb. 22, 1888 quoted in Gen. Lew Wallace, Life of Gen. Ben Harrison (Philadelphia, 1888), 309.

3 Speech of May 3, 1888 quoted in Martin, Life of Joseph Hodges Choate, I, 401.

Mythical images of Lincoln were perpetuated in a variety of ways during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries, and a brief survey of these will indicate the continuing vitality of Lincoln myths in American life.

Biographies, while purporting to record history, often made an important contribution to the growth of Lincoln mythology. In early biographies such as J. G. Holland's Life of Lincoln, published in 1865, the concepts of the Great Emancipator, Martyr and Saviour of the Nation were prominent, and mythical images of Lincoln permeated a biography published over thirty years later in which W. M. Thayer presented Lincoln as the pioneer boy who had become President, the saviour of his nation and hero of democracy, and the anti-slavery hero who had fulfilled a pledge made as a young man to hit slavery hard if he ever had a chance to do so, thus becoming the Great Emancipator of the slaves.[1] Mythical concepts of Lincoln also found expression in poetry, as in John G. Whittier's 1879 poem, written to commemorate the unveiling in Boston of a copy of the Freedmen's Memorial Statue depicting Lincoln as the Emancipator, which eulogized the martyred hero "whose hand unchained a race." Similarly in 1895 Lyman Whitney Allen's poem "The Emancipator", which was awarded the New York Herald Prize for the best poem in American history, presented Lincoln as the anti-slavery hero who having freed the slaves, was "Caught to the bosom of that martyr throng/who died for Liberty."[2] Lincoln's life and in particular the freeing of the slaves has also had dramatic appeal for film-makers, and motion pictures depicting Lincoln as the Great Emancipator include None Can Do More (1912), Abraham Lincoln The Statesman (1933), and Abraham Lincoln (1951).[3]

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1 Josiah G. Holland, The Life of Abraham Lincoln (Springfield, 1866), W. M. Thayer, Abraham Lincoln: The Pioneer Boy and How he became President. (London, 1899 ed.).

2 John Greenleaf Whittier, "The Emancipation Group", in William W. Betts, Jr., Lincoln and the Poets (Pittsburgh, 1965), 23; Allen's poem quoted from Basler, The Lincoln Legend, 217-19. Basler also discussed in detail the Lincoln Myth in other literary forms.

3 Paul C. Spehr, Comp., The Civil War in Motion Pictures: A Bibliography of Films Produced in the United States since 1897 (Washington, D.C., 1961), 1, 3, 49.

Political exploitation of the heroic Lincoln also testified to the continuing hold which Lincoln myths exerted over the American mind, and again a few examples must suffice to indicate this. Politicians continued to endorse themselves and the policies they advocated by association with the heroic Lincoln. Indeed, such was the Republican Party's determination to establish its claim to the hero that the London Times, which had some years earlier noted that celebration of Lincoln's birthday had become a Republican tradition, published in February 1944 a report by its Washington correspondent which opened by referring to the anniversary of the birth of "Abraham Lincoln, who, in Stanton's words 'belongs to the ages,' but who also belongs to the Republican Party."[1] Thus from 1865 onwards, Republicans presented their organization to the country as, in the words of Adlai Stevenson, "the party which claims descent from Abraham Lincoln."[2] Stevenson, a committed Democrat, was not given to playing upon the memory of the Republican President, but he nevertheless chose to mention, in the introduction to a published collection of speeches he had delivered when campaigning as Democratic candidate for the governorship of Illinois in 1952, that his maternal great-grandfather had taken a leading role in organizing the Republican Party in Illinois "and worked tirelessly for the advancement of his long-time friend, Abraham Lincoln."[3]

With Lincoln's role as a hero of Negro emancipation firmly established in the popular mind it was natural enough that those seeking to ameliorate or improve the condition of black Americans should invoke his memory. Thus in 1880 Governor St. John of Kansas, seeking to win the sympathy of his state's white inhabitants, and white Northerners generally, for the plight of Southern

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1 London (England) Times, Feb. 14, 1944.
2 Address at New York City, Aug. 28, 1952, in Adlai E. Stevenson, Speeches (London, 1953), 46.
3 Ibid., 13.

Negroes who were moving in large numbers into Kansas, tried to exploit the image of Lincoln the Emancipator. While St. John, who had been elected upon an anti-liquor platform, sought to reconcile the citizens of Kansas to this so-called exodus of blacks from the South by depicting the immigrants as industrious fugitives from Southern oppression and by emphasizing their support for prohibition, he also hoped to take the pressure off his own state, without repulsing the black migrants, when he declared that, "He felt if Abraham Lincoln were living, that greatest and truest of all Americans would prefer some of these people to acquire homes in his own state of Illinois."[1] Eight years later a more traditional Republican use of the heroic Lincoln on behalf of black Americans was illustrated by General Ben Harrison when, in an appeal for black political rights to be respected, he recalled black loyalty during the Civil War and urged, "Shall we not insist that what is true of those who fought to destroy the country shall be true of every man who fought for it, or loved it, like the black man of the South did, that to belong to Abraham Lincoln's party shall be respectable and reputable everywhere in America."[2] When in 1908 violent anti-Negro riots broke out in Lincoln's home town of Springfield, Illinois, friends of the black race once again invoked the memory of the Great Emancipator. In an article which contributed to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, Journalist E. Walling told readers that "the spirit of the abolitionists, of Lincoln and of Lovejoy, must be revived and we must come to treat the Negro on a plane of absolute political and social equality...." A year later Walling, together with other white reformers, chose the hundreth anniversary

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1 The Inter Ocean, Dec. 11, 1880, quoted in Caroline Hare, Comp., Life and Letters of Elizabeth L. Comstock (London and Philadelphia, 1895), 403-405.
2 Speech at Detroit, Feb.22, 1888, in Wallace, Life of Gen. Ben Harrison, 308.

of Lincoln's birth as a suitable occasion on which to issue a call for resistance to attacks on Negroes. Doubtless such appeals to the memory of the Emancipator were more effective than one of the slogans shouted out by white rioters in Springfield in 1908, which declared that "Lincoln freed you, we'll show you where you belong ...", but this too showed how for white Americans, whether friendly or hostile to Negroes, Lincoln remained the symbol of emancipation and hero of the black race and of equal rights for all.[1]

The heroic Lincoln and the image of him as the Great Emancipator was also exploited by those engaged in other broadly political campaigns, and notably the Temperance movement. As early as the 1870's women temperance reformers in Illinois campaigning against liquor, sought to associate the heroic Lincoln with their cause and held prayer meetings on top of his monument in Springfield.[2] Lincoln, though a non-drinker, was by no means a temperance fanatic, but as a historian of prohibition has pointed out, it was the Lincoln myth, rather than the reality of his moderate sentiments on liquor, which interested the anti-liquor movement, as when, linking Lincoln with the Southern hero Robert E. Lee in an attempt to ensure a broad national appeal, the Total Abstinence Unions of the Anti-Saloon League was given the name of the Lincoln-Lee League. Anti-prohibition groups also sought to exploit the heroic Lincoln, recalling, for example, that in his youth Lincoln had worked in a grocery store which had sold alcoholic drinks.[3] A pamphlet published by prohibitionists illustrated how their opponents also exploited the image of the Great Emancipator. "One of the most dastardly pieces of campaign villainy ever perpetrated", declared the pamphlet, "was the use by the liquor men during the Atlanta Prohibition Contest of a flaming circular representing Abraham Lincoln in the act of

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1 "The Race War in the North," The Independent, vol. 65 (Sept. 3, 1908), 529-34, quoted in William Loren Katz, Eyewitness : The Negro in American History (New York, 1967), 349, 365-67.

2 Willard, Autobiography, 271.

3 Andrew Sinclair, Prohibition (London, 1962), 133-34.

striking the shackles from the slaves, while under this suggestive picture were declarations against Prohibition, purporting to have been uttered by Lincoln." According to the pamphlet, "The object of the liquor men who devised the circular was, of course, to influence the colored vote, ..." To counter such propaganda, the author of the pamphlet reproduced an address delivered by Lincoln in 1842 before a Springfield Temperance Society, and commented, "one of America's grandest representatives and most illustrious men on an evil which he evidently did not consider second, even, to that of human slavery."[1]

Confirming the importance of myth in times of national crisis, Americans of all political persuasions found the heroic Lincoln invaluable during World Wars One and Two. Thus in 1918 labour leader Samuel Gompers used Lincoln as a hero of democracy and freedom to increase and intensify patriotism amongst American workers when he urged members of the American Alliance for Labour and Democracy, of which he was President, and the Trade Union movement generally, to make Lincoln's birthday the occasion for a demonstration of loyalty to America and of solidarity with the war effort against Germany. According to one report, the message declared that, "The anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, will be made the occasion of nation-wide demonstrations of patriotic unity and earnestness." Thus the memory of Lincoln was invoked in Gompers' call to "rally the forces of freedom ... that they may do their full part for the triumphant world struggle of to-day, so that justice, freedom and democracy shall survive and become world-wide ..." In his message to labour, Gompers also played upon the image of Lincoln as a hero representing the values of democratic society when he declared, "We shall derive new strength from the rich heritage left by that great servant of the people and apostle of democracy."[2] Twenty-five years

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1 An Address Delivered by Abraham Lincoln Before the Springfield Washington Temperance Society ... Pamphlet (n.p., n.d.) in Lincolniana Collection, William and Mary College Library, Williamsburg, Virginia.

2 London (England) Times, Feb. 8, 11, 1918.

later, as Americans fought a second war against Germany and her allies, President Roosevelt chose to make a call for support for the war effort on the anniversary of the birthday of "a great, plain American." Invoking the image of Lincoln as a world hero of freedom and democracy, Roosevelt declared: "The living memory of Abraham Lincoln is now honoured and cherished by all of our people wherever they may be, and by men and women and children throughout the British Commonwealth, and the Soviet Union, and the Republic of China and in every land on earth where people love freedom and will give their lives for freedom."[1] American representatives in Europe also exploited the heroic Lincoln as they sought to strengthen the Anglo-American alliance in what they saw as a struggle to preserve the freedom of the Western World.[2]

Finally, just two examples of more unusual survivals of the Emancipator tradition will perhaps suffice to emphasize the enduring character of Lincoln myths. One is mentioned by E. DeWitt Jones in Lincoln and the Preachers when he describes churches with stained glass windows depicting Lincoln as the Great Emancipator.[3] The other is mentioned by William E. Curtis who in his work on The True Abraham Lincoln describes how, "Some one has arranged the Emancipation Proclamation so that its words form an accurate profile of Abraham Lincoln's face. The picture is perfect and not a letter of the document is wanting."[4]

Though Lincoln myths found widespread support in 1865 and later became part of national mythology in America, not all Americans accepted the concepts of Lincoln which these traditions enshrined, even at the time of his assassination. Interestingly, their rejection of the Lincoln-Negro traditions in particular brought together two groups of Americans who had little else in common, namely abolitionist leaders in the North and die-hard Confederates in the South.

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1 London (England) Times, Feb. 13, 1943.
2 See below, Chapter Nine.
3 E. DeWitt Jones, Lincoln and the Preachers (New York, 1948), 154-61.
4 William E. Curtis, The True Abraham Lincoln (Philadelphia, 1903), 337.

Many abolitionists, as indicated earlier, did support Lincoln when he introduced emancipation. One contributor to the Liberator even predicted for him future fame as the Emancipator, provided that he did issue the final proclamation, promising:

> We look to thee: -our Leader be!
> Speak but one master-word - "Be Free!"
> .....
> Whose lip shall utter it, his name
> All earth shall shout it with acclaim.

The promise was not fulfilled amongst abolitionist leaders either in 1863 or 1865. Although they had pressured Lincoln to adopt emancipation, few were entirely satisfied with his proclamations. William Lloyd Garrison saw the edicts as a notable advance against slavery, but when in 1864 he clashed with Wendell Phillips over the latter's harsh criticism of the President, he found that many abolitionists preferred Phillips' stand. A pamphlet advocating John C. Fremont for President in 1864 expressed views which were probably common enough in abolitionist circles. Though not hostile to Lincoln, who was presented as the best candidate after Fremont, the pamphlet labelled him lukewarm upon the question of abolition. The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was dismissed as "magnificently sonorous" but impotent.[1]

Lincoln's assassination shocked abolitionist leaders, but does not appear to have altered their assessments of him. This does not mean that no prominent abolitionist ever gave support to Lincoln myths. Nothing suggests that Wendell Phillips saw the late President as a hero of emancipation, but he was willing after Lincoln's death to use images of the Great Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty to secure the Radical approach to reconstruction which he had earlier feared that Lincoln would obstruct. In

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1 Caroline A. Manson, "The Word for the Hour", Liberator, Sept. 26. 1862; Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, 283-85, 287; O.R.L. Crozier, The Fortress of the Rebellion (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1864), 7, 13, 29.

an address delivered by Phillips in Boston on April 23, 1865 Lincoln was indeed the divinely-inspired Emancipator. At last allowing a little peace to the man he had so harassed, Phillips told how Lincoln "sleeps in the blessings of the poor, whose fetters God had commissioned him to break." The Emancipation Proclamations were now conceded to have been effective and their author emerged as the martyr of his nation and liberty. Lincoln, said Phillips,"was permitted himself to deal the last staggering blow which sent rebellion reeling to its grave; ... and finally, to seal the sure triumph of the cause he loved with his own blood." The war had exposed the sin of slavery, and it was Lincoln "in whose precious blood this momentous lesson is writ." Like other allies of the Radicals, Phillips was using the images to predispose his audience towards Radical policies, and, closer perhaps to the politicians than to the churchmen, he had no scruples about contributing to the development of myths which he personally rejected. For as he reconciled new images of the President with earlier criticisms, it was clear his own views on Lincoln's role in emancipation were unchanged. It was because the late President could no longer hinder the fulfillment of policies Phillips favoured that the former critic could say, "No matter now that, unable to lead and form the nation, he was contented to be only its representative and mouthpiece; no matter that, with prejudices hanging about him, he groped his way very slowly and sometimes reluctantly forward ..." It was, said Phillips, time to remember Lincoln's virtues. What did matter, for Phillips, was Lincoln's attitude towards the South. Once the hero of democracy had freed the slaves and won the war, his work was done, for he had, said Phillips, "too little sectional bitterness, often forgetting justice in mercy ..." His death, confirming emancipation by his martyrdom, was perfectly timed: "God has graciously withheld him from any fatal misstep in the great advance, and withdrawn him at the moment when his star touched

its zenith, and the nation needed a sterner hand for the work God gives it to do."[1]

Traditional abolitionist criticism of Lincoln lay beneath Phillips' use of the Martyr-Emancipator image. Nor did the Commonwealth when it hailed him as a divinely-inspired hero of liberty murdered by slavery forget that Lincoln had become the Emancipator "almost without his consent." In its many articles advocating Radical Reconstruction the Commonwealth seldom utilized Lincoln myths. Indeed, a June 10, 1865 editorial urging Negro suffrage amongst other pacification measures for the South contained the comment, "Everybody knows, now, that Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation should have preceded Fremont's." A similar editorial on June 17 implied faint praise for the emancipation proclamations, but there was no hint of the concept of the Great Emancipator. When the image of the merciful martyr was used by the paper, in October 1865, it was to condemn Johnson, who was showing a willingness to pardon former rebels which the Radicals had hoped would perish with Lincoln. Claiming that Johnson's pardons had produced pro-slavery Southern constitutional conventions the Commonwealth commented: "The sublime words of mercy that add glory to the halo of our martyr-President cannot be our guiding star in this hour of stern necessity. We must punish and not pardon." There were, however, few references in this paper's editorials to Lincoln as the Great Emancipator or Martyr to Liberty.[2]

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1 Phillips, Speeches at American Anti-Slavery Society meeting, May 10, 11, 1864, quoted from Liberator, May 27, 1864 in Merrill, Against Wind and Tide; Phillips, "Tribute to Abraham Lincoln", Address after the assassination of President Lincoln, Boston, April 23, 1865, in Wendell Phillips, Speeches, Lectures, and Letters ... 2nd ser. (Boston, 1891), 446-53.

2 Commonwealth, May 20("The Black Southerner"), June 10 ("Pacification"), June 17 ("No Reorganization except on Loyalty!"), Oct. 14 ("The Situation"), 1865.

The writings and speeches of individual abolitionists often revealed their inability to see Lincoln as the Great Emancipator. In eulogistic poetry on the assassination produced by abolitionists John C. Whittier and Frank Sanborn, the idea that Lincoln had been inspired by God to free the slaves was emphasized to play down rather than to sanctify the President's role in emancipation. According to Whittier:

> Let man be free! The mighty word
> He spoke was not his own;
> An impulse from the Highest stirred
> Those chiseled lips alone.

In Sanborn's "Abraham Lincoln" the President appears to be presented as a hero of freedom, but beneath the eulogistic phrases can clearly be seen the old abolitionist allegation that Lincoln had to be dragged into emancipation. Picturing Lincoln as placed by God upon "threatened Freedom's flaming car", Sanborn wrote:

> His purpose high thy course impelled
> O'er war's red height and smouldering plain;
> When awe or pity thee withheld,
> He gave thy chafing steeds the rain, -
> Till at thy feet lies Slavery slain.

Nor did Mrs. Child, writing for the fomer slaves a "Freedman's Book" use this splendid opportunity to promote these Lincoln traditions. Instead, she made only a passing reference to Lincoln's services for freedom, and seemed always to prefer to give the credit for emancipation to the abolitionists or to God. Even Garrison did not forget former criticism when he assessed the dead President's work for emancipation.[1]

The reluctance of abolitionist leaders to concede that Lincoln had played a significant role in emancipation is interesting. Historian David Donald has presented one explanation:

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1 Basler, The Lincoln Legend, 214; F.B. Sanborn, "Abraham Lincoln", in Commonwealth, April 22, 1865; Garrison, Life, IV, 161; Lydia Maria Child, The Freedmen's Book (Boston, 1865), 261. On page 276 of this work Mrs. Child wrote to the freedmen, "Wonderful changes have taken place in your favor during the last 30 years, and the changes are still going on. The Abolitionists did a great deal for you ..." There was no reference to Lincoln at this point.

> The freeing of the slaves ended the great crusade that had brought purpose and joy to the abolitionists. For them Abraham Lincoln was not the Great Emancipator; he was the killer of the dream.

As early as February 23, 1864, the Marquis of Chambrun had expressed a similar idea in a letter to his wife, "In truth, there are now no more slaves in America and the role of the apostles of abolitionism has been taken from them; their occupation is gone." That there was resentment over this amongst some abolitionists is suggested by a speech given by Wendell Phillips before the American Anti-Slavery Society on May 11, 1864. Observing that Lincoln had gained his international reputation by doing precisely what the Society had been urging for twenty-five years, Phillips commented, "I am asking you to remember how our work has been taken out of our hands." Doubtless there were abolitionists who found it galling that in popular tradition the man whom they had long attacked and whom they believed had been forced into abolition largely by their activities was securing all the credit for emancipation. Phillips had told members of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in early 1862 that emancipation was certain, adding, "The President thinks we drift that way. But who helps us drift? That is the work of the abolitionists." Those who agreed were unlikely later to deny their own role in the work of securing freedom by accepting the tradition of the Great Emancipator. Perhaps, too, some echoed the sentiment of Garrison's 1835 warning that great men would come in "at the death of the monster slavery ... Let us beware how we trust or eulogize them ..." Some abolitionists would never concede that emancipation as adopted by Lincoln could be considered a great moral act. Anti-slavery extremist Lysander Spooner stressed in a pamphlet published in 1870 that slavery had been abolished "not from any love of liberty in general - not as an act of justice to the black himself, but only as 'a war measure'." Even those who had accepted the view expressed by the Commonwealth in 1862 that it was unrealistic to expect philanthropy from the

Government, were unlikely to take kindly three years later to the development of traditions viewing Lincoln as the greatest American philanthropist.[1]

Thus it was not so much that Lincoln had taken away the abolitionists' work, thus killing their dream, that prevented them from hailing him as the Emancipator. Wendell Phillips certainly did not consider that his work was over, and like many other abolitionists he became absorbed with the postwar condition of the freedmen and with Negro suffrage in particular. Garrison did feel that his great task was done, but as he closed down the Liberator he showed no resentment. Rather it was that in becoming the Great Emancipator, Lincoln deprived the abolitionist movement of recognition for its share in the triumph of securing abolition. With over thirty years of anti-slavery activity, often involving personal risk to its members, to the credit of the movement, abolitionists had good reason to feel cheated of their just fame.[2]

In rejecting the tradition of the Great Emancipator, abolitionists reached,for different reasons, the same conclusion as the majority of those who, because of their loyalty to the South, had been inveterate enemies of the abolitionist movement.

Few Confederates condoned Lincoln's murder, but there is no evidence of widespread Southern sorrow at his death. Public mourning may for Southerners have been a pragmatic response to the assassination, as one report from Mobile indicated: "The news of the assassination of the great and good Lincoln came to this city like a clap of thunder. The feeling spread through the city in

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1 Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 36; Charles A. de Pineton, Marquis de Chambrum, Impressions of Lincoln and the Civil War, a foreigner's account; translated from the French by Aldebert de Chambrum (New York, 1952), 17-18; Liberator, May 20, 27, 1864, quoted in Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, 287; Phillips, Speech at 29th Annual Meeting Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Jan. 24, 1862, in Liberator, Jan. 31, 1862; Garrison to Lewis Tappan, Dec. 17, 1835, quoted in Gara, "Who was an Abolitionist?", op.cit., 49; Frederickson, Inner Civil War, 189; Commonwealth, Nov. 29, 1862.

2 Liberator, Dec. 29, 1865.

a moment that the soldiers and the negroes would instantly rise up and murder the citizens ... On every corner old citizens gathered. In one hour it was decided to hold a mass meeting of the prominent men of the city for the purpose of given (sic.) expression to their feeling of condemnation of the fiendish act by which our President fell." There is little to suggest that the assassination fundamentally changed the attitude towards Lincoln of the average Southerner. Confederate soldier John Dooley still saw Lincoln as a "monster", though he disapproved of the murder. In Columbia, Emma LeConte trembled with excitement at the news and rushed home thinking, "If it is only true! ... The man we hated has met his proper fate." Kate Stone, unrelenting, also felt that Lincoln deserved his death, and was glad he was not alive to enjoy the humiliation of the South. Even Mrs. Chesnut, who was not vindictive, felt that the murder should be a warning to tyrants.[1]

With Southern views of Lincoln substantially unchanged, heroic concepts of him could not emerge in the South as they did in the North in the weeks following his death. Shocked by the Confederacy's collapse, Southerners sought an explanation of what had happened which would bring both comfort and the strength to face a highly uncertain future. In this interpretation there proved to be no room for Lincoln as a hero of emancipation.

The pattern of thought which developed in the postwar South was very much a response to the interpretation of the war put forward by the victorious North, with its emphasis upon Southern war guilt and upon union and emancipation as the war's twin themes, with the North fighting to abolish and the South to preserve slavery. For the South to accept this analysis meant admitting that

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1 The War Eagle (Cairo, Ill.), April 20, 1865; New Orleans Black Republican, April 29, 1865; Joseph T. Durkin, ed., John Dooley, Confederate Soldier: His War Journal (Notre Dame, Ind., 1963), 195. Hereafter cited as: Dooley, Journal. Earl Schenck Miers, The Great Rebellion: The Emergence of the American Conscience from Sumter to Appomattox (New York, 1961 ed.), 265; Stone, Journal, 333, entry for April 22, 1865.

the cause for which Confederates had fought and died had been unworthy, dishonouring all who had served it. Instead, Southerners chose to reaffirm fundamental themes of pre-war and wartime Southern thought, thus rejecting the North's interpretation of the war and the associated myths.

The South therefore remained convinced that the burden of guilt should be borne by Northern anti-slavery fanatics. Those who, like Father Sheeran, had looked upon the battlefields of the Civil War as "drenched with the blood of the victims of (Northern) fanaticism, tyranny and injustice ..." and who blamed the war upon the teachings of "a few fanatics residing in New England", did not suddenly abandon a thesis which justified the Confederate war effort. The idea that secession had been imperative because the North threatened Southern property was therefore retained. This was not meant to imply that Northerners had fought to free the slaves. The majority of Southerners had always seen Northern anti-slavery feeling as a pretext for aggression against their section and continued to do so in spite of the Federal Government's wartime emancipation measures. In 1861 Confederate soldier George Neese, who as he later recalled, "never bowed at the shrine of a Southern fire-eater", condemned "our pious friends of the North, whose sham philanthropy for Southern slaves is excelled by avaricious envy and legislative meanness ..." His words were echoed, long after Lincoln issued the emancipation proclamations, by ardent secessionist Kate Cumming who wrote of the "hatred and contempt which is generally shown the negro by these dear (Northern) lovers of the race, excepting when they wish to use them (Negroes) in politics ..." Incorporated into postwar thought this analysis of abolitionism and political anti-slavery in the North allowed Jefferson Davis to maintain that Northern hostility to slavery had never reflected any humanitarian impulse. The North had freed its own slaves, he claimed, because slavery was uneconomic in that region, and its anti-slavery agitation against the South had masked Northern ambitions to

control the Union. Conflict over slavery, alleged Davis, had been simply one aspect of the South's struggle to prevent the North, through control of Congress, from passing legislation which benefited the North at the expense of the South. It was a theory that could be adapted to explain the events of the postwar period. In Northerner George Lunt's pro-Southern history of the war published in 1865, which became a standard work in the South, those Republicans seeking to institute harsh measures against former rebels were condemned through an attack upon the "radical Republican oligarchy" of the abolitionists and their political allies, the "self-seeking and ambitious demagogues" who had forced the South to leave the Union for self-protection and had thus caused the war.[1]

Through their interpretation of the war, former Confederates could reaffirm the values of the society of the antebellum South which they had fought to preserve. If slavery had been only the "pretext" for Northern aggression, then the South had clearly fought, as it had always claimed, not for slavery, but for independence and for the right of self-government. Forty-five years after the war ended, Randolph McKim vehemently denied that his fellow-soldiers in Confederate service had fought for slavery. They did not, he asserted, "draw their swords in defence of the institution of slavery. They were not thinking of their slaves when they cast all in the balance ..... They did not suffer, they did not fight, they did not die, for the privilege of holding their fellow men in bondage!" It was, said McKim, for the sacred right of self-government that they fought: "It was in defence of their homes and firesides. It was to repel the invader, to resist a war of subjugation."

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1 Joseph T. Durkin, ed., Confederate Chaplain A War Journal of Rev. James B. Sheeran c.ss.r. 14th Louisiana, C.S.A. (Milwaukee, 1960), 4, 25, entries for Aug. 10, Sept. 6, 1862; George M. Neese, Three Years in the Confederate Horse Artillery (New York, 1911), 3-5, 362, introduction and entry for July 4, 1865; Cumming Journal, 158, entry for Oct. 6, 1863; Pressly, Americans Interpret Their Civil War, 123-24.

Unaware, or perhaps forgetting, that many Southern civilians had been unwilling even to loan their slaves to the Confederate war effort, McKim claimed that Southern soldiers had cared little about slavery, and that "To establish our independence we would at any time have gladly surrendered it."[1]

McKim's reminiscences reflect the continuance of that element of guilt which had co-existed with and had lent aggressiveness to the South's antebellum defence of slavery as a positive good. Indeed, this duality continued, for Southern claims that the North had not emancipated for philanthropic reasons enabled Southerners to maintain that the slaves had been happy, that blacks and whites had profited from slavery, and that it was they, and not the abolitionists, who had been the true friends of the slaves. Harmony and contentment had prevailed in the South before the war, they said but "the restless spirit of New England has spread its wings on the blast, and its envenomed breath has gone forth to poison the happiness of black and white." In any case, argued its defenders, if the institution of slavery was open to criticism, the blame lay not with the South but with the abolitionists whose sustained attacks upon slave-owners had resulted in a rigidity in Southern thought on slavery which had prevented developments likely to improve the condition of the slaves. Thus continuing guilt over slavery only served, as it had done before the war, to sharpen Southerners' defence of that institution, and, defending it, they could in spite of their guilt reject Southern claims that their defeat was God's punishment for the sin of slavery. Kate Cumming, for example, did not doubt that abolition was God's will, but neither did she interpret this as a divine condemnation of the South. Instead she believed that it revealed that the Negro's mission as a slave was ended, thus by implication defending slavery as God's will.[2]

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1 Randolph H. McKim, A Soldier's Recollections Leaves From The Diary of a Young Confederate With an Oration on the Motives and Aims of the Soldiers of the South (New York, 1910), 21-22.

2 Dooley Journal, 205, entry for April 27, 1865; Cumming, Journal, 158, entry for Oct. 6, 1863; McKim, Recollections, 20.

The South's insistence that slavery had been benevolent, was vital to its interpretation of the war and of reconstruction. For while Southerners denied that they had fought for slavery, they could not deny that the society they had sought to preserve had been based upon that institution. To condemn slavery would therefore imply condemnation of that society and so of the Confederate war effort. At the same time, by stressing the beneficial nature of slavery, postwar Southern ideology prepared the way for action by which the former Confederate States would attempt to re-establish a society similar to that destroyed in the war. For if the abolition of slavery was accepted as final, Southern leaders determined early in the Reconstruction era to create a new economic and social framework in which the former slaves would be returned to a position of subordination to white control, an ideal achieved with the collapse of Radical Reconstruction.

Such arguments gave meaning to what had happened to the South. In Southern postwar thought the "Lost Cause" became holy, and the Confederate heroes and martyrs were not betrayed. Thus Southerners acquired a new purpose. They could live through defeat because they were certain that the future must reveal the justice of their cause. This was a development of the wartime belief that "good and true" men in the North would one day arise to overthrow the fanatics in that section and vindicate the South. That day did not arrive in time to save the South from defeat, but the conviction that it would come remained. Though the world would not listen to the South's defence in 1865, the justice of its cause would be revealed. As Robert Dabney, former Confederate chaplain, wrote "Let the arrogant and successful wrongdoers flout our defence with disdain; we will meet them with it again, when it will be heard, in the day of their calamity, in the pages of impartial history and in the Day of Judgement." In the meantime former Confederates would teach their children the values of the Old South,

and the heroes who would enshrine such values would be those of the Confederacy. Whatever happened, the ideal of the Old South would survive. Southerners would not be reconstructed by the North. They would never accept the Lincoln myths.[1]

In such an analysis of past, present and future, there could be no room for the concept of the Great Emancipator or any Lincoln myths relating to emancipation. Every major theme of postwar Southern thought undercut the Emancipator tradition. If the North had not fought to free the slaves, then emancipation had been a war measure or an incidental result of the war, but it had not been a great moral act. If Northern anti-slavery feeling had been a pretext for aggression against the South, then Lincoln could not have been the great philanthropist of Northern eulogy. If slavery had been a positive good, and if the slaves were worse off after emancipation, then Lincoln was neither the Great Emancipator nor the Negro's Friend. Nor was he a martyr to liberty. Perhaps he could not be seen as a martyr of any kind, for this carried the dangerous implication that his death had been brought about by the South, if only because of the rebellion. Certainly he was not a martyr to the freedom of the slaves. Southerners cherished the concept of liberty as much as any Americans, but for them it had nothing to do with emancipation. Liberty, or freedom from Northern aggression, had

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1 On Nov. 8, 1863, Kate Cumming wrote in her journal that she looked forward to the day when the many good and true Christians of the North would "rise in their might, and with one voice demand that the demagogues and fanatics who are now having full sway desist from this unholy strife, and treat us as they should." Cumming, Journal, 168. Pressly, Americans Interpret Their Civil War, 102, 103-104; Confederate soldier John Worsham recalled the poem recited to him by a former comrade when they met a few years after the war ended: "I can't take up my musket/And fight 'em now no more,/But I ain't a-going to love 'em/Now that is sartin sure;/For I don't want no pardon,/For what I was and am,/I won't be reconstructed,/And I don't give a damn. John H. Worsham, One of Jackson's Foot Cavalry: His Experience ... During the War, 1861-1865 ... (New York, 1912), 294.

been the great ideal for which the South believed that it had fought. Those who, like Kate Cumming, had buried Confederate soldiers in graves consecrated to martyrs for liberty could never concede that title to Abraham Lincoln, the man who was, for the South, the symbol of Northern responsibility for such deaths.[1]

While the South rejected the Emancipator tradition, it abandoned the older concept of Lincoln as an abolitionist. This was in any case incompatible with the image of Lincoln as the South's best friend. The one tradition the postwar South accepted, this permitted former Confederates, whose ideology allowed them to accept little of the North's portrait of the late President as a hero-martyr, to praise at least one aspect of his character, his mercy, and so to give token support to the Lincoln myth. At the same time, since the tradition applied specifically to Lincoln's known or supposed attitudes on reconstruction, Southern leaders could hope, by promoting it, to win popular support for a policy of leniency towards those who had supported the rebellion. It was one way of countering exploitation of the Lincoln myths by those who sought to promote Radical Reconstruction.

Essentially a political myth, then, the Southern tradition of Lincoln as the best friend of the South began to emerge in 1865. In Virginia, the Richmond Whig revealed a blend of the Unionism of editor Robert Ridgway and the interests of the defeated Confederacy when it declared editorially (April 17):

> The heaviest blow which has ever fallen upon the people of the South has descended. Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, has been assassinated: ... Just as everything was happily conspiring to a restoration of tranquility, under the benignant and magnanimous policy of Mr. Lincoln, comes this terrible blow. God grant that it may not rekindle excitement or inflame passions again.

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1 Cumming, Journal, 106, entry for May 24, 1863.

In West Virginia, a Southern minister, hearing the news of the assassination, gave his opinion that "The South has lost its best friend." General Lee's comment that Lincoln's kindness was more powerful than Grant's artillery was widely quoted. Democratic papers in the North were happy to promote the tradition; the Chicago Times published a letter from Richmond describing the reaction of a leading rebel to the possibility that Lincoln might be assassinated: "He replied, with a terrified look,"Can you believe that any human being would take from us our best friend?"[1]

The South was never to concede Lincoln's heroic status with regard to emancipation. As late as the 1930's an elderly Southern woman was to be shocked by the sight of an image of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator immortalized in the stained glass window of a Detroit church. The tradition of Lincoln as the best friend of the South went, however, from strength to strength. For even when Radical Reconstruction was long past, the idea that Lincoln had not condemned the South had enduring value as part of the South's defence of its role during the war. An article entitled "Confederate Regeneration" enclosed in an 1887 letter to Jefferson Davis reflected acceptance of the tradition by one who had clearly been a zealous Confederate. Indicating that the death of Lincoln had benefited the Radical Republicans and not the South, the Reverend Henry W. Cleveland wrote:

> It is strange that he died from the hand of a man who thought, Brutus like, to free the South, and not, as he feared, and as was most likely, (as Garfield did,) from a furious partizan on his own side. Lincoln had to die, for then ten thousand daggers would have punished a submission of the slave question to the courts, or, the immediate restoration of the South, or a Northern tax to compensate the South. He was the best friend we had ...

For Cleveland, this concept of Lincoln made it possible to accept the Northern leader as a national hero. The reminiscences of Southerners indicate that

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1 James G. Randall, Lincoln and the South (Baton Rouge, La., 1946), 154-55; Brighton (England) Gazette, May 4, 1865; Chicago Times, April 21, 1865.

many accepted the tradition. McKim gave an interesting variant of it when he claimed that the spirit of the martyred Lincoln had saved the South after the collapse of Radical Reconstruction, a rare use of the martyr concept of Lincoln in Southern thought.[1] In the 1915 silent film The Birth of a Nation, which through the then new medium of the cinema gave full expression to the Southern interpretation of the Civil War, the tradition loomed large, as the merciful "Great Heart" Lincoln spared the life of a young Confederate soldier and promised the rebel states that he would "Treat them as if they had never been away." The narrative described how the South began to rebuild itself "under Lincoln's fostering hand." In contrast, Radical Reconstruction was bitterly attacked. In this film, the image of the Great Emancipator or the Martyr to Liberty made no appearance. When the term "liberators" was used, it was with reference to the Ku Klux Klan, whose reign of terror helped white Southerners to reimpose their control over the former slaves. Nothing could indicate more clearly that these particular traditions had no role to play in the thought of the postwar South.[2]

The traditions about Lincoln which came to play such an important role in American thought, both as separate traditions and as part of the Lincoln Myth, were then political traditions which won widespread popular support in America and so outlived the political programme whose exponents first promoted them. Where the traditions had no political value, amongst die-hard Southern sympathizers in the North and the former Confederates of the South, they did

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1 Jones, Lincoln and the Preachers, 160; Cleveland to Davis, Nov. 25, 1887, in Jefferson Davis, Letters, Papers and Speeches, X, 14; McKim Recollections, 157.

2 Quotations are from the film's subtitles.

not emerge.[1] Not all in America in 1865 accepted fully the concepts of Lincoln enshrined in the myths, but such was their popularity that few cared to challenge them. Northern Democrats had reason to regret the development of traditions so useful to the Republicans, but found it advisable politically to accept Lincoln as a hero. Nor did ultra-abolitionists, who tended to reject the Emancipator tradition, make an outright attack upon it. Only a tradition such as that viewing Lincoln as a friend of the South had any value in Southern thought, and this tradition alone gained significant Southern support. The concept of the Great Emancipator, the most enduring of the emancipation traditions, remained primarily a Northern tradition, its enduring relevance within the American nation ensured by the victory of the North which had established the dominance of Northern society whose values the Lincoln myths represented. In the Southern States the former Confederates, in defeat and even more so after the Redemption of the South in 1877, rejected those values and especially those represented in the concept of the Great Emancipator.

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1 For a discussion of the wartime and postwar attitude to Lincoln of a die-hard Southern sympathizer in the North, see George Joseph Jr., "Abraham Africanus I': President Lincoln Through the Eyes of a Copperhead Editor", Civil War History, XIV (September, 1968), especially pp. 237-39.

Chapter Seven

Black Americans and the Lincoln Myths

> For so long as the world shall last shall the name of Abraham Lincoln be dear to a people who remember their two hundred and fifty years in bondage in a land of liberty, and whose hand it was struck off from them their fetters, and whose voice it was proclaimed them free.[1]

White Americans who eulogized Lincoln as the Great Emancipator in 1865 were quite sure that blacks, and especially those newly emerged from slavery, would share their view of him. "You I can comfort;" Henry Ward Beecher told his Brooklyn congregation, "but how can I speak to that twilight million to whom his name was as the name of an angel of God?... When, throughout the South, the dusky children, who looked upon him as that Moses whom God sent before them to lead them out of the land of bondage, learn that he has fallen, who shall comfort them?" Anti-slavery men, seeking to stimulate sympathy amongst Northern whites for the former slaves, had good reason to dwell upon "the simple-hearted lay of the freedman, weeping sad and lonely...", but most in the free states would probably have accepted their claim that for the "enfranchised millions" Lincoln was a father, Moses and second Messiah. Nor were they wrong to do so. For the majority of black Americans did in 1865 and for many decades afterwards accept Lincoln as their hero, though not always so naively as white thought implied. Indeed amongst freedmen in

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1 Colman, Discourse, 10.

particular the concept of Lincoln as a personal emancipator had emerged before 1865, and represented the development of even earlier traditions associating him with their eagerly desired freedom from slavery.[1]

It is surely fitting that the earliest references by white Americans to Lincoln as a hero of emancipation should be attributed to Owen Lovejoy and an un-named Western preacher.[2] For Republican Radicals and anti-slavery ministers did play a vital role in the development of the Emancipator tradition. Its origins must be sought, however, by turning away from white Northerners to consider black attitudes to Lincoln during the Civil War. For if black Americans developed no major traditions of Lincoln as an Emancipator before 1865, slaves certainly laid the foundations of that tradition by their identification of him with their future freedom and their conviction that he was, at heart, the Negro's Friend.

Former slave Frank A. Patterson, interviewed by a member of the Federal Writers' Project team in 1938, recalled how in 1860 he had already visualised Lincoln as a future emancipator:

> When Fillmore, Buchanan, and Lincoln ran for President, one of my old bosses said, "Hurrah for Buchanan," and I said "Hurrah for Lincoln." One of my mistresses said "Why do you say, 'Hurrah for Lincoln?'" And I said, "Because he's going to set me free."

There is no way of knowing whether Patterson really made this prediction or whether, having lived through emancipation, he simply reshaped the past to make himself appear a prophet.[3] That there were slaves who expected to

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1 Our Martyr President, 46-47, 91-92; Nason, Eulogy, 4.

2 See Jones, Lincoln and the Preachers, 64, and Herbert Agar, Abraham Lincoln (London, n.d.), 21-22.

3 B.A. Botkin, ed., Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery (Chicago, 1958, ed.), 17-18. The slave narratives collection of the Federal Writers' Project, an early experiment in oral history, is a rare and therefore valuable source for ex-slaves' evidence regarding the slavery era. It should be noted, however, that most of these former slaves were children in the 1860's. Moreover, project interviewers used questions likely to secure particular responses and those interviewed sometimes told their stories in a way which they hoped would please the interviewer: The comment made by

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be freed by Lincoln is, however, confirmed by other sources. Federal officer and abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson recalled in his memoirs a speech given by a black soldier who, "described most impressively the secret anxiety of the slaves in Florida to know all about President Lincoln's election, and told how they all refused to work on the fourth of March, expecting their freedom from that day." Higginson also recalled hearing the Freedmen at Beaufort, South Carolina, singing:

> We'll fight for liberty
> Till de Lord shall call us home;
> We'll soon be free
> Till de Lord shall call us home.

He had been told that, "this is the hymn which the slaves at Georgetown, South Carolina were whipped for singing when President Lincoln was elected." Others who looked to Lincoln for freedom appear to have seen July 4 as the crucial day. On July 5, 1861, a young Southern woman noted in her diary, "The Fourth and today passed without any trouble with the Negroes. The general impression has been that the Negroes looked for a great upheaval of some kind on that day. In some way they have gotten a confused idea of

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(cont.) one former slave is revealing: "Lots of old slaves closes the door before they tell the truth about their days of slavery. When the door is open, they tell ... how rosy it all was. You can't blame them for this, because they had plenty of early discipline making them cautious about saying anything uncomplimentary about their masters." The desire of some interviewers to hear the former slaves say that they looked back happily upon slavery days cannot be disguised, and some of their informants may have been made more willing to oblige them by the hope or expectation of some kind of reward. An extract from one interview is revealing:

> "I am a Confederate veteran but my house burned up wid de medals and I don't get a pension."
>
> "Thank you, mister bossman fer (sic) the quarter. It will buy me a little grub. I'se too old to work but I has to.(")
>
> The reporter left him sitting with his little pack and a long fork in his hands; in his eyes, dimmed with age, a faroff look and a tear of longing for the old Plantation.

Interview with Gus Brown of Birmingham, Alabama, in Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938 (Washington, D.C., 1941), I, 50. The earlier quotation is from an interview with Martin Johnson of Texas, in Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 267-268. On slave narratives see Paul D. Escott, Slavery Remembered, a Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives (Chapel Hill, 1979), pp., The Washington, D. C. collection of slave narratives, which is in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., is hereafter cited as S.N.

Lincoln's Congress Meeting and the war; they think it is all to help them, and they expected 'something to turn up.'"[1]

Occasionally this view of Lincoln as a future emancipator becomes linked with the idea that he had, as presidential candidate or as President, travelled in the Southern States, and, having convinced himself thus that slavery was an atrocity, had promised to destroy it. An ex-slave whose story was typical told how:[2]

> 'Fore the election he (Lincoln) traveled all over the South, and he come to our house and slept in Old Mistress' bed. Didn't nobody know who he was. It was a custom to take strangers in ... He seen how the niggers come in on Saturday and drawed four pounds of meat and a peck of meal for a week's rations. He also saw 'em whipped and sold. When he got back up North he writ Old Masters a letter and told him that he was going to have to free his slaves, that everybody was going to have to, that the North was going to see to it.

It is difficult to account for such tales other than as mythical stories invented by slaves to explain why Lincoln had decided to free them. In all cases of Negro reminiscences it is also difficult, if not impossible, to determine to what extent descriptions of black attitudes to Lincoln in 1860 are influenced by his later decision to free the slaves. Still it seems probable that even before Lincoln finally committed himself to emancipation, many slaves shared the faith in him shown by one slave woman when according to her son, Booker T. Washington, he woke to find her "kneeling over her children praying that Lincoln and his armies might be successful and that ... her children might be free."[3]

White Southerners might have agreed that Lincoln stood for emancipation,

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1 Thomas W. Higginson, Army Life in a Black Regiment (Boston, 1870) 17-18, 34; Stone, Journal, 37.

2 Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 16. See also the recollections of Salena Taswell, formerly a slave in Georgia, in Ibid., 17.

3 Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery (New York, 1967), 18. Washington's account may be romanticised, but, while his memories of childhood were not always reliable, there is no reason to doubt that this incident occurred. There is plenty of evidence that slaves prayed for freedom during the Civil War: see S.N., II, pt.1, 51, 120; IV, pt. 1, 181; Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 26-27; John B. Cade, "Out of the Mouths of Ex-Slaves", JNH, XX (July, 1935), 330.

but presumably preferred their slaves not to think so. Some even tried to convince their Negroes that Northerners were to be feared.[1] Ironically, the belief held by slaves that Lincoln would free them may have owed something in origin to discussions among slaveholders on the threat he posed to slavery. Slaves must have overheard these while carrying out their duties as servants and in some cases concealed themselves in order to do so.[2] "The slave", said one Southern newspaper, "has heard strange noises in the air whenever he has heard the Republican party spoken of by its opponents. He has heard the white man, his owner, declare at public meetings that the sole object of that party is the abolition of slavery. No wonder he believes that the prophetic day of universal emancipation is at hand."[3] The tendency for the advance of Northern troops to bring about practical emancipation, deliberately or accidentally, could only reinforce such ideas. At the same time, the limited nature of their sources of information must have led to the simplification of war issues by slaves resulting in the conflict's anti-slavery tendencies becoming personalised in Lincoln. Surely, too, the slaves' interpretation of the war as one which would bring about their freedom and the associated concept of Lincoln as their future emancipator was part of the process by which they prepared themselves, consciously or unconsciously, to seize any opportunities for freedom which might arise

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1 See recollections of Aunt Mittie Freeman, Lizzie Barnett and Della Briscoe: S.N., II, pt. 1, 112; IV, pt. 1, 131. Slaves did not necessarily believe such propaganda: Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 7-8.

2 Washington, Up From Slavery, 18-19; Wiley, Southern Negroes, 1861-1865 (New Haven, 1965 ed.), 16; Mrs. Chesnut recalled her father's comment, about his butler, that "Dick, standing in front of his sideboard, has heard all subjects in earth or heaven discussed, and by the best heads in our world." Chesnut, Diary, 224, entry for July 8, 1863. Significantly she added that Dick was always very ambitious. While formal education was often discouraged as likely to encourage aspirations detrimental to the continuance of slavery, such aspirations could develop out of the work of the slave.

3 Missouri Democrat quoted in Liverpool (England) Daily Post, Nov. 20, 1860

out of that conflict.

Northern blacks did not usually share this faith in Lincoln as the future emancipator of their race. Frequently well-informed and politically aware, they were often critical of the Republican Party's moderation on the slavery issue. Nevertheless, most supported it to a lesser or greater extent as the only significant political representation of anti-slavery sentiment and as the best hope for improvement in their own political and social position. Of great concern to Northern blacks was their failure in the later 1850's to secure the right to vote, and Lincoln may have lost some support amongst them when he made it clear in a speech in 1859 that he did not stand for political equality of the races.[1] Most apparently concluded, however, that the Republican ticket was less objectionable than any other in the 1860 presidential contest.[2] Thus free blacks tended to occupy a position similar to that of moderate abolitionists, sustaining the Republicans because they recognized that the election to the presidency of a man known to oppose slavery, however moderate his sentiments or those of his party in general, would be a moral victory for the anti-slavery cause and a blow to the political power of the slaveholders. Perhaps, too, constant allegations by his political opponents, particularly in the South, that Lincoln was an abolitionist and favoured racial equality and amalgamation made him more acceptable to blacks even while they rejected such ideas. Even the critical Henry Ford Douglass was brought to declare, as election day drew near, that, "I love everything the South hates, and since they have evinced their dislike of Mr. Lincoln, I am bound to love you Republicans with all your faults."[3]

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1 Speech at Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 16, 1859: Lincoln, Works, III, 400-425, especially 401-403

2 For the development of black political thought and its increasing militancy see Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861 (New York, 1974) esp. Chaps. 9-12.

3 Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 56

Some Northern blacks gave Lincoln more positive support. In Pittsburgh they formed marching clubs of "Wide-Awakes", stirring up support for the Republican Party amongst enfranchised blacks. Such efforts may have received moral support from Negroes in areas where black political activity was unwise. The Negro vote was too small to affect the outcome of the election; its significance lay in the indication it gave of black support for the Republicans and for Lincoln personally. Most in the black community welcomed the news of Lincoln's election.[1] Even more enthusiastic was their response to his call for troops in April 1861, and the War Department received numerous offers from free blacks anxious to enlist.[2] They welcomed any opportunity to strike a blow at the slave states, and many were convinced that slavery lay at the root of the war and that a Northern victory would be bound to affect adversely that institution. To this extent, Northern blacks associated Lincoln and the Republican Administration with the future freedom of those in slavery.

The tradition was essentially a slave tradition. Few Northern whites would have wished to link the election of Lincoln with the future freedom of the slaves. One who did was the Reverend Jacob Manning who on January 5, 1861 told a Boston audience: "The 6th of November is a historical fact. If we would, thank God, we never can, erase it from Freedom's calendar."[3] Yet even in anti-slavery circles few shared the attitude of abolitionist Edward S. Philbrick who declared that, "I have great faith in Lincoln and am ready to leave the question (of emancipation) with him."[4]

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1 See letter to William Still, Oct. 17, 1860 in Carter G. Woodson, ed., The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written During the Crisis of 1800 to 1860 (Washington, 1926), 559; Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 57

2 See Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1969 ed.), 26-29

3 Liberator, Jan. 11, 1861, quoting Boston Journal, Jan. 5, 1861.

4 Philbrick to Edward Atkinson, June 3, 1862 in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, ed., Letters from Port Royal. Written at the Time of the Civil War (Boston, 1906), 63.

Anti-slavery Northerners confirmed that a tradition associating Lincoln with freedom existed amongst the slaves,[1] but neither they nor Northern blacks held it to be valid in anything but the loosest sense.

Those slaves who did see in Lincoln their future emancipator must have felt, when freedom came, that their trust had not been misplaced. This faith in Lincoln personally, rather than as a representative of Northern anti-slavery feeling, seems to have continued, probably because the slaves found it easier to fix their hopes and gratitude on one person. In at least one area of the South this identification of Lincoln with freedom was to have a touching result in 1865 when, according to an abolitionist working among the Freedmen in Port Royal:[2]

> The death of Lincoln was an awful blow to the negroes here. One would say, "Uncle Sam is dead isn't he?" Another, "The Government is dead, isn't it? You have got to go North and Secesh come back, havn't you. We going to be slaves again?"

Significantly by 1865 such examples of Negro faith in Lincoln were entirely acceptable to both Northern Negroes and Northern whites. The reason for this change in attitude lay in the unquenchable demand for any evidence which supported the tradition of the Great Emancipator, and many an eulogist lingering over the picture of the trusting slave waiting patiently for "Massa Linkum" to free him was able to prove just how popular this earlier tradition had become.[3]

On the day of Lincoln's death, Gideon Welles recorded in his diary how coloured people of the District of Columbia gathered outside the White House, and later he wrote of a similar demonstration, "There were no truer mourners ..." The sincerity with which the Negroes mourned Lincoln's passing bears witness to their belief that he had been their friend, a

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1 See below p.176
2 T.E.R. to C.P.W., May 6, 1865, Pearson, ed., Letters from Port Royal 310-11.
3. Examples can be found in Our Martyr President, passim.

natural corollary to their identification of him with freedom for the slave, and an essential part of the tradition of the Great Emancipator. Possibly this concept of a special relationship between Lincoln and American blacks, particularly slaves, emerged soon after he became President. Abolitionist Lydia Maria Child was certain that fugitive slaves making their way to Federal lines would have been "strengthened by the faith that President Lincoln was their friend, and that his soldiers would protect them." That many did feel affection for him is indicated by their references to him as "Father Abraham" and "Uncle Abe".[1]

Like the association of Lincoln with freedom, the idea that he was the Negro's friend must have been part of that interpretation of the war which gave an impetus to slave escapes during the war. Something of this is perhaps indicated in the case of black pilot Robert Smalls when, after a daring escape from Charleston, he delivered a Confederate ship to Union forces with the comment, "I thought the Planter might be of some use to Uncle Abe." Support for the tradition was not, however, confined to slaves. For while black radicals in the North continued to attack the President for alleged shortcomings on issues relating to slavery and the black race, the anti-slavery policies of his Administration and its treatment of blacks in general convinced many free blacks that they had not been mistaken in giving him their support. Like a correspondent of the Christian Recorder they felt that it had been demonstrated "that this administration is the friend of the black race, and desires its prosperity no less than the good of all the races of men." In the "Philadelphia Appeal" of 1862 black inhabitants of that city criticized Lincoln's support for the idea of colonizing former slaves outside the United States, but as they urged him to adopt emancipation the idea of the President as

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1 John T. Morse, Jr., Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson, 3 vols. (Boston, 1911), II, 290,293; entries for April 15, 19, 1865; Lydia M. Child to Mrs. Shaw, May 5, 1861, in Child, Letters, 71.

a friend of the Negro race was implicit. When in 1864 a mass meeting of San Francisco blacks endorsed Lincoln's re-election to the presidency, a black paper commented that,

> They were made happy in this opportunity to bestow a humble mark of their approbation. He is the man who, of all others who have occupied the Presidential chair, since the formation of the Government or the adoption of the Constitution, has stood up in defiance of the slave-power, and dared officially to maintain the doctrine, by his official actions, that we are citizens, though of African descent ...

The politics of black support for Lincoln, and the related use of the tradition viewing him as a friend to the Negro race, were illustrated by the Anglo-African when, in September 1864, it declared that the current issue was not whether Lincoln had done all that blacks thought possible for the overthrow of oppression in American, but whether or not what he had done was to be preserved: "This is the only question now, and if you are a friend of liberty you will give your influence and case your vote for Abraham Lincoln, who, under God, is the only hope of the oppressed."[1]

If, as Frederick Douglass later claimed, the name of Abraham Lincoln was from the first "near and dear" to the hearts of black Americans, the proclamations of emancipation must have given strength to such sentiments. Writing to the President in January, 1863 Benjamin Rush Plumly revealed not only how anti-slavery whites used the tradition to put moral pressure upon Lincoln, but also how it acted to sustain black hopes for a better life under freedom. According to Plumly:

> The Black people trust you. They believe that you desire to do them justice. They do not believe that you wish to expatriate them, or to enforce upon them any disability, but that you cannot do all that you would ... Someone intimated that you might be forced into some form of colonization. 'God won't let him,' shouted an old woman. 'God's in his heart,' said another, and the response of the Congregation was emphatic."

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1 Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 71; Christian Recorder, Sept. 12, 1863, Pacific Appeal, Jan. 9, 1864 and Anglo-African, Sept. 24, 1864 quoted in James M. McPherson, The Negro's Civil War (New York, 1965) 301-302, 306-307; Aptheker, ed., Documentary History of the Negro People, 473-475.

The former slaves, too, understood the political value of the concept of Lincoln as a friend of their race. When in 1864 Sea Islands freedmen prepared on their own initiative a petition "praying for redress against their various oppressions", they sent it to Lincoln.[1]

It was, however, in 1865 that the tradition entered a period of rapid growth. This was partly because it gained the support of white Americans as it was integrated into the tradition of the Great Emancipator. So to the Reverend Samuel T. Spear it was clear that when the slaves, the "sable victims of outrage and wrong", should hear of Lincoln's death they would feel that 'a friend has departed." They would be right to mourn, for "One of their most eminent and valuable friends now lies in death ..." Black support for the tradition was, however, also stimulated by the assassination. At Fortress Monroe, the Reverend Theodore Cuyler noted the freedmen's response to Lincoln's assassination: "'Yes, sah,' spake out a gray-haired Aunt Chloe - 'yes, sah! Linkum's dead! They killed our best friend.'" In an editorial on the murder a New Orleans black newspaper declared that, "The greatest earthly friend of the colored race has fallen..." On the same day, April 22, the coloured inhabitants of that city resolved that, "in the death of Abraham Lincoln, we deplore the loss of a true and devoted friend of our race and of mankind in general..." In Marietta, Ohio, Charlotte Scott told her former owner that, "The colored people have lost their best friend on earth."[2]

Those, black and white, with whom the tradition found favour might have been unaware that not all Negroes subscribed to it during Lincoln's

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1 Douglass, Speech at the unveiling of Lincoln's Memorial in Washington, D.C., April 14, 1876, in Benjamin Quarles, ed., Frederick Douglass (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968), 75; Plumly to Lincoln, Jan. 1, 1863, in Catton, Never Call Retreat, 113; letter of W.G.G., early May, 1864, in Pearson, ed., Letters from Port Royal, 263.

2 Our Martyr President, 296, 171; Blck Republican, April 22, 1865; New Orleans Tribune, April 25, 1865; Joseph T. Wilson, The Black Phalanx; A History of the Negro in The Wars of 1775-1812, 1861-'65 (Hartford, Conn., 1888), 513.

lifetime, and would probably have ignored such evidence on this point as detrimental to the tradition, but in addition to Lincoln's black critics in the North there were undoubtedly slaves who rejected the idea of Lincoln as the friend of their race. One slave who clearly felt that he could dispense with Lincoln's friendship stated in a letter to his master written in 1860:

> I hear much of the coming election. I hope that Mr. Lincoln or no such man may ever take his seat in the presidential chair. I do most sincerely hope that the Union may be preserved.

James Bolton, a former slave, recalled long after the war: "We didn't talk much 'bout Mr. Abbieham Lincum endurin' slavery time kazen we was skeered of him atter the war got started." Publicly, however, the tradition developed unchallenged for over a decade after Lincoln's death, and the majority of black Americans may well have clung to the belief that Lincoln had been their friend even when the first doubts in the tradition's validity were raised. Frederick Douglass' speech at the unveiling of the Freedman's Monument in Washington, D.C. in 1876 was one of the earliest attempts to look critically at this concept of Lincoln. Though he did not deny that the late President had been a friend to the black race, Douglass declared:

> The race to which we belong were not the special objects of his consideration. Knowing this, I conceed to you, my white fellow citizens, a pre-eminence in his worship at once full and supreme. First, midst, and last, you and yours were the objects of his deepest affection and his most earnest solicitude. We are at best his stepchildren, children by adoption, children by force of circumstance and necessity.

Yet the monument itself represented the gratitude of black Americans for Lincoln's services to their race, and its erection was entirely in keeping with the tradition of the Negro's Friend. Prominent blacks continued to support the tradition, Douglass himself frequently referring to Lincoln's friendly and unprejudiced manner on the occasions when they met. In the reminiscences of ex-slaves, too, Lincoln continued to appear as a benign

father-figure, protecting the interests of his black children. "You be sure", declared one former slave, "we knowed he was our friend ..."[1]

The traditions associating Lincoln with freedom and viewing him as the Negro's Friend had much in common in terms of origin and development. Both were part of the slaves' interpretation of events in the early 1860's. Southern blacks could seldom have been unaware that white Southerners saw a threat to slavery in the rise of the Republican Party and that fear of this party focussed in 1860 upon its presidential candidate. What to Southern whites was a threat was to many slaves a promise: when their owners asserted that he would attack slavery, it was not surprising that slaves looked to Lincoln for freedom and saw him as their friend. Much of the evidence that they did so comes from anti-slavery white observers, and, while there is no reason to reject such evidence, it ought to be noted that by promoting these traditions such observers may have hoped to stimulate sympathy for the slaves and so for the cause of emancipation. The main significance of such concepts of Lincoln during the war was not, however, their use by abolitonists, but the role they played in helping black slaves to understand the issues of the war in a way which guided them into an appropriate course of action: viewing Lincoln as an opponent of slavery and a friend thus helped to stimulate the movement of slaves into Federal lines which brought practical freedom. The traditions survived the war for various reasons. At a fundamental level, they enabled former slaves to understand the complex process of emancipation by personalizing the forces which brought this about. Indeed, incorporated into the concept of the Great Emancipator they performed the same role for white Americans,

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1 Richard Hockley to John A. Broadus, Nov. 5, 1860, in Woodson, Mind of the Negro, 537; S.N., IV, pt. 1, 102; Quarles, Frederick Douglass, 74, 79; Salena Taswell, quoted in Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 17; see also Booker T. Washington, Address on Abraham Lincoln, Feb. 12, 1909, in E. Davidson Washington, ed., Selected Speeches of Booker T. Washington (New York, 1932), 190-199.

and, linked with this enormously popular later tradition, became part of the understanding of both races in America of the Civil War and the issues of postwar America.

Amongst the slaves, concepts of Lincoln as a friend of the black race with whom its future freedom was associated prepared the way for an early emergence of the Emancipator tradition. For the tendency to personalize the war's anti-slavery trends in Lincoln which underlay the development of these earlier black traditions was inevitably confirmed when he chose to by-pass congressional legislation concerning slaves and to make emancipation an executive action, and after 1862 many slaves showed a strong sense of Lincoln as a personal emancipator.

Contraband rejoicing over the emancipation proclamation, which was encouraged by both Union soldiers and anti-slavery Northerners working amongst the former slaves, both reflected and encouraged their belief that they owed freedom from slavery to Lincoln. On New Year's Eve, 1863, hundreds of contrabands in Washington,D.C. attended a watch-night meeting, disbanding at dawn to meet together at noon for celebrations which lasted into the night. In Virginia, several thousand freedmen, flanked by Federal troops, marched through Norfolk in celebration of the day on which the final proclamation was issued. Sea Islands contrabands also celebrated and on Emancipation Day at Port Royal Thomas Wentworth Higginson and other white observers were moved by a spontaneous outburst of rejoicing by the former slaves, described by Higginson as "the choked voice of a race unloosed", which interrupted the carefully planned exercises. Black abolitionist William Wells Brown described an almost symbolic scene in a South Carolian slave cabin on the night of December 31, 1862, which suggests the faith that many slaves shared that Lincoln's proclamation would destroy slavery:

> The room was filled with blacks, a group of whom surrounded a rough board table, and at it sat an old man holding in his hand

> a watch, at which all were intently gazing. A stout Negro boy held a torch which lighted up the cabin, and near him stood a Yankee soldier, in the Union blue, reading the President's Proclamation of Freedom.
>
> As it neared the hour of twelve, a dead silence prevailed, and the holder of the time-piece said, "By de time I counts ten, it will be mid-night an' de lan' will be free.

Encouraged and protected by sympathetic Unionists, contrabands could show a delight in freedom recorded by an observer on a Louisiana plantation where the former slaves sang "John Brown's Body" as they worked.[1]

Elsewhere in the South whatever emotion was felt by the slaves when Lincoln declared them free is largely unrecorded. It seems clear that news of the proclamations spread quickly, and since there is abundant evidence, despite Confederate claims to the contrary, that most slaves wanted to be free, it is reasonable to suppose that they were generally excited by the news. The reminiscences of former slaves tend to confirm the recollection of Gus Brown, who though he had identified with the South in the war and had also remained with his master after emancipation, stated that, "When time came for freedom most of us wuz glad." Often slaves appear to have demonstrated their enthusiasm for emancipation by noisy celebrations, or by leaving their owners. Others did both, as Susan Castle recalled: "Some of de slaves shouted and hollered for joy when Miss Marion called us togedder and said us was free and warn't slaves no more. Most of 'em went right out and left 'er and hired out to make money for deyselfs."[2]

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1 Higginson, Army Life, 58-61; Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 175-179; Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 146-147; Botkin, Civil War Treasury, 234; New Orleans Daily Delta, Oct. 29, 1862.

2 S.N. I, 49; IV, 181-182. Northern anti-slavery papers frequently claimed that slaves were well informed about the war, and especially about the Emancipation Proclamation, which its supporters in the North were anxious to prove effective. Such reports were not necessarily invented. There is abundant evidence to suggest that, though Booker T. Washington exaggerated concerning the accuracy of slave information on the issues and progress of the war, he was correct in saying that "they kept themselves informed of events by what was termed the 'grape-vine' telegraph." In the case of the Emancipation Proclamations, some masters, accepting abolition as final, told their slaves the news. More commonly the news spread from slave to slave when Southern whites were overheard discussing the measure or when a literate slave read the edict to others from shared or borrowed copies of newspapers. (cont.)

Such evidence as exists suggests that those slaves who rejoiced in their freedom did have some concept of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation. At the watch-night meeting held by Washington, D.C. contrabands on December 31, 1862 one woman sang a version of "Go Down, Moses," in which Lincoln was clearly the Emancipator:

> Go down, Abraham, away down in Dixie's land,
> Tell Jeff Davis to let my people go.

In the same contraband camp on the following day, William Beverly, leading his fellow freedmen in prayer, asked God's blessing "on everything belonging to the United States President who has bestowed such gifts on us this night." His vision of the Emancipator was confirmed as he continued, "We were bound as slaves. Chains on our hands. We have seen our people bound in chains and carried away. Some got mothers in foreign countries. Some got fathers in foreign countries. Bless the President, Jesus!" At this meeting a Virginia contraband, recalling the cruelty his wife had endured as a slave in Loudoun County, burst out, "Thanks be to God, Loudoun is free! Bless that man they call Mr. Lincoln for such a glorious proclamation." Port Royal contrabands and white visitors, celebrating emancipation, toasted the President in molasses and water. At the Union Bethel Church in Washington, D.C. on New Year's Eve, 1862, a Black minister told his congregation to "get down on <u>both knees</u> to thank Almighty God for his freedom and President Lincoln too." The emotional watch-night meeting lasted until dawn, and one woman revealed how clearly the Mosaic concept of Lincoln as Emancipator emerged when she recalled that "Men and women just wept, sang and gave thanks to God Who had set them free and to old Abe

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(cont.) Bishop Isaac Lane did so from his owner's paper. Governor Andrew of Massachusetts had printed 10,000 copies of the edict for distribution amongst the slaves by Federal soldiers. In some cases slaves learned the proclamation by heart, but most knew the essential message. Washington, <u>Up From Slavery</u>, 18; reminiscences of former slaves Carrie Davis and Easter Brown, <u>S.N.</u>, I, 107; IV, 139-140; Wiley, <u>Southern Negroes</u>, 18; Quarles, <u>Lincoln and the Negro</u>, 149.

Lincoln who had been the Moses who their Maker had ordered to tell the old slave owners to let his people go." In Beaufort, South Carolina, members of The Baptist Church in Christ prepared a resolution which illustrated not only their present but also their past faith in Lincoln as The Emancipator. Giving thanks to God and to Lincoln for emancipation, the resolution declared: "We have gathered together two or three times a week for the last five months to pray that the Lord might help you and your soldiers. We never expect to meet you face to face on earth, but may we meet in a better world than this: this is our humble prayer." The reminiscences of a white army nurse indicate that Lincoln continued to loom large in the thought of the contrabands as a hero associated with freedom. Joining an evening service in a contraband camp on the Potomac, she found the former slaves giving thanks for freedom, and praying "that God would bless good President Lincoln, and all de great Union armies..." Elizabeth Botume, working among the Sea Islands contrabands, found that for the children of emancipated slaves Lincoln had become a hero. Describing a day when visitors came to her school, she wrote: "Imagine my surprise ... to hear one of the visitors get up and ask, 'Children, who is Jesus Christ?' For a moment the whole school seemed paralysed. Then one small boy shouted out, 'General Saxby, sar.' Upon this an older boy sprang up, and giving him a vigorough thrust in the back, exclaimed, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum.'" Of these children Miss Botume observed, "They all knew who was President."[1]

Those still in slavery on January 1, 1863 may well have had an even stronger concept of Lincoln as a personal emancipator. A Federal soldier who took part in the occupation of Plymouth, North Carolina in February, 1863

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1 Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 175; Commonwealth, Feb. 7, 1863; Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 107-108; John E. Washington, They Knew Lincoln (New York, 1942), 90-91; Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 147-49; Dannett, ed., Noble Women, 298; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, First Days Amongst the Contrabands (Boston, 1893), 108-109. General Rufus Saxton organized the recruitment of Negro troops in South Carolina.

commented of a Negro family that entertained his company in their home: "They seemed to rejoice greatly that they were free, and knew all about President Lincoln and the Proclamation." Union officer Major Abner Small described how slaves on one plantation expected to see Lincoln when Federal troops arrived, and when told the President would be passing on the following day, sang:

> Jordan's stream is runnin', runnin', runnin' -
> Milyuns sojers passin' o';
> Linkum comin' wid his chariot.
> Bress de Lawd fo' ebermo'!
>
> Don' yer hear him comin', (comin',) comin'?
> Yes, Ah do!
> Wid his robe an' mighty army?
> Yes, Ah do!
> Want ter march wid him to glory?
> Yes, Ah do!

Indeed Lincoln filled the vision of some slaves. One Negro who had stared hard at Union general William T. Sherman went away repeating to himself, "He has the Linkum head, he has the Linkum head, he has the Linkum head." Observers commented upon the wild enthusiasm for the President shown by Richmond slaves when Lincoln visited the occupied Confederate capital in 1865. Newspaper correspondent Charles C. Coffin of the Boston Journal described how when he pointed out Lincoln to a colored woman, "She gazed at him a moment, clapped her hands and jumped straight up and down, shouting 'Glory, glory, glory!' till her voice was lost in the universal cheer." As the President walked through the city he was surrounded by "a surging mass of men, women and children, black, white and yellow, running, shouting, dancing, swinging their caps, bonnets and handkerchiefs." According to Coffin, "A colored woman snatched her bonnet from her head, (and) whirled it in the air, screaming with all her might, 'God bless you, Massa Linkum!'" Describing the whole scene, Coffin commented, "What a spectacle it was! such a hurly-burly - such a wild, indescribably, ecstatic joy I never witnessed." It was, he said, "the

great delivered, meeting the delivered."[1]

Free blacks were also overjoyed when Lincoln adopted an emancipation policy, and, in spite of fears that the President might not issue the final proclamation, Frederick Douglass could not resist showing his delight. "We shout for joy," declared Douglass' Monthly, "that we live to record this righteous decree." At Shiloh Church in New York on September 29, 1862 the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet held one of the few public black celebrations of the preliminary edict. When in January 1863 the promise of emancipation was fulfilled, free blacks gave full rein to their feelings. Frederick Douglass indicated how he and other Northern Negroes viewed Lincoln's proclamation when he described the feelings of an "immense assembly" which gathered in Boston's Tremont Temple to await the news that the final edict had been issued. The meeting, held under the auspices of the predominantly black Union Progressive Association, was attended by both blacks and whites, and black leaders present included William Wells Brown, J. Sella Martin and Dr. John. S. Rock. Speeches were made, said Douglass, but "It was not logic, but the trump of jubilee, which everybody wanted to hear. We were waiting and listening as for a bolt from the sky, which would rend the fetters of four millions of slaves; we

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1 Commonwealth, Feb. 21, 1863; Botkin, Civil War Treasury, 237-238; Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 317; "President Lincoln in Richmond" by "Carleton", Boston Journal, reprinted in Commonwealth, April 22, 1865. An account of this visit by Lincoln to Richmond allegedly written by coloured soldier J.J. Hill and published in his work A Sketch of the 29th Regiment of Connecticut Colored Troops (Baltimore, 1867), 25-27, is included in Herbert Aptheker's collection of Negro writings, A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States, 488-490. Hill's words, however, seem to be Coffin's article, slightly adapted. As a sidelight on black acceptance of the tradition of the Great Emancipator this second account is nevertheless interesting. Coffin described how "I said to a colored woman:- 'There is the man who made you free.'" Hill similarly comments, "...I said to a woman, 'Madam, there is the man that made you free.'" There is further recognition of Lincoln's heroic status as an Emancipator when Hill, like Coffin, comments, "It was a deliverer among the delivered." In addition, Hill accepts and repeats Coffin's assertion that, "thousands of colored men in Richmond would have laid down their lives for President Lincoln."

were watching, as it were, by the dim light of the stars, for the dawn of a new day; we were longing for the answer to the agonizing prayers of centuries. Remembering those in bonds as found with them, we wanted to join in the shout for freedom, and in the anthem of the redeemed." When the news came that the proclamation was on the wires, "The effect of this announcement was startling beyond description, and the scene was wild and grand. Joy and gladness exhausted all forms of expression, from shouts of praise to sobs and tears." A Negro preacher "expressed the heartfelt emotion of the hour, when he led all voices in the anthem, 'Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea, Jehovah hath triumphed, his people are free.'" Forced to vacate Tremont Temple, the crowd packed the Twelfth Baptist Church until dawn. It was, said Douglass, "one of the most affecting and thrilling occasions I have ever witnessed, and a worthy celebration of the first step on the part of the nation in its departure from the thraldom of ages." To Charlotte Forten it seemed that January 1, 1863 was "the most glorious day this nation has yet seen, I think." On that day, prominent black abolitionist William Cooper Nell told a large crowd that, "New Year's Day - proverbially known throughout the South as 'Heart break Day' from the trials and horrors peculiar to sales and separations of parents and children, wives and husbands - by this proclamation is henceforth invested with new significance and imperishable glory in the calendar of time." Celebrations were held throughout the North and in the occupied South. The New York Times' description of the Copper Union meeting of January 5, 1863, at which the audience was predominantly black, might have described any of the meetings. The gathering said the Times struck, "joyous notes of jubilee that echoed the edict of Negro emancipation."[1]

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1 Douglass' Monthly, V (Oct., 1862), 721; Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 163-64, 171-74; Commonwealth, Jan.10, 1863; Aptheker, ed., Documentary History of the Negro People, 476-77; Liberator, Jan.16, 1863, quoted in Robert P. Smith, "William C. Nell: Crusading Black Abolitionist", JNH, LV (July, 1970), 195; Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation, 109 (quoting New York Times, Jan. 6, 1863), 111-12.

Northern blacks sometimes gave more specific support to the Emancipator concept of Lincoln. In March, 1863 a delegation of black soldiers, visiting the President, hailed him as a deliverer. This was echoed when in September, 1864 the coloured people of Baltimore presented him with a Bible and black minister S.W. Chase told the President:

> Towards you, sir, our hearts will ever be warm with gratitude. We come to present to you this copy of the Holy Scriptures, as a token of respect for your active participation in furtherance of the cause of the emancipation of our race. This great event will be a matter of history. Hereafter, when our children shall ask what mean these tokens, they will be told of your worthy deeds, and will rise up and call you blessed.

Negro troops, including both free blacks and freedmen, seem to have shared the affection shown for Lincoln by the soldiers in general, and in their case this appears to have reflected gratitude for the Emancipation Proclamations. The image of the Emancipator President was used to recruit blacks in the South, and war correspondent Sylvanus Cadwaller's description of a ride to the front with Lincoln reveals why this tactic was successful:

> The noticeable feature of the ride was the passing of a brigade of negro troops. They were lounging by the roadside, and when he approached came rushing by hundreds screaming, yelling, shouting: "Hurrah for the Liberator; Hurrah for the President," and were wild with excitement and delight. It was a genuine spontaneous outburst of love and affection for the man they looked on as their deliverer from bondage. The President uncovered as he rode through their ranks, and bowed on every hand to his sable worshipers.

At a dinner given as part of the Emancipation Day celebrations in 1865 by Boston's black inhabitants, and attended by the Shaw Guards, who had paraded earlier in honour of the day, the toast proposed was: "Abraham Lincoln - The author of the Emancipation Proclamation, which inaugurated the day we celebrate." It met with repeated cheers and applause.[1]

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1 Washington Daily Morning Chronicle, Sept. 8, 1864, Lincoln, VII, 543 Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 166-167; Benjamin P. Thomas, ed., Three Years with Grant as Recalled by War Correspondent Sylvanus Cadwallader (New York, 1955), 233; Commonwealth, Jan. 7, 1865; Boston Daily Evening Voice, Jan. 3, 1865.

Support for the Emancipator tradition amongst Northern blacks was largely an emotional response to a measure which most had ardently desired. It may also have been a conscious, or unconscious, attempt to set a moral seal upon the emancipation edict and to encourage the President to stand firm against its critics, but political use of the tradition by Negroes, as yet barely discernable, occurred in the South rather than in the North. Once the emancipation edicts had been issued, Northern black leaders turned their attention once more to the struggle for citizenship rights which more immediately affected the lives of Northern Negroes. In this regard, the failings of a President who advocated colonization as the only way by which blacks could hope to secure immediately their rights as citizens were only too obvious. It was therefore the policy of black leadership in the North to combine praise for the Government's anti-slavery measures with criticism of its attitude on Negro equality, and in such an approach heroic images of Lincoln were of limited value. In the South free blacks were also concerned with citizenship rights, but they were very much aware that a viable future for the Southern black community as a whole depended upon securing and preserving universal emancipation. The influence this had upon their attitude to the Emancipator tradition can be illustrated by considering the case of the articulate free black community of New Orleans.[1]

Most Southern blacks, slave or free, probably sympathized with the Northern cause, but some New Orleans free Negroes, particularly wealthy slaveowners, gave moral or financial support to the Confederacy. The occupation of the city and surrounding areas by Union troops and the adoption by the Federal Government of an emancipation policy seems to have convinced

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1 The attitudes of New Orleans free Negroes were probably similar to but are more easily studied than, those of Southern free Negroes elsewhere. Early occupation of the city by Federal troops encouraged black political activity and the establishment of black newspapers, but also, as John Blassingame points out, the free blacks of New Orleans were "far more articulate, literate, and cosmopolitan than blacks in most other Southern cities." Blassingame, Black New Orleans, xvi.

even these men that the best hope for the advancement of their race, and presumably in some cases for the protection of their economic interests, lay in supporting the Union cause. The community as a whole therefore welcomed the Emancipation Proclamation, and after 1862 a major concern of Louisiana free black leadership was their campaign to ensure that Lincoln issued the final proclamation and to urge him to extend emancipation to areas in Louisiana and elsewhere excepted from its operations.

In late 1862 L'Union, which during the war became an influential organ of the Creole community in New Orleans, utilized every available argument in favour of emancipation as it sought to counter criticism of the Emancipation Proclamation. In an appeal to the values of the free labour society of the North, opponents of emancipation were condemned not only as sympathizers with rebellion but also as admirers of oppression, aristocracy and feudalism. Democratic victories in the Autumn elections in the North were blamed not upon the proclamation but upon the absence of Unionists serving in the Army. The idea that the Proclamation might lead to slave revolt was emphatically denied. Like anti-slavery Republicans and their allies in the North, Southern black leaders sought to justify emancipation mainly in political and military terms. The morality of emancipation was played down. When L'Union declared that "élle a été inspirée par le ciel au président Lincoln," the paper meant that the edict was a divinely-inspired measure to crush rebellion. After the final edict had been issued, the paper did pay tribute to the concept of Lincoln as Emancipator when it published the verdict of the New York Tribune that the proclamation, once enforced, "sera sans contredit, le plus grand fait humanitaire de notre époque" and that "l'histoire sera forcée d'enregistrer le nom du Président parmi ceux des plus grands de l'Union Américaine."

A February editorial indicated the extent to which the editors of L'Union accepted and made use of the Emancipator concept of Lincoln. In an attempt to further the idea that emancipation was irrevocable, the paper

claimed that the President would not go back upon his promise of freedom. Just as he had accepted the war, he would accept what followed from it. Thus he would become, a little reluctantly perhaps, the Emancipator: "Il a résolument accepté la guerre; il en acceptera l'indispensable conséquence. Il a entrepris, un peu malgré lui peut-etre, et conduira, nous l'espérons, à bonne fin le plus grand acte de justice qu'ait encore accompli un Président de cette république. Grace à cette initiative, quelques millions de misérables seront delivrés de leurs chaines..." A few days later, responding to rumours of Confederate troops murdering Negro soldiers, the paper warned that, "En ne protegeant pas les esclaves libres par sa proclamation, en ne châtiant pas leurs assassins, M. Lincoln merite d'etre appelé leur bourreau, non leur libératuer." This attempt to force Lincoln to live up to the Emancipator image was an early and somewhat unusual use of the tradition.[1]

Radical black leaders in New Orleans, convinced that Lincoln, and his policies on Reconstruction in particular, would hinder the progress of blacks towards equal rights, had no time for even such qualified support for the Emancipator tradition. Representing their views, the New Orleans Tribune declared in August, 1864 that if Southern whites had desired a conservative president in 1860, "neither North nor South of the Potomac could they have found one who would have more zealously protected the rights of property in man ... than Abraham Lincoln." Nevertheless, most free blacks probably favoured Lincoln's re-election in 1864. Clearly his Negro supporters were influenced by his role in emancipation, and the New Orleans black press continued to give occasional support to the Emancipator tradition. In August 1863 an article in the English version of L'Union asserted that the emancipation policy had surrounded Lincoln, his government and his cause with "a halo of glory, in the estimation of the great and good

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1 L'Union, Nov. 15, 26 and Dec. 10, 20, 1862; Jan. 13 and Feb. 24, 28, 1863.

of all nations ..." In May, 1864 L'Union published an article from a French-language paper sympathetic to the Administration which, in urging Lincoln's re-election, declared: "cet acte réparateur que l'humanité s'est empressé d'enregistrer, cette fameuse proclamation de l'abolition de l'escalvage qui change la face des Etats-Unis, c'est à Lincoln qu'on le doit, et le postérité répétera avec reconnaissance le nom d'un homme qui a brisé les fers de quatres milles d'êtres humains."[1]

By 1865, then, free black leadership had generally accepted the Emancipator tradition. Indeed, co-operating with anti-slavery whites to secure black suffrage, they had already utilized the tradition politically. Thus "The Song of the Black Republicans" published by the Black Republican had associated the image of Lincoln as a heroic emancipator with the call for black rights:[2]

> Now grandly, Abraham Lincoln stands;
> Beneath the Flag of all:
> He flung us Freedom through its stars,
> From them our "Rights" will fall ...

Free black leaders were therefore well prepared to accept and exploit the traditions depicting Lincoln as a hero of their race after his death.

Amongst black Americans as amongst whites, shock and grief over Lincoln's death stimulated the development of myths, but it was too a reflection of black acceptance of Lincoln as a hero of the black race. "All mankind will mourn the death of the universal philanthropist; but Americans must feel more poignant grief for the loss of their child magistrate; and we, my friends," Henry Baker told fellow blacks in New Orleans,, "still deeper sorrow for the friend of the colored man."[3]

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1 The New Orleans Tribune, Aug. 25, 1864, quoted in McPherson, Negro's Civil War, 302-303; The Union, Aug. 20, 1863; le Messager Franco-Americain de New York quoted in L'Union, May 5, 1864. A letter published in The Union, Dec. 1, 1863 probably spoke for many free blacks: "So far as we can learn (,) Abraham Lincoln was with the friends of freedom in 1860 (,) and we think a majority of them will be for him in 1864..."

2 Black Republican, April 15, 1865. Extract from verse 5.

3 New Orlenas Tribune, April 22, 1865.

The Boston Commonwealth was moved by "the pains taken by the poorest and humblest" of the city's black inhabitants, "to signify by outward signs their sorrow." A Philadelphia nurse recorded that, "There was not a contraband hut in all the fields between the Hospital and the city but had its poor little rag of black above the door." In New Orleans La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans described how,"Blancs et noirs étaint plongés dans l'affliction la plus profonde." In the city's free schools even the poorest black children wore tokens of mourning. Public meetings to express black grief were held throughout the country, and Northern Negroes took part in funeral processions escorting Lincoln's coffin and swelled the crowds that watched these. In a black church in Charleston, South Carolina, funeral drapes were left untouched for a year after Lincoln's death.[1]

Black mourning provided, too, more specific evidence of support for Lincoln-Negro traditions. The concept of the Emancipator found expression as a Negro soldier wrote to his fiancee:

> We mourn for the loss of our great and good President as a loss irreparable. Humanity has lost a firm advocate, our race its Patron Saint ... and none will more delight to lisp his name in reverence than the future generations of our people.

One of the banners carried by the two thousand Negroes who marched with the President's funeral procession in Washington, D.C. read on one side "Abraham Lincoln, Our Emancipator", and on the other, "To Millions of Bondmen Liberty he Gave". A Northern woman noted in her diary that black soldiers in New York City's funeral procession wore "Abraham Lincoln, Our Liberator" on their breasts. Black meetings North and South hailed the late President as a "true friend of Liberty and Freedom." Lincoln, said La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans, "a été le bienfaiteur de l'humble, le libérateur de l'opprimé." Blending the traditions of Emancipator and

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1 Commonwealth, April 22, 1865; Dannett, ed., Noble Women, 364; La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans, April 20, 1865; Black Republican, April 22, 1865; Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 342-44; Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 240-46

Negro's Friend, the Reverend George W. Levere told a mass meeting of Blacks in New Orleans:[1]

> Parcourez toutes les plantations; jetez un coup-d'oeil partout ou il y a un homme de sang africain, vous verrez nos frères, le yeux mouillés de larmes, et élévés vers le ciel, offrir, par la prière, leur tribut à la memoire d'Abraham Lincoln. Concitoyens, partout ou vous vous trouverez, benissez hautement le nom d'Abraham Lincoln; il a été l'ami de la population du couleur et celui du people americain.

Black support for the Emancipator tradition was enduring. Celebrations of Emancipation Day on January 1 of each year continued in both Northern and Southern states throughout the nineteenth century, and black papers published emancipation editions. Clearly for those emancipated during the war, the vision of Lincoln as Emancipator had enormous emotional impact. "Where am I!" an elderly black man asked an audience in the postwar South: "I am dreaming!" he continued. "Will some one pinch me, pull my hair, knock me on the head. Can this be Charleston? When last I stood on this green it was to attend a great slave auction. Are you here to be sold. Well, I will sell you. I never separate families. I will not take a husband from his wife. I will not tear a child from its mother's arms; but I will put you all up together. Going - going -" Then raising his eyes and pausing a moment, he added, "Look above you for the bidder. It is the spirit of Abraham Lincoln! O bless God that he died for you - he has bought you all! and given you to yourselves! That I should have lived to see this day!"[2]

Some examples of particularly blatant exploitation of the Emancipator tradition indicate its potency amongst the Southern blacks. An order issued by Union General W.S. Hancock appealing to the former slaves to

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1 Edgar Dinsmore to Carrie Drayton, May (?) 29, 1865 quoted in McPherson, Negro's Civil War, 308; Sandburg, War Years, IV, 399; Daly, Diary, 358, entry for April 26, 1865; New Orleans Tribune, April 22, 1865; La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans, April 22, 23, 1865

2 Henry L. Swint, ed., "Dear Ones at Home": Letters from contraband camps (Nashville, Tenn., 1966), 216.

aid in capturing Lincoln's murderers depicted the late President as the best friend, father, Emancipator and Martyr of the black race, asserting that, "Had he been unfaithful to you and to the great cause of human freedom, he might have lived."[1] Advertisement for the Freedman's Savings Bank also played upon the memory of the Great Emancipator to encourage freedmen and particularly former soldiers to place their savings in its safekeeping. One set of deposit books portrayed the late President with one hand on a Freedman's Bank safe and the other holding broken shackles to symbolize his role in the destruction of slavery, and beneath this was drawn a banner inscribed, "LINCOLN AND FREEDOM."[2] Radical use of a picture of Lincoln on ballot cards to induce newly-enfranchised Negroes to vote the Republican ticket has already been mentioned. Another example was provided by a Texas Black paper, the Freed Man's Press, as it sought to increase its circulation and to win black support for the Republican candidate in the 1868 presidential election. This paper offered to send to every person who formed a subscription club of twenty members, "an engraving of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the great EMANCIPATOR." Developing this theme, the article continued:

> We will have a supply of fine portraits of the great Liberator, Abraham Lincoln in the course of a week or two, and we propose,to send one to every one who will procure us twenty subscribers.
>
> So hurry up, and you shall have a picture of the man to whom is due the credit of emancipating the slave of the South. We know that you all love the memory of Abraham Lincoln and ought to have a picture to teach your children to love him too.

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1 New York Tribune, Sept. 18, 1868.

2 Carl R. Osthaus, Freedmen, Philanthropy and Fraud: A History of the Freedman's Savings Bank (Urbana, Chicago and London, 1976) 55-56. The Bank, which had branches in Washington, New York, and throughout the South, was established by Congress in March 1865. For accounts of its early success and ultimate failure see George R. Bentley, A History of the Freedmen's Bureau (Philadelphia, 1955) and Osthause, op.cit.

When cheap lithographs of the President could be found in the homes of even the poorest Northern blacks, it is likely that former slaves were susceptible to this offer. Reminiscences of those freed during the war confirm that many had some concept of Lincoln as the Emancipator. Alec Bostwick, a child at the time of the Civil War, did not know much about Lincoln or Jefferson Davis, and thought that both were good men, but he was quite sure that, "Us would a been slaves 'til yit, if Mr. Lincoln hadn't set us free." Many, recalling emancipation, thought in terms of the time when, "Mr. Lincoln done said we was free ... when Abraham Lincoln first free 'em .... when Mr. Linktum came down to free us ..."[1]

Black dentist John E. Washington collected numberous examples of black idolization of Lincoln, to produce in 1942 a book which was in itself an act of hero-worship. Washington recalled that his grandmother had kept until her death a newspaper issued on the day Lincoln died, and that she would look at it "sometimes for nearly an hour ..." He remembered too his grandmother and her friends praying to join Lincoln "in the land where freedom forever dwells." "Cousin Annie", he recorded, used to tell people, "that Lincoln didn't die to save the Union, but died to save the old colored people, who lived in his day and generation." According to Washington many former slaves preserved Lincolniana. Visiting the isolated cabin of an elderly woman who had been a slave in Maryland, he found"one of the most valuable collections of Lincoln material I had ever seen." Significantly, over the fire there hung "a picture of

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1 Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, 7; The Freedman's Press, July 18, 1868; The Free Man's Press, Aug. 15, 22, 1868; Commonwealth, April 22, 1865; former slaves Alec Bostwick, Gus Askew and Campbell Armstrong, in S.N., IV, pt. 1, 111; I, 15-16 and II, pt. 2, 71; Aunty Pinky Howard of Arkansas, quoted in Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 16.

soldiers reading to a family of slaves, by the light of a fire, the Emancipation Proclamation." Next to this was a copy of the edict.[1]

Other heroic concepts of Lincoln found favour with those who saw him as the Emancipator. As Mrs. Keckley, dressmaker and confidante to Mary Lincoln, viewed the remains of "the man I had worshipped as an idol", it seemed to her that, "The Moses of my people had fallen in the hour of his triumph. Fame had woven her choicest chaplet for his brow. Though the brow was cold and pale in death, the chaplet would not fade, for God had studded it with the glory of the eternal stars." The image of Lincoln as a Mosaic Emancipator seems to have been especially popular with former slaves who had long identified with the Israelites in bondage in Egypt. A black preacher gave an elaborate version of the tradition, linking a mythical presentation of Lincoln's humble origins with the image of a divinely inspired Emancipator in an explanation of why Lincoln freed the slaves. After describing the emancipation by Moses of the Children of Israel, he continued:

> In America where there was a group of God's children of a different color struggling in bondage and under the oppressor's lash ... God needed more than a Moses of the Israelite kind, and needed one of a type unknown before. So God in answering the prayers of the oppressed deliberately created an individual to His own liking and planned his education in a manner that his language could be understood by all whom he was to lead ... He had to be a child of the soil, speaking the same language and experiencing the same hardships as those people who looked up to him. He had to beunlettered and uncultured in the beginning as they were. He had come through the fiery furnace of the hardships as did the Hebrew children ... He had to have a heart for the most despised and rejected of people. Therefore God created Lincoln as the rough person for this great task.

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1 John E. Washington, They Knew Lincoln (New York, 1942), 31, 36, 52, 147-148, 154-155.

Mingo White of Alabama expressed the idea rather more simply: "The children of Israel was in bondage one time, and God sent Moses to 'liver them. Well, I s'pose that God sent Abe Lincoln to 'liver us."[1]

Even more so than white Americans, slaves had long used biblical language to describe emancipation. Elementary religious instruction was often their only formal education, and, more important, they used religious services to express aspirations for freedom, and later support for the North during the Civil War, while saying nothing Southern whites could prove to be seditious. As inter-sectional conflict intensified in the 1850's, slaves began to look for an immediate and earthly "Day of Jubilee", and when freedom came they gave the credit to God. Lincoln, as author of the emancipation edicts, thus became God's instrument for securing their freedom. From viewing him as a black man's Moses, it was a short step to hailing him as the Messiah of the black race.[2]

The welcome which the Freedmen of Richmond gave the President in April 1865 provided evidence of the development, before his assassination, of the black tradition viewing Lincoln as a Messiah. As Lincoln stepped ashore at the Richmond wharf, some Negro workmen recognized him from his pictures, and one of them, an old man of sixty, exclaimed, "Bless de Lord, dere is de great Messiah! I knowed him soon as I seed him. He's bin in my heart fo' long yeahs, and he's cum at las to free his chillum from dir bondage! Glory, Hallelujah!" As the President entered the city

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1 Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 341; Washington, They Knew Lincoln, 147-48; Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 16.

2 For a discussion of the religious life of slaves, see Eugene D. Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made (London, 1975) 161-284. Slave owners were not necessarily naive concerning the meaning of slave prayers. A former slave recalled of her master that, "old man Heard despised to hear any one pray saying they were only doing so that they might become free niggers." S.N., IV, pt. 1, 24.

another incident occurred. Amongst the crowd of blacks one woman held up her sick child, saying, "See yeah, honey, look at the Saviour, and you'll git well." Slaves did not need to see Lincoln to share this view of him. A Sea Islands contraband told White teacher Laura M. Towne, "Lincoln died for we, Christ died for we, and me believe him the same mans." It was, however, his edict of emancipation rather than his assassination which secured for Lincoln his god-like status in the eyes of the slaves. As one ex-slave commented: "I think Abe Lincoln was next to the Lord. He done all he could for the slaves, he set 'em free." "I never seed Mr. Lincoln," recalled another, "but when they told me 'bout him, I thought he was partly God."[1]

Playing a part in the development of the black tradition viewing Lincoln as a Messiah figure was the concept of him as a supernatural being. "Oh Abraham Lincoln, are you dead? are you dead?" cried an old Negro woman as she laid evergreens on his coffin. The casket before her eyes, she could hardly comprehend that life had ended for the President as for other mortals. The initial reaction of many whites to Lincoln's assassination was also one of disbelief. Amongst blacks, however, this may have reflected the concept, especially prevalent amongst former slaves, of Lincoln as a superhuman being. The supernatural played an important role in slave culture and religion,[2] and doubtless there was a tendency for former slaves to feel that the man whom they believed responsible for their freedom could be no mere mortal. Perhaps they even applied to

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1 Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 236, 245; Wecter, Hero in America, 251; Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 16, 240. It is interesting to contrast the anecdote concerning the elderly Richmond Negro, as told by Quarles, with the version which appears on page 15 of Abraham Lincoln, The Great Emancipator, a booklet published by an insurance company in 1926. In the latter the additional comment that the Negro kissed Lincoln's feet and the failure to mention Lincoln's embarrassment help to strengthen the picture of the Messianic Emancipator.

2 See Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll, esp. pp. 215-25. Many examples of slave superstitution can be found in Botkin, Lay My Burden Down.

Lincoln a concept of a superhuman emancipator built up during generations of slavery.

Colonel McKaye, member of a Committee which reported to the President on the condition of freedmen on the North Carolina coast, told how the ex-slaves:

> Had an idea of God, as the Almighty, and they had realised in their former condition the power of their masters. Up to the time of the arrival among them of the Union forces, they had no knowledge of any other power. Their masters fled upon the approach of our soldiers, and this gave the slaves a conception of a power greater than that exercised by them. This power they called "Massa Linkum".

The close association between this supernatural Lincoln and the Messiah tradition linking him with Christ is indicated by an incident which, according to McKaye, occurred at the freedmen's place of worship:

> On a certain day, when there was quite a large gathering of people, considerable confusion was created by different persons attempting to tell who and what "Massa Linkum" was. In the midst of the excitement the white-headed leader commanded silence. "Brederin," said he, "you don't know nasen' what you'se talkin' 'bout. Now, you just listen to me. Massa Linkum, he eberywhar. He know eberyting. Then, solemnly looking up, he added, "He walk de earf like de Lord!"

A Sea Islands Negro expressed a similar idea when, replying to a fellow freedman's wish that he might see Lincoln, he commented, "No man see Linkum. Linkum walk lak Jesus walk - no man see Linkum." The tradition probably found support mainly amongst slaves and Freedmen, but was not necessarily confined to these groups, for much the same concept of Lincoln seems to lie behind the statement of the educated and cultivated Elizabeth Keckley that Lincoln had been "no common mortal".[1]

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1 Botkin, Civil War Treasury, 239; Sandburg, War Years, IV, 375; Elizabeth Keckley quoted in Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 341. An incident similar to that described by McKaye is recorded in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. The Negroes involved were workmen on the wharves of Beaufort who were conjecturing as to the qualities and characteristics of the President. An aged "praise man" interrupted the discussion to declare: "What do you know 'bout Massa Linkum. Massa Linkum be ebrewhere. He walk de earth like de Lord." O.R., 3 ser., III, 436, quoted in Wiley, Southern Negroes, 15.

Not all blacks, not even all slaves, saw Lincoln as a hero. In January 1863 the Commonwealth published a letter allegedly written by a Norfolk black which attributed Lincoln's decision to except certain areas from the Emancipation Proclamation to racial prejudice. Indifference to, rather than criticism of, Lincoln is sometimes apparent in the reminiscence of former slaves. Some were not even sure who he was. Asked what she thought of Lincoln, Jefferson Davis and Booker T. Washington, "Aunt Molly" Ammond looked puzzled and said, after a moment's hesitation, "I don't believe I is had the pleasure of meetin' dem gentl'mens." Some had clearly been exposed to the Emancipator tradition, but were not very interested in it. "No'm, I don't know nothin' 'bout Abe Lincoln 'ceptin dey say he sot us free," Henry Cheatam told an interviewer, adding, "an' I don't know nothin' 'bout dat neither." Others rejected the tradition. As one former slave commented: "Abraham Lincoln gits too much praise. I say, shucks, give God the praise." Yet it is clear that the concept of Lincoln as a hero of the Negro race found widespread and enduring support amongst black Americans, and that they became an established part of the thought of those blacks particularly who had experienced slavery and emancipation.[1]

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1 Commonwealth, Jan. 17, 1863; Molly Ammond and Henry Cheatam, formerly slaves in Alabama and Mississippi respectively, S.N., I, 11, 71; Alice Douglass of Oklahoma, quoted in Botkin, Lay My Burden Down, 16. In reminiscences collected by the Federal Writers' project many former slaves expressed a belief that they had been better off in slavery, perhaps indicating that a sizeable minority would have qualified or rejected the Emancipator tradition. Sometimes this did reflect criticism of the condition of Southern blacks during Reconstruction, but most who looked back favourably on slavery were elderly blacks comparing an ellegedly golden past with their present poverty. It is significant that most stressed the abundance of food in slavery times. One comment of Henry Bland of Georgia is revealing: "When asked to describe the living quarters of the slaves on his plantation he looked around his room and muttered: 'Dey wuz a lot better than dis one.'" (S.N., IV, pt 1, 85). Such attitudes expressed in the 1930's may then be a particularly unreliable basis for speculation on slave attitudes to emancipation in the 1860's.

Lincoln's assassination not only stimulated popular development of the heroic images of him amongst blacks, but also provided black leaders North and South with their first significant opportunity to exploit these images politically. The subsequent development of heroic concepts of Lincoln as black political myth, especially in the South, must have contributed to their enduring character.

In 1865, politically conscious Negroes, concerned with the future of their race in American, and with that of the newly-emancipated slaves in particular, encouraged and utilized the developing Lincoln myths to win black support for the Republican Party. The editors of the Black-Republican spoke for the free and emancipated black population of Louisiana, and probably of the South in general, when in an address to their readers they declared in early April 1865: "White men may be monarchists, aristocrats,or oligarchs, but American colored men should be nothing but Republicans." It was not pretended that this was a non-partisan appeal to republicanism in its widest sense, for the address continued:

> By the help of God our paper will be an instrument, however, humble, to unite our people, to bind them to the great Government that gave us freedom, to restore the National power, and establish it upon the rock of freedom and justice, and to strengthen the hands and gladden the spirit of our beloved chief magistrate, Abraham Lincoln, in whose heart is the cause of the poor.

The paper assured those Northern whites who had once been called "Black Republicans" that it considered the title an honour.[1]

As the war drew to a close, most Negro leaders saw as their first priority the establishment of full citizenship rights for black Americans. This had long been the aim of Northern blacks and both they and Southern black leaders considered such rights essential to secure in any real sense the emancipation of former slaves from white control promised by the

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1. Black Republican, April 15, 1865.

Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment. Blacks had secured the right to fight, said coloured soldier H.J. Maxwell, speaking at the Convention of the Colored People of Tennessee in August, 1865. "We want," he continued, "two more boxes, beside the cartridge box - the ballot box and the jury box. We shall gain them. The government of this nation will not prove false to its plighted faith. It proclaimed freedom and we shall have that in fact."[1] The interests of black leadership in the South therefore coincided with those of Radical Republicans and anti-slavery whites in general who sought to establish a Southern wing of the Republican Party and at the same time to preserve emancipation, and other fruits of the Northern victory, through Negro suffrage. Black leaders therefore co-operated with white Radicals to secure support for the Republican Party amongst Southern blacks and, especially, amongst the newly-freed slaves.[2] In doing so, they exploited the image of Lincoln as friend, hero and Emancipator of the black race, promoting Lincoln myths as part of a Radical interpretation of the Civil War and Lincoln's assassination.

The New Orleans black press, representing and directing its arguments towards the city's free Negro community and rapidly expanding population of former slaves, quickly gave expression to Radical Republican themes in its response to the assassination. Lincoln's murder and the attack on Seward were denounced by the Black Republican as the natural culmination of slavery's rebellion striking at the hero of emancipation:

> They are the fell spirit of slavery breaking from the knife of the assassin - slavery, that for two hundred years has educated whole generations in cruelty and the spirit of murder; that, in the end, drove half a nation to a rebellion to destroy liberty, now whets the knife of the assassin to murder, in cold blood, the most illustrous exemplar of freedom.

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1 Sergt. H.J. Maxwell, 2d Battery, U.S. Col. L.A., quoted in The Colored Tennessean, Aug. 12, 1865.

2 For example, South Carolina Radical Republican Robert Smalls, a former slave who saw the Republican Party as "the party of Lincoln which unshackled the necks of four millions human beings." Smalls to Whitfield McKinlay, Sept. 12, 1912, Letters to and from Robert Smalls, Carter G. Woodson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., quoted in Okon E. Uya, From Slavery to Public Service: Robert Smalls, 1839-1915 (New York, 1971), 57.

In a later editorial, the traditions viewing Lincoln as Negro's Friend, divinely inspired Emancipator, and martyr of Black Emancipation followed rapidly upon one another in a dual indictment of slavery and rebellion:[1]

> The greatest earthly friend of the colored race has fallen by the same spirit that has so long oppressed and destroyed us. In giving us our liberty he has lost his own life. Following the rule of the great and glorious in the world, he has paid the penalty of Apostelship. He has sealed with his blood his Divine commission to be the liberator of a people. Hereafter, through all time, wherever the Black race may be known in the world; whenever and wherever it shall lay the foundations of its power; build its cities and rear its temples, it will sacredly preserve if not deify the name of "Abraham, the Martyr."

The New Orleans-Tribune, similarly blending traditions, declared that Lincoln's "true glory" and his "great fame throughout future ages" would be the Proclamation of Emancipation which he had sealed with his blood. In Lincoln's death, continued the Tribune, "we are mourning for a benefactor of our race. Sadness has taken hold of our hearts. No man can suppress his feeling at this hour of affliction. Lincoln and John Brown are two martyrs, whose memories will live united in our bosoms. Both have willingly jeopardized their lives for the sacred cause of Freedom." The myths established, the Tribune published, two days later, an article which incorporated the Martyr-Emancipator tradition into a plea for Radical Reconstruction. The situation at the time of Lincoln's assassination had, the paper claimed, been critical, for, secessionists who had "walked ankle deep in the blood of our brethren" were to regain both property and political power, and would impose on blacks a servitude similar to slavery, recovering through cunning what they could not preserve through force of arms. In a typical Radical argument, Lincoln became the gentle hero of emancipation whose very goodness made him unfit to deal with rebels:

> Abraham Lincoln, the honest, the good, the religious man, who did not understand - be it said to his honor and glory - duplicity and trickery, believed in the protestations and solemn oaths of rebels. He was too confident, too lenient, and too mild. He was repaid with a pistol's bullet.

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1 Black Republican, April 20, 22, 1865

Lincoln had failed to realize what the Tribune was sure its readers knew, that slavery demoralized Southern whites, and that, "The varnished aristocrats of the South are nothing less than elegant slave-drivers, and refined horse-thieves and assassins." The paper recalled that six months earlier one such aristocrat had, in a Georgia paper, offered half a million dollars for the heads of Lincoln and Seward. Determined that none should miss the point, the Tribune expressed the theme of the article once more in terms calculated to touch a responsive chord amongst blacks, white Unionists and Republicans in general:

> It (rebellion) was inaugurated in blood, it grew up in blood and now, at its dying hour, it falls stained with the blood of two illustrious victims. Men who pursue their fellow-beings with blood hounds, men who take pleasure in whipping the flesh of their flesh and in devising new means of torturing their slaves, men who have hunted down the unionists of the Southern States and shot them from behind bushes and trees - such men are fit to murder in cold blood and to assasinate in broad daylight.
>
> A generous and liberal peace was on the eve of being agreed upon with the Southern people. For the sake of Union and concord, the future was in danger of being compromised. The interests of the black races were about - to say the least - to be neglected. But, by this great catastrophe, the eyes of Union men, throughout the land, have at last been opened.

Thus the martyred hero of liberty, Lincoln, was used to support the Tribune's call to, "Keep the rebels down. They have shown what they are about. No restoration of property; give away their lands and their homes. No restoration of political rights."[1]

The promotion by black leadership of Lincoln myths was illustrated at a mass meeting of New Orleans Negroes held following Lincoln's assassination. Prominent Black Oscar J. Dunn called to order the meeting, at which some ten thousand Negroes were reported to have assembled in Congo Square, traditional meeting place of New Orleans slaves, prior to joining white citizens in Lafayette Square to pay tribute to Lincoln. Resolutions prepared by a committee which included Creole leader Caesar C.

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1 New Orleans Tribune, April 20, 22, 1865

Antoine and James H. Ingraham, a leading figure in the English-speaking Negro community of the city, gave full expression to the mythical images of Lincoln. After deploring Lincoln's death, the resolutions declared him a second Moses of the Christian world and a true friend of Liberty and Freedom, and mourned the loss of a true friend of the black race and humanity in general. The Negro race would, the resolutions promised, forever cherish his memory. At the same meeting Radical use of the traditions by a black leader was also illustrated as Francis Esteves declared that:

> Abraham Lincoln (will) be honored forever by the men of (our) race. We can see to-day the expression of grief and affliction in their (countenances?) and their faces. Give us the rights invested in all citizens and we (will) crush the rebellion and avenge Abraham Lincoln. (Applause).

Esteves promised that Lincoln would live eternally in the memory of the black race, and urged black people to unite in swearing that they would never forget Lincoln's name. Thus a tribute to the concept of the Great Emancipator was also a call for black unity.[1]

So in 1865 Southern black leaders, attempting to influence both Northern White and Southern black opinion in favour of the Radical Reconstruction policies through which they hoped to preserve emancipation and to secure, if possible, citizenship rights for Negroes, were as anxious as white anti-slavery men to perpetuate and utilize the concept of Lincoln as a friend of the Negro and the heroic Emancipator who had died a Martyr to Liberty. It was in their interests to promote the idea put forward by La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans when it announced Lincoln's assassination, that "l'homme qui a signé le Proclamation d'Emancipation scelle la (avec) son sang. Il n'était hier qu'un (President) des Etats-Unis; il est devenue (aujourd'hui) un maryr, dont la gloire sera perpetuelle."[2]

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1 New Orleans Tribune, April 23, 24, 1865; La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans, April 23, 1865. The words which in the extract from Esteves' speech are enclosed by brackets are obscure in the Library of Congress microfilm copy of the New Orleans Tribune for April 24, 1865.

2 La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans, April 20, 1865

Northern black leaders found Lincoln myths similarly useful, as Frederick Douglass showed when in a speech of October 1865 he developed the theme that Lincoln was "an excellent medium through which to view the dangers which surround us." After listing several examples of "the villainy of the South", Douglass delivered his message:

> (Southern slaveholders) have assassinated Abraham Lincoln, and he hoped that the American people would appreciate the lesson of the deed. Dying, as he did...dying by violence for a just and loyal government as against an unjust one, dying by the hand of slavery, his name becomes a text from which to preach the great doctrines of equality that are necessary to the perpetuation of our government. The man who casts any vote in favor of proscription of race, insults the memory of Abraham Lincoln and causes his wounds to bleed afresh.

In October 1866 the Illinois State Convention of Colored Men issued an "Address to the American People" which urged the adoption of Negro suffrage in the name of the martyred Lincoln:

> A voice from the tomb of the martyred Lincoln now seems to reach the national ear, saying, "The hour is come in which to enfranchise the colored people, that they may help you keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom.

Other such black conventions generally adopted resolutions which paid tribute to Lincoln and urged the necessity for Negro suffrage, thus attempting to use the heroic Lincoln indirectly to endorse their call for the rights of citizenship.[1]

The state convention held by Illinois blacks in 1866 coincided with the final phase of the 1866 election campaign, and, though evidence is limited, it seems reasonable to suppose that black and white Republicans used the heroic Lincoln in attempts to influence the way in which enfranchised blacks used their votes and to win Northern white sympathy for attempts to improve the civil and political status of black Americans and for the party chiefly associated with these.

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1 Commonwealth, Oct. 28, 1865; Quarles, Lincoln and the Negro, 246. The First Convention of Colored Men of Kentucky, meeting at Lexington on March 22-26, 1866, passed resolutions calling for citizens' rights (although prepared to waive for the time being the ballot) and, amongst other things, approving the erection of a monument to "our Martyr-President, Abraham Lincoln, the emancipator of our race..." The Tennessean, July 18, 1866.

By 1866 early disillusionment with emancipation or with the Republican Party's failure to secure voting rights for black Americans may have made some Negroes less receptive to mythical images of the late President,[1] but North and South emancipation celebrations testified to that continuing black support for the image of Lincoln as Emancipator which made the heroic Lincoln politically useful to black leadership.[2] Such celebrations may have been used in 1866 as a campaign tactic to consolidate black support for the party which claimed the heroic Lincoln as its spiritual leader. Although January 1 was the date sacred to those who each year held ceremonies to commemorate emancipation, in 1866 many such celebrations were also held in September when the congressional election campaigns were in full swing. It is perhaps revealing that the New York Council of the Colored Loyal League was anxious that there should be a grand parade of blacks in that city in September to observe the anniversary of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation,[3] and that blacks in King's County, New York, used the occasion of their celebration of the emancipation edict to call for equal rights for their race. Significantly, Stewart L. Woodford, Republican candidate for Lieutenant-Governor of New York, had been invited to address the King's County meeting.[4]

Such demonstrations were, as indicated, not intended to influence black voters only. Indeed, in spite of the evidence of some criticism of Republicanism by blacks mentioned above, it seems probable that while the

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1 The New York Times (Sept. 16, 1866) reported that Southern blacks had lost confidence in the Freedmen's Bureau and quoted a black paper in Memphis as saying that "the Yankees are as mean as the secesh." Doubtless there were freedmen who had come to feel, like one speaker at a black meeting in Danville, Virginia, that the white men of the South were "their only true friends." (World, Sept. 19, 1866). For evidence of Northern black disappointment over Negro suffrage see World, Oct. 8, 1866.

2 Many such celebrations were reported in the Northern press. The New York Times (Jan. 3, 4, 1866) reported that large numbers participated in black celebrations at Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia, on January 1, 1866.

3 World, Sept. 22, 1866.

4 White abolitionists also spoke in favour of Negro suffrage at this meeting on Sept. 25, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 26, 1866.

alternative to the party which was associated with the destruction of slavery was co-operation with the Democrats, who traditionally appealed to anti-Negro sentiment in the North and represented the pro-slavery element in the South, the majority of black voters would support Republican tickets. Of equal, if not greater, concern to black leaders, therefore, was the need to win Northern white sympathy for attempts to improve the civil and political status of black Americans, and here, too, in this election year, the heroic Lincoln was utilized. Thus Henry Highland Garnet used the occasion of an emancipation celebration in New York in January 1866 to call for voting rights for blacks, and Frederick Douglass seemed to hint that the Emancipator would have endorsed black demands for equal rights when he told the Southern Loyalists' Convention that under Johnson's Reconstruction policy there would come a time when government officials in the South would have "falsified the Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln, made it a nulity (sic.), and have made the emancipated slave merely emancipated to society..."[1] Similarly, the King's County meeting mentioned above, which adopted an address calling for universal suffrage, passed a resolution declaring, "That the proclamation of Emancipation issued by President Lincoln has imposed upon the people of the United States the solemn duty of establishing in every State the principles that will govern and protect every citizen as equal before the law."[2]

As this suggests, black leaders soon became hostile to Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction policy, and when, through liberal use of presidential pardoning power, he allowed to develop a situation where Southern whites seemed on the verge of regaining control in former rebel states and Southern conventions framed legislation designed to re-establish white control over the black population in the South, black leadership used the heroic Lincoln

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1 Garnet at New York, Jan. 2, 1866: New York Times, Jan. 3, 1866; Douglass at Philadelphia, Sept. 6, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 7, 1866.
2 New York Tribune, Sept. 26, 1866.

to attack the President and to endorse Radical Reconstruction policies.

At a meeting held by blacks in Sacramento on January 1, 1867 to celebrate Lincoln's "immortal Proclamation of freedom to our race", resolutions were passed which bitterly attacked Johnson for failing to fulfil the promise of that proclamation and for thus betraying the memory of Lincoln. The preamble to these resolutions established Lincoln as the martyr-hero of emancipation and by implication as a hero of Negro equality, declaring:

> through the decree of Divine Providence, and the wisdom, patriotism and fidelity to principle of Abraham Lincoln, the martyr President of the United States, we, the colored race, have been placed in a position to claim and maintain equality under the wise provisions of the law ...

After stressing the role of blacks as soldiers during the Civil War, the resolutions turned to Johnson, and it was resolved,

> That we sincerely regret the course pursued by the President, Andrew Johnson, in his abandonment of the course adopted by his worthy and illustrious predecessor in favor of freedom and freedmen, and that his abandonment of the high and holy principles of universal freedom justly entitle him to the cognomen of the arch traitor of our country.

Praise for Radical Reconstruction followed as the meeting endorsed the acts of the current Congress and hailed the re-election of many of its members as revealing "undying fidelity to the principles of freedom and freedmen." Finally, the image of the Great Emancipator was again associated with the cause of black rights as the concluding resolution declared:

> That we recommend to our race throughout all time to come, to celebrate each succeeding anniversary of the issuing of the immortal Proclamation of Freedom, which struck from four millions of slaves the chains which bound them in hereditary and perpetual servitude.[1]

The use of another mythical image of Lincoln in attacks upon the President seems to have been invited by Johnson himself. Following the

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1 The Elevator, Jan. 11, 1867. This was a black weekly journal first published in San Francisco, in March, 1865.

assassination of Lincoln, he utilized the myth of the Mosaic Emancipator in a promise calculated to win the support of both white Radicals and blacks, as Henry Wilson indicated when, in a speech to freedmen in Washington on July 4, 1865, he declared:

> I believe that the President of the United States, who told the black man in the capital of his own Tennessee that if no one else would be their Moses and be to them what Abraham Lincoln would have been, had he been spared to complete his great and good work, will keep his promise and see the redemption of a race.

In the eyes of both Radicals and blacks, Johnson betrayed that promise, and they used it against him.

In January, 1867 a poem published in The Elevator in honour of the Emancipation Proclamation contrasted Johnson with the "real" Moses of the black race, Abraham Lincoln, in a plea for Radical Reconstruction which blended this Lincoln tradition with visions of him as the Great Emancipator and Martyr of the black race and the nation. Presenting a Radical interpretation of the War as a struggle against slavery, the poem emphasized that as men of "every hue" had been found in Union lines, all should receive the prize of "equality before the law" for which it was alleged the North had fought. This prize, and the North's victory, was asserted to be in jeopardy as: the conquered chiefs of the Slave South sought to regain power. The attack upon Johnson followed immediately:

> The self-style Moses brings the aid
> Of power and place to help them through.
> To crush the race by him betrayed,
> And every man who, loyal, true,
> And faithful to his country's laws -
> Declines to aid the tyrant's cause.
> Our real Moses stretched his rod
> Four years ago across the sea,
> And through its blood-dyed waves we trod
> The path that leads to Liberty.
> ....
> And, like his prototype of old,
> Who used his power, as Heaven had told,
> To God and to the people true,
> Died with the promised land in view.
> ....
> And ever while the earth remains,
> His name among the first shall stand
> Who freed four million slaves from chains,
> And saved thereby his native land.

In the name of this heroic Lincoln, the poem went on to attack the Black Codes passed by white-dominated Southern legislatures, playing too upon the virtue of labour, a fundamental theme in Northern society, as it denounced those who invented "oppressive laws" to "cramp the energies of men who toil." The poem ended with an appeal for racial equality before the law to prevent the threatened revival of slavery and the power of slaveholders and to fulfil the promise of America as a land of the free. This poem provides, then, an excellent example of how black propagandists of Radical Reconstruction, like white, blended fundamental themes in American life and in the ideology of the Free North with the myths of the free labour society in a powerful appeal for the policies which were seen as crucial to the future of the black race.[1]

Black support for the Republican Party and for Radical Reconstruction was again demonstrated in 1868. Indeed, in the opinion of some historians, the Negro vote was crucial to Grant's popular majority in the presidential election of that year.[2] Contemporaries observed that Republican politicians were anxious to secure black votes. According to one Democrat, the Radical cry in the South was, "Help, help us, Cuffee, or we sink!"[3] As in 1866, there is evidence to suggest that black and white Republicans used the heroic Lincoln in efforts to consolidate black support for their party, particularly in the Southern States.

Once again emancipation celebrations perpetuating the image of the Republican Party's hero as the Great Emancipator may have served as a campaign tactic. Certainly some appear to have had political overtones.

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1 A Poem. Written for...the Fourth Anniversary of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, by J. M. Whitfield. Published in The Elevator, Jan. 11, 1867.

2 Coleman, Election of 1868, 370; Burnham, Presidential Ballots, 100; Randall and Donald, 640-641, quoting Coleman.

3 Gen. Toombs quoted from Atlanta (Ga.) Daily Constitution in New York World, Sept. 13, 1868.

They had not assembled "to advocate their rights", one black speaker told Brooklyn Negroes on September 21, but only after he had used the occasion of their emancipation celebration to assert the status of blacks as citizens.[1] Frederick Douglass, ardent exponent of black rights, was one of the speakers at a celebration on August 26 "gotten up by the colored people of Geneva..."[2] At Frederick in Maryland on September 2, Hugh L. Bond, one of the state's prominent white exponents of Negro suffrage, was amongst those who addressed a large audience of blacks gathered to celebrate emancipation.[3]

The memory of the heroic Lincoln was also invoked at black demonstrations in support of the Republican Party. The messages carried on transparencies by a procession of black Republicans in New Orleans on September 12 included a call to "Remember Lincoln".[4] Such processions were clearly considered to be politically significant. According to the New York Times, both Radicals and Democrats took a close interest in a very similar demonstration reported to have taken place on September 24, the former estimating that fifteen thousand blacks had participated, while the latter insisted that less than six thousand had done so and noted the presence of several hundred white men.

A more overt way of using the heroic Lincoln to influence black voters was demonstrated in Georgia where a document entitled "Georgia: An Address to Colored Voters" was extensively circulated during the 1868 campaign. Interpreting the expulsion from the State Legislature early in September of its black members as part of a revolutionary attempt to strip coloured people of their rights and reduce them to virtual slavery, the Address called upon Georgia blacks to rally to the Republican Party and elect Grant. To drive home its message, the Address appealed to the memory

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1 Remarks of Elias B. Conover: World, Sept. 24, 1868.
2 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1868.
3 Ibid., Sept. 4, 1868. Such emancipation celebrations continued to have political value. At Nashville in 1870 blacks observing Emancipation Day adopted resolutions expressing gratitude to and affection for Lincoln and support President Grant, his Cabinet, Congress and the Republican Party, as "their real friends": Chicago Tribune, Jan 3, 1870.
4 World, Sept. 13, 1868.
5 New York Times, Oct. 4, 1868.

of the Great Emancipator as, endorsing both the Republican Party and its presidential candidate through association with the heroic Lincoln, it declared: "Republicans made the colored people free. Mr. Lincoln was a Republican. When he was President he issued the first Proclamation of Freedom. Gen. Grant is a Republican. He conquered the Rebels, and gave effect to the Proclamation of Mr. Lincoln."[1] The image of the Emancipator was similarly but not explicitly exploited when black papers urged readers to "...stick to the party of Freedom....the party which emancipated the slave..."[2]

According to the New York Times, black emancipation celebrations in Richmond in 1868 attracted less support than in previous years, partly because Southern blacks were finding emancipation "a myth" and the hopes held out to them "a sham to get their votes."[3] However, appeals to the memory of the heroic Lincoln could still be expected to find favour with black Americans, for it is clear that, North and South, many blacks were still anxious, as one of their spokesmen expressed it, "to celebrate the anniversary of the day when Abraham Lincoln issued the great Emancipation Proclamation."[4]

Whether such exploitation of the Emancipator image of Lincoln was necessary to secure black support for the Republican Party is another matter. In spite of the disillusionment noted by the Times and discussed earlier,[5] and although some Southern Democrats now supported qualified Negro suffrage in an attempt to win black votes while others resorted to intimidation to prevent the freedmen from supporting Republican tickets,[6]

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1 New York Tribune, Sept. 24, 1868.
2 The Free Press (quoting the Portsmouth Journal), April 5, 1868.
3 New York Times, Jan. 4, 1868.
4 Remarks of Elias B. Conover at Brooklyn, op.cit.
5 See above, p.327.
6 Coleman, Election of 1868, 318-19; New York Times, Sept. 2, Oct. 7, 1868.

it is clear that most black Americans continued to support the party which was associated with emancipation and showed at least limited concern for the protection of black rights. Significantly, a regiment of black Republicans who took part in a torchlight procession of "Boys in Blue" at Boston on October 23 carried a transparency which read, "We were chattels in 1860; we are men in 1868."[1] Also revealing is a Declaration of Rights adopted by the State Convention of Colored Men which met at Utica on October 6. Appealing for their rights as citizens to be protected these New York blacks stressed that, "we do not now counsel any other means than thoughts, words, and the integrity of the Republican party."[2]

As such conventions show, in concerning themselves primarily with Negro suffrage and education black leaders largely ignored the crucial issue of economic independence for the emancipated slaves. Doubtless this was in part a pragmatic response to contemporary white attitudes. By the end of the Civil War most white Northerners had accepted that wartime emancipation had been necessary and just, and Radical propaganda helped to convince many that Negroes should be given the vote to preserve their freedom and to prevent any revival of the slaveholding aristocracy that, it was alleged, had rebelled against the Government. There remained, however, considerable racial prejudice in the North, which would have doomed any scheme to confiscate the land of white men, even if they were former rebels, to give the freedmen an economic start in life. The ideology of the free labour society, which emphasized that once society had offered to all the opportunity to rise by their own efforts, those who failed to do so deserved to be poor, also militated against popular support for such schemes. Indeed, they gained little support amongst Radical Republicans. In addition,

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1 New York Tribune, Oct. 29, 1868.
2 Ibid., Oct. 8, 1868.

even if such confiscation had been acceptable to Northern whites, it would have caused considerable bitterness amongst Southern whites with whom most black leaders hoped to be able to co-operate, eventually, in the establishment of a new society in their section.

Yet it was not simply pragmatism on the part of black leadership which shaped their policies. For black Americans, seeking above all to integrate themselves into American society, accepted without question most of its fundamental values. This was clearly illustrated in a resolution by which the Convention of the Colored Men of Ohio held in Xenia in January 1865, pledging itself to aid former slaves in their efforts for complete freedom and enfranchisement, advised the freedmen, "to enter upon their new and free life with an earnest determination to cultivate among themselves education, temperance, frugality and morality, together with all other things 'that pertain to a well ordered and dignified life ...'" That the emancipated blacks had no wish to challenge these values is indicated by a resolution adopted at the First Convention of the Colored Men of Kentucky held at Lexington in March, 1866. The Convention resolved,

> to labor to the utmost of our poor ability to infuse into the minds of our colored fellow-citizens, the desire to educate themselves and their children; to establish and to maintain well-ordered characters; and to secure by manly endeavor in all honorable industrial pursuits, wealth with all its attendant material blessings.

Indeed, it was in terms of fundamental American values that blacks sought citizenship rights. Thus Sergeant H.J. Maxwell, calling for these rights, told the 1865 Convention of the Colored People of Tennessee that, "He was there as an American, claiming the inalienable rights of a man."[1]

Accepting the values of the free labor society of the North, in part a rejection of those of the South which had enshrined slavery, and at the same time seeking integration in that society, black Americans were

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1 Aptheker, Documentary History of the Negro People, 529; The Tennessean, July 18, 1866; The Colored Tennessean, Aug. 12, 1865.

predisposed to accept its heroes and myths, especially when it was in their interests to do so. The Declaration of Sentiment adopted by California blacks and read at their meetings to celebrate the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1866 and 1867 shows how acceptance of these basic values and exploitation of Lincoln myths could be blended in a statement of black aspirations calculated to win sympathy from the North while providing guidance for future action by the black community. After declaring the determination of blacks to secure and maintain their freedom and their rights as loyal citizens, the Declaration continued:

> 7th - We declare our unalterable determination ever to sustain, by word and example, the free institutions of our native land, and the Republicanism of the American Government.
> 8th - We declare that industry, education, virtue and morality should be the leading principles of our lives, and to maintain these principles we should encourage agricultural pursuits, the mechanic arts, support institutions of learning and sustain every good cause which leads to financial, moral, social and political elevation.

The ninth article of the Declaration associated Negro freedom with the heroic Lincoln and his assassination as it declared:[1]

> we hail the dawn of this day with joy and gladness, as the beginning of a new year, and as the anniversary of the event in the history of our nation so dear to the hearts of the colored people of the country; yet with sorrow do we remember, and sadly regret, the great sacrifices which was (sic) necessary in order to accomplish and sustain the principles of the great event we this day celebrate - the greatest of those sacrifices, the assassination of the great and good man, ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

With the abandonment of Southern Negroes and their interests by the Republican Party which contributed to the collapse of Radical Reconstruction,[2] and allowed native white Southerners to regain political power in their section and to reimpose their control over its black population, black leaders were forced to change their tactics and to drop the Radical interpretation of the war which had served to promote the interests of their race. Their support for and use of the concept of Lincoln as a hero

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1 The Elevator, Jan. 11, 1867

2 See Patrick W. Riddleberger, "The Radicals' Abandonment of the Negro during Reconstruction", JNH, XLV (April, 1960), 88-102.

of the Negro race continued in spite of the disillusionment this produced,[1] for mythical images of Lincoln proved as flexible in the hands of black leaders as the Lincoln myths in general were for Northern white leadership.

Recognizing that indifference in the North and direct opposition in the South prevented direct political activity by blacks at a local or national level, conservative black leadership, dominant in spite of the criticism of more radical blacks, sought to advance the interests of their race through co-operation with white Americans North and South. At the same time, they encouraged blacks to concentrate upon improving themselves economically and through education, and avoided aspirations for immediate integration at a social or political level which would lead to conflict with the white race. The 1891 platform of a Kansas black paper, The American Citizen, reflected these attitudes. Discussing the question of race, the paper urged that Negroes should feel no grief if excluded from certain social circles, and implied that this held for politics too. Land, good character and culture were alleged to be more important for an oppressed class than interference in politics.[2]

The speeches of conservative black leader Booker T. Washington show clearly the continuing usefulness of Lincoln myths within the framework of changing black aspirations. Like many black leaders a self-made man, Washington personally accepted the free labour ideology of the North and doubtless subscribed to the Lincoln myths which represented the values of that society. He also used heroic images of Lincoln to endorse amongst both blacks and whites his concept of the role of the Negro in America. Anxious in particular to secure moral and financial support for his work in black education, Washington expected both the aspirations he expressed and the Lincoln traditions he exploited to secure a sympathetic response from Northern Liberals.[3]

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1 See Mary Ellison, The Black Experience: American Blacks Since 1865 (London, 1974), 35

2 The American Citizen, Sept. 25, 1891

3 See Louis R. Harlan, Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901 (New York, 1975 ed.).

Addressing the Union League Club at Brooklyn, New York, on the anniversary of Lincoln's birth, February 12, 1896, Washington declared that Negroes sought to bring about a new emancipation which would free white men to love the Negro and Negroes to love white men and would develop in the Negro habits such as thrift, skill and economy. "Thus rising day by day in stepping on our dead selves," said Washington, "we hope to help the black and white man bring about that larger, that higher emancipation for which Abraham Lincoln lived and died, and to which you and I should dedicate our means, our influences and activities." On February 12, 1909 before the Republican Club of New York City, Washington again hailed Lincoln as the Emancipator. Picturing himself as "that which he (Lincoln) found a piece of property and turned into an American citizen", he declared that for the Emancipation Proclamation and its results Lincoln had "My undying gratitude and that of ten millions of my race ..." Lincoln was also hailed as a hero of freedom in a wider sense, as Washington played upon the American theme of liberty: "By the same token that Lincoln made America free, he pushed back the boundaries of freedom everywhere, gave the spirit of liberty a wider influence throughout the world, and re-established the dignity of man as man." This vision of the heroic Lincoln was utilised, however, to encourage blacks to emulate his example of "patience, long-suffering, sincerity, naturalness, dogged determination, and courage ..."[1]

Abandonment of issues of Negro rights in the South had its effect upon Northern black thought too, and in at least one case led to exploitation of the concept of the Great Emancipator which contrasted very strongly with earlier political use. In an address at an emancipation celebration in Rockford, Illinois in August, 1892, the Reverend S.B. Jones used the Emancipator image of Lincoln to urge Southern Negroes to emigrate to the North. Lincoln was established early in the speech as the Great

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1 Richmond Planet, April 18, 1896; Booker T. Washington, Selected Speeches, 192-193, 195

Emancipator, and, in a passage perhaps aimed at a white rather than a black audience, the minister tried to endorse black political rights by describing these as "the fruit of the even we commemorate." The main point of the speech followed as, recalling the 1879 exodus of disillusioned Southern blacks to Kansas, Jones urged the wisdom of such movements and exploited the image of the Great Emancipator as he claimed that the Negro's right of franchise in the South was a farce, and that in the face of persecution Southern Negroes should leave that section for the Northwest. The exodus of 1879 had been, said Jones, a blessing, and, "Just so will all movements of that kind bring rich returns of prosperity and add stars to the heavenly crown worn by him who said on January 1st, 1863 'Let all be free.'"[1]

Political use of the myths presenting Lincoln as the hero of black Americans changed, but the myths themselves did not change, and at a popular as well as a political level they continued to find sufficient support amongst black Americans, and especially former slaves, to enable them to outlive the century in which they were born. Thus as the nineteenth century drew to a close, and in the very year in which a black paper, the Omaha, Nebraska Afro-American Sentinel, expressed its fear that Negroes were growing indifferent to the act of emancipation, a black meeting at Roanoke, Virginia resolved, as it celebrated the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, that:[2]

> We recognize in Abraham Lincoln the foremost friend in human liberty, a name ever to be held sacred in the hearts of all American Negroes; and until gratitude has turned to scorn, until memory deserts the human race, this friend will precede all others, and with us his name will forever remain a sacred trust.

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1 Rev. S.B. Jones, Address at emancipation ceremonies, Rockford, Illinois, Aug. 1, 1892, in Wisconsin Afro-American, Aug. 13, 1892.

2 Afro-American Sentinel, Jan. 1, 1898; Richmond Planet, Jan. 8, 1898

Chapter Eight

Lincoln Myths in Britain

When he became President of the United States in 1861, Abraham Lincoln was virtually unknown in Britain. Four years later his assassination created a sensation throughout Europe, and many amongst the thousands of tributes to him which poured across the Atlantic to America testified to the development amongst inhabitants of the Old World of mythic images of the murdered hero of the New. The purpose of this chapter and the one that follows is to examine the growth in Britain of myths associated with Lincoln and in particular to establish to what extent the tradition of the Great Emancipator took root in British minds.

The analysis will fall into two parts. Firstly, in this chapter it will be suggested that heroic images of Lincoln and notably that of the Emancipator found significant support, after the Emancipation Proclamations had been issued, amongst many who were active within the British anti-slavery movement and those Radical and working class leaders whose interpretation of the Civil War as a battle against slavery by the forces of democracy predisposed them to recognize the Norther leader as a hero. It will also be shown that opponents of an extended franchise on the one hand and Radical and working class leaders on the other integrated their opinions on the War and on Lincoln into the domestic struggle over Reform. The latter theme will dominate the second part of this chapter, as the drive for franchise reform which was gathering momentum during the last two years of the Civil War is analysed in order to show the role played by appeals to America and to the heroic Lincoln in Reformers' arguments. This chapter will close by considering the transient character of such political use of Lincoln.

Secondly, in chapter nine, popular British responses to the Emancipation Proclamations will be discussed to show that the upper and middle classes largely rejected heroic concepts of the American President, and especially that of the Emancipator, during the War. The way in which these classes, and their press organs, changed their opinion of Lincoln when he was assassinated will also be discussed, and some attempt will be made to show how a wider concept of Lincoln as a hero of broadly democratic values emerged in 1865 and survived into twentieth century British thought.

Lincoln as Hero
and the British Struggle for Democracy

"We sympathise with the American people
in their attempts to destroy slavery,
and we aim to destroy serfdom here." [1]

I The Traditions Emerge, 1861-1865

The American Civil War was, as John Bright said, "a contest on which England and the civilized world looked with a profound interest."[2] Inhabitants of the Old World watched with mixed emotions as for four years the fate of the United States, the emergent power of the New World, hung in the balance. Nowhere was interest more obsessive than amongst the British.[3] It was impossible to attend any social function, even an agricultural dinner, complained one pamphleteer, "but our ears are stunned with speeches ... on America and everything American."[4] A multiplicity of historical, political, diplomatic, economic, cultural and personal factors shaped English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh interest in America and its civil War. Speculations as

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1 Thomas Barley, Potter at St. James' Hall, London, April 29, 1865: Cirencester Times, May 8, 1865.

2 H.J. Leech, ed., The Public Letters of the Right Hon. John Bright, (London, 1885), 295. Letter of March 10, 1884. Bright was Radical M.P. for Birmingham.

3 For general accounts of British responses to the Civil War see Ephraim D. Adams, Great Britain and the American Civil War (New York, 1925); H.C. Allen, Great Britain and the United States (London, 1954), chap. 13; and Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, Europe and the Civil War (Boston, 1931)

4 Dan Gow, Civil War in America. A Lecture Delivered...on Nov. 24, 1862 (Manchester, 186(3?), 3.

to whether the American experiment in republicanism would fail and the reliance of Lancashire's cotton industry upon Southern cotton were not the least of these, but of fundamental importance was the memory of Britain's former role as mother-country to the American colonies founded in her name. A modified but clearly discernable Anglo-Saxon heritage dominated the Republic, and to its future the British could not be indifferent. "England bore you", English Radical Goldwin Smith told America, "and bore you not without a mother's pangs."[1]

Conceding, with a mixture of affection and irritation, a special relationship with the country that claimed a parent's role,[2] it was pre-eminently to Britain that Americans North and South looked for sympathy. The North could claim this on powerful grounds, for the country that had led the fight against slave-trading and slavery might well be expected to condemn the establishment of a state in which slavery was the cherished basis of social and economic organization. Yet British sympathy for the South was sufficiently strong for a report to reach Pennsylvania in 1863 that "London newsboys cry 'God news' when reverses occur to our arms, and speak of 'disasters' when the Rebel army is beaten or retiring."[3]

Such sympathy was not bounded by lines of class or party. If the aristocracy and the Anglican country gentry and professional men who formed the backbone of the Conservative Party tended to be anti-Northern and often pro-Southern in sentiment, so too were many amongst the middle classes whose newly gained economic power was reflected politically in the development of the Liberal Party. Equally, if Conservative M.P.'s frequently voiced the Southern sympathies of their constituents, similar sentiments were shared by

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1 Goldwin Smith, England and America: A Lecture, Delivered by Goldwin Smith, Before the Boston Fraternity, During his recent visit to the United States (Manchester, 1865), 7.

2 "American Feeling Toward England", Birmingham Daily Post, Nov. 13, 1865.

3 Philadelphia Inquirer quoted in Montgomery Daily Advertiser, Sept. 3, 1863. See also Sheldon Van Auken's unpublished B.Litt. Thesis, "English Sympathy for the Southern Confederacy: The Glittering Illusion" (Oxford, 1957)

most members of the Whig-Liberal Government and the best known advocate of British recognition of the Confederacy was Liberal M.P. William S. Lindsay. Moreover, the theory that the Liberal Party's radical wing and the working men whose call for political rights many middle class Radicals espoused supported the North as a matter of course has been effectively challenged.[1]

The Civil War nevertheless became an issue in British politics during the 1860's as both advocates and opponents of an extended franchise sought to relate events in America to the perennial domestic issue of extending the franchise, known at the time as the question of parliamentary reform. Radical pressure had made lowering the voting qualifications laid down by the 1832 Reform Bill[2] a recurrent topic of political debate during the 1850's,[3] and many thoughtful men believed that some expansion of the working class electorate was necessary. The eight years preceding the Civil War had witnessed the failure of three attempts by the Liberal Lord John Russell and one by the Conservative Benjamin Disraeli, to secure a measure of Reform, but the accession to power of a Whig-Liberal government in June 1859 seemed to augur well for the renewed agitation for Reform which John Bright, recently returned to political life after a lengthy illness,[4] showed himself ready to lead.[5] However, the conservatism which characterised the political thought of not only the party of Derby and Disraeli but also many who saw themselves as embracing in Liberalism a more "progressive" political philosophy,[5] made it difficult for the Liberal Party to reach consensus on the extent to which working men should be admitted to the electorate, and lack of enthusiasm amongst his own colleagues and followers helped to defeat Lord John Russell's moderate 1860 Franchise Bill.[6] This setback, together with the distracting

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1 The Reform Acts of 1832 - relating to England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland - are described and analysed in Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel: A study in the Technique of Parliamentary Representation 1830-1850 (Hassocks, Sussex, 1977 ed.), Chapters One and Two.

2 See S. Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-1886 (London, 1938), 12-72.

3 George Macaulay Trevelyan, The Life of John Bright (London, 1913), 254-61.

4 Speech at Birmingham, Oct. 27, 1858: ibid., 268-73.

5 See Trygve R. Tholfsen, Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England (London, 1976), Chapter Four.

6 E.J. Feuchtwanger, Gladstone (London, 1975), 110-11.

effect on the public mind of the American Civil War, resulted in a temporary weakening of the Reform impulse, but the debate on the suffrage took on a new dimension as Radicals and their opponents pinned their hopes, and fears, on the American Republic's struggle to survive. In the course of this debate Abraham Lincoln, as the symbolic representation of popular government under challenge and later of the North's drive for emancipation, became at the same time for the Radicals and their allies a symbol for their own struggle for democracy and the political emancipation of labour at home. The purpose of the discussion that follows is to look more closely at this process.

From the first the Tory wing of the Conservative Party, whichincluded all who took an ultra-conservative stand on political change, consistently defending rule by privilege and opposing attempts to extend political rights to Britain's worker masses, together with Liberal opponents of Reform, exploited Radical fears as they sought to relate the problems of the United States to their own cause. From the crises of secession and civil war they drew the moral that lowering the franchise "has been the curse of America and will prove its ruin."[1] In their cry that the republican bubble had burst,[2] they came close to gloating over the supposed discomfiture of their opponents who had long pointed to the United States as a glorious example of successful popular government.[3] Partly in response to such propaganda, a number of Radical leaders, notably John Bright and some others of the Manchester School[4] together with various younger Radicals,[5] were quick to insist upon a relationship between the American War and their own efforts

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1 Hon. Algernon Egerton, M.P. addressing Rochdale Conservative Association, Nov. 21, 1861, Manchester Guardian (Liberal), Nov. 22, 1861

2 Sir John Ramsden (Liberal) in the House of Commons, May 27, 1861, quoted in Jordan and Pratt, op.cit., 57.

3 Jordan and Pratt, op.cit., 55-58; Henry Pelling, America and the British Left from Bright to Bevan (London, 1956), 1-2.

4 Manchester Radicals supporting Bright's call for peaceful foreign policy, lower taxation, free trade and suffrage extension.

5 Bright was the driving force in Radical pro-Northern propaganda, but was ably supported by Edward Baines (M.P. Leeds), Richard Cobden (M.P. Rochdale), William E. Forster (M.P. Bradford), Harriet Martineau, Thomas Bayley Potter who succeeded Cobden as M.P. for Rochdale in 1865, James Stansfield (M.P. Halifax), Peter Taylor (M.P. Leicester) and American Samuel Goddard. The most recent biography of Bright, which has interesting chapters on his crusades for Reform and his attitude to the the Civil War is Keith Robbins, John Bright (London, 1979).

to bring about Reform in Britain. These men were hostile to the attempt to establish an independent South, not only because many of them were deeply involved in the British anti-slavery movement, but also because it threatened to undermine or destroy the American Republic and they feared for the future of Reform at home if the trans-Atlantic experiment in democracy were seen to collapse under the challenge of slave-owning Southern planters described by Goldwin Smith as "that worst of all aristocracies."[1] For them the struggle for Reform had in a sense been transferred to the United States. Writing to Charles Sumner in January 1865 Richard Cobden agreed with the American Radical "that you are fighting the battle of liberalism in Europe as well as the battle of freedom in America."[2]

Anxious therefore that British sympathy for the South should not result in recognition of the Confederacy, aiding its bid for independence, these Radicals sought support for the Northern cause amongst those sections of British society from which it was most likely to be forthcoming. Members of the London based Emancipation Society and those provincial abolitionists who formed the Garrisonian wing of the British anti-slavery movement maintained close links with British Radicalism and the Garrisonians in America and were likely to be sympathetic.[3] So too were the Nonconformist Churches which were

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1 Smith to Charles E. Norton, Nov. 7, 1863 in "Letters of Goldwin Smith to Charles Eliot Norton, 1863-1872", Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, XLIX (Dec., 1916), 106-60, p.107. Hereafter cited as "Smith-Norton Letters".

2 Cobden to Sumner, Jan. 11, 1865, in "Letters of Richard Cobden to Charles Sumner, 1862-1865", AHR, II (Jan., 1867), 306-19, p.316. Hereafter cited as "Cobden-Sumner Letters".

3 See Clare Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding (Edinburgh, 1974), and David Turley's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "Relations Between British and American Abolitionists from British Emancipation to the American Civil War (Cambridge, 1970). According to Clare Taylor, "In the 1860's the Emancipation Societies were...not the only or the most important channel through which the Parliamentary reform movement flowed, but they were an important one, for they brought together various sections who were interested not only in Negro slavery but in political reforms and at the same time sympathetic to American democratic ideas..." (p.15). British anti-slavery men were divided by the Civil War until convinced by the Emancipation Proclamations that the North was fighting against slavery. Their subsequent activity regarding American affairs took two main forms: the pro-Northern propaganda discussed in this chapter and the establishment of societies to encourage and organize British aid to the freedmen. See Christine Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction: A Study in Anglo-American Co-operation 1833-77 (London, 1969).

well represented in Radical and anti-slavery circles.[1] Most important to the Radicals, however, was the co-operation of those artisan leaders who agreed that the best interests of their class lay in a display of solidarity with the inhabitants of the free labour Northern States.[2] For the sympathy of British labour - comprising the mass of unskilled wage earners and the craftsmen who formed a labour aristocracy - was seen as vital, partly because if working men were seen to support the South the Radical analysis of the War as a struggle between on the one hand free labour and democracy and on the other slave labour and reaction would be discredited, but more crucially because agitation in favour of the South by workers suffering economic hardship as a result of the disruption of the cotton industry might force the Government to take action on recognition.[3]

Such labour support was by no means certain. Newspapers which claimed to represent the working classes tended to be anti-slavery, but this did not necessarily incline them to support the North.

According to the editor of the Glasgow Saturday Post, described by a contemporary sources as "Emphatically 'the working man's paper'",[4] "Hostility to slavery is all very laudable; but it is not the only, nor, we beg to say, the chief consideration to be taken into account in the adjustment

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1 For a discussion of the views of the larests sects - the Weslyan Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists and Presbyterians - see Jordan and Pratt, op.cit., 134-36. A smaller but influential sect, the Quakers - to which John Bright belonged - had a long history of opposition to slavery and was torn between sympathy for the North and pacifist principles: see J. Travis Mills, John Bright and the Quakers, 2 vols. (London, 1935), 291-319.

2 On the cotton shortage and its results see W.O. Henderson, The Lancashire Cotton Famine, 1861-1865 (Manchester, 1934). Norman Longmate, The Hungry Mills: The Story of the Lancashire Cotton Famine, 1861-1865. (London, 1978) is very readable but poorly documented.

3 See Tholfsen, op.cit., 18-19; E.J. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour (London, 1964), Chapter Fifteen. The term labour, unless otherwise defined, refers to working men in London and the industrial towns of Northern England and Scotland. The views of agricultural workers and women labourers were not represented in the mid-nineteenth century labour press and are unknown.

4 Scottish Newspaper Directory; and Guide to Advertisers. A Complete Manual of the Newspaper Press...(Edinburgh, 1855), 81. A modern guide to newspapers and journals produced by members of the working classes or claiming to speak for sections of those classes or labour as a whole is Royden Harrison, Gillian B. Woolven and Robert Duncan, compilers, The Warwick Guide to British Labour Periodicals 1790-1970 A Check List (Hassocks, Sussex, 1977)

of our international relations."[1] One consideration which influenced the often Radical editors of working class papers hostile to the North was the Federal Government's insistence that the free states were not fighting to destroy slavery.[2] Another was the unemployment caused by the shortage of cotton which resulted from the Federal blockade of Southern ports: an editorial in Reynold's Newspaper, an important working-class weekly, declared, "Better fight the Yankee than starve the operatives...The American blockade must be broken."[3] In fact, not only were many prominent labour spokesmen anti-Northern,[4] but also there is evidence of sympathy for the South amongst Lancashire workers, particularly in depressed areas.[5] An English immigrant to America indicated how unemployment caused by the cotton shortage had affected the views of one of his Huddersfield relatives: "I am astonished to think Alfred thinks more about labouring nor (sic) serving a Country in so glorious a thing as keeping the Union safe..."[6] Dependence upon relief may also have helped to shape working class sympathy for the South. Of the three groups which provided relief two - landed gentry and local millowners - tended to be pro-Southern in sentiment.[7] To counter such factors, pro-Northern Radicals and their allies stressed their interpretation of the North's cause as a struggle for the preservation of free labour and free institutions whose success was closely linked to the

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1 Glasgow Saturday Post, Jan. 19, 1861.
2 Ellison, Support for Secession, gives many examples of this.
3 Reynold's Newspaper, Sept. 29, 1861, quoted in Pelling, America and the British Left, 7 n. This influential ultra-Radical weekly organ of working class opinion was pro-Southern.
4 For example, George Potter, manager of the Bee-Hive; T.J. Dunning, Secretary, of the Bookbinders' Society; and Scottish labour leaders Alexander Campbell, editor of the Glasgow Sentinel, and Peter Mackenzie, editor of the Glasgow Gazette. See Royden Harrison, Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861-1881 (London, 1965), 41-56.
4 Ellison, Support for Secession. On labour attitudes see also Royden Harrison, "British Labour and American Slavery", Science and Society, XXV (Dec.,1961),291-319; and "British Labour and the Confederacy", International Review of Socialist History, II (1957), 78-105; and Joseph Park, "The English Workingmen and the American Civil War", Political Science Quarterly, XXXIX (1924), 432-57.
5 Titus Cranshaw to his father,Mar.20,1862, Ms at London School of Economics.
6 Edward O.Greening, Hon.Sec. of the Manchester branch of the Emancipation Society described in a private letter (to L.A.Chamerovzow,Dec.21,1863) methods which he claimed were used by the Southern Independence Association to secure labour support for the South. The possibility of bias in his his evidence must be kept in mind, but his comments relate interestingly to the point concerning millowners: "The (pro-Southern) memorials are mostly promoted in mills, the owners of which are pro-Southern and pressure is put upon the mill hands to induce them to sign. Signatures of children and persons who cannot write are duly entered as a rule by the overlooker or person in charge of the memorial." Anti-Slavery Papers of Chamerovzow, Rhodes House, Oxford.

cause of reform in Britain. In terms of this analysis they presented Confederate sympathisers in Britain as aristocrats happy to see democracy discredited and played upon the idea that slavery degraded labour and that attempts to expand slavery therefore threatened free labour everywhere.[1] This was a potent appeal, but if the war was to be seen as a struggle between free and slave labour, it was necessary to accept the Radical claim that the Northern war effort was anti-slavery. It was in their campaign to win acceptance for this claim, not only amongst working men but also in order to exploit British anti-slavery feeling in general, that Radicals and their allies utilized the concept of Lincoln as the Emancipator.

Not that there was much idea in Britain, even amongst the North's anti-slavery supporters, of Lincoln as a future hero of emancipation before he issued the proclamations of freedom. The London Spectator spoke for many in the upper and middle classes whose sympathy for the North was based upon hatred of slavery. While it seemed possible to preserve peace in America, this journal praised Lincoln's moderation on the slavery issue. Once the war began and Lincoln made no move against slavery, criticism quickly followed. The reason for a scathing attack upon Lincoln's July 1861 Message to Congress was made clear when the Spectator commented: "From first to last, throughout all those weary columns of type, the word slavery never occurs... The President thrusts the slave question wholly out of sight." Far from representing the cause of the slaves, Lincoln perhaps was, said the journal, "doomed, like Balaam, to prophesy, with reluctant voice and averted eyes, that triumph of an unconstitutional freedom which his legal and constitutional

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1 At a meeting of Ashton-Under-Lyne Union and Emancipation Society, a society "composed of Working Men", Radical barrister Ernest C. Jones warned working men that the South was their enemy because, "Slave labour is a direct aggression on the free labour of the world." Stressing that America was "the chief hope and home of the emigrant", and that few emigrated to the Southern States, Jones claimed that expansion of slavery "would produce such labour surplus in the North that immigration would become impossible." Ernest Jones, The Slave-Holders War, A Lecture... (Manchester, n.d.), 42.

instincts had rendered him most anxious to prevent." Emancipation was however being forced upon him.[1] Even such an ardent admirer of Lincoln as John Bright went no further than trusting that if the War made emancipation necessary the President would not stand in the way of such a measure.[2]

It was Lincoln's decision to adopt emancipation which gave Radicals, and others, who supported the North their greatest opportunity to drive home their message that the Federal cause was anti-slavery in character and so led to the appearance in Britain of the concept of Lincoln as an anti-slavery hero. Doubtless the emergence of this image was facilitated by Britain's anti-slavery past which ensured that almost all Britons, even Southern sympathizers, saw themselves as opponents of slavery and that there was little of the overt hostility to emancipation in principle which checked the free expression of praise for emancipation in the Northern States of America. Those who in Britain sought to win favour for Lincoln's anti-slavery edicts were, not, like their American counterparts, forced to play down the morality of emancipation. Indeed, arguments such as that of military necessity with which American exponents of emancipation sought to justify Lincoln's edicts were an embarrassment to their friends in Britain whose opponents made capital out of the alleged political and military motivation of emancipation in order to deny Lincoln any credit for anti-slavery conviction.[3] Consequently, British Radicals, anti-slavery and working class supporters of the North were anxious to present the Emancipation Proclamations as a genuine attempt to destroy slavery, and the way was clear for eulogies of the edicts which made possible an early emergence of the concept of Lincoln as a hero of liberty. This was made certain by the promotion of the North's most active supporters of a Radical interpretation of the War. This was illustrated in some Radical press comments on emancipation, which, according to the Edinburgh Caledonian

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1 Spectator, March 23, July 20, Sept. 21, 1861

2 Bright to Joseph Lyman, Jan. 13, 1862, "Bright-Sumner Letters, 1861-1872", Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, XLVI (Oct., 1912) 101. Hereafter cited as: "Bright-Sumner Letters".

3 See below p. 400-404.

Mercury, for example, was "an immense stride in advance, and one for which the President deserves and will get immortal thanks."[1]

It was, however, largely in addresses to Lincoln prepared by meetings held in late 1862 and early 1863 and representing the new alliance of labour and middle class support for the North that the image of Lincoln as a hero of liberty found expression. Declaring that slavery alone had lessened their sympathy with America in the past, Manchester working men told the President that, "the erasure of that foul blot upon civilization and Christianity - chattel slavery - during your Presidency will cause the name of Abraham Lincoln to be honored and revered by posterity."[2] That this concept of Lincoln as a hero of liberty could be related to the struggles of and emergence of a class identity amongst working men in Britain is suggested by the address sent to Lincoln by a London meeting of December 31, 1862. "We who offer you this address," it read, "are Englishmen and workingmen. We prize as our dearest inheritance ... the liberty we enjoy - the liberty of free labour upon a free soil." With a clear reference to the political enfranchisement of labour in America the address continued: "We have... been accustomed to regard with veneration and gratitude the founders of a great republic in which the liberties of the Anglo-Saxon have been widened beyond all the precedents of the old world, and in which there was nothing to condemn or lament but the slavery and degredation of men guilty only of a coloured skin or an African parentage..." It was within the framework of such concepts that Lincoln's proclamation was hailed and working men prayed God to confirm Lincoln's "noble purpose" and to hasten the restoration of Federal authority which sought "to realize the glorious principle on which your Constitution is founded - the brotherhood, freedom, and equality of all men."[3]

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1 Caldedonian Mercury, Oct. 7, 1862, quoted in Robert Botsford's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "Scotland and the American Civil War" (Edinburgh University, 1955), 582.

2 Manchester Guardian, quoted in Belle B. Sideman and Lillian Friedman, eds., Europe Looks at the Civil War (New York, 1962 ed.), 168.

3 Lincoln, Works, VI, 89.

London trade unionists paid tribute to Lincoln as the Emancipator when in January 1863 they adopted an address which, recalling their hope that Lincoln's presidency would inaugurate a policy designed to rid America of slavery, declared:

> ...we have not been disappointed. Though surrounded by difficulties ...you have struck off the shackles from the poor slaves of Columbia; ...and by your Proclamation, ... and the plans you have laid before Congress, you have opened the gates of freedom to the millions of our negro brothers who have been deprived of their manhood by the infernal laws which have so long disgraced the civilization of America.

The trade unionists expressed their faith that Lincoln would fulfil his role as Emancipator and "carry out to completion the grand and holy work you have begun..."[1]

In the warmly sympathetic address forwarded to the President by inhabitants of Birmingham, Lincoln emerged not only as a hero of liberty but also as a divinely-inspired Emancipator. Condemning"with horror and abhorrence" the South's attempt to establish a Confederacy based upon slavery, and praying that God would strengthen Lincoln and his cause so that the "unholy contest" might be ended, the addresses trusted that, "as the crown of all, that liberation and freedom with all their accompanying blessings may be given to the millions of our coloured bretheren now in bondage." The address continued:

> That you may be the chosen instrument in effecting this glorious emancipation is our earnest hope. And, if in your aspirations for the freedom of the negro, the sympathy and good wishes of all men who love liberty can cheer your heart ... you may assuredly feel convinced that such sympathy and good wishes are not withheld.

Lincoln's 'noble efforts' for emancipation were praised. "We hold", asserted the authors of the address, "that your cause is the cause of humanity..."[2]

From anti-slavery individuals too came expression of support for the concept of Lincoln as a hero of liberty. American-born Radical Samuel A. Goddard, who during the war sought to win liberal and working class support

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1 Quoted in John Bright, Speeches of John Bright, M.P. on the American Question, (Boston, 1865), 192.

2 Birmingham Daily Post, Jan.9, 1863. The Post was a Liberal paper serving the Midland Counties.

for the North through a series of letters to the Birmingham and London press, claimed in January 1863 that Lincoln's emancipation edict, "will be declared by posterity to be the greatest movement of this century, and will immortalize the President." Lincoln and the North sought to strike the chains from millions of their fellow creatures, asserted Goddard, and for this "glorious work" Lincoln deserved the support of every friend of freedom and mankin. In a later letter Goddard declared that, "Mr. Lincoln has made gigantic strides toward the total aboliton of slavery, and his acts will confer lasting honour upon him in the page of history..."[1]

In a lecture given in Sydenham Chapel in November 1862 and published by Manchester Radical Abel Heywood, Daniel Gow denounced those who had not "thrilled with joy" at the proclamation, declaring, "He must be blind indeed who does not see the hand of God in what is now transpiring in America." The image of Lincoln as a divinely-inspired Emancipator was clear as Gow linked him with Moses: "I believe that Lincoln's proclamation will prove an instrument, in the hands of God, for the accomplishment of a far greater deliverance than that which was achieved when He made the waters stand up as an heap on the right hand and the left, that the captive Israelites might go free." Any doubts that the edict might prove ineffective were dismissed: "The year 1862... will see the deathblow given to the foul demon of Slavery. The bells that ring out this old year, will also toll the death knell of American thraldom." Lincoln was thus established as the Great Emancipator, and Gow predicted that, "in the distant future, - the name of Abraham Lincoln, will live in the hearts of uncounted millions, when the memories of his traducers and slanderers are utterly forgotten and unknown."[2]

However, such support for the concept of Lincoln as a hero of liberty, and isolated tributes to him as the Great Emancipator, by representatives of British Radicalism, abolitionism and pro-Northern labour sentiment marked the limits of British praise for the Emancipation Proclamations in the years when they were issued.

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1 Goddard to Editors, London American, Jan. 31, 1863 and the Liberal Birmingham Daily Gazette, May 2, 1863, in Samuel Goddard, Letters on the American Rebellion (London, 1870), 296, 299, 308.

2 Gow, Civil War in America, 28, 30-32.

Lincoln as Hero
and the British Struggle for Democracy

II Mythical Images of Lincoln and the Drive for Reform 1865 - 1867

News of Lincoln's assassination reached England on April 26, 1865. Such was the sensation produced that the editors of the London Times which carried the announcement fetched two shillings and sixpence per copy and was sold out within an hour. The next day the paper recorded that, "The excitement caused by the intelligence was manifest in the public streets, and the event was the theme of conversation everywhere." The Timeshad to admit that Britain's own Road Hill Murder, until then endlessly discussed, was quite overshadowed.[1] A similar sensation was produced in every major town. It was reported that when the news reached Edinburgh, "strong men wept as children, or as if a Common Father had gone.[2] John Bright described the widespread shock and horror: "For fifty years, I think, no other event has created such a sensation in this country...The whole people positively mourn, and it would seem as if again we were one nation with you, so universal is the grief and horror."[3]

Throughout Britain public bodies and private societies and individuals made haste to express their shock and outrage at the crime. The Government and both Houses of Parliament formally expressed sympathy with the United States and Queen Victoria wrote a personal letter to Mrs. Lincoln.[4] Numerous borough and town councils and other public bodies drafted resolutions and addresses. Public meetings similarly paid tribute to Lincoln. "To chronicle them all", observed the Brighton Gazette, "would be to give a catalogue of all the principle towns in the kingdom."[5] It seemed that all in Britain from the vestrymen of St. Pancras to the Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted

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1 Times, April 27, 1865. This was the leading daily organ of upper and middle class opinion.

2 Caledonian Mercury, April 27, 1865. This Radical Edinburgh paper claimed to represent the principles of "Advanced Liberalism" and was pro-Northern during the Civil War.

3 Ibid; Birmingham Daily Post, April 27,1865; Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser, April 29,1865; Bright to Sumner, April 29,1865, in Pierce, Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner, IV, 240.

4 Adams, Great Britain and the Civil War, 262; Times, April 27, 1865; Victoria's letter in Sideman and Friedman, Europe Looks at the Civil War,231

5 Brighton Gazette, May 4, 1865. The Gazette was an influential Conservative weekly

Masons of Scotland could find cause to mourn Lincoln. "Never did I see the ice which generally covers the feelings of this people more completely broken up", wrote Goldwin Smith, "than on the arrival of the latest news from America."[1]

The shocking news of the assassination, and the triumph of Northern arms, combined to bring British opinion in general to a juster appreciation of the late President's virtues, and many of the tributes forwarded to the United States Government eulogized his heroic qualities. This marked the beginning of a trend to hail Lincoln as a hero of those broadly democratic values which Britain cherished in common with America, a trend which will be dealt with more fully later in this chapter. It was a development of considerable political significance for those Radical leaders whose much more specific images of Lincoln as a hero of democracy and emancipation were reinforced by his assassination. For on the eve of an intensified drive for Reform and at the very moment when opponents of popular government were chastened by the victory of Republican America, British regret at Lincoln's untimely and horrific death provided Radical leaders with an opportunity to exploit the heroic Lincoln in the cause of franchise extension.

While prominent Radicals together with some working class spokesmen had, as demonstrated earlier, integrated their "democratic" and anti-slavery interpretations of the Civil War into arguments for Reform at home, the Whig-Liberal Ministry of Lord Palmerston had shown no interest in the issue of extending the franchise since the withdrawal of Lord John Russell's moderate but abortive Reform Bill of 1860. However, as the Confederacy fell and British interest once more focussed on home affairs, the Reform impulse could no longer be held in check. The result was an agitation on the part of middle-class Reformers and working men which survived the disappointment of the defeat of Earl Russell's 1866 Reform Bill to contribute to the passage of

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1 Tributes to the Memory of Abraham Lincoln: facsimilies in the British Museum, hereafter cited as: "Tributes"; Smith to Norton, April 29, 1865, "Smith-Norton Letters", op.cit., 119.

Disraeli's more extensive measure a year later.[1] Under the auspices of the working class Reform League[2] and the middle class National Reform Union[3] meetings were organized across the country in 1865 and 1866. Political exploitation of Lincoln's assassination by Radicals and their working class allies provided the prelude to this agitation.

This does not mean that Radical politicians were insincere when they mourned Lincoln's death and eulogized him as a hero and martyr of freedom. Nor indeed were they alone in doing so. The connection between Radicalism and anti-slavery thought has already been noted,[4] and doubtless anti-slavery men and women who were generally sympathetic to the interpretation of the war as a crusade for freedom promoted by British and American Radicals after 1863 were also receptive to the myths which later became associated with it. In any event, the Radicals' sentiments on the American President's death were undoubtedly shared by many within the British anti-slavery movement, as the following discussion of the development of mythic images of Lincoln, and their political use, in 1865 will show.

For those in Britain who had worked to win support for Lincoln and his cause, and especially all who saw the war as a struggle for liberty and democracy - a struggle in which Lincoln had already emerged as a hero - the assassination was a bitter blow. It had been "a month of sore trial" for Bright. The death of Lincoln followed closely upon those of his friends Richard Cobden and Samuel Lucas. He felt "stunned and ill" after hearing the "terrible news."[5] Robert Trimble wrote to an American anti-slavery

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1 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 78-137. On this see also Maurice Cowling, 1867 Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution. The Passing of the Second Reform Bill (Cambridge, 1967), especially pp. 15-48.

2 The League was organized by working-class leaders seeking to inaugurate a working class movement standing uncompromisingly for manhood suffrage and the ballot: Cowling, op.cit. 246-247; Bee-hive, Nov.3, 1866.

3 Founded by Radical politicians and their allies in Lancashire in 1864: Cowling, op.cit., 242-245.

4 See above p.345.

5 Bright to Sumner, May 16, 1865, Bright-Sumner Letters, op.cit., 143; R.A.J. Walling, ed., The Diaries of John Bright (London, 1930), 290, entry for April 29, 1865. Hereafter cited as: Bright, Diaries. Samuel Lucas of the London Star was Bright's brother-in-law.

paper, the Boston Commonwealth: "I have had before now disappointments, griefs, and losses to bear; but all affected me not one tithe that this murder has done. I am not singular in this. Many of our friends, male and female, have shed an abundance of tears, and it will be long 'ere they feel jubilant again."[1]

In the eyes of Radicals and anti-slavery men alike, the North's victory had been the vindication of their interpretation of the War. As the conflict drew to a close, they rejoiced in the belief that slavery had suffered its death-blow. "What I never dared to hope has come to pass", wrote George Thompson to Garrison, "- freedom to the slave of the cotton plantations of the South. The slave of yesterday the free man of to-day - a man, a citizen, a patriot soldier!"[2] In a letter to a friend, Richard Webb of Dublin expressed the feelings prevailing within British anti-slavery ranks: "I rejoice for the sake of the United States, of the slaves and the civilised world that the right side has won ..."[3] When the news of Lee's surrender reached Britain, Bright wrote:[4]

> Slavery has measured itself with Freedom, and Slavery has perished in the struggle...This great triumph of the Republic is the event of our age, and future ages will confess it...I have had an almost unfaltering faith from the beginning, and I now rejoice more than I can tell that the cause of personal freedom has triumphed. The friends of freedom everywhere should thank God and take courage.

A few days later it must have seemed to Bright that he had rejoiced prematurely. For God had permitted the leading figure in the North's great struggle to fall at the moment of triumph. Pondering the meaning of this event, British Radicals and anti-slavery men drew similar conclusions to those reached by Radicals and abolitionists in America. Their shared analysis of the war,

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1 Commonwealth, June 24, 1865. Letter dated May 30, 1865.
2 Letter of Dec. 4, 1864, in Taylor, British and American Abolitionists, 529.
3 Letter to unidentified friend, April 21, 1865, in ibid., 531.
4 Bright, Diaries, 289-290, entry for April 23, 1865.

as well as trans-Atlantic contacts between these groups, predisposed them to do so. In a letter written in May, John Stuart Mill commented:[1]

> I agree with you in having no fear of public mischief from his loss. It will perhaps, on the contrary, prevent a great deal of weak indulgence towards the slaveholding class, whose power it is necessary should be completely and effectively broken at all costs.

A month later Robert Trimble wrote that though he and his friends mourned Lincoln,[2]

> we see that the striking down of our idol...is likely to prove essentially a gain to the cause of freedom. Not unlikely that his gentleness of disposition would have led him to be too forebearing to the leaders, and through them the system which they represent might have once more in some unforseen way attempted to gain predominance. That chance is, I think, now cut off.

So closely sympathetic to the Radical Republican line of thought, with its emphasis on the destruction of slavery as the crucial issue of the war, they could not fail to echo its interpretation of Lincoln's death and the myths associated with this. Three days after news of the assassination reached Britain, Goldwin Smith wrote to C.E. Norton that in killing Lincoln, slavery had destroyed itself. "Lincoln's death knell", declared Smith, "is the death-knell of this great power of Evil too, and the morning chime of a new era for Lincoln's nation."[3]

The interpretation of Lincoln's death revealed in such private letters was reflected in public statements on the assassination made by Radicals and anti-slavery leaders. It was natural that this should be so. By hailing the victory of the North as that of freedom and Lincoln as a hero and martyr of liberty, they sought to drive home the validity of their long-held analysis of the War. As the Tory Saturday Review observed, "It is not surprising that strong partisans of the North should have profited by the occasion to proclaim or assert the triumph of their own principles. As Mr. Lincoln fell by the hand of an assassin in the very moment of success, he naturally becomes the symbol as well as the martyr of his cause."[4]

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1 Mill to W.E. Hickson, May, 1865, in Mill, Letters, II, 28.
2 Commonwealth, June 24, 1865.
3 Smith to Norton, April 29, 1865, "Smith-Norton Letters", op.cit.,120.
4 Saturday Review, May 6, 1865.

Congregationalist Minister Newman Hall, an untiring advocate of the Northern cause and emancipation, followed the example of anti-slavery preachers in America and contributed to the spread of a Radical analysis of Lincoln's death and the associated traditions. In his lecture upon the assassination Lincoln was a hero of liberty. Lincoln's hostility to slavery was depicted as the "avowed cause of the rebellion", and as Hall described how during the war that followed Lincoln took the earliest opportunity to free the slaves, the late President became the Great Emancipator: "And now throughout those Southern States, long a house of cruel bondage, the jubilant trumpet is sounding deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound. Four millions of freed-men bless God for Abraham Lincoln!" Hall had no doubt as to why Lincoln had been killed. The hero of liberty had died "a victim to the hatred which the slavery spirit ever bears to the staunch friends of freedom" to become "the pure and illustrious martyr of American Emancipation." The lesson to be drawn from Lincoln's death was clear: there would be no danger now that the North would temporize with slavery, for Lincoln's assassination had sounded that institution's death knell. Thus the death of Lincoln, "ratified the late President's emancipation proclamation, so that slavery in America is buried in the same grave with him whom it slew..." Like many Northern preachers, Hall was reminded of Christ "Our Divine Emancipator" when he recalled how "Abraham Lincoln, on Good Friday, was slain; an unconscious martyr in emancipating four millions of men from the slavery of the body."[1]

The idea that Lincoln, a victim of slavery because of his work for freedom, had become the Martyr-Emancipator, sealing that work with his blood, was equally clear in resolutions adopted at a meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society Committee on May 5, 1865. Lincoln's murder and the attack on Seward were described as "the natural manifestations of the Execrable system of slavery, directed against the exponents of a policy of

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1 Newman Hall, The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln. A Lecture... (London, 1865), 9, 13-15, 23-24, 27, 30.

freedom." According to the resolutions, "As the emancipator of the slaves... Lincoln is entitled to the gratitude of all mankind." Sympathizing with Americans in the loss of this world hero of liberty, the Society expressed, "the confident hope that they will remain steadfast to the Policy of emancipation, to the steady development of whichhis life was consecrated, and to which he fell a Martyr..." Lincoln's future fame as the Great Emancipator was alleged to be secure: "he and his descendants will bear an honoured name, which the ever increasing multitudes of a since down-trodden race will hold enshrined in their hearts to be transmitted to remotest posterity as that of one of the greatest benefactors of mankind."[1] Similar sentiments were expressed in an address sent by ladies of the London Emancipation Society to Mrs. Lincoln. Recalling how they had watched with ever-increasing interest Lincoln's course from entering upon the office of President, "to the final martyrdom with which his labours closed...", and describing his death as a loss to the world, the ladies declared that they found consolation "in the conviction that for all future time his name will be beloved and honoured by every friend of freedom, of justice, and of humanity - of those who, loving freedom, must abhor slavery."[2]

British Radicals were also engaged in promoting these ideas. Samuel Goddard put before readers of the Birmingham Daily Post a similar interpretation of events in America. The murder was, he wrote, "the legitimate fruit of the institution of slavery" and "should be a warning to all to separate from the accursed thing; to countenance neither it, nor its abettors; and not to rest until this long-standing and unspeakable disgrace is banished from off the face of the earth." For Goddard "the finger of Providence" was "clearly discernable" in these events, and he explained this in language identical to that of exponents of Radical Reconstruction in America:

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1 Minute 781, British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, Vol. 4, Rhodes House, Oxford.

2 Caledonian Mercury, May 10, 1865.

"Mr. Lincoln had finished his mission. He was of too kindly a nature to deal with unconquered rebels; and nought but his death would have ensured a full acknowledgement of his merits. A sterner nature was required to establish permanent peace and concord." To drive home the message, Goddard sent to the Post an article from the New York Iron Age in which the Radical Republican analysis of Lincoln's murder and the related traditions of Lincoln as Great Emancipator and Martyr to Liberty were fully developed.[1]

Indeed, the full range of mythical images of Lincoln which emerged in America at the time of his assassination was reflected in the thought of British Radicals and friends of Reform generally. In the columns of newspapers which advocated Reform and in speeches delivered and addresses and resolutions drafted by middle-class Reformers and their allies, Lincoln appeared as an immortal hero and martyr of popular government in America, as the friend, Moses and divinely-inspired Martyr-Emancipator of the black race, and so as a universal hero of democracy and the cause of the world's oppressed.

The editor-owner of Edinburgh's Caledonian Mercury was an "Advanced Liberal" who had long laboured for the rights of working men and other causes cherished by Reformers,[2] and the frequent appearance within his paper's columns at this time of heroic images of Lincoln suggests that these were very much to the taste of a readership that shared his anti-slavery, pro-Northern sentiments and his political views. The concept of Lincoln as Emancipator was particularly favoured by the Mercury, and clearly underlay that "intense admiration" for "honest old Abe" which, as its editor now reminded his readers, he had long cherished. According to an early editorial on the assassination, Lincoln was the hero called by Providence for a great work performed during his first term of office when he "led the people on from victory to victory to the goal of universal and unconditional emancipation." Warming to this theme of a divinely-inspired Emancipator, the Mercury echoed

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1 Goddard to Editor, Birmingham Daily Post, April 27, May 6, 1865, in Goddard, Letters, 509-12.

2 Caledonian Mercury, June 30, 1865.

American anti-slavery thought as it hailed Lincoln as the black man's Moses: "Like Moses, he saw the people in bondage; like Moses he sympathised with them in their afflictions; like Moses he led them through the Red Sea out of reach of their oppressors; and, like Moses also, just as he was beginning to realise a Pisgah view of the promised inheritance he is taken away." Taking Biblical analogies even further, and once more echoing American eulogists, the Mercury's editor felt that he was not "improperly associating the Human with the Divine" when linking Lincoln with Christ - and so introducing the martyr concept of Lincoln - he paraphrased that it would have been he who would have redeemed Israel."[1] Letters published by the editor revealed how completely some readers accepted his anti-slavery interpretation of Lincoln's death.[2]

On April 29, 1865 at a meeting in St. James Hall convened by the London Emancipation Society, anti-slavery men gathered to pay tribute to the murdered Lincoln. The large hall, "draped with black", was "crowded in every part", and many present wore emblems of mourning. Among the prominent Radicals present were Professor Henry Fawcett and M.P.'s W.E. Baxter, W.E. Forster, E.A. Leatham, T.B. Potter, J. Stansfield and P.A. Taylor. In their speeches, which dominated reports of the proceedings, the idea that Lincoln, a hero of liberty, had been killed by slavery and rebellion was a dominant theme, and the tradition of the Martyr-Emancipator emerged clearly.

According to Forster, Lincoln had died to ensure the destruction of slavery and quoting from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address the words that God willed slavery to cease, Forster virtually depicted Lincoln as a willing martyr to liberty who had anticipated his own sacrifice: "The murdered patriot Abraham Lincoln had read the lesson of duty; the handwriting on the wall was guiding him..." The sacrifices, claimed Forster, would not be in vain:

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1 Ibid., April 27, 1865.

2 Caledonian Mercury, April 29, 1865. The way in which "the Lincoln Myth served as an inspiration for Radical and working class forces" in Scotland is discussed in Botsford, op.cit., Chapters VII and VIII.

"the foul deed would seal the speedy and irrevocable doom of slavery (cheers)." Lincoln had become a world hero: "the name of Abraham Lincoln... would be pre-eminent in all future history (great cheering)." For Taylor, Lincoln was the divinely-inspired Emancipator, "one who had really fulfilled the task which God had put into his hands, of maintaining and extending the cause of human freedom (cheers)." The "atrocious crime" had made Lincoln a martyr to that cause, but would strengthen the determination of the American people to complete his work of reunion through emancipation. "It has pleased God that Abraham Lincoln should die for that principle," observed Taylor, "but not in so dying as to be evidence of its defeat, but rather as a symbol of its glorious triumph." In Stansfield's speech the late President was the hero of Union and liberty who had issued the Emancipation Proclamations, defeated the "manchinations" of those who would have saved the Union but sacrificed emancipation, and became "the martyr of his country and of freedom." The image of Lincoln thus established by Stansfield was used to encourage the United States Government and people, "to carry out to the full the policy of which Abraham Lincoln's presidential career was the embodiment and to establish free institutions throughout the whole of the American Republic."[1]

In promoting this analysis of Lincoln's death, British Radicals were not solely concerned to establish the validity of their much publicized view of the Civil War as a struggle between slavery and freedom. They did not now forget the relevance of that contest to the British Reform movement, and seized the opportunity offered by meetings upon the assassination to associate the North's victory with their own cause. Following Forster, Taylor and Stansfield on to the platform at St. James Hall, T.B. Potter made the Emancipation Society's meeting to honour Lincoln the occasion for a speech advocating parliamentary reform. Though expressing sympathy for the United States in its loss, Potter rejoiced that popular government had

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1 Bee-Hive, May 6, 1865; Cirencester Times, May 8, 1865.

withstood its severe test and that "'the bubble of democracy has not burst'", a gibe at their opponents much favoured by Radicals, and indicated what Reformers saw as the desirable sequel to the triumph of Republican America when he declared that, "we hope and trust to see the spirit of democracy carried out in our own land." After eulogizing "that glorious hero of progress" John Bright, Potter continued: "We sympathise with the free spirit in America which has elevated the condition of all people, as we sympathize with them in their destruction of slavery, and in the efforts which are being made to make the slaves free citizens of the great state of America. Sympathizing with them, we hope that Englishmen may move in the same direction, and that it may not be long before honest labour is admitted to full citizenship in our own country."[1]

It was indeed a great moment for all who had invested in the North's battle to preserve intact and to free from slavery the American Republic their hopes in the struggle for more representative government at home. "How often have I longed and prayed for this result, and how much have I suffered from anxiety while it has been slowly working out, I only know!" wrote Bright, when he knew that the War had been won and slavery was doomed.[2] In the triumph of Republican America, British Radicals were amply rewarded for any suffering they had endured when their opponents had made political capital out of the apparent collapse of the American experiment in democracy, and they were quick to turn the tables upon the enemies of Reform. Moreover, in spite of their regret at Lincoln's death, it must have been gratifying for them to acclaim the triumph of his cause, which they had adopted as their own, and to eulogize as a world hero of democracy and liberty the President upon whom their opponents had poured scorn.

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1 Bee-Hive, May 6, 1865. The Bee-Hive was founded by George Potter in 1861 to represent working class opinion and interests and was until late 1865 the organ of the London Trades Council. It was pro-Southern until late 1862. See Stephen Coltham, "The Bee-Hive Newspaper: its Origin and Early Struggles" in Asa Briggs and John Saville, eds. Essays in Labour History (London, 1960), 174-204.

2 Bright, Diaries, 289, entry for April 23, 1865.

The pro-Northern, anti-slavery Liberal weekly, the Norfolk News, demonstrated how a newspaper friendly to an extension of the working class electorate could use Lincoln's assassination at the moment of Northern victory to further the cause of franchise reform. In an editorial comment on the rejection by Parliament of Baines' 1864 Reform Motion,[1] the paper urged its readers not to despair. A moderate measure had, it claimed, been defeated by a Liberal Ministry committed to, and a House of Commons elected to carry, a Reform measure, but its readers needed only to recall the recent "bouleversement" in ruling class opinion on Lincoln to realize that Parliament and statesmen were capable of doing anything "which the force of 'circumstances' may press them into doing." Reminding its readers how the "Upper Ten Thousand" had sustained the pro-slavery Southern rebellion, the News recalled that, "At that time Abraham Lincoln was jeered at, lampooned, made the subject of wicked and malignant lies." Circumstances had changed: the North had won, and "it became dangerous to cheer the South, dangerous to speak unkindly of the North." Then Lincoln had been assassinated: "The crime did not alter the man's character. The tree as it fell did not become a different tree. But suddenly Lincoln was seen to be an angel- the wisest, the most generous, the justest of men and rulers, the stay of his own country and the hope of the world!" The moral for Reformers was clear: when they became united and determined, the ruling classes would recognize the force of circumstances and concede Reform.[2]

Turning the former opinions on the Civil War and Lincoln held by the British ruling classes against enemies of Reform was a favourite tactic of those who took part in the renewed drive for franchise extension in 1865-1867, and equally valued and valuable was the closely linked assertion that the working classes had proved their moral superiority, and crucially their fitness to vote, by sustaining from the first the cause of Lincoln and the

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1 On May 11, 1864, Edward Baines, M.P. for Leeds introduced a motion in the H. of C. to reduce the borough franchise from £10 to £6 rental.

2 "Reform - What Should the People Do?", Norfolk News, May 13, 1865.

North. Denouncing as hypocrisy the sudden and dramatic change of attitude towards Lincoln and his cause on the part of Britain's leading press organs, the Caledonian Mercury expressed its conviction that, "the great, big, honest heart of Great Britain - the heart of the people as opposed to the aristocracy and their dependents - was perfectly sound on the American question..."[1]

This was twisting their opponents' tails, but the reaction of the British ruling classes in general suggests that there was something more at stake than the humiliation of eating one's words. Some degree of smugness on the part of Northern partisans was only to be expected. There was, however, considerable venom in the ultra Tory Glasgow Courier's early and stinging attack upon Radical political exploitation of the assassination which denounced "advanced Liberals" and "well-known Radical organs" for viewing Lincoln's death as a source of new life to his cause and thus their own, and claiming that it would "give an impetus to Democracy among ourselves." Giving as examples the "impassioned remarks" of T.B. Potter at St. James Hall,[2] the comments of John Bright, and a quotation from the London Morning Star, the Courier condemned that party "which calls itself exclusively the friends of freedom" and which sought, it said, to exploit natural indignation over Lincoln's assassination to promote the idea that he had been killed because he opposed "what they call the slaveholding aristocracy." It was not difficult, observed the Courier, to move from this to a condemnation of all aristocracies. It was, the paper clearly wished to imply, a kind of Radical paranoia: "Mr. Potter no doubt would convey the inference that what the Virginia aristocrats have done to Mr. Lincoln the aristocrats of England would be only too glad to do to himself."[3]

There was certainly anxiety on the part of those responsible for calling public meetings on the assassination, particularly in towns such as Liverpool and Edinburgh where feelings ran high, to prevent these from becoming partisan

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1 Caledonian Mercury, May 2, 1865.
2 See above p. 362-63.
3 Glasgow Courier, May 4, 1865.

affairs, but the real fear in conservative minds seems to have been that advocates of parliamentary reform would seek to make political capital out of such occasions.

When on April 26, the Mayor of Liverpool agreed to call an evening meeting to express indignation at Lincoln's assassination it was not without hesitation. According to the Liverpool Herald, "before he did so he said, 'he had only one question to put - was there any political significance in the matter?' to which Mr. Rawlins, one of the deputation answered - 'not in the least.'" If Mr. Rawlins and his fellow delegates believed themselves to be promising to avoid any direct reference to British politics they apparently kept their word, but their meeting outraged the Tory Herald and revealed how sensitive those it represented were to exploitation of Lincoln's assassination by British partisans of the North. Instead of valuing "the manly and Christian sympathy of their opponents," said the Herald, the "Northerners" had "disgraced themselves by robbing the occasion of its true value and purport, and substituting instead an occasion for creating Northern political capital out of Southern sympathy."

Yet extracts from speeches made at the meeting quoted by this editorial hardly seem to justify the paper's hostility. Lincoln was presented as "the best friend the South ever had", and if this image, much favoured by the Confederacy's supporters in Britain, was linked with a suggestion that the South had plotted Lincoln's death, it was only as part of an interpretation of the assassination promulgated by opponents of slavery on both sides of the Atlantic. "It is the long tail of slavery that has killed Abraham Lincoln", one speaker declared, and the result would be, he said, as Lincoln would have wished. Instead of revenging themselves on the South, Northerners would "take up the cause for which he has died, and slavery will know no quarter." This orator having made clear his concept of Lincoln as the Martyr-Emancipator, an approving audience was urged to "unite in honouring this man, who is an honour to the English name" and whose fame

would equal that of Washington. In a second extract another speaker also developed the image of the Great Emancipator as he recalled telling the late President that his emancipation proclamation "had gone home to the hearts and homes of England" and quoted Lincoln's reply that, "he knew, when he issued it, that God-fearing men the world over would in due time do justice to his motives."

However irritating to those who had sympathised with the Confederacy and who rejected any concept of Lincoln as heroic Emancipator of the slaves, such comments hardly account for the Herald's bitter criticism. Indeed, only one of the extracts quoted could be interpreted as relating events in America to the political situation at home. According to the Herald, the Reverend Bains of Birkenhead, "said that were it possible for them not to sympathise with the Northern Americans, or to hope for the success of their great cause, the great men of our own history who won for us our freedom at Runnymede, and made it an everlasting possession, the Cromwells, the Miltons, the statesmen, patriots and warriors of our civil war might be expected to rise and to rebuke their unworthy and degenerate posterity." Cromwell was a hero of the Radicals, who also often looked back to Runnymede and Magna Charta to justify their claims on behalf of an extended franchise,[1] and opponents of Reform might well have viewed the Reverend Bains as one of those "preaching politicians" who tried to associate the cause of Reform with that of the martyred Lincoln.[2] This aside, there was nothing reported, except perhaps a reference to Americans as brothers, calculated to offend the political sensibilities of a Tory newspaper.[3]

Evening meetings such as this one were usually intended to permit working men to express their views on the assassination, and perhaps the key to Tory hostility was the presentation in speeches delivered at a meeting held at a time when labouring men could attend of an interpretation of the

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1 See below p. 389.
2 Glasgow Courier, May 4, 1865.
3 Liverpool Herald, April 29, 1865.

Civil War and of mythic concepts of Lincoln which were widely associated with Radical thought in America and Britain. For there is some evidence to suggest that it was in particular at meetings of working men that ultra-Conservative opinion feared political exploitation of Lincoln's death by Radical and working class leaders urging Reform. Indeed, it may be that in making haste to call middle class meetings on the assassination and to draft their own tributes to the murdered American President, and in stressing the unanimity of British feeling on his death,[1] those committed to preserving the political status quo in Britain sought to cut the ground from under the feet of those who hoped to exploit Lincoln's death in the cause of franchise reform.

While this must remain speculation resting upon isolated references to British Radical and working class attitudes, a comparison with the French Government's handling of attempts by its own left-wing critics to exploit Lincoln's murder on behalf of their own call for democratic government is revealing. Noting that the assassination had created a profound sensation in the French capital as elsewhere in France, the Brighton Gazette's Paris correspondent described how "The liberal party have attempted to make political capital out of it to the injury of the Government." When students attempted to march en masse to present an address of condolence to the United States Minister, the authorities considered the matter sufficiently serious to order their dispersal by the police, but when Liberal politicians sought to make the assassination a subject for agitation, the Government preferred an alternative to repressive measures. In the Senate and Corps Legislatif a despatch written by the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing indignation at the crime and sympathy for America was read and the Government "had speeches to the same effect delivered in its name by two of the speaking Ministers." Significantly the Gazette's correspondent felt that the French

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1 See below pp. 411ff.

Government had "very wisely" thus "taken the business out of the hands of the Liberals."[1]

If British meetings on the assassination organized by the upper and middle classes, and the tributes they and local authorities drafted, were intended to take the matter out of the hands of Radical and working class exponents of Reform, the tactic was not entirely successful. In a letter to the Birmingham Daily Post, W. Radford, claiming to speak on behalf of the town's working class inhabitans, observed sarcastically: "What wonderful enlighteners are success anddeath! Lincoln has succeeded, and he is dead, and all men now see his surpassing excellences, and rival each other in chanting his praises." Radford's bitterness was apparently due to his suspicion that while Lincoln's old critics hailed him as a hero, labour was being prevented from doing so. Criticizing the timing of a meeting held in Birmingham Town Hall on May 28, which he alleged had prevented working men from attending it, he commented:

> The working classes would have been glad of such an opportunity to express their detestation of the base and cowardly crime, and their sympathy with their American brethren under the calamity that had befallen them. But their sympathy would have gone further.
>
> The heroic devotion of the North in fighting the battle of free labour, not only for themselves, but for the whole world, would have been acknowledged and applauded.

Radford's letter made it clear that he believed that the town's leading men had deliberately excluded working men from the meeting of the 28th in order to prevent labour leaders from seizing the chance to draw some such correlation between the American War and the struggle for reform in Britain. "It has been suggested," he wrote, "that the fear, that a large meeting would not be satisfied with resolutions so tame and general, had some influence in fixing the time of holding the meeting."[2]

It is possible that Radford's comments did represent real discontent amongst working men, or at least amongst their representatives. At Brighton on May 4, 1865 Joseph Wood, an articulate local labour leader of working

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1 Brighton Gazette, May 4, 1865. The Liberal Brighton Guardian (July 4, 1866) described this paper as "the organ of the Tories".

2 Birmingham Daily Post, May 4, 1865.

class rather than middle class origin, acting as spokesman for the town's working men, made the point that:

> This meeting, he might say, was attended by the elite of the town, and, without laying any blame to the Mayor, this meeting having been called at twelve o'clock in the day gave no opportunity for the working classes to express their sympathy for the loss America had sustained, and some little dissatisfaction had been shown on that account among the working classes.

According to Wood, he held in his hand a requisition "from the working-classes" for the mayor to convene a second meeting on the assassination. There was no attempt to evade this demand, which had the sympathy of Brighton's leading "advanced" Liberals. Wood was thanked "for allowing the meeting to pass off so unanimously." It was one indication that the situation reflected underlying class tensions; another was Wood's own reference to worker discontent on the matter.[1] A similar situation may have existed in Wolverhampton where, at a meeting on Lincoln's death held on May 5, one speaker commented that the attendance would have been larger had the meeting been held an hour later when more of the labouring classes could have attended.[2]

If opponents of Reform were seeking to deny Radical leaders opportunities to make political capital out of Lincoln's death, prevention of working class meetings on the assassination might well have seemed desirable. Certainly labour leaders were ready to exploit the victory of the North and the tragedy that had followed. In what was called by the Croydon Times "a powerful address to the working classes" issued by the Reform League, workers were called upon to organize and were urged: "Take courage from the triumph of our brethren in America, and let us emulate their virtues and resolution, while constitutionally battling for our rights."[3] Presenting the demand for a working class meeting in Brighton, George Wood made clear Lincoln's significance for labour and the crucial reason why its spokesmen

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1 Brighton Gazette, May 4, 1865. A Mr. Woodward seconded Wood's proposition.
2 Birmingham Daily Post, May 6, 1865.
3 Croydon Times, May 20, 1865.

were anxious to eulogize him when he observed that Lincoln "was a man who threw a mantle of dignity around the working-classes."[1] Moreover, the concept of the Great Emancipator could be adapted to suit the purposes of labour leadership, as an address issued by the Working Men's International Association in London, and published by the Bee-Hive, revealed when it declared that: "You will never forget that, to initiate the new era of the emancipation of labour, the American people devolved the responsibilities of leadership upon two men of labour - the one Abraham Lincoln, the other Andrew Johnson."[2] Moreover, the Radical interpretation of the Civil War had laid great emphasis on labour support for the Northern cause and on Lincoln as a working men's hero as proof of the good sense and moral integrity of labour, and Radicals and their allies were anxious not only to exploit widespread recognition of the late President's qualities but also to demonstrate, through working class meetings on the assassination, that their analysis of labour attitudes had been correct.

The most widely publicised of such meetings was a demonstration by London's working men at St. Martin's Hall on May 4, 1865.[3] The meeting was convened by a Working Men's Committee which had originally been organized to prepare an address of congratulation to Lincoln and the American people, and various metropolitan working class organizations were represented on the platform, but the interest and co-operation of middle class Radicals was clear from the presence along side these representatives of labour of a number of prominent Reformers including the Chairman of the Reform League, Edmund Beales, Professor Beesly, the Reverend Newman Hall, E. Mason Jones, the Reverend Dr. Massie, George Potter and T.B. Potter. It was, then clear from the first that the meeting would carry a political message, and this was quickly spelled out. In the course of the many speeches delivered

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1 Brighton Gazette, May 4, 1865.
2 Bee-Hive, May 20, 1865. Those signing the address included Karl Marx, who had helped to found the association in 1864 and was the dominant member of its General Council.
3 Details and quotations are from the report in the Bee-Hive, May 6, 1865.

by Radicals and working men, every major argument involved in Radical exploitation of Lincoln's assassination on behalf of Reform appeared. The anti-slavery interpretation of the War crucial to Radical thought was implicit in most speeches and explicit in many, labour's consistent support for the North's cause and admiration for Lincoln was praised, and these themes were combined with mythic images of Lincoln as an Emancipator who by freeing black slaves became the hero of oppressed labour throughout the world, to justify and drive home the meeting's demand for the political enfranchisement of British working men.

Chairman T.B. Potter and the Bee-Hive's trade-unionist founder George Potter opened the proceedings with speeches hailing the late President as "a great champion" of liberty, the divinely-inspired Emancipator of the American slaves and a martyr to his cause. In both speeches the emancipation of the Negroes was related to Lincoln's role as a labour hero, and the mythic Lincoln's achievements were linked to the demand for Reform. Urging his audience to remember that Lincoln was a working man who "rose from the poorest of the people" and made his way upwards "by sheer hard work", Goerge Potter merged the mythic themes of Emancipator, labour hero and martyr to liberty to make Lincoln a symbol for the Reform movement as he declared: "We, the working men of England, feel the loss of such a man, and deeply sympathise with our working brethren in America. It was to emancipate slavery and to elevate labour that Abraham Lincoln lived and died. We lament his loss, and hope and trust that his martyrdom will be the death knell of slavery and oppression throughout the world." Lincoln was politically useful, and Potter's vision of him had changed since the days when he had controlled the Bee-Hive. T.B. Potter also made a clever play upon Lincoln's programme of Union and Emancipation, stating that in America "Union" was "the symbol of the success of popular government and emancipation, which means not merely to break the fetters of the slave, but to give him the rights of citizenship." Like American exponents of Negro suffrage,[1] Potter was converting the Great

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1 See above Chapters Four, Five and Seven.

Emancipator into a hero of black rights in whose name he was calling for political emancipation of Britain's working men. "We also need union," declared Potter in a reference to lack of unity among Reformers,[1] "to give every man equal rights and justice, and emancipation from thos remnants of feudalism, the privileges of which still trammel labour in this country." Expressing sympathy for the cause of labour in America, Potter declared that thought Lincoln was dead, "his example is not lost" and promising that the American hero would be venerated in England also, he linked Lincoln with Cobden and Cromwell to confirm his status as a hero and martyr of the Radical cause.

The image of Lincoln as a working men's hero dominated the speech of Mason Jones, who paid tribute to "the wisest, greatest, ablest and noblest representative of labour that ever existed", and urged the appropriateness of working men meeting to honour the man "who had not only been the advocate of the freedom of labour on the American continent, but the freedom of all honest men all the world over." As Lincoln was canonized by death, Jones drew a portrait of "the despised rail splitter" transfigured, his head encircled by "the martyr's crown." The image of the Great Emancipator appeared only fleetingly in a lengthy diatribe against slavery which used the themes of Lincoln being struck down by Southern slavery to expose its barbarous character and to call for its complete extermination and the enfranchisement of Southern blacks. The message for Britain was not forgotten. Just as from America came Lincoln's proclamations of freedom, so "under the magic of that voice the enslaved populations of Europe would wake, start forth, and walk into new liberty and life." The "glorious fabric of American freedom" would be raised to its fullest height on the basis of "universal suffrage and the vote by ballot" and "all nations of the earth would stand by and cry, 'Grace, grace unto us.'"

Such Radical use of Lincoln was echoed in the speeches made by working men. According to Mr. Leicester, a glass maker, Lincoln was an immortal

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1 See below p.

hero whose death had been a blow to millions in Britain, and whose life would provide "a pattern and an example for good men to follow." Above all, he was the Great Emancipator, and Leicester won cheers when he promised that the former slaves would recognize this and that "their children's children would, in after ages, sing their songs of praise to Abraham Lincoln." At the same time Lincoln was presented as a hero for working men because he had risen from "obscurity" to "the highest pinnacle of fame" in a state "which the greatest monarch in Europe would consider it an honour to govern ..." Describing the South's rebellion as "a hellish compact" by slave-holders against the legitimate government, Leicester asserted thatthe privileged classes in England had sympathized with the rebels and would have aided them had it not been for the working classes which, led by John Bright, "had always stood for freedom." Warming to his theme of the moral superiority of labour, Leicester claimed that working men had met the challenge of the privileged classes and a corrupt press and had received their reward: they had seen the triumph of the North and a great principle, "and the recent lessons in America ought to teach them to persevere in the maintenance and spread of liberal opinions." As he closed by calling for working class representation in the House of Commons, Leicester besought his audience to "urge on the cause of freedom, and never to relax their efforts until their end was obtained and freedom's battle fully won."

The same themes permeated the speeches of other working men and the addresses presented by them. British attitudes towards the Civil War and Lincoln were repeatedly recalled in order to endorse working men and attack those who would deny them a fuller share in government. The working men had always been true to the North, declared Mr. Abbott, a shipwright, and Mr. Weston, a carpenter, denounced "the governing classes, the genteel classes, the upper scum of society" who in contrast were alleged to have sympathised "with their brethren in the South in their hellish design to establish an empire based upon human bondage." The British press had railed against Lincoln, "calling him everything but a gentleman", but his name had

been dear to "the toiling millions" of the civilized world and his memory would remain forever in the hearts of working men. He was eulogized as the hero of the North's struggle against an aristocratic and pro-slavery rebellion. In that struggle he was seen as having fallen "a martyr to freedom", and an address from the working men of London to the President and Government of the United States confirmed their acceptance of the belief that, "Abraham Lincoln has been sacrificed in the cause of Negro emancipation, and the freedom of the slave has been consecrated by the blood of his deliverer." Working class admiration of Lincoln as a man who had risen from humble origins to strike a blow on behalf of oppressed black labourers was a dominant theme. According to this address the working men of Britain had throughout the War watched anxiously, confident that the time approached "when the rights and dignity of labour shall be acknowledged to exist equally in the black man as in the white." "It was for this", the address continued, "that Abraham Lincoln laboured; it was for this that Abraham Lincoln died, the martyr of freedom." Finally it was made clear that these labour spokesmen accepted Lincoln as a hero of their class's struggle for political rights. His battle against the slaveholders' rebellion was asserted to be their battle too, for the pro-Southern sympathies of the British ruling classes, said Mr. Weston, proved their desire to establish a slave empire at home. "What other interpretation", he asked, "will their conduct bear?" According to Mr. Connolly, a mason, Lincoln "did as much in the cause of the people of this country as he did in the cause of his countrymen, for he was an advocate of the establishment of freedom throughout Europe as well as in America." While working men would mourn their hero, they should also rejoice "at the impulse he had given to the cause of freedom throughout the world." It is clear that all the working men who spoke would have shared the sentiments of a painter, Mr. Davis, who told those gathered to eulogise Lincoln that, "he felt proud to be able to take part in so glorious a meeting, for so holy a cause."

Such a resounding endorsement by London working men of the Radical interpretation of the Civil War and of Lincoln's status as a patron saint of oppressed labour was likely to be as unacceptable to opponents of Reform as it was gratifying to the Radicals, and there was, particularly in the closing speeches, a militant note certain to alarm or offend ultra-conservatives. Mr. Weston's speech could easily be interpreted as inciting class hostility, and Professor Beesly's as a call for revolution. Attacking Baines' "miserable little six pound franchise bill", Beesly called for voting rights for the people and pointed to the trans-Atlantic example, declaring that it was "a spark from America that lit up the great French revolution" and winning applause as he promised that by vigorous efforts they might reach a state of affairs unknown since the days of Cromwell. It was not a prospect that the propertied classes would relish.

Yet Beesly was only calling upon working men to join the Reform League and to agitate for Reform at public meetings. "It was only by such means", said Beesly, endorsing the accepted channels of protest in Victorian England, "that they could obtain a full representation of the people." The very presence at this meeting of both working class spokesmen and prominent Radicals was evidence that articulate metropolitan labour leadership did not intend to abandon the co-operation with middle class Reformers which was characterise mid-Victorian working class agitation.[1] The remarks of Mr. Wheeler, representing the Friend in Need Society, were illuminating.[2] After congratulating the meeting on its chairmanship by T.B. Potter, a middle class Radical, Wheeler said that he "felt grateful at seeing on the platform so many gentlemen who interested themselves in promoting the welfare of the working classes." Even his injunction to the labouring classes to depend upon themselves for advancement sounded less like a call for a revival of the Chartist spirit than a middle class warning that working men must do their share in the struggle for Reform.

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1 Tholfsen, op.cit., 307, 322.

2 For a recent discussion of friendly societies see Tholfsen, op.cit., 288-306.

A more independent spirit was demonstrated at the Brighton meeting on Lincoln's assassination which resulted from the requisition presented to the Mayor on May 4 by Joseph Wood and Woodward.[1] The meeting is an interesting one for it was almost certainly brought about by local labour initiative and was attended, according to one local paper, by "a goodly company of artisans". Although a number of middle class sympathisers took part in the proceedings this was not, apparently, the intention of the meeting's organisers. There is no evidence that these non-working class speakers tried to dominate the meeting. Both Wood and Woodward spoke and other working men may have done so. An address was presented by J. Matthews, a railway worker, and the Mayor's comment that Lincoln had risen from the working classes, proving that a man could do so in America, while it did not necessarily imply sympathy with workers' aspirations in Britain, could be interpreted as a gesture of goodwill.

Nevertheless, the presence of some of Brighton's most prominent men may have inhibited the expression of Radical sentiments by working class speakers. Certainly the latter seem to have avoided any direct references to the issue of Reform and contented themselves with promoting the cause of labour indirectly by hailing the victory of the free labour North, stressing British labour's long-held sympathy with the now vindicated Northern cause, and eulogising Lincoln as the hero-President risen from working class origins. Also, reflecting the tendency of labour leaders to promote a Radical interpretation of the Civil War and to identify the interests of British workers with those of oppressed slave labourers in the South, Lincoln was depicted as a world hero and martyr of liberty. A resolution introduced by Wood expressed working men's regret at Lincoln's untimely death, and Wood went on to eulogise Lincoln's determination to destroy slavery as having raised him far above the patriot Garibaldi,

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1 See above, p. 370. Details of this meeting and quotations are taken from reports published in the Brighton Guardian, May 10, 1865 and the Brighton Gazette, May 11, 1865.

another hero of the working classes. Woodward drew "a well kept parallel" between the deaths of Lincoln and Christ, and expressed a hope that his audience would remember Lincoln in their prayers, on each anniversary of his assassination, as "the man who struck the greatest blow against slavery of any human creature." Mr. Matthews praised Lincoln's work to abolish slavery and told the meeting that with his death working men had lost "a personal friend."

Though Woodward, "long known in Brighton for his extreme principles", took this opportunity to thank the Mayor for attending the funeral of Richard Cobden, he did not apparently seek to make political capital out of Lincoln's death in any explicit way. The only hint that the town's working class leaders were thinking on more radical lines came in the comments of Wood, who was described during the election campaign of 1865 as a "Radical stump orator".[1] Having praised the late President for his "strenuous efforts to abolish slavery", Wood observed that, "there was no doubt that he (Lincoln) had worked a great revolution in America..." It was Wood, too, who read, and had probably drafted, a resolution that: "this meeting of working men sympathise the more deeply with the untimely death of Abraham Lincoln, as he was the first President elected from the working classes to the high position of ruler of one of the mightiest nations on the globe, that he carried successfully the struggle of Free against Slave Labour..."

Mor Radical sentiments, of the kind that middle and upper class conservatives may well have wished to suppress, were expressed during a meeting held at Birmingham on May 17, 1865. Here, in the rejection of middle class spokesmen, was unmistakable evidence of continuity, in spite of the dominant trend towards accommodation with middle-class Radicals, with the independent traditions of early nineteenth century working class Radicalism.[2] Called "after the principle trades unions had been taken into

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1 Brighton Gazette, June 22, 1865.
2 See "Working-Class Radicalism and Parliamentary Reform", in Tholfsen, op.cit., 307-27.

council", this may also have been the result of working class initiative, and, according to the Birmingham Daily Post, "the hall was well filled by an audience of respectable working-men." Representing, then, prosperous labour, the meeting was not attended by any of the town's more prominent inhabitants and this may explain the freedom with which Radical sentiments were expressed. Chairman Arther J. Partridge's loudly-cheered opening address announced that the threefold purpose of those present was to express horror at the assassination of the leader of the world's first republic, to exult at the destruction of "the worst oligarchy the world ever saw", and to record their determination to promote the success of those principles of democratic equality and popular self-government which had so gloriously triumphed in the West." In a Radical attack upon the Town Hall meeting of April 28, Partridge asseted that, "it had the necessary defect of all middle-class meetings - it was not sufficiently thorough - (hear) - it was not sufficiently numerous, and it had not that deep and profound interest in the progress of the people... which all public meetings...ought to have at the present time." With the same contempt for eulogies upon Lincoln by his former critics that had been evidence in Radford's letter to the Post,[1] Partridge denounced those who "sympathised with the assassination of a nation, but expressed their horror at the assassination of a man." The meaning of the American struggle for those present was made clear. "Where would have been the cumulative progress of all nations of the world up to the present time," asked the speaker, "if the great republic of America had been shattered by the South?" Lincoln was hailed not merely as an hero of America and of the struggle against slavery, but also as the representative of labour and manhood suffrage:

> Lincoln lived to promote great principles, and those principles had triumphed...These principles were those of democratic equality and conservatism - for the two were one - of national progress and strength, for, until a nation was composed of the

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1 See above, p. 369 . W. Radford was also present at this meeting.

> whole of the national manhood it would lack the decisive elements of national strength. (Applause) They were the principles of the rights of labour against capital, when labour came into legitimate conflict with capital, and of representation and constitutional majorities.

British middle class support for the South was used directly as an argument for extending the franchise. According to Partridge:

> a large minority of the middle classes...had dishonoured themselves in taking the part of slavery...The middle classes who had the greatest political power in this country, had done this, and the fact seemed to him to show clearly the necessity of introducing an element of better manhood into the governing power of the nation...The future power of England was an equal voting, educated manhood of the whole nation...

One address to the United States presented at this meeting fully reflected its Radicalism. Conventional expressions of sympathy gave way to a Radical analysis of the war and the associated Lincoln-Negro traditions. Lincoln clearly emerged as the Great Emancipator, the man who had done so much to secure "the approaching extirpation from your glorious Republic of that foul stain of slavery" who had thus "endeared himself to his country and to mankind." He was, too, hailed as the Martyr-Emancipator, who had been"sacrificed in the cause of Negro Emancipation", and it was claimed that, "the freedom of the slave has been consecrated by the blood of his deliverer." At the same time Lincoln was a hero of labour whose name"will be endeared to, and enshrined in, the hearts of the toiling millions of all countries, as one of the few uncrowned monarchs of the world." The North's success was hailed as "the positive acknowledgement of the great principles of democracy, political equality, fraternity, and national self-government", and this theme was integrated with that of the heroic Emancipator as the Address declared:

> the workmen of Great Britain have always been sound upon the great struggle in which you have been engaged, and while you have been fighting they have been anxiously watching and awaiting the time when the rights and dignity of labour shall be acknowledged to exist equally in the black man as in the white. It was for this Abraham Lincoln lived and laboured; it was for this Abraham Lincoln died the martyr of freedom.

It is clear that the address met with the approval of those present, for attempts to amend it caused uproar, "the great majority of the audience not only hissing and groaning vigorously, but stamping upon the floor with such

vehemence as to cause the dust to rise from the floor in a dense cloud."

The address chosen for transmission to America was more moderate, but here too Lincoln was presented as both the Great Emancipator and a hero of the emancipation of labour in its wider sense. America had lost a wise President, read the address, "liberty one of its brightest ornaments, and free labour one of its most sincere advocates." The hope was expressed that, in their hour of mourning, Americans would "find some consolation in the fact that the working men of all countries looked up to him as their champion; and though cut down in the hour of triumph, yet let us all rejoice that he lived long enough to see the dawn of negro emancipation..."[1]

The meeting was a long one and the Post's reporters left before it ended, but Partridge wrote to that paper two days later to point out that the meeting had subsequently adopted an address of thanks to Samuel A. Goddard for his efforts on behalf of the North and freedom. A public duty, wrote Partridge, was thus "performed by that very order whose appreciation of political ability and character is so fatally and unhappily mistrusted by the powers that be in England."[2] Goddard naturally took this opportunity to promote the cause of reform, commenting in his reply to the meeting: "I regard the working men as the brethren of the brave and true men of America who have been fighting the battle of freedom there - the battle of labour..." Lincoln, claimed Goddard, "was the type of what working men will accomplish under circumstances which it is their right to enjoy. Enfranchisement with them does not lead to mobocracy, but to an enlightened conservatism, and this history confirms."[3]

Thus Radical and working class responses to Lincoln's assassination revealed much about the character of the Reform movement on the eve of its renewed drive for an extension of the working class electorate. While traces of an independent and militant working class radical tradition were still

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1 Birmingham Daily Post, May 18, 1865.
2 Ibid., May 19, 1865.
3 Ibid., May 22, 1865.

to be glimpsed, meetings such as those at St. Martin's Hall in London and at Brighton confirmed that agitation for an expanded suffrage would be dominated by that alliance of middle and working class Reformers which Bright had urged in 1858[1] and which had developed after 1862 with the increasing acceptance by labour leaders of a Radical interpretation of the Civil War. Both groups stood to gain by such an alliance. Labour needed the aura of respectability which the support of its middle class champions could provide. Parliamentary Radicals needed to be able to produce popular demonstrations to counter opponents' claims that working men were politically apathetic. This suggests that the pro-Northern, anti-slavery working men's meetings of 1862 and 1863, and more significantly meetings to express labour sympathy over Lincoln's death, played a crucial role in the development of the Reform impulse of 1865-1867, fulfilling the needs of both working class and middle class Reformers and so helping to cement their developing alliance. Such meetings were in this sense the first stage of the agitation of 1865-1867 and a trial run for the mass demonstrations which gave force to Radical demands during that campaign.

In view of the enthusiasm with which those present at these meetings adopted the heroic Lincoln, and particularly images of him as the Great Emancipator and working man's friend, as symbols in their own struggle to secure political rights for labour, it is interesting to note how seldom his name appeared in the rhetoric of Reformers after 1865. Appeals to the American example of democratic government, long a standard argument of Radicals, remained frequent, and aristocratic and labour attitudes towards the Civil War were recalled and contrasted in order to demonstrate the moral superiority of working men and their fitness to vote, but Lincoln was only occasionally mentioned.

Much of the Reformers' time was taken up with rejecting the charges of their opponents that working men were unfit to vote, giving their rhetoric a defensive character. The idea that the labouring classes lacked intelligence

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1 Trevelyan, John Bright, 271.

was vigorously contested,[1] and the growth of a popular press, the progress of working men's education and their interest in politics were cited to demonstrate that labour had proved itself fit to exercise the right to vote.[2] Friends of Reform were equally anxious to refute claims that franchise extension would produce a social and political revolution. Reformers did not seek to incite class warfare, stressed W.E. Forster, and the Norfolk News urged Reform as the only solution to class jealousy stirred up by the Tories.[3] Radical speakers stressed that similar fears about the 1832 Reform Bill had proved unfounded.[4] The threat of violence was not, however, entirely dismissed. Reformers were anxious that the governing and propertied classes should recall the violence of 1832[5] and remember that "The people are learning their power, and they will not be kept down."[6] The Reform Bill of 1832 had avoided revolution and had made all thoughts of violence absurd, John Bright told a Rochdale Reform meeting,[7] but warnings of violence appeared in other speeches that he made.[8] Nevertheless, the dominant tone was one of reassurance. Fears that upper and middle class voters would be swamped by the masses were dismissed as Radical leaders emphasised the commitment to the political and economic systems of Britain of those who, according to M.P. Thomas Bazley, wanted only to be citizens,[9] and who, it was promised, would enrich the national constitution with their blood.[10]

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1 Norfolk News, April 7, 1866; Henry Willett speaking at a Reform meeting, Brighton, June 26, 1866: Brighton Guardian, June 27, 1866; B. Whitworth , M.P. for Drogheda, speaking at a National Reform Union meeting, Manchester, Jan. 30, 1866: Manchester Weekly Times, Feb. 3, 1866.

2 Thomas Barnes, M.P., addressing his constituents at Bolton, Jan. 24, 1865, and Thomas Bazley, M.P. for Manchester, at a National Reform Union meeting, Manchester, Jan. 30, 1866; Manchester Weekly Times, Jan. 28, 1865 and Feb. 3, 1866.

3 W.E. Forster at a public meeting, Manchester, May 16, 1865; Manchester Examiner and Times, May 17, 1865; Norfolk News, April 7, 1866.

4 T.B. Potter and John Bright at Rochdale, Jan. 3, 1866: Manchester Weekly Times, Jan. 6, 1866.

5 Mr. Boon, a working man, speaking at a meeting at Stockport, March 22, 1866: Manchester Examiner and Times, March 23, 1866.

6 Norfolk News, April 7, 1866.

7 Bright at Rochdale, Jan. 3, 1866, op.cit.

8 Cowling, op.cit., 12.

9 Speech at Manchester, May 16, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 17, 1865; George Potter at a trades' meeting, Glasgow: Bee-Hive, April 21, 1866.

10 Norfolk News, April 7, 1866.

Working class speakers sometimes displayed a more militant spirit which was reflected in former Chartist Ernest Jones' attack upon those Reformers who "attempted to conciliate the moneyed classes and the timid..."[1] At a meeting of Brighton's Conservative electors, Joseph Wood scathingly dismissed the idea that an extension of the suffrage would swamp intelligent voters and its corollary that the existing electorate had a monopoly of intellect,[2] while Ernest Jones told a public meeting in Manchester that it was better that the many should swamp the few thanvice versa.[3] A similar militancy sometimes appeared in the speeches of middle class Reformers,[4] but Radical leaders generally preferred arguments which would arouse the sympathy of the propertied classes and their representatives in the House of Commons with whom the decision on Reform ultimately lay. The argument that working men had fought for the Reform Bill of 1832 and that those whom it had enfranchised should repay their debt was popular,[5] as were warnings that failure to adopt Reform would result in greater numbers of working men emigrating to the New World where they could vote freely, draining industry of labour.[6]

The New World meant, above all, the United States, and Conservative M.P. C.B. Adderley was right when he told Eggleshall Conservative Association that Reformers "had the model of America before their eye."[7] For exponents of Reform the American Republic was the supreme symbol of the progress of freedom and democracy, a role confirmed by the North's triumph in the Civil War, and middle class Radicals and working men alike eulogized "the great

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1 Remarks at a National Reform Conference, Manchester, May 16, 1865: Glasgow Saturday Post, May 20, 1865.

2 Reported in the Brighton Gazette, June 22, 1865.

3 Speech of May 9, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 10, 1865.

4 See speeches at a conference of Reformers, Manchester, May 16 (2nd day) ibid., May 17, 1865.

5 Birmingham Daily Post, Aug. 28, 1866.

6 George Odger, acting as spokesman of a Reform League deputation to Earl Russell: Manchester Weekly Times, Jan 20, 1865.

7 Speech of Nov. 24, 1865: Birmingham Daily Post, Nov. 27, 1865. Charles B. Adderley was M.P. for North Staffordshire. F.B. Smith observes that opponents of Reform were "obsessed with the example of American democracy ...". See F.B. Smith, The Making of the Second Reform Bill (Cambridge, 1966), 78-80. See also, H.C. Allen, "The Civil War, Reconstruction and Great Britain", in Harold Hyman, ed., Heard Around the World: The Impact Abroad of the Civil War (New York, 1969), 3-96, p. 86.

and glorious American Republic" as "foremost of all the world..."[1] When Reformers claimed that manhood suffrage had worked elsewhere, and to the advantage of the nation,[2] it was primarily to the example of America that they looked, and the Reverend A. Hall won loud applause from fellow Reformers when he attacked the British aristocracy as pressing upon the vitality of the middle classes and declared, "There was no aristocracy in America. Every man there must work to eat, and labour to get property."[3] It was an image that appealed to working men. Believing that a steady drain of workers to the United States would influence the Government more than even monster meetings, a working class correspondent of the Bee-Hive urged the formation of a working men's emigration movement, declaring, "Let us be up and doing, and let our watchword be America and our rights."[4]

In the Federal Government's triumph over the Confederacy its British admirers saw the vindication of democratic and Republican government, and they drew from the Civil War lessons regarding the need for Reform in Britain.[5] Their opponents' claims that democracy had failed in America could now be turned against them,[6] and warnings that the American bubble had burst, once a source of deep anxiety, were now recalled with laughter. On the contrary, P.A. Taylor told an audience of 5000 including many influential Reformers, the American bubble "had lengthened into an arch that spanned the political horizon; it was a rainbow which gave a guarantee to the nations that never again should their liberties be entirely submerged beneath the deluge of aristocratic and despotic power."[7] Maintaining their wartime analogy between aristocratic opposition to Reform in Britain

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1 Edmond Beales at a Reform League demonstration, London, Bee-Hive, March 10, 1866. John Bright quoted in Birmingham Daily Post, Jan 23, 1866.

2 Edmond Beales at a conference of Reformers, Manchester, May 16 (2nd day), 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 17, 1865; James Moir at a Reform Meeting at Glasgow, Jan. 25, 1866: Caledonian Mercury, Jan. 26, 1866.

3 Speech at Hulme, March 6, 1866: Manchester Weekly Times, March 10, 1866.

4 "A Working Man" to the Editor, Bee-Hive, July 14, 1866.

5 Manchester Weekly Times, Jan. 27, 1866, discussing the views of Goldwin Smith.

6 W.E. Forster at Manchester, May 16, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 17, 1865. F.B. Smith discusses use of the American example by opponents of Reform in The Making of the Second Reform Bill (Cambridge, 1966), 78-80.

7 Speech at Manchester, May 16, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 17, 1865.

and the Confederacy as an anti-democratic attempt to establish a nation based on slavery, Reformers warned the British upper classes that they could not be blind to what had happened on the other side of the Atlantic where, as working class spokesman J.C. Edwards put it, "one of the world's proudest aristocracies failed to put down democracy in the American Civil War."[1] The War itself, it was claimed, should be a lesson to reactionaries. Their anti-slavery interpetation of the conflict strengthened by the North's victory, Radicals drew a parallel between the movement for Reform in Britain and abolitionism in America, which, as the experience of the last few years had shown, could not be ignored.[2] Urging the necessity to return to Parliament men friendly to Reform, one speaker cited the example of procrastination over slavery resulting in civil war to prove that "There was danger of making delays in such matters."[3] To Gladstone, rapidly emerging as a hero of Reform, it seemed that Britain must profit from the Civil War's lessons and learn to trust the people.[4]

The most valuable lesson of all in the eyes of the Reformers was bound up with their wartime analysis of British attitudes towards the American conflict. Allegations that the ruling classes had sympathized with a slaveholding rebellion were used to attack those who sought to preserve the political status quo, and opponents of Reform were denounced as "Men who are always found on the wrong side, who hate freedom, and delight in oppression."[5] In contrast, the attitude of the working classes, who, it was asserted, had always supported the North was presented as proof of their fitness to share in political power. Strengthening a tradition which was to become part of the popular history of the Civil War on both sides of the Atlantic, those arguing for Reform at home continued their wartime tactic

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1 Speech at a public meeting, Manchester, May 9, 1865: ibid., May 10, 1865; W.E. Forster at Manchester, May 16, 1865, op.cit.

2 John Bright to his constituents at Birmingham, Jan. 18, 1865; Manchester Weekly Times, Jan. 21, 1865.

3 Brighton Guardian, May 17, 1865.

4 Speech at Liverpool, April 6, 1866: Birmingham Daily Post, April 7, 1866.

5 George Potter at a working men's meeting, London, April 5, 1866: Bee-Hive April 7, 1866.

of playing upon the sufferings of Lancashire operatives during the cotton famine who, it was claimed, opposed British recognition of the pro-slavery Confederacy even though the North's blockade of Southern cotton meant unemployment and hardship for workers in the depressed British cotton industry. British workers, said Reformers, had been tested in adversity,[1] and their peaceful behaviour during the cotton famine was presented as proof of their patriotism and that good sense which, it was alleged, had alone prevented war with America.[2] According to one advocate of Reform, the "good order, industry, propriety, and moral and decorous behaviour" of the working classes, especially in Lancashire, during the War years had been "the most forcible indication of their fitness to take part in the election of members of Parliament."[3]

For anti-slavery Radicals one result of the Civil War above all others - emancipation - carried an enduring message for Reform. To John Bright events in America were proof that questions involving the rights of men, such as Reform, could not be laid to rest. American attempts to bury the slavery question had, he said, ended in civil war, "and the negro stands forth, in vast proportions, before the world. He is rubbing the marks of the branding iron from his forehead. (Cheers.) And the shackles which bound him so long are dropping from his limbs. (Cheers.)" The same argument was presented more explicitly by the Caledonian Mercury in an editorial published early in 1866. Warning that no institution, custom or law not sanctified by Heaven could withstand the force of public opinion, this paper looked back at the Civil War and commented, " When the whole system of slavery, with all the interests involved in it, can be put an end to in five years, what may not be done in a short space of time in the cause of

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1 John Bright speaking at Hulme, March 6, 1866: Manchester Weekly Times, March 10, 1866.

2 Bee-Hive, Jan. 6, 1866; speeches of Edmond Beales in December 1865 and April 1866 reported in ibid., Dec. 16, 1865; April 14, 1866. Mr. Connolly at the St. Martin's Hall working men's meeting, May 4, 1865; ibid.,May 6, 1865.

3 Rev. S. Green speaking at a Sunday School Conference, Wolverhampton, March 30, 1866: Birmingham Daily Post, March 31, 1866.

humanity and of God here and elsewhere?" Public opinion had, it claimed, brought about emancipation in America, and the message was spelt out for all who "repudiating the just claims of honest and earnest reformers, deny common rights and refuse common justice in the hope that their special privileges will be preserved and their class powers maintained." "Let them be warned", continued the Mercury, "by the American struggle. Endurance has its limits; and...the day may come when Great Britain...may find herself, like America, in arms..."[1] This theme fitted well into Reformers' successful attempts to express their demands in terms of the virtue and inevitability of progress, a fundamental belief of mid-Victorian society.[2] Thus Mason Jones told a Reform League meeting at Islington in August 1866 that, "When liberty is progressing all the world over, you must not go back, but be ready to defend the cause for which your fathers bled and died."[3] To advocates of Reform it seemed that their cause symbolized the progressive tendencies of the age[4] and they were not surprised to find its opponents, whom they stigmatized as enemies of progress, on the side of the pro-slavery Confederacy.[5] Their own cause, however, was that of world progress: upon the overthrow of "the existing enemies of Reform" depended "the march of liberty and the better future of the world."[6]

To those who shared such beliefs, the emancipation of the Russian serfs, the slaves in America, and the people of Italy by Garibaldi, were bound to become symbols in a campaign which asked, in the words of Mason Jones, "were 5,000,000 of Englishmen to be kept in political bondage?"[7] "A Non-Elector" informed the Editor of the Liberal Western Times, that,"A united

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1 Caledonian Mercury, Jan. 4, 1866.
2 David Thompson, England in the Nineteenth Century (1815-1914) (Middlesex, 1962, ed.), 102-103
3 Bee-Hive, Aug. 4, 1866.
4 Robert Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill (London, 1979) 98; Manchester Weekly Times, Jan. 20, 1866; Sir John Bowring at Exeter, April 4, 1866: Western Times, April 6, 1866.
5 E.A. Watkin, M.P. for Stockport, speaking at Yarmouth, June 12, 1865: Norfolk News, June 17, 1865.
6 Norfolk News, April 14, 1866.
7 Mason Jones at a London Working Men's Association meeting, July 31, 1866: Bee-Hive, Aug. 4, 1866.

North liberated four millions of slaves from bondage. A united majority of the English people will yet emancipate themselves from political thraldom."[1] The tactic of linking the cause of oppressed British working men to that of Southern slaves, used during the War to stimulate labour sympathy for the North and for Lincoln's emancipation edicts, was still much in favour with Reformers. In a letter on Reform tactics, John Bright claimed that opponents of Reform viewed British workers in the same light that planters viewed their former slaves: "They may work and pay taxes, but they must not vote." He added pointedly, "Millions of workmen will bear this in mind..."[2] Other Reformers made sure that they did so.[3]

It is easy to see from this how eulogies of Lincoln as a hero and martyr of the North's struggle to preserve the American Republic and free the slaves fitted into Reformers' rhetoric. His career symbolised dramatically the values they cherished, and while Magna Charta, the 1832 Reform Bill and heroes like Cromwell were symbols of progress in the past, Lincoln, like Cobden, was a symbol of the day, representing, as Radical and working-class tributes showed, the triumphant progress of democracy and fulfilling its promise for the emancipation of labour.

It is perhaps less easy to understand why the heroic Lincoln appears so rarely in the rhetoric of Reformers after the spring of 1865, but a number of reasons can be suggested. Firstly the Radical defence of the Northern cause, in which mythic images of Lincoln as a hero of democracy and emancipation played an important part, was unlikely to dominate Reform propaganda after that time because it had arisen, to a considerable extent, as a means of countering attempts by opponents of Reform to exploit the Civil War in their propaganda against extension of the franchise.[3] With

1 Western Times, June 27, 1865.

2 Letter to George Howell, May 19, 1866 read at an out-door Reform meeting, London, May 21, 1866: Birmingham Daily Post, May 23, 1866.

3 W. Cooper at Reform meeting, Rochdale, Feb. 2, 1865: Manchester Weekly Times, Feb. 4, 1865; Henry Willett at Brighton Reform meeting, June 26, 1866: Brighton Guardian, June 27, 1866. A popular argument was that raised by Mr. Howard, Secretary of the London Reform League, at the Reform Conference which opened in Manchester on May 15, 1866: "If they were prepared for the granting of civil rights to American slaves," he declared, "surely they must agree to give the same privileges to their own countrymen." Manchester Examiner and Times, May 16, 1866.

4 See above p.

the North's victory in 1865, Radicals were no longer on the defensive, and panygerics to the victorious Republic and its heroic President were bound to become less frequent once the initial rejoicing was over. At the same time, they were equally certain to lose their impact on the public mind as the assassination faded into the past. In the spring of 1865 Lincoln's name was on everyone's lips, even his bitterest critics generally chose to concede his qualities or remain silent, and the time was ripe for exponents of Reform to capitalise on the late President's new-found popularity in Britain and drive home their well-established message that he was a man who had risen from the ranks of labour to become the hero of working men in Britain and a symbol for the cause of freedom, democracy and - they said - working men everywhere.[1] Within a few months Americans were engaged in the task of reconstructing their nation, and interest in its affairs waned. In September 1865 the Birmingham Daily Post observed, "the cessation of the war has happily deprived us of exciting news from the United States...", and in April of the following year the same paper confirmed, as it glanced editorially at American affairs, that "attention is just now mainly fixed upon home politics..."[2] Although there was still concern over whether or not the American peace of 1865 would last,[3] Reform and the coming European war, were the great topics of discussion in 1866.[4]

Secondly, a number of factors militated against concepts of Lincoln as a hero and martyr of emancipation proving valuable in a campaign which sought middle class sympathy and support for its call to extend the franchise. Once the immediate shock of the assassination had passed, and irritation over the Alabama claims[5] swept away a temporary but widespread desire to conciliate the victorious North which had encouraged a more favourable

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1 See above, pp. 355, 366 ff.
2 Birmingham Daily Post, Sept. 4, 1865; April 24, 1866.
3 Bolt, The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction, 33.
4 "The Coming War", Brighton Gazette, May 17, 24, 1866.
5 Claims that Britain had violated her neutrality by supplying the Confederacy with cruisers, of which the best known was the Alabama, resulted in American demands for compensation. This led to bad feeling between Britain and the United States. The question was not settled until 1872. See Birmingham Daily Post, Oct. 20, 1865.

attitude towards Lincoln on the part of his upper and middle class critics, old pro-Confederate sympathies often revived.[1] At the same time growing race prejudice, apparent during the Civil War and reinforced by the Jamaica riot of 1865,[2] together with a lingering belief that slavery had not been the real issue of the war,[3] and allegations that emancipation had not, in any case, benefitted the American slaves,[4] operated against any vision of Lincoln as the Emancipator.

Direct political use of Lincoln was soon reduced to isolated references to him. Thus, for example, Mason Jones told a National Reform League meeting at Birmingham that, "If they wanted evidence of the fact that manhood suffrage was advantageous, and promoted the greatness of the country, let them look at the United States, and see the effect it had there. He for one had always been under the impression that the rail splitter from Illinois and the tailor from Tennessee compared very favourably with some of the hereditary legislators of our own more favoured land..."[5] The image of Lincoln as a working man's hero evoked by Jones was apparently one which continued to have meaning for politically minded workers, for in 1866 the Bee-hive used the example of Lincoln as a heroic representative of labouring men's aspirations to support its argument for the education of boys rather than their employment in industry.[6]

Though political use of Lincoln declined, there is evidence that his anti-slavery, Radical and working-class admirers continued to view him as a hero of labour democracy and emancipation. To the men and women who actively opposed slavery, the decision to free Southern blacks had been the moral turning point of the war, justifying their faith in "the genius of

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1 See below, pp. 419 - 21 on enduring sympathy for the South.
2 See Christine Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race (London 1971).
3 Duke of Argyll speaking in London, April 24, 1865: Western Times, May 30, 1865; on April 22, 1865 the Liverpool Herald published a letter on the alleged American threat to Canada which commented that when the Civil War began, "we soon saw that the nigger question was a sham." Argyll was a staunch opponent of slavery and a Northern partisan during the War.
4 See below p.
5 Speech of Nov. 23, 1865: Birmingham Daily Post, Nov. 24, 1865.
6 Bee-hive, April 7, 1866.

example in which Lincoln played a role. An address to Johnson adopted at a general meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in February 1866 expressed the continuing belief that the sacrifices of the Civil War and "the assassination of your virtuous predecessor, President Lincoln" "are being overruled for good by an all-wise Providence, and that the lesson will not be without its salutary effect upon the nations of the civilized world."[1] The image of Lincoln as the Negro's Friend and Emancipator appears to have been one that British opponents of slavery continued to find acceptable. At a meeting of Birmingham Laides' Anti-Slavery Society in May 1866 an American visitor, Mr. Parvin, representing the American Freedmen's Christian Union, entertained those present with "a lucid account of the interest the late President always felt in the cause of the negro, remarking that, from the first moment of his occupation of the Presidential chair, he was always anxious to sign a declaration abolishing Slavery..."[2]

For British abolitionists, as for many American opponents of slavery, Lincoln's reputation was enhanced as initial warmth for his successor gave way to disillusionment. Johnson's widely-publicised hostility to slavery and to the Southern slaveholding aristocracy, together with the adoption by Congress in December 1865 of a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery throughout the United State, inclined British anti-slavery opinion to look kindly upon the new President. However, uneasiness that his Administration would fail to protect the freedmen, in whose progress the British anti-slavery movement took a close interest, his veto of the Freedmen's Bureau and Civil Rights Bills by which Congress tried to ensure that the Government would do so, and his break with the anti-slavery Radical wing of the Republican Party, brought a change of attitude. In particular British emancipationists were alienated by Johnson's unwillingness

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1 Anti-Slavery Reporter, Feb. 15, 1866.
2 Birmingham Daily Post, July 2, 1866.

to support Negro suffrage which many of them, in common with their anti-slavery contacts in America, saw as "bare justice" to the black man and necessary to preserve his freedom.[1] By the time that the American election campaign of 1866 was in full swing, the Anti-Slavery Reporter was convinced that Johnson lacked sound principles or clear judgement, and his tour of the North was condemned as a "sad and humiliating spectacle". Recalling the career of his predecessor, the Reporter declared that, "The fiery furnace of political strife served but to purify and brighten Abraham Lincoln. It has simply blackened and grimed Andrew Johnson..."[2]

Anti-slavery British Radicals were similarly disappointed by Johnson's course, and equally likely to mourn Lincoln more deeply as a result. To Goldwin Smith it seemed by the end of 1865 that the Southern press was beginning to damn Johnson with its approval and that the President was following a policy of compromise with the South, "the work of one who is too little of a Lincoln..." Two months later Smith felt more favourably disposed towards Johnson. "But I confess", he told C.E. Norton, "my heart does not accept him as the successor of Lincoln." Nevertheless, he trusted that the North would not permit the President, or anyone else, to prevent the total extirpation of slavery.[3] By the summer of 1866 he had no doubts that Johnson was a barrier to this. "The negro has suffered a great loss by the death of Mr. Lincoln," Smith told an anti-slavery audience in Birmingham, and he added that Johnson had been a slaveholder and that, "from the first he (Mr. Smith) had no confidence in Mr. Johnson and he deeply mistrusted him now."[4] In 1867 he wrote that the problems of Reconstruction "have been immeasurably increased by the loss of Lincoln and the character of his occidental successor." Similarly, the Birmingham Daily Post regretted that, unlike Congress, Johnson "did not see what Lincoln saw so clearly, that nothing could secure union but the total destruction of the fatal seed of disunion - slavery."[5]

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1 Anti-Slavery Reporter, Feb. 16; May 1, 1866.
2 Ibid., Oct. 1, 1866.
3 Letters to C.E. Norton, Oct. 1, Dec. 16, 1865: "Smith-Norton Letters", 126, 128.
4 Birmingham Daily Post, June 13, 1866.
5 Ibid., Sept. 12, 1866.

For British emancipationists and anti-slavery Radicals the image of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation remained bright. Writing to Joseph Cooper to explain his absence from a meeting called by the National Freedmen's-Aid Union in 1867, one English abolitionist recalled how in 1861,"I thought I saw in the election of President Lincoln the dawn of those wonderful events, which crowded into a few years, have effected a revolution...", and he perhaps hinted at a Mosaic concept of the late President when he declared that in the progress of emancipation the hand of God had been more visible than at any time since the Israelites were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh.[1] To Leslie Stephen, writing in 1865, it seemed that slavery had been the crucial issue of the Civil War, and he declared of the Emancipation Proclamation that, "this great measure was perhaps the most important step, and the crowning glory of Mr. Lincoln's life..."[2] In an address on Lord Palmerston, who had recently died, delivered in Birmingham on November 2, 1865, George Dawson, a famous dissenting preacher and lecturer whose anti-slavery and pro-Reform views were well known, admitted that he had no great admiration for the late Premier, 'for only those whose names were "wedded to great thoughts and principles" became immortal. Linking Lincoln's name with that of the Reformers' hero Cobden, Dawson commented, "The names of Richard Cobden and Free Trade would ever live together; the name of Abraham Lincoln and the abolition of slavery were eternally linked..." Such names would be remembered by posterity according to Dawson: "Abraham Lincoln and Richard Cobden would live for ever, for the name of the first, like the memories of the righteous, 'brighten more and more unto the perfect day;'..." The Birmingham Daily Post recorded that Dawson closed amid the loud cheers of a large audience.[3]

It is difficult to assess the extent to which mythical concepts of Lincoln endured in the minds of his anti-slavery, Radical and working class

1. J.H. Tuke of Hitchin to J. Cooper, Oct. 12, 1867: Anti-Slavery Reporter, Nov. 15, 1867.
2. 'L.S.' (Sir Leslie Stephen), The "Times" on the American Civil War: A Historical Study (London, 1865), 42-43
3. Birmingham Daily Post, Nov. 3, 1865

admirers of the 1860's. The London Anti-Slavery Reporter and the Bee-Hive, still an important organ of working class opinion, both had less to say about America in the 1870's, and though a series of biographical portraits of labour leaders published by the Bee-Hive sometimes mentioned an individual's pro-Northern sentiments during the Civil War, the heroic Lincoln seems to have been forgotten.[1] Moreover, later writings and reminiscences of prominent Radicals and working class spokesmen sometimes skimmed over the Civil War years paying little or no attention to the issues or personalities involved in the American conflict.[2] By the Twentieth Century, British Radicals were less inclined to hail the example of America,[3] and perhaps as their feelings for the Republic cooled, so too did their admiration for the man who symbolized its values.

Yet there is some evidence to suggest that for his wartime British admirers Lincoln remained a hero, According to John Bright's grandson, Roger Clark, in later days the elderly Radical leader liked to recall John Bright's continuing view of the Civil War as a conflict against slavery and part of the world struggle for liberty, as well as his enduring admiration for America,[4] doubtless ensured that he also retained his concept of Lincoln as a hero: a portrait of the late President hung in his library, and Lincoln's gold-headed cane became a Bright family heirloom.[5] The memoirs of John Wilson, a labour leader of working class origins, suggest that he also continued to hero-worship Lincoln. For Wilson the Civil War had been "a conflict in which the issues of one of the greatest questions that ever engaged human attention or taxed the resources of any nation were in the balanced..." and Lincoln had been "the moving spirit in the initiation and the consummation of the righteous project..." While

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1 Birmingham Daily Post, Nov. 3, 1865.

2 See, for example, portraits of George Potter and Edward O. Greening: Bee-Hive, Aug. 2, 1873, Nov. 6, 1875.

3 See, for example, John Passmore Edwards, A Few Footprints (London, 1905); Howard Evans, Radical Fights of Forty Years (London and Manchester, 1913); Joseph McCabe, Life and Letters of George Jacob Holyoake, 2vols (London, 1908)

4 Pelling, America and the British Left, 4-5.

4 Speeches at Rochdale, Dec.18, 1879, Birmingham, June 1, 1882, and letter to Hon. R.B. Hayes (President Hayes),1879, quoted in William Robertson, Life and Times of the Right Hon.John Bright (London,1883),498-99,526,532.

5 Mills, John Bright and the Quakers, 242; Robertson, op.cit., 404.

Wilson clearly saw the late President as a symbol of democratic government, Lincoln's role in emancipation contributed to his heroic status in Wilson's eyes. According to Wilson, Loncoln would never have compromised his principles in order to retain political office: "Equality and the love of human right and a recognition of the fundamental truth that the colour of a skin ought not to differentiate the human race weighed more with him. Freedom was with him an eternal principle; to live in the White House was temporary and fleeting." Wilson continued to see Lincoln, as he claimed to have done in the 1860's, as "a man full of noble purpose", "a hero of the highest type", and "one of the world's greatest men." "There was never", he wrote, "a grander soul found in the human breast."[1]

Working people's memories of the Civil War years have seldom been preserved, but Lincoln as a hero of the working classes and emancipation loomed large in the reminiscences of an English immigrant to America published in 1902. According to Joseph Holden, the working people of Lancaster had walked to Liverpool when they heard the news of Lincoln's death, and had dragged to a meeting in St. George's Square a wagon decorated with a bale of cotton, flowers and bunting, the British and American flags, and "the plain picture that appeals to plain people all over the world - Abraham Lincoln." Holden added that he had since repeatedly asked his fellow working men whether they would suffer again, as they had done during the Civil War, for liberty's sake, and that their answer, like his own, was that they would.[2] Thus it seems that for those who continued to see the Civil War as a battle against slavery, Lincoln was remembered for "his great work of emancipation..."[3] and that they continued to believe, as the anti-slavery Norfolk News predicted in the summer of 1865, that "the martyred President" would be "the man whose proud privilege throughout all time shall be, that he proclaimed freedom to five millions of his fellow-men."[4]

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1 John Wilson, Memories of a Labour Leader: The Autobiography of John Wilson, J.P., M.P. (London, 1910), 173-74, 179-80.

2 James E. Holden, "My Story of Abraham Lincoln", Outlook, LXX, no.12 (March 22, 1902), 718-20, p.720, quoted in Jay Monoghan, Diplomat in Carpet Slippers (Indianapolis, 1945), 427-28.

3 Caledonian Mercury, Feb. 6, 1866.

4 Norfolk News, June 10, 1865 quoting from "Good Words" for June.

Chapter Nine

Britain and the Enduring Image of Lincoln as Hero

> All I know about him is that he was one of those rare men whom you do not associate with any particular creed, party, and, if you will forgive me for saying so, not even with any country, for he belongs to mankind in every race, in every clime, and in every age. - Address by David Lloyd George, Springfield, Illinois, Oct. 18, 1923.[1]

Radical and working class exploitation of the heroic Lincoln which began when the Emancipation Proclamations were issued and reached a peak at the time of his assassination was an important but brief phase in the drive for Reform which culminated in the 1867 Reform Act. However, even when the emancipation edicts had been issued, the concepts of Lincoln as a hero of popular government and emancipation which found favour with many Reformers, though shared to some extent by anti-slavery men and women, did not win favour with the upper and middle classes whose representative in Parliament, the Church, the armed forces, the professions and - to an increasing extent - in business and industry, formed what may be called "influential opinion" in mid-nineteenth century Britain. It was only when Lincoln's assassination caused a revulsion of feeling amongst his former critics that recognition of his virtues and his heroic status as the martyred leader of the victorious North became widespread. Then, while the upper and middle classes by no means accepted the Radical vision of Lincoln, they did, by their tributes to him, lay the foundation for his emergence in late nineteenth and twentieth century British thought as a hero of those broad values of freedom and democracy which Britain and America alike claim to cherish. This chapter

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1 David Lloyd George, Abraham Lincoln: An Address ... (Cleveland, 1924), 8-9.

will seek to illustrate and explain these developments by studying prevailing upper and middle class attitudes to Lincoln at the time of the emancipation proclamations and immediately after his assassination, and by presenting a brief survey of some evidence from the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth which demonstrates the enduring character of mythic concepts of Lincoln.

Popular British Responses to Mythical Images of Lincoln: 1862-1865

Little was known of Lincoln when he became President, and the initial friendliness shown towards him by the British press generally at the time of Secession disappeared once it became clear that his government was prepared to go to war with the South to save the Union, a course which large numbers in Britain felt to be both futile and likely to disrupt Anglo-American commerce, thus damaging Britain's prosperity. At the same time the call by the Federal Government and its supporters abroad for moral support for its cause from the British people was rejected by many influenced by the Lincoln Administration's persistent denials that it threatened slavery in the South and by the Confederacy's insistence that Southerners were not fighting to preserve slavery. The many other reasons for widespread British sympathy for the Confederate cause that contemporaries noted and historians have confirmed are well-known and need not be discussed here.[1] It is sufficient to observe that this sympathy meant that during the Civil War years admiration for Lincoln was largely restricted to those anti-slavery, Radical and intellectual and working class circles from which most of the North's British partisans were drawn.

This situation was not significantly altered by Lincoln's decision to issue the 1862 and 1863 edicts of emancipation. "Take one step for

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1 See the general works listed above, p. 341 n. 3.

emancipation", had promised one British opponent of slavery in a letter to the American Secretary of State in 1861, "and all England will encourage you. Withhold it, and neither ask nor expect our sympathy."[1] However, the main body of educated opinion in a country which prided itself upon its love of freedom and hostility to slavery was harshly critical of Lincoln's proclamations. As contemporaries noted, outside the ranks of abolitionism, British anti-slavery feeling had lost its fire. "One would have thought that such a glorious result would have been hailed with acclamation in this liberty-loving land;" American A. F. Stoddard, referring to Lincoln's decision to adopt emancipation, told a Scottish audience early in 1863. "A few years ago", he observed, "the whole country was ringing with the guilt of American slavery."[2] A glance at the reactions to the Emancipation Proclamations expressed in a few of Britain's most influential London newspapers and journals helps to explain Stoddard's disappointment.

The London Times, organ of upper and middle class opinion and wielding its influence in Britain and abroad, had early in the War abandoned its initially pro-Northern stand in favour of an alleged neutrality which was unmistakably pro-Southern, and was now hostile to Lincoln's edict of emancipation. Only conquest of the South could make the edict more than waste paper, said the edition of October 6, and a day later such cautious criticism gave way to a blistering attack upon Lincoln's "pompous proclamations". A sop to Britain and France and a party move to keep American abolitionists within his party, Lincoln's act would, claimed the Times, prove too little for anti-slavery men but too much for the slaveowners. Not a decree of emancipation on its merits, but a desperate final attempt to

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1 Dr. Philip P. Carpenter to William H. Seward, quoted in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, May, 1880.

2 A.F. Stoddard, Lecture on "The Civil War and American Slavery", at Paisley, Jan. 28, 1863: Glasgow Saturday Post, Jan. 31, 1863.

preserve the Union by a "would be conqueror and extirpator", the Proclamation would bring neither re-union nor European support. More contemptible than wicked, "Lincoln's last card would not prove to be a trump." A recurring theme was that Lincoln was a weak man pressured into an action he did not personally favour by the ultra-abolitionists of the North. These men were as guilty as he was for the edict, said the Times, for they had "wrought him up to a decision ..." His speeches showed him to be "like a man under constraint, acting against his own convictions." He had been"cruelly used by the Abolitionist section of his own party." Far from being the Great Emancipator, Lincoln could not even keep control of his own policy on emancipation. Summarizing on October 21 a critique of emancipation which did not substantially alter before Lincoln's assassination, the Times made clear its conception of the place Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation would secure him in History:[1] It will not deprive Mr. Lincoln of the distinctive affix which he will share with many, for the most part foolish and incompetent, Kings and Emperors, Caliphs and Doges, that of being LINCOLN - 'THE LAST'.

The Saturday Review was equally venomous in its denunciation of the edict. The proclamation was seen by that journal as both a menace and a bribe to Southerners to return to the Union or lose their slaves. It was an unnecessary, unintelligible, unconstitutional and illegal act that could not be justified in any way, for "Even if he were influenced by humane motives, philanthropy is no excuse for tyranny," but his "avowed object" was to save the Union. The edict would not, said the Review, secure English support; it was "a fresh display of abject weakness and of consummate wickedness" by which Republican philanthropy was prepared to sacrifice the Negro in a vain effort to save the Union. Incidental damage to slavery was, stressed the

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1 Times, Oct. 6, 7, 8, 21, 1862.

journal, no excuse for arbitrary and illegal revenge on the South. The Review had, then, no concept of Lincoln as the Emancipator. Mere "idle bombast" and "aimless rhetoric" unless followed up by war, the edict was already tacitly consigned to oblivion. Lincoln's "fictitious abolition of slavery" was only likely to defer its destruction. In slavery, "as in most other matters," claimed the Review, Lincoln had "no mind, no convictions."[1]

Other conservative journals echoed these judgements. The Proclamation was described as a "cry of despair", and a monstrous, reckless and "devilish" project. Despairing of victory through force of arms, Lincoln sought "to paralyse the victorious armies of the South by letting loose upon their hearths and homes the lust and savagery of four million negroes." The edict was, however, a "last fling" that missed its aim.[2] Provincial organs of upper and middle class hostility to the North echoed the London press. On the verge of collapse, observed the Brighton Gazette, Lincoln "once more displays the banner (of emancipation) he has so often dragged in the mire."[3] Described as neither "statesmanly" nor anti-slavery, the edict was condemned as "the great and crowning blunder" of Lincoln's administration by which he sacrificed the Union to "Negrophites" who hated the individual Negro.[4]

Spokesmen of pro-Southern opinion in Britain similarly denounced the edicts, denying Lincoln credit for genuine anti-slavery sentiment. The 1862 Proclamation was, according to Sir Thomas Peel, "odious and abominable" and he, like A.J. Beresford-Hope and many others, emphasized Lincoln's failure to free

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1 Saturday Review, Oct. 11, 18, 1862; Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7, 1863.
2 Edinburgh Review, Oct. 1862, quoted in Adams, Great Britain and the Civil War, 103, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1862; Court Circular quoted in Bee-Hive, Oct. 18, 1862; Punch, Oct. 18, 1862.
3 Brighton Gazette, Oct. 9, 1862.
4 Bristol Mirror, Oct. 11, Nov. 29, 1862.

slaves in Union states.[1] "I am unable to discover," said Liberal M.P. Charles Buxton, in November 1862, "that this is a war with slavery", and he added that, "President Lincoln's proclamation is not an abolition of slavery."[2] At Colchester in October 1862, G.M.W. Peacocke, M.P. for North Essex, declared that, "the Emancipation Proclamation, even if it had been in the interests of the Negro, would have been a political crime; but ... it was merely a vindictive measure of spite and retaliation upon nine millions of whites struggling for their independence, it was one of the most devilish acts of fiendish malignity which the wickedness of man had ever conceived."[3]

Nor was there any support for the concept of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation amongst those of his critics whose anti-Northern or pro-Southern sentiments certainly did not reflect sympathy with an anti-democratic interpretation of the Civil War. Anti-Northern Radicals in Lancashire condemned the Emancipation Proclamation in spite of the strong hostility to slavery which they expressed and which they also attributed to the working men they claimed to represent. For them the edict was not a genuine attempt to free the slaves but simply a war measure.[4] In Scotland the Glasgow Saturday Post, which was said to be very popular with the working classes in Glasgow and surrounding towns and villages,[5] saw the edict as "a mere freak or whim of the moment on the part of the respectable but rather silly President ..." The Post rejected any idea of Lincoln as the Emancipator, claiming that he had only issued the proclamation in an attempt to win back the Southern States: "The privilege of continuing to hold these slaves is the bribe with which the Great Liberator tempts his revolted countrymen." Observing that the edict

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1 Croydon Times, Feb. 7, 1863; Sheldon Van Auken, "English Sympathy for the Southern Confederacy", B. Litt. thesis, Oxford, 1957.
2 Bee-Hive, Nov. 8, 1862.
3 Allen, Great Britain and the United States, 484.
4 Ellison, Support for Secession, 24.
5 Scottish Newspaper Directory (1855), 81.

would certainly be inoperative in the South, the paper added, "We trust that British emancipationists will cease to sing paeons over this sort of abolition."[1]

Critics of the Proclamations took pains to make their views known. Some wrote to the press to condemn the North's adoption of abolition as a matter of military expediency and to deny that Lincoln had any "high and holy 'aspirations for the freedom of the Negro ...'"[2] Others attended pro-Northern, pro-emancipation meetings where they challenged the expression of praise for the edicts. At Exeter Hall, a gentleman "Who gave his name as Mr. Matthews, moved an amendment, strongly denouncing the proclamation ... and asserting that recognition of the South by England would ultimately secure freedom to the black."[3] Yet others published anti-Northern pamphlets opposing emancipation.[4]

Clearly many factors shaped such criticisms of emancipation. Even John Bright could not suppress fears that the Unionists might not be sufficiently determined to destroy slavery, and wrote to Sumner, "Will the North persist? Will it grapple with the slavery devil and strangle it?"[5] Some who were genuinely sympathetic towards the North and emancipation regretted the apparent lack of moral principle in the proclamation which its author presented as a war measure. Lincoln "performs his great task ungracefully, incompletely," commented the Spectator, echoing American anti-slavery criticism of the edict.[6] Some felt the desired emancipation was too dearly bought: in a letter to Sumner Cobden commented, "But at what a price is the negro to be emancipated! I confess that if then I had been the arbiter of his fate I should have refused

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1 Glasgow Saturday Post, Oct. 11, 1862.
2 "A Young Brum" to Editor, Birmingham Daily Post, Jan. 10, 1863.
3 Gravesend Reporter, Feb. 7, 1863.
4 Onesimus Secundus, The True Interpretation of the American Civil War and of England's Cotton Difficulty, or Slavery, From a different Point of View... (London, 1863).
5 Bright to Sumner, Oct. 10, 1862, "Bright-Sumner Letters", op.cit., 109.
6 Spectator, Jan. 17, 1863.

him freedom at the cost of so much white man's blood and women's tears."[1] If Cobden's words had racist overtones, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society indicated another reason underlying such comments when it denied that its support of the Proclamation represented approval of the war, revealing the anti-war sentiments that prevailed in those Radical and Dissenting circles from which much support for the North and emancipation was drawn.[2] If such misgivings were felt by ardent friends of the North, how much more strongly must they have operated upon the attitudes towards Lincoln's edicts of those not predisposed in his favour.

Nevertheless, British criticism of the Proclamations was a reflection less of doubts concerning their morality or effectiveness than of hostility to the North and sympathy for the South. The very factors which had produced pro-Southern feeling in Britain shaped responses to emancipation. When a correspondent of the Birmingham Daily Gazette commented upon hostility to the Proclamation amongst cotton brokers, he revealed how concern for the future of supplies of Southern cotton to Britain which had inclined these men to favour the South caused antipathy to a measure which threatened to destroy the labour system of the Southern cotton belt and prolong the war at the very moment when British manufacturers needed fresh supplies of cotton.[3] As the Saturday Review commented: "The result of the war will scarcely be thought satisfactory if the cotton plantations which command the markets of the world become deserts under the influence of emancipation."[4]

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1 Cobden to Sumner, Feb. 13, 1863, "Cobden-Sumner Letters", op.cit., 309.
2 Minute 447, British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society Minute Book, Vol. 4, Rhodes House, Oxford.
3 Goddard to Editor, Birmingham Daily Gazette, May 21, 1863, in Goddard, Letters, 326. The manager of the Bristol Cotton Works denounced Lincoln's edict as "partial, insincere, inhuman, revengeful, and altogether opposed to ... high and noble principles ...": Bee-Hive, Jan. 31, 1863.
4 Saturday Review, June 3, 1865.

More important, emancipation was an issue in the conflict over the war between Radicals and their opponents. Writing in October 1862 to American historian J.L. Motley, John Stuart Mill observed that the proclamation had increased the venom of those "deeply-dyed" Tory opponents of democratic institutions "who, after taunting you for so long with caring nothing for abolition, now reproach you for your abolitionism as the worst of your crimes."[1] By no means all who condemned the edict fitted this category, but attacks upon it were in many cases a product of hostility to the North born out of dislike for popular government and republicanism and resultant sympathy for the South. Forced to counter the argument that the Confederacy should be condemned because of slavery, Southern sympathizers had long denied that the North was anti-slavery. To admit themselves mistaken would have been to admit the validity of the Radical interpretation of the War and to concede the moral superiority of Northern society, used by Radicals as a model, and the unworthiness of that of the South with which they, on the other hand, had identified the cause of government by privilege. Rather than do this, they chose to undercut the anticipated exploitation of emancipation by their opponents by denouncing the edict as insincere, unprincipled and ineffective. Unwilling to allow that the Northern cause was that of freedom and justice, British conservatives totally rejected any idea that the Emancipation Edict had turned the President hailed by Radicals as a product of popular democracy into a hero of liberty. The author of that edict was, according to the Times, "as the world says, a good-tempered man, neither better nor worse than the mass of his kind - neither a fool nor a sage, neither a villain nor a saint...", but in issuing the Proclamation he had committed an atrocious crime. Far from being a great moral act, the edict reflected only Lincoln's hypocrisy:

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1 Mill to Motley, Oct. 31, 1862, in Hugh S.R. Elliot, ed., The Letters of John Stuart Mill, 2 vols. (London, 1910), I, 263-64.

> "Come to me," he cries to the insurgent planters, "and I will preserve your rights as slaveholders, but set me still at defiance, and I will wrap myself in virtue and take the sword of freedom, in my hand, and, instead of aiding you to oppress, I will champion the rights of humanity."

Lincoln, the Times decided, was not "like an earnest man pressing on his cause in steadfastness and truth."[1]

What gave venom to attacks upon the edicts was not, however, Lincoln's alleged hypocrisy, but the claim that in issuing them Lincoln was inciting servile revolt. Speculation that the American conflict might produce inter-racial war in the South was inevitable in a society which could recall slave insurrections in its own colonies. Even those hostile to the North sometimes showed themselves aware that the Federal Government would hardly need to incite slaves to desert their masters: the Saturday Review noted that slaves "will become a troublesome property in the neighbourhood of a hostile army"[2] The possibility, first mentioned by the Review, that slaves might also be a potentially dangerous property was clear to all. The Anti-Slavery Reporter thought Southerners a doomed people, morally and financially bankrupt and "With the elements of servile insurrection burning in their midst..."[3] From time to time Southern sympathizers even suggested that the North hoped to win the war by means of such a revolt, but prior to October 1862 this idea was considered too shocking to be widely credited.[4]

When, however, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, those sympathetic to the Confederacy seized the chance to excite moral indignation against the North by depicting it as "Lincoln's infamous proclamation of servile insurrection."[5] The Times denounced the measure as

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1 Times, Oct. 7, 1862.
2 Saturday Review, July 13, 1861.
3 Saturday Review, Nov. 17, 1860 cited in Adams, Great Britain and the Civil War, 80; Anti-Slavery Reporter, March 1, 1861.
4 Alexander J. Beresford-Hope, The American Disruption (London, 1862), 19; Economist, Sept. 8, 1860.
5 Saturday Review, Oct. 25, 1862.

"this nefarious resolution to light up a servile war in the distant homesteads of the South." Lincoln avows, asserted the paper, "that he proposes to excite the negroes of the Southern plantations to murder the families of their masters while these are engaged in the war." A letter published by the Times played upon the racist fears which surrounded the idea of a Negro rebellion, warning that beneath the Negro's kindly disposition "African blood is hidden, as the claw sheathed in the tiger's paw", and that when that blood was roused, "on lone plantation ... every white man would be murdered, every traveller waylaid, every white woman seized, every pale-faced child tossed into the flames of the burning homestead."[1] The edict, warned the Brighton Gazette, "would excite the blacks who are left at home to rise and massacre the defenceless women and children ..." The thought was "enough to make the flesh creep and the blood chill." The paper trusted that Lincoln's "demoniacal appeal" to the slaves would fail.[2] The absence of any such revolt between September 1862 and January 1863 did not calm the pro-Southern forces in Britain. When the final edict was issued they launched a fresh attack upon the Northern President for "verbally condemning the Southern whites to massacre." Lincoln, claimed the Saturday Review, did not hide his aim: the Proclamation was an "incendiary appeal to the fiercest passions of ignorant millions ..."[3]

British partisans of the South were naturally predisposed to accept the Confederacy's interpretation of Lincoln's Proclamations in which the tradition that he was inciting servile revolt played a key role.[4] Clearly, though, the tradition was part of their campaign to excite sympathy for the South while denying Lincoln moral credit for emancipation and so undermining Radical exploitation of the edict. Indeed, by warning that a revolt by slaves would

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1 Times, Oct. 7, 9, 1862.
Brighton Gazette, Oct. 9, 1862.
3 Saturday Review, Jan. 24, 1863.
4 See above, pp. 41-3.

result in their slaughter by enraged masters, those sympathetic to the Confederacy sought to present themselves as true friends of the Negro and to capitalize on British sympathy for slaves, while condemning Northern efforts to free them.

The tradition had, however, another purpose. For those whose pro-Southern sentiments reflected fears of republicanism and democracy in America and at home it could be turned into a weapon against British Radicals and their allies. In a scathing article upon meetings held to celebrate emancipation, the Saturday Review chose its words carefully as it sought to associate advocates of reform in Britain with a call for servile revolt in the South. "It seems", observed the Review, "that we are to have a rousing agitation on behalf of the divine right of insurrection and massacre. President LINCOLN'S proclamation, authorizing the slaves of the 'rebel' States to murder their masters, has warmed and cheered the heart of British professional philanthropy." In an indirect attack upon British liberals the Review alleged that the "friends of universal human brotherhood" were overjoyed at the prospect of a slave revolt, and, whatever its consequences, "the bare idea of the thing carries them fairly off their feet with delight." In this and later articles, the journal hinted at a connection between the call for servile rebellion and British politics as it described the sections of society which approved emancipation. The Exeter Hall celebration of January 1863 was depicted as a "vast cheering, howling hoard of men, women and Dissenting preachers ..." In February the Review referred to "The Emancipation meetings which have lately been attended in some large towns by the impulsive and irresponsible classes ..."[1] The Times, too proved that it could use the Proclamationto play upon class antagonisms in Britain. Drawing

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1 Saturday Review, Jan. 17, 24, 31, Feb. 7, 1863.

a forced analogy between Southern slaves and urban proletariats, the paper claimed that it might be possible to produce slave risings in the South:[1]

> for let any armed power publish an exhortion to the labouring classes of any community to plunder and murder, and there will be the same response. It might happen in London, or Paris, or New York.

What gentleman in Britain could approve the Proclamation when the Times and the Saturday Review played upon both racism and upper class fears of the masses in assurance that the edict meant that in the South, "it is the whites who are to have their throats cut by their domestics?"[2] What gentleman of property could fail to see the connexion between Lincoln's edict inciting a slave revolution and "abolishing the existing law of property"[3] in America and support for this measure by those British Radicals, liberals and working class leaders whose call for reform at home, and particularly for suffrage extension, aroused dormant fears of revolutionary change amongst the propertied classes? It hardly mattered whether these classes were most shocked by the destruction of property in slaves or the murder of white women by blacks. The tradition that Lincoln was inciting slave revolt with its depiction of British liberal circles hailing a potentially bloody revolution by labour against an employer class reflected and exploited every possible prejudice and fear of the privileged in Britain. Given the dominant role in society of these classes, and their control of the major papers, and particularly the Times, this was the only mythical image of Lincoln to gain widespread support in Britain prior to 1865.

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1 Times, Oct. 7, 1862.
2 Saturday Review, Oct. 11, 1862.
3 Ibid., Jan. 17, 1863.

Lincoln's assassination caused many of his former critics to attempt a reassessment of his character and career. Few were prepared to alter their views so fundamentally as to recognize him as the hero and martyr of popular government and emancipation, but most were anxious to acknowledge his virtues. This was not simply because they desired to speak well of the dead. A variety of factors shaped their response to the assassination.

In some cases there was genuine remorse, best illustrated in Tom Taylor's penitent verses in Punch:[1]

> Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer
> To lame my pencil, and confute my pen -
> To make me own this hind of princes peer
> This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

Even when remorse was not felt, shock and horror at the unprecedented murder of a President was profound, and virtually all tributes to Lincoln drafted in Britain expressed abhorrence at what was seen by all as an appalling crime. The sincerity of such sentiments was underlined by the resolution adopted at a public meeting in Liverpool which expressed a desire "that the Government and people of the United States should understand that no difference of opinion on the merits of the conflict of the last few years avails to prevent the unanimous condemnation of so great a crime against our common humanity."[2] Thus in shocking Britain the assassination created an atmosphere in which old hostilities were played down, even when not forgotten, and no doubt this resulted in genuine attempts to reassess Lincoln.

There were, however, sound practical reasons for making an attempt to praise Lincoln. Widespread fears existed in Britain that America reunited and freed from the distractions of internal conflict over slavery might prove a formidable enemy if her government remembered and resented British sympathy

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1 Punch, May 6, 1865.
2 Tributes to the Memory of Abraham Lincoln (1865): facsimilies in the British Museum, hereafter cited as: Tributes. This meeting was held on April 27, 1865.

with the Confederacy, and some felt Britain's Canadian dominions to be dangerously vulnerable to attack from the United States.[1] At the very least there was the possibility that strained Anglo-American relations would interfere with commerce between the two countries. In order to conciliate American opinion those formerly hostile to the North or sympathetic to the South were now usually prepared to pay tribute to the President who had become America's newest hero and as such symbolized the values cherished by the victorious North. In thus praising Lincoln and recognizing his heroic status in order to promote friendly relations with the United States, British spokesmen set an example which would be repeated whenever British interests demanded the cultivation of good feeling between the two nations.

Demonstrations of British sympathy with America and press and public tributes to the late President were intended, in part at least, to offset American resentment over the limited sympathy the North received from Britain during the Civil War. "This spontaneous expression of our sympathy", observed one speaker at a meeting of Manchester's citizens, "must convince the Americans that we are as friendly towards them as any nation could possibly be."[2] The Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser made no bones about its motives in advocating a public meeting on the assassination. Stressing that Birkenhead was well known as the town where several ships were built for the Confederacy, the paper urged that steps be taken to condemn publicy the murder of Lincoln, for, "If this be done it will go far to obliterate the angry feelings caused by the privateers built here, and we think it a step which is due both to the memory of Mr. Lincoln and to the good fame of our town."[3]

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1 See, for example, Lynn Advertiser, March 18, 1865. The Advertiser was a Conservative weekly published in King's Lynn and circulating in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

2 Mayor Wright Turner of Salford speaking at a Manchester meeting, May 3, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 5, 1865.

3 Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser, April 29, 1865.

Many tributes expressed hopes for future good feeling between Britain and the United States and stressed links between the two countries. Some played upon the friendly feelings which, it was alleged, Lincoln had always shown towards Britain.[1] Typical of the sentiments expressed at public meetings was the desire that out of Lincoln's death might come "what we all so much desired - a cessation of bickerings and unkindliness between them and us; and a mutual understanding that our interests, hopes and purposes were, and should be, the same."[2] At a public meeting in Liverpool one speaker declared his hope "that all differences between Great Britain and the United States would now be buried in the tomb of Lincoln."[3] Developing this theme, and revealing the adaptability of mythical images of the late President, the Brighton Guardian gave a new, and essentially British, dimension to the martyr image of Lincoln when it declared: "By his blood Mr. Lincoln has sealed the peaceful relations of his country with other countries, which he, more than any other individual, laboured to maintain."[4] Radicals and conservatives alike were convinced that paying tribute to Lincoln would improve relations between Britain and America. "It is better than pouring oil on troubled waters;" commented the Caledonian Mercury, "it is administering the choicest vintage to wounded and bleeding souls, and it will have its reward."[5]

At the same time, many who spoke for the governing classes in Britain were well aware that exponents of Reform and admirers of republican government might seek to exploit the North's victory and the tragedy of Lincoln's assassination.[6] Within a few days of the news of his murder reaching Britain

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1 Tributes; resolutions adopted at a public meeting, Leeds, May 1, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 2, 1865.
2 Oliver Heywood at a Manchester meeting, May 3, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 5, 1865.
3 Remarks of John Campbell, April 27, 1865: ibid., April 28, 1865.
4 Brighton Guardian, May 10, 1865.
5 Caledonian Mercury, May 2, 1865.
6 See above, Chapter Eight.

this was already occurring, and those hostile to Radicalism did not need to read the Bee-Hive to know that for British Radicals April 1865 had represented, as Professor Beesly expressed it in the columns of that paper, "the glorious triumph of our principles on the other side of the Atlantic ...", or that, like Beesly, Reformers generally were declaring: "It is we, now, who call on the privileged classes to mark the result."[1] There were occasional attempts by opponents of Reform to retaliate by depicting Lincoln's murder as a natural consequence of popular government,[2] but those of Lincoln's former critics who failed to pay tribute to him after his death undoubtedly played into the Radicals' hands and enabled Radical spokesmen to exploit this omission and use the heroic Lincoln against them. Edinburgh's Radical Caledonian Mercury, for example, was able to draw a parallel between the city authorities' failure to notice the brutal murder of "the President of a great nation, and the emancipator of 4,000,000 slaves", and their similar silence on the death, a few weeks earlier, of the Reformers' hero Richard Cobden.[3] Consequently, those who saw in British Radicalism a threat to their own or their country's interests were concerned to frame tributes to the late President which would conciliate American opinion without conceding the validity of the Radical interpretation of the North's victory or Lincoln's death.

It was surely, then, a desire to check the emergence of Lincoln as a cult hero for Radicalism and labour that led upper and middle class conservatives to hold private and public meetings, perhaps timing the latter so as to exclude large numbers of working men,[4] at which they adopted their

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1 "The Republican Triumph", Bee-Hive, April 29, 1865. Edward Spencer Beesly, Professor of History at University College, London, was an active spokesman for Reform and for working men's interests. See Roydon Harrison, "Professor Beesly and the Working-class Movement" in Briggs and Saville, op.cit., 205-41.

2 Glasgow Courier (Tory), May 4, 1865.

3 Caledonian Mercury, April 29, 1865.

4 See above, pp. 368-70.

moderately phrased tributes to Lincoln. At such meetings Radical sentiments on the assassination were unlikely to be expressed, and the tributes to Lincoln's memory favoured by those present could be offered as representing what their authors described as the unanimity of British sentiment on the assassination.[1] Thus the proprieties were observed, an attempt was made to conciliate the North, and at the same time steps were taken to thwart any intention on the part of the forces of Radicalism to exploit Lincoln's death by making him an exclusive hero of the cause of reform.

Those Northern partisans who attended these meetings were not always satisfied with the outcome. A correspondent of the Caledonian Mercury who had attended one at Edinburgh commented that friends of the North had been unable to express their sentiments fully because they had agreed to say nothing that would offend Southern sympathizers present. "In short, Mr. Editor, I was tongue-tied", he wrote, and he recalled the "painfully bottled-up condition" caused by the restraints of a joint meeting.[2] Nevertheless, such gatherings served their purpose. "Today", said the Telegraph, "all party-feeling, all political jealousies must be hushed and suspended ... We are all mourners over the fate of an honest citizen."[3] It suited British conservatives very well that this should appear to be the case.

The response to the assassination outlined here was clearly illustrated in two main areas: comments upon the assassination in newspapers and journals which represented upper and middle class sentiments and resolutions adopted at meetings dominated by the middle classes. In essence the policy followed was to praise as much of Lincoln's character and career as possible while rejecting the heroic concepts of him favoured by those who sought to promote Reform in Britain.

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1 Tributes; remarks of the Mayor at a meeting at Leeds, May 1, 1865: Manchester Examiner and Times, May 2, 1865.

2 William Arnot to Editor, Caledonian Mercury, May 4, 1865.

3 Daily Telegraph, April 27, 1865, in Robert Bloom, "As the British Press saw Lincoln", Topic (Spring, 1965), 60-61.

In this process of framing suitable tributes to Lincoln the Times led the way. In an effort to conciliate the victorious North and eulogize Lincoln without appearing too ludicrous in the light of four years of consistent and sometimes bitter criticism of the late President and his cause this paper resorted to a triple negative: "It would be unjust", observed the Times, "not to acknowledge that Mr. Lincoln was a man who could not under any circumstances have been easily replaced." The article that followed was a superb example of how to praise a man after his death while making it perfectly clear that he could hardly have been seen in so favourable a light four years earlier. With perfect truth the paper declared that, "Mr. Lincoln slowly won for himself the respect and confidence of all ..." Like the Times, the Saturday Review emphasized that Lincoln's virtues had only slowly become apparent, implying that not even well-wishers could have been aware of these when he became President. Though virulently critical of Lincoln throughout the War, the Review now conceded that, "The intimate connexion of wisdom with goodness of disposition had seldom been more forcibly illustrated." The Daily Telegraph spoke for many of Lincoln's former critics when it declared:

> It has often been our lot ... to question the wisdom of the policy which he pursued; nor do we retrace what we have said even now ... But from vulgar corruption, from factious hatred, from meanness, jealousy, uncharitableness, this ruler was notably free ... (Lincoln) was a man who, during four years of great excitement, had scarcely made a single personal enemy ... a sturdy, sensible Western man, with long limbs and a longer head.

Sometimes old hostility to Lincoln showed through expressions of regret, as when the Conservative King's Lynn Advertiser, playing upon Lincoln's railsplitter image, regretted the savagery which had "replaced King Log of Northern America by a King Stork ..." However, few papers in London or the provinces followed the course taken by the popular Conservative daily the London Evening Standard which refused to modify its virulently anti-Lincoln stand, remarking sourly that "he was not a hero while he lived, and therefore

his death does not make him a martyr."[1]

Nevertheless praise for Lincoln was moderate and no significant support for the concept of him as the Emancipator appeared in the formerly Anti-Northern press. The Times emphasized that though Lincoln "was doubtless glad at last to see slavery perish", his first concern had been to save the Union. The Saturday Review bluntly rejected the Emancipator tradition: "The exclusive advocates of Emancipation do some injustice to his character when they claim Mr. Lincoln as an organ and leader of their cause. He hated slavery, but he felt that his first duty was to the Union ..." Nor did the Review withdraw its earlier criticism of the Emancipation Proclamation, recalling that it had "looked like a crime" and that had it proved effective, Lincoln "would have been justly condemned as the author of an intolerable servile revolution." A Conservative paper sympathetic to the South did indicate awareness of, though not support for, the Emancipator tradition when reporting how in New York Negroes followed Lincoln's coffin with a banner hailing him as their Emancipator it commented that, "Unhappily, Abraham Lincoln has been succeeded by an "emancipator" of less human tendencies than the lank and gaunt humourist whom the North delighted to honour ..." Punch did strike a different note, hinting at the Emancipator image of Lincoln in the lines,

> So he went forth to battle, on the side
> That he felt clear was liberty's and Rights ...

and publishing a cartoon which depicted Columbia, Britannia and a Negro, who is sitting on the floor with his head in his hands and an open shackle by his ankle, mourning the dead Lincoln. Even such tentative support for the Emancipator tradition was, however, rare.[2]

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1 Times, April 27, 1865; Saturday Review, April 29, May 6, 1865; Lynn Advertiser, May 6, 1865; Daily Telegraph, April 27, 1865 and Evening Standard, April 27, 1865, in Bloom, op.cit., 60-61.

2 Times, April 29, 1865; Saturday Review, April 29, May 6, 1865; Lynn, Advertiser, May 20, 1865; Punch, May 6, 1865.

Similarly, there was little support for the tradition at middle class meetings on the assassination. These did indeed praise Lincoln, but only in the most general terms. He was, in the language of various addresses and resolutions adopted by public meetings dominated by middle class influences, "the late eminent statesman", an "excellent and much esteemed President" and "a brilliant example of those humane principles which always actuate men of distinguished attainments." The "great and irreparable loss" of "so good and able a man" was regretted as eulogists recalled his "many virtues". Many tributes recorded deep regret that a "wise and good ruler" should have been removed "at a time when his moderation and sagacity were so needful" and"when his firm but conciliatory policy was about to reap its harvest" in peace and reconstruction of the Union. Lincoln's middle class eulogists were determined to prove that he was, in the words of one tribute, a man "whose rare virtues under the most trying circumstances, the civilized world had learnt to recognize and admire."[1]

Eulogists of thelate President were sometimes willing to promulgate mythical images of him as the martyr-saviour of his nation, conceding that, in the words of one speaker at a meeting in Norwich, "it may be that by this one man's martyrdom the whole nation will be saved."[2]

They were not, however, anxious to hail him as the Great Emancipator. In the tributes of some fifty-one city, town and borough councils and public meetings throughout Britain, there were only three indirect references to Lincoln's services for freedom. Resolutions adopted by Canterbury Council described the assassination as depriving the world of "one of the greatest

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1 Tributes. Quotations taken from the tributes of Gloucester Council (May 1, 1865), the Borough of Sudbury (May 5, 1865), the Borough of Southampton (May 3, 1865), Luton Board of Health (May 9, 1865), Lincoln Council (May 9, 1865), Oldham Borough Council (May 3, 1865), a public meeting at Stockton-on-Tees (May 5, 1865), and Coventry City Council (May 9, 1865).

2 Remarks of Mr. Chancellor Evans at a public meeting, Norwich, May 2, 1865: Norfolk News, May, 6, 1865.

friends of humanity." The address of Kendall Borough Council expressed a hope that "the sanguinary Struggle during which so many precious lives on both sides have been sacrificed has eventually resulted in freedom to the whole family of man on the North American continent." Only in the lengthy resolutions adopted at a public meeting in Blackburn was there a significant divergence from the general pattern. After expressing regret over the War and Lincoln's death, the address continued:

> It has been wisely said that the exigency of a Nation demands an able leader, and that God in his providence, always sends the right man for the time.
> We believe that Abraham Lincoln was the man raised up for the special work, and lament his horrible death by the hand of the assassin.

The final paragraph of the tribute is especially significant, for it reads: "To the American people we send loving words, and trust that these great afflictions will work out an abundant harvest of liberty, whereby free institutions may be consolidated, and later, by whom so ever performed, dignified." Clearly local Radicalism, whether middle or working class, was strongly represented at this meeting.[1]

Fear of Radical exploitation of Lincoln's death was not the only factor which prevented his former critics from accepting the heroic concepts of him promoted by Unionists in America and British partisans of the North. The Confederacy was defeated, but in Britain sympathy for its cause lingered on and helped to shape attitudes towards him in the Spring of 1865.

The Radical interpretation of Lincoln's assassination as the last blow of slavery's rebellion was emphatically rejected by those who had consistently denied that slavery was the cause of the Civil War. In April 1865 the

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1 Resolutions of the Council of the City and Borough of Canterbury and the County of Canterbury, April 27, 1865; Address of Kendall Borough Council, May 1865; resolutions adopted at a public meeting, Blackburn, May 2, 1865: Tributes.

Saturday Review expressed its fear that "reckless agitators will endeavour to impute the crime to the hated slaveholders."[1] In early May the Bristol Times and Mirror spoke for most who had supported the Confederacy when it insisted that the South could not be held responsible for the act of a few fanatics.[2]

Continuing sympathy for the South undoubtedly operated against acceptance of the concept of the Great Emancipator, for those who had shared the South's picture of slavery as a benign institution remained reluctant to concede that emancipation had been a great moral act. As late as April 1865 a speaker addressing a meeting in Sydenham contrasted the happy and protected life of the Southern slave with that of "the blackman forced to accept freedom by the Northern armies, or deserted by his master and left to suffer and die ..."[3]

Indeed, Southern sympathizers in Britain were as inclined in 1865 as they had been in 1863 to echo Southern patterns of thought. In both cases this contributed to the development of mythical images of Lincoln, though not those depicting him as a hero of emancipation. Two years earlier Lincoln's British critics, like Confederates, had denounced Lincoln for inciting servile revolt as revenge upon an undefeated South; upon receiving the news of his assassination they insisted, like many Southerners, that he had planned to treat the conquered rebel states mercifully and had been the best friend of the South. The Brighton Gazette argued that it was folly to lay the assassination at the South's door when the death of Lincoln, who, it was claimed, was disposed to temporize with the South, was the greatest possible calamity for the defeated Confederates.[4] The Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser, hinting that it still saw the South's bid for independence as

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1 Saturday Review, April 29, 1865.
2 Bristol Times and Mirror (formerly the Bristol Mirror), May 3, 1865.
3 Essay by Mr. Churcher read at Sydenham Young Men's Association meeting, April 7, 1865: Croydon Times, April 15, 1865.
4 Brighton Gazette, May 4, 1865.

noble, alleged that once Lincoln had defeated the Confederacy, "no thought of vengeance occupied his mind; he was intent only upon pacification and conciliation."[1] The Saturday Review asserted that there would have been no proscription of the South had Lincoln lived."[2]

Nevertheless, there was some support for mythical images of Lincoln as a hero and martyr of emancipation which was apparently unconnected with the expression of Radical sentiments, although those hailing Lincoln as such obviously subscribed to an anti-slavery interpretation of the War and may have sympathized with Radicalism. Some concept of Lincoln as a hero of liberty was implicit in the resolution read at a public meeting in Liverpool deploring Lincoln's death and expressing a hope that it "may not imperil or delay the triumph of freedom and of right, or the restoration of peace in America." Newspaper articles praising the late President sometimes stressed his antislavery sentiments, though often emphasising that his approach to emancipation had been shaped by respect for the Constitution. The anti-slavery Western Times blended images of him as the saviour of his nation and a hero of liberty as it recalled how to preserve the Union Lincoln had "declared total abolition and never receded from it."[3]

In an anti-slavery sermon on Lincoln's death, Robert Blackley Drummond, who the Caledonian Mercury described as well known as "a man of wide scholarship and liberal sympathies" said of the late President, "His name is enrolled for ever upon the scrolls of history, and will be connected to the world's end with the most momentous event of this generation ..."[4] The London Anti-Slavery Reporter, organ of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, hailed Lincoln as "Negro Emancipator, Saviour of the Union, Slavery's

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1 Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser, May 24, 1865.
2 Saturday Review, Sept. 16, 1865.
3 Bristol Western Times, May 2, 1865. This paper was published twice weekly and took a moderate stand in favour of Reform.
4 Quoted from a funeral address delivered on April 30, 1865, in Caledonian Mercury, May 13, 1865.

Great Martyr."[1]

Some opponents of slavery were irritated by attempts to play down Lincoln's role in emancipation. At the annual meeting of the Congregational Union in Scotland in May, 1865, the Reverend Dr. Halley attacked those who denied Lincoln credit for the abolition of slavery. Criticising the moderate tone of a resolution on Lincoln's death, Halley declared: "The progress of events has emancipated slavery! I do not understand that. I suppose events come to pass in a progress - (hear and laughter) - but there have been men and principles at work to bring about those events. Do not let us throw a crown of thorns upon the dead body of martyred President Lincoln."[2] Revealing that in Britain as in America poetry served as a medium for the spreading of myths, some poets presented Lincoln as a hero and martyr of his nation and emancipation. Thus a poem published in the Caledonian Mercury hailed Lincoln as a martyr against oppression who had been raised by Providence to save his country and free the slaves and had thus achieved immortality and closed with the lines:[3]

> Surely a noble mission hath been thine
> To quench rebellion and to free the slave,
> And dying seal in blood a cause divine.

Yet it is clear that such concepts of Lincoln found little support amongst those who had withheld their sympathy from his cause during the Civil War.

Thus in Britain in 1865 Lincoln's heroic status was generally accepted as British spokesmen sought to express sympathy with the United States and to placate American resentment over British sympathy with the Confederacy during the Civil War. In their attempts to emphasize the shared heritage of America, Lincoln's British eulogists adopted him as the heroic representation

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1 Anti-Slavery Report, May 1, 1865.
2 Caledonian Mercury, May 15, 1865.
3 Anonymous poem,"Abraham Lincoln", in ibid., May 6, 1865.

of common values. In particular Britain's avowed respect for the ideal of freedom make it possible for Lincoln to be generally accepted as a hero of humanity and of liberty in a general sense. Yet there was not in Britain widespread support for the traditions viewing him as the Great Emancipator and the Martyr to Liberty. For, as has been shown, in Britain as in America the Lincoln-Negro traditions acquired meaning as part of a political campaign. The common ideals shared by Radicals, anti-slavery men and working class leaders in Britain and Radical Republicans and abolitionists in America made possible their shared analysis of the Civil War and their joint support for the Lincoln myths associated with this. Once, however, these myths were promoted by Radicals and their allies there was little chance of their gaining widespread acceptance in Britain. The political nature of the myths thus ensured but limited their development in Britain in the 1860's.

Lincoln as a Symbol of Freedom and Democracy in the late Nineteenth and the Twentieth Centuries

By their quick response to Lincoln's death and their carefully framed tributes to his virtues, the governing classes in Britain were able to present Lincoln as a symbol of the broad values of freedom and democracy. For provided that freedom was taken to imply responsibility and democracy was understood to mean representative government as it existed in the British parliamentary system, these were values which British people in general claimed to cherish. The hero who represented these values was not, however, the Radical and working class hero of popular government. While Radicals and working men stressed Lincoln's plebian origins, even calling him "peasant President Lincoln",[1] middle and upper class eulogists emphasised his statesmanlike qualities and insisted that he had gained stature in office,

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1 "Plebian" to Editor, Caledonian Mercury, May 5, 1865.

thus implying that he had outgrown his humble beginnings. The underlying message seemed to be that Lincoln had been no ordinary man, which to some extent countered Radical efforts to present him as a hero sprung from the common people. In this way the heroic Lincoln was detached from his early associations with Radical thought and Radical exploitation of Lincoln as an emancipator of labour and working men's hero was undermined. The result was widespread acceptance of Lincoln's heroic status which made possible the persistence of mythical images of him during the remainder of the Nineteenth and into the Twentieth centuries.

At the same time, a society which protested its antipathy to slavery could not ignore the fact that Lincoln had issued a proclamation abolishing slavery in a large part of the United States and that this had contributed to the destruction of that institution in America. From hailing Lincoln as a hero of freedom to viewing him as the Great Emancipator was a short step, and, as the latter image lost its early identification with Radical propaganda and the Radical-inspired image of slaves as black labourers and kindred of oppressed white working men in Britain was forgotten, a step that British opinion generally could accept. Consequently the image of the Emancipator promoted by Radicals and their anti-slavery and working-class allies during the Civil War endured in British thought as part of a broad mythical view of Lincoln as a hero of freedom and democracy. A brief examination of some evidence illustrating the persistence of mythical images of Lincoln into the Twentieth Century will illuminate this process.

It should, however, be noted that if Lincoln did, as seems likely remain a hero in the thoughts and reminiscences of anti-slavery men and women and others who held to a Radical interpretation of the Civil War this may have contributed to the persistence of mythical images of him in Britain. A lecture delivered in London in the 1870's by an English minister, the Reverend

W. J. Dawson[1] seems to illustrate this. During this lecture, which demonstrated his deep anti-slavery convictions, Dawson revived those heroic images of Lincoln which opponents of slavery had developed in 1865. "For the emancipation of the slaves," he declared, "a second George Washington was needed and found - Abraham Lincoln." According to Dawson Lincon had appeared, like an Old Testament prophet, to save the nation from slavery: at the moment of crisis "this man arose, who believed in God and nothing else, and so won the day." In Dawson's eyes Lincoln was above all a champion of liberty: inspired by the spirit of the "noble martyr" John Brown, he was elected President "as avowed abolitionist" and so "the first great blow was struck at slavery in the United States." As President, said Dawson, Lincoln freed the slaves to become "the visible Moses of the Negro people" and he died a martyr to liberty, "borne to his grave mourned by millions, especially the poor slaves who owed him their freedom."[2]

Accounts of Lincoln's life published in the late nineteenth century helped to perpetuate myths about the late President, and two examples will be considered. Both were the type of work likely to reach a wide audience and in particular to be awarded as prizes to school and Sunday school pupils, using mythical images of Lincoln to encourage respect for the values which the myths enshrined and so passing them on to a new generation.

The first of these works - a biography by William G. Rutherford which was written with young readers in mind, was originally published in London in the 1880's or 1890's and ran to several editions - was permeated by heroic

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1 Possibly Rev. William James Dawson, a Methodist minister who published a number of religious works in London in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

2 "Abraham Lincoln", a lecture delivered by Rev. W.J. Dawson before Highbury-Quadrant Association, Oct. 12, 187 , as reported in an unidentified English newspaper clipping, Lincolniana collection, MSS Dept. William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia. This is a collection of newspaper clippings, many of which are unidentified, which are taken or believed to be taken from British newspapers.

concepts of Lincoln. The late President's "immortal fame" as America's greatest hero was asserted, his dual role as "'The Saviour of the nation' and the liberator of the slave" was established in the opening paragraphs, and the Emancipator image reappeared throughout Rutherford's brief work. It was, for example, evoked when the death of Lincoln's mother was narrated, and Rutherford echoed the eulogists of 1865 when he linked his hero with Christ, declaring of Nancy Hanks Lincoln that, "she takes a place in history as the mother of a son who liberated a race of men. At her side stands another mother, whose Son performed a similar service for all mankind eighteen hundred years ago.

The concept of Lincoln as Emancipator was particularly clear when Rutherford described the young Lincoln's trips to New Orleans. Although he admitted that there was no record of Lincoln's response to his first sight of slavery in a Southern city, Rutherford invested the first of these journeys down the Mississippi with peculiar significance. "The day of reconing was yet far off," he wrote, "but the Great Liberator had been 'down South,' and seen for himself what those terrible words meant to the hopeless negro..." Driving home his point, Rutherford added that the time was coming when, "the poor slaves would thank God when they heard the name of Abraham Lincoln." The tradition that during Lincoln's second visit to New Orleans slavery "ran the iron into him" was faithfully recorded. For Rutherford, as for many other anti-slavery writers, this was a symbolic moment in the life of the future Emancipator: the sight of a slave auction was said to have filled him "with an overpowering feeling of unconquerable hate." He promised before God that if he were ever given the chance he would hit slavery hard. "Never," wrote Rutherford as he reproduced John Hank's 'anecdote, "was the name of God invoked in a better cause, and never was it used with greater reverence than when Lincoln called his Maker to witness his determination to strike a deadly blow at the inhuman traffic."

Predictably, Rutherford stressed anti-slavery incidents in Lincoln's political career and he concluded that from 1858 onwards "the nation regarded him (Lincoln) as the foremost champion of the slave." In this account Lincoln's early reservations about joining a party which had connections with abolitionism, and his later insistence, together with other leading Republicans, that the Republican Party did not threaten slavery in the states were ignored, and he emerged as the founder of that party which was described as "having for its one great object the abolition of slavery."

Throughout his narrative Rutherford also emphasised Lincoln's humble frontier origins and the "Railsplitter" tradition was used to dramatize the picture of Lincoln as "a daily labourer." This image of Lincoln as a "popular hero" was combined with that of the Emancipator as Rutherford described his nomination for the presidency in 1860 as a great people's movement in which "Friends of freedom and enslaved negroes hailed the coming liberator in 'The Railsplitter of Illinois.'" In the mouth of this anti-slavery hero was placed a speech which, on the eve of the presidential election, foreshadowed his future role as a divinely-inspired hero of the battle against slavery, and his triumph at the polls was presented as the death-knell of that institution. For Rutherford the Emancipation Proclamation was the great event of the Civil War, and he quoted a wartime Northern poem hailing Lincoln as the immortal world-hero of emancipation in America. A brief reference to the 1864 election and a somewhat longer discourse on Lincoln's simplicity and compassion, with anecdotes to prove his humane and merciful disposition, dealt with the remaining war years, but the reader's attention was soon brought back to Lincoln's role as Emancipator when Rutherford described the President's visit to Richmond in 1865 and how "the negroes who had received their freedom at his hands went wild with joy when they saw their liberator." Rutherford's anti-slavery sentiments apparently predisposed him to perpetuate the Radical

interpretation of Lincoln's death. He thought it was not to be expected that Southerners would accept the destruction of slavery without trying to revenge themselves on the man responsible for their defeat: "Secretly they met, and in their wild fury determined on the assassination of the President." With America mourning Lincoln's martyrdom in the cause of emancipation, Rutherford closed his story of the man "whose name will ever be "The Watchword of Liberty.'"[1]

In the second example, Heroes of the Great Republic, published anonymously, Lincoln was again presented as the heroic Emancipator of the slaves in America, and the author did not scruple to create an anecdote in which the child Lincoln drew a simple parallel between the slaves of Kentucky and the "little Jew children" delivered from bondage by Moses, and told his mother that,"I hope God will send a Moses to Kentucky some day, mother, to make all the little boys free." "And," added the biographer, "He did."

Lincoln's early life and humble origins were discussed in some detail in this work, and anecdotes were recounted to illustrate the young lawyer's willingness to defend escaped slaves and their friends, but the author skimmed over his subject's political career and devoted the remainder of his narrative to Lincoln's election to the Presidency and his presidential career. Verses by Whittier and Blanchard opened the chapters covering the period between Lincoln's election and inauguration as President, presenting him as a hero of liberty, and an entire chapter was devoted to emancipation. Lincoln's insistence that the North had gone to war to save the Union and not to abolish slavery was emphasized in this chapter, but the image of him as a divinely-inspired Emancipator was retained: according to the author, "Abraham Lincoln, whose soul hated slavery, could not but be thankful to have been the man chosen

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1 William G. Rutherford, Abraham Lincoln, Plough-Boy, Statesman, Patriot (London, (188-?)), 10, 30-31, 55, 60, 78, 91-92, 111, 112, 114, 120, 128-133, 133-134, 139. A later edition of this work is dated 1896.

by God to set the slaves free." The President's vow before God that if Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania was repulsed he would free the slaves was recorded, as was his determination that the proclamation of freedom would never be recalled, and a description of the coloured people of Maryland paying tribute to Lincoln as the Liberator emphasized the image which this chapter sought to convey and which was summarized in the lines of poetry with which it opened: "Emancipation is proclaimed,/The shackles fall - the slave's unchained."

Other mythical images of Lincoln appeared in this account of his life. On its opening page a moral was drawn concerning the frequency with which great men are born in cottage homes and the young Lincoln's humble origins were glorified. The image of Lincoln as a man of the people - the "Railsplitter" who became President - was developed, and the author dwelt upon the support for Lincoln demonstrated by the working men of Lancashire and London. However, as the narrative drew to a close the concept of Lincoln the Emancipator was once more dominant. His visit to Richmond in 1865 was presented as a tribute to the hero of abolition. In this account former slaves abandoned their work securing floating timber under the command of an army lieutenant: "What cared those freed-men, fresh from the house of bondage, for floating timber and military commands? Their deliverer had come - he who next to the Lord Jesus was their best friend." In the city where he had been reviled, observed this author, Lincoln received, the blessings of "thousands who hailed him as an ally of the Messiah."

Poetry again set the tone of the final chapters, the verses proclaiming that, "Freedom claimed another martyr" and that "Heaven received another saint", and the account of Lincoln's funeral emphasized the tribute to Lincoln as the Emancipator made by the black population of New York. Finally Henry Ward Beecher's anti-slavery sermon eulogizing Lincoln as the friend, Moses and Martyr-Emancipator of the slaves and swearing his congregation to emulate this

immortal hero and pursue slavery to the grave was offered as "One of the most eloquent testimonies to Lincoln's life and work ..." and as a fitting close to the history.[1]

The turn of the century did not bring any significant diminution of the popularity of heroic images of Lincoln, as two similar works published in the 1900's show. The appropriate chapters of G. Barnett Smith's Heroes of the Nineteenth Century, published in London in 1901, opened with a reference to "Abraham Lincoln, the emancipator of the slave", and Lincoln emerged in this account of his life as a "man of the people" whose emancipation edict - "the greatest event of the nineteenth century" - made him a world hero and "the man of the century in the New World."[2] More interesting, however, is a biography of the President produced six years later by Henry Bryan Binns which demonstrates not only how Lincoln myths were perpetuated in a less eulogistic work but also the way in which this author used them to underline his analysis of his own times.

Binns specifically rejected the late nineteenth century presentation of Lincoln "as a mere Sunday-school hero, or as a conventional 'example to the young'..." Nevertheless, mythic images of Lincoln pervaded his work. For the title page he selected a quotation from the President's American admirer Walt Whitman thus indicating that his own work would contain no challenge to Lincoln's heroic status as "The grandest figure yet on all the crowded canvas of the nineteenth century." Although Binns recognized that Americans had created a legendary Lincoln and although his work was notably free from

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1 Heroes of the Great Republic. Lives of General Grant, General Lee, Abraham Lincoln, President Garfield, Lloyd Garrison (London, (188-?)), 3-4, 43, 65, 74, 91-98 (chapter XI), 1, 26, 56-57, 113-115, 121-122, 124, 136, 145-146. The work is undated but was written after 1885.

2 G. Barnett Smith, Heroes of the Nineteenth Century: Gladstone - Havelock - Bismarck - Lincoln (London, 1901), 285, 328, 362-363. Born in Halifax in 1841 George Barnett Smith was on the editorial staff of the then Liberal Globe from 1865-1868. He relinquished journalism in favour of literature in 1876 and was a popular author who produced numerous works including biographies of Gladstone (1899) and Bright (1881).

exaggerated eulogies of his subject, the biography did not represent a significant attempt to debunk Lincoln myths. Two themes dominated the narrative revealing Lincoln as a simple man of the people who became the foremost champion of democracy and the redeemer of his country who freed the slaves.

While Binns did emphasize Lincoln's hesitation in adopting emancipation, Lincoln was still for him the man destined to destroy slavery, a reluctant but divinely-inspired Emancipator who became aware, long before he became President, of "a fatal, pre-destined, superhuman power" working through the strife over slavery to bring about "by his own hand and deed, a result from which he had continually turned away his face, the revolutionary emancipation of four million of slaves." This Emancipator image persisted in the general tone of the work and in passing references such as those to the ex-slaves' hero-worship of the President or to Emerson's words that Lincoln "lived long enough to keep the greatest promise that ever man made to his fellow-men- the practical abolition of slavery?" At the same time Binns also developed a clear picture of Lincoln as a hero of labour. Though he rejected any concept of Lincoln as a Socialist, it was stressed that "He remained always a free and independant working man, and, whatever his circumstances, the life of the workers always remained his own." These images of Lincoln as Emancipator and working man's hero were combined to add potency to an attack on the rise of big business, the rule of the corporation and the emergence of "industrial white slavery". Accordingly to Binns, early twentieth century America divided her allegiance between God and Mammon, and the spiritual life of the Republic was in danger: "The desperate struggle, the heroic national labour of the Civil War for the illegalisation of negro slavery, has not been enough to destroy that Old Dragon the enemy of Freedom; Liberty must indeed be won anew by each generation." Echoing the attitude of mid-nineteenth

century Reformers towards the Civil War, Binns saw in this new contest in America meaning for working men everywhere: "Is her soil yet to be the battlefield of the great Armageddon of Labour, which men await with mingled hope and terror?" It seemed to him most likely for America would not long remain subservient to "those powers of re-action and tyranny which now menace her life, endeavouring to reduce labour there to the condition which it has too long endured in Europe." If such a struggle came, he concluded, "the lovers of liberty in every land will pray that a leader may be raised up as tender and as true as was Abraham Lincoln."[1]

The use of Lincoln myths to interpret contemporary events illustrated in Binns' conclusions played a key role in their survival in the twentieth century. In this way they became for Britain once again meaningful political myths, explaining the present in terms of the past so as to give guidance for the future. During the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 Wars mythical images of Lincoln, and particularly that of the heroic Emancipator, or, in a broader sense, the champion of freedom, were used to encourage the war effort and more crucially to convince America that the values he represented were at stake in Britain's struggle against Germany and her allies.

At a meeting of the Pilgrims' Society held in London on April 15, 1915, Sir Gilbert Parker, M.P. for Gravesend, gave an address entitled,"The United States and the War: a Word in Season" and thus made the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Lincoln's death an appropriate moment at which to urge fellow British citizens impatient with the United States Government to reflect on the importance of neutral America's aid to Belgium and other small nations and her moral support to their own country. A telegram from

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1 Henry Bryan Binns, Abraham Lincoln (London and New York, 1907), 5, 303, 342, 344, 352-354. Binns was the author of a large number of books, including works on education and poetry.

Joseph Choate, a former American Ambassador in Britain, was read to this meeting, revealing how Americans and British alike believed the example of the heroic Lincoln to have relevance for wartime Britain and neutral America. According to Choate, the causes that Lincoln had represented were now at stake in the European war, and as he conveyed to those present at the meeting the message that American Pilgrims united with them in commemorating the death of "the foremost champion of freedom, humanity, and good faith", he stressed that, "If he were living today, we know how heartily he would sympathize with you in the terrible contest you are waging in defence of these great causes ..." When the United States entered the War, Lincoln would be used to justify her course of action.[1] At this point, however, Choate preferred to emphasize "how earnestly he (Lincoln) would have insisted upon his country conforming with the strictest fidelity to all the obligations of neutrals, while stoutly maintaining their rights."[2]

An editorial in the Times of 16 April, 1915, similarly exploited the heroic Lincoln, arguing that the values he represented were not only cherished by Britain as well as America but also underlay the struggle against Germany. To this paper it seemed that in the midst of their great struggle "for liberty and right" the people of Britain were bound to recall the day, fifty years earlier, when "the greatest and noblest leader whom democracy has yet given the world" died by an assassin's hand. Claiming that "None has accomplished a mightier work in the annals of human progress", the Times hailed Lincoln as the Saviour of the Union who "restored the shattered foundations of the Republic" and so accomplished a life-work which was "surely amongst the most memorable and most abiding ever wrought by man." In thus eulogizing America's hero the Times was anxious to stress that the "heritage" of old

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1 See above, Chapter Six.
2 Times, April 12, 16, 1915

traditions and progressive ideals" which the heroic Lincoln preserved and symbolized was valued by both nations and that "Lincoln is one of the patron saints of democracy, at least to all Democrats born of the same blood." Quoting from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the Times drove home its message that the words and deeds of "this plain man", "sprung himself from the ranks of the democracy", and the great cause he represented, had meaning for the present time: "We are firmly convinced that we ourselves are fighting for this same cause to-day. Let us see to it that we fight with the same resolution and with the same success."[1] Thus the Times, in its concern to create good feeling between Britain and America, was ready to exploit mythical images of Lincoln as a hero of popular government which fifty years earlier it had found unacceptable.

In publishing this editorial the Times undoubtedly sought to influence American as well as British opinion through the inspiring example of the heroic Lincoln and to win American sympathy, so crucial to the British war effort, by its tribute to him. The paper's faith in the potency of Lincoln's name was indicated in its comment that "none is enshrined more surely for all time in the grateful memory of his countrymen ...",[2] a faith shared by one of its Sussex readers, F. K. Bret Harte, who, expressing his admiration for this editorial, wrote, "It will be a pity if The Times leader on Abraham Lincoln in your issue of Friday last is not quoted far and wide throughout the United States." According to Harte, "No true American at home or abroad can read this beautiful tribute to his national hero without a lump rising in his throat, nor can the stirring application of Lincoln's deeds and words to England in this moment of her struggle for freedom over tyranny fail to deepen this emotion." Harte believed that the editorial would be effective in bringing home to England and America the insolubility of the ties which bound together

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1 "A Great Example", Times, April 16, 1915.
2 Ibid.

the English-speaking peoples. "What kind of an American is he," asked Harte, "who will not endorse with all the spontaneity of his nature the sentiments so forcibly expressed...?"[1]

Newspaper items relating to Lincoln were apparently a not uncommon part of wartime propaganda on both sides of the Atlantic, as the author of a biography published in 1920 indicated when he attributed his choice of subject to "The revived interest in President Abraham Lincoln evoked in the main through the numerous Press references to his political career during the recent Great War ..."[2] One example was an article on "The Great American", inspired by the publication of Lord Charnwood's biography of Lincoln, which appeared in The Daily News and Leader of 15 July, 1915 and which endorsed and promoted mythic images of Lincoln for broadly political purposes. Demonstrating the way in which, as it alleged, "the present is... illuminated by the past", this article sought to foster friendly relations with the United States and, in order to keep up British morale, to impress upon its readers the heroism of the war against Germany, by relating Britain's struggle to that of the American hero against the South and slavery.

Declaring that the Civil War made "an exceptional appeal to us in the circumstances of to-day", the author traced Lincoln's career from his origins in poverty through his entry into politics and the crises of secession and civil war to the victory that made him "one of the world's Immortals." Throughout Lincoln appeared as an anti-slavery hero. While stressing that he was no abolitionist extremist, the article introduced the familiar tale of how after seeing a slave auction in New Orleans Lincoln vowed to hit

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1 F. K. Bret Harte to the Editor, April 18, 1915: Times, April 20, 1915. The writer was probably related to American author F. (Francis) K. Bret Harte, who was U.S. Consul at Crefield in 1878 and Glasgow 1880-1888 and who died in 1902.

2 Hon. Ralph Shirley, A Short Life of Abraham Lincoln (London, 1920 ed.), vii.

slavery hard if he were ever given the chance with the comment, "The iron ... entered his soul early." A major theme of the article, and one which was clearly intended to carry a message for the times in which it was written, was Lincoln's "invincible resolution" to succeed in the face of every adversity. As this theme developed there was even a hint of the superhuman Lincoln, the humble backwoodsman giving way to "one whose head touched the stars" who possessed the "powers, depth of vision, greatness of soul, splendid humanity and heroic will, which was needed to save America in the hour of its peril." In a final eulogistic paragraph Lincoln emerged as the Savour of his nation and the Great Emancipator, a symbol from the past offering hope to a generation also at war: "He did save it, and,incidentally, he wiped out from the record of humanity the stain of slavery, and wrote in its place the indelible truths of freedom."

Charnwood's study was one of a series of works on "Makers of the Nineteenth Century", and in his introduction to the Lincoln volume the series' editor, Basil Williams, commented: "It is fit that the first considered attempt by an Englishman to give a picture of Lincoln, the great hero of America's struggle for the noblest cause, should come at a time when we in England are pressing through as fiery a trial for a cause we feel to be as noble."[1] Charnwood himself was not averse to appealing to a heroic vision of Lincoln or relating this hero to contemporary affairs. Thus in an article written to commemorate the 109th. anniversary of Lincoln's birth and published on 12 February, 1918, Charnwood wrote of the wartime President's "burning faith" and powers of endurance and of his commitment to human equality and freedom, commenting: "Today it is ... appropriate to recall that his patriotism, rooted in these principles which he sealed with his death, was a patriotism

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1 Lord Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln (London, 1917), iv.

which knew no local and no racial bounds."[1] However, Charnwood's biography set a new standard of objectivity for British students of Lincoln, and did not seek to perpetuate or exploit Lincoln myths. While he accepted John Hanks' story of how slavery made its impact on Lincoln at New Orleans, Charnwood stressed that, "it is not in the light of a crusader against this special evil that we are to regard him." In Charwood's view, Lincoln regarded emancipation as part of the larger work of preserving the Union. Though Lincoln became the Great Emancipator, he did so reluctantly: preferring gradual to immediate emancipation, "he would at first rather not have played the historic part which he did play as liberator of the slaves..."[2]

Nevertheless, mythical images of Lincoln did appear in other biographies published in Britain after the 1914-1918 War. One such was a brief work written by American Ralph Shirley and published in London in 1919. In the preface to this volume Shirley acknowledged his debt to Charnwood's "impartial" study of Lincoln, and while he emphasized the theme of Lincoln's role in preserving the American Union and suppressing slavery this did not result in exaggerated eulogies of him as the Saviour of his nation or an heroic Emancipator. Yet the concept of Lincoln as appointed by Providence to oppose slavery was implicit in the opening pages of the narrative, and there was some hint of the Emancipator when, giving John Hanks' account of the trip to New Orleans as the origin of Lincoln's hatred of slavery, Shirley commented: "Such incidents in early life often leave more mark and produce greater results than is realised at the time." By the end of the biography Lincoln was established as "the great protagonist of the Union and of the cause of Freedom."[3]

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1 Unidentified newspaper clipping, MSS Dept., William and Mary College
2 Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln, 14-15, 316.
3 Shirley, Short Life of Abraham Lincoln, vii, 3, 10-11, 182.

Less objective, and revealing once again how myths could be used to underline a contemporary, and this time a religious, message, was a biography by Englishman Henry Withers significantly entitled Abraham Lincoln. A Champion of Freedom which was published by the Religious Tract Society in London in 1927. In Withers' monograph Lincoln was above all a God-inspired hero of the Union, democracy and emancipation whose life was "the story of the triumph of freedom over servitude," and whose services to democracy were embodied in "his fight for the limitation and final extinction of slavery in the Western world." Seeking to achieve his ends amidst the struggles of the Civil War, wrote Withers, "the great, heroic, melancholy figure of Lincoln moved on, unswervingly and uncomplainingly, to his triumph and his doom." In common with some American anti-slavery biographers Withers included in his account of Lincoln's youth the unsupported tradition that Thomas Lincoln moved from Kentucky to Indiana because he wished to live in a free state, and Withers quoted from Lincoln's 1855 letter to Joshua F. Speed recalling his own early hatred of slavery in order to give emphasis to John Hanks' account of Lincoln's reaction to slavery in New Orleans.[1] Withers pointed out that Lincoln's hostility to slavery was tempered by his reluctance to interfere with a domestic institution of the South and described what he called the popular assumption that Lincoln and the North fought the Civil War to free the slaves as "only part of the truth." Nevertheless, his chapters on "Lincoln and Slavery", "Lincoln and Emancipation", and "Lincoln the Champion of Freedom" made clear Withers' belief that liberty was the great cause of Lincoln's life and that "The destruction of slavery was the text upon which he based his passionate advocacy of true freedom ..."

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1 See Lincoln to Speed, Aug. 24, 1855: Works, II, 320-323.

It was in the final chapters of this work that Withers related Lincoln's life to the times in which he was writing. As a champion of freedom in its widest sense, Lincoln's words were declared to be "pregnant with significance when we look about us and realise how the cause of true liberty is daily assailed, not merely in our own homeland, but still more fiercely in other less favoured quarters of the globe." It was this hero of the broad values of freedom and democracy whose best epitaph would be, in Withers' view, his own words at Gettysburg, and whose life illustrated a moral suitable to the final paragraph of a work published by the Religious Tract Society. "The whole world is his debtor," wrote Withers, "and, remembering that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, let us take fresh courage and inspiration from the story of Abraham Lincoln, and gird ourselves afresh to the task of loosening the shackles which still bind mankind and hinder the coming of the Kingdom of the truly free."[1]

A brief account of Lincoln's life published in a collection of essays on Great Democrats published in London in 1934 showed that in spite of the trend to approach his life with an attempt at objectivity and to avoid exaggerated eulogies, Lincoln remained a hero who represented values common to Britain, the United States and the Western World generally, and who was politically useful in the broadest sense of the term. According to editor A. Barratt-Brown, these studies of men and women who had achieved greatness as democrats were offered to an age "which indubitably needs to be reminded of their message." However, Bruce Bliven's study analysed rather than perpetuated mythic images of Lincoln. The popular "Railsplitter" tradition which, Bliven felt romanticized Lincoln's early life, was rejected, and the Emancipator image was modified. When recounting the well-known tradition

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1 Henry Withers, Abraham Lincoln. A Champion of Freedom (London, 1927), 13, 14, 50, 116, 169, 177-178, 180, 192.

concerning slavery in New Orleans Bliven noted that it might be apocryphal, although he added that, "the frame of mind indicated by it is in accord with the historic facts." Emphasizing that Lincoln was no abolitionist, Bliven described his cautious approach to emancipation and its adoption "primarily as a War measure ..." Although it was noted that history would regard the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation as the most important event of the Civil War, Lincoln was not presented as the Great Emancipator. Yet his statue as a hero was not challenged. In seeking to explain widespread veneration of Lincoln as one of the greatest Americans of all time, Bliven declared: "Finally, we must return to the plain fact that he was in truth a great man. ... certainly very few men in history have come closer than he to breaking all temporal bonds and emerging into that timeless region where greatness speaks to greatness unfettered by the years."[1]

D. W. Brogan's 1935 biography of Lincoln did not seek to eulogize him as a hero of either democracy or emancipation.[2] Nor, beyond drawing a parallel between the Radicals during Reconstruction in America and those in Britain who had profitted from the 1914-1918 War and hoped to do better out of the peace, did Brogan relate his narrative to contemporary events.[3] His brief, objective life of Lincoln has remained popular for nearly half a century, but its appearance did not mark the disappearance from British thought of mythic images of Lincoln, and the 1939-1945 War provided ample opportunity for their revival as part of Anglo-American wartime propaganda.

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1 Bruce Bliven, "Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865", in A. Barratt-Brown, ed., Great Democrats (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1934), 11, 403, 405-406, 415.

2 D. W. Brogan, Abraham Lincoln (London, 1935). Shocken Books Inc. of New York published a paperback edition in 1963.

3 Brogan's reference to the Great War was omitted from the 1963 edition.

As in the Allied propaganda of World War One, the mythical Lincoln played two related roles. As a hero of freedom and democracy, or specifically as the Emancipator of the slaves in America, he served both as an inspiration to those who saw themselves as fighting for freedon in Europe[1] and as a means of cementing good relations between Britain and the United States. Both functions were illustrated when Ambassador John Winant and his wife and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden were guests of honour at a luncheon given by the English-Speaking Union in May 1941.[2] In his speech, Winant referred to the destruction that week by German bombs of the House of Commons and the altar of Westminster Abbey, two hits which, he said,"seemed to me to symbolize the objectives of the dictator and the pagan." Looking across Parliament Square, he had noticed that the statue of Abraham Lincoln was still standing. To Winant it seemed that this statue's survival, and the memory of the mythic being it represented, symbolized hope for those engaged in "the greatest struggle in all history to preserve freedom..." Developing this theme, Winant portrayed Lincoln the Liberator as representing the values cherished by all in Britain and America who stood against Nazi Germany:[3]

> As I looked at the bowed figure of the Great Emancipator and thought of his life, I could not help but remember that he loved God, that he had defined and represented democratic government, and that he hated slavery. And, as an American, I was proud that he was there in all that wreckage as a friend and sentinel of gallant days that have gone by, and a reminder that in this great battle for freedom he waited quietly for support for those things for which he lived and died.

In such exploitation of the heroic Lincoln the British were happy to play their part. Paraphrasing Winant's speech on this occasion, a British newspaper told its readers that: "Lincoln's statue stands as a silent symbol,

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1 Times, May 9, 1944 and Jan. 8, 1945.
2 The English-Speaking Union was formed in 1918 and sought to perpetuate what it saw as the wartime unity of English speaking peoples to preserve common ideals.
3 Times, May 15, 1941

bringing comfort and hope to this threatened world. It reminds every lover of liberty who looks up to it of a man who is famous from one end of the world to the other as a man who created freedom." This paper also paid tribute to the potency of the mythic Lincoln in wartime propaganda when it declared: "Mr. Winant's speech was full of Lincoln's spirit. Nobody has described with simpler eloquence or a deeper insight into truth what the men who, first in this island, then across the seas, made out of different stocks and traditions self-respecting and civilized societies understand by freedom, and why they are ready to defend it to the death."[1]

There is evidence to show that during both World Wars the British establishment valued tributes to the heroic Lincoln as a means of conciliating American opinion. The controversy which arose in 1917 over a statue of Lincoln by George Gray Barnard which had been offered to Britain on behalf of American Charles P. Taft. The statue was widely condemned in America as grotesque and defamatory, and the British press reported consternation in Washington, D.C. over the news that it was to be erected in Parliament Square and published many criticisms of the piece including former Ambassador Choate's description of it as "a desecration to the memory of Lincoln and the precincts of Westminster." The matter was considered sufficiently serious for questions to be asked in Parliament and elicited from Sir A. Mond the revealing comment that, while the Government had no duty to question the statue's artistic merit, "I need hardly add that his Majesty's Government and the country will warmly welcome a representation worthy of this illustrious American statesman in the capital of the Empire." The House of Lords showed equal concern, Viscount Harcourt calling for a photograph of the statue to be placed at the disposal of the House.

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1 Unidentified newspaper clipping, MSS. Dept., William and Mary College.

The Times, which followed the controversy, was provoked into an editorial attack upon the statue. "By all means let us have our memorial of Lincoln, whose size and achievement were never so fully recognized in England as to-day", the paper declared, but it felt that such a memorial should be a source of pride to Americans as well as British and that the Taft statue did not fit the bill. As this suggests, the cause of the Times' hostility to the statue related to the role of such a memorial to a foreign hero in diplomatic relations between two countries: the same editorial had earlier denounced the affair of the Taft statue as a blunder, declaring: "This is exactly the kind of careless trifle which might easily cause bad blood between two peoples with less complete unanimity and less reverence for each other's great men."[1]

In the event the matter was settled amicably. The statue selected to stand in London was a replica of a piece by Augustus St. Gaudens which, remarked the Times, "is universally acknowledged to be the finest memorial in stone of the great American." The Taft statue was presented to Manchester in 1919. Referring to the former, the Duke of Connaught made clear its symbolic role in Anglo-American relations. Developing images of Lincoln as a man of the people, the hero who preserved the American Union and the Emancipator, he declared: "May the presence of this statue in our midst in London be an inspiration to us all of the great principles for which Lincoln lived and died, and may it also constitute another bond that may help to forge a lasting friendship and understanding between the British and American peoples."[2]

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1 Times, Sept. 24, 25, 26, 27, Oct. 19, and Dec. 8, 12, 1917.
2 Times, Sept. 25, 1917; Duke of Connaught's remarks reported in the women's magazine Homechat, Aug. 28, 1920.

An example from the Second World War was the Admiralty's decision in 1940 to pay tribute to the American hero by naming a destroyer transferred to the Royal Navy from that of the United States "Lincoln", a choice which won instant approval from America. In a letter accompanying two portraits of Lincoln, one of which was to hang in the wardroom of the destroyer, the United States Secretary of the Navy, Colonel Frank Knox, wrote to the First Lord of the Admiralty: "I learned with great satisfaction that you had named one of the former American destroyers, and now a part of the British Navy, the "Lincoln". Surely in a war being fought for the preservation of human liberty no more significantly appropriate name could have been chosen." With equal courtesy, and equal respect for Lincoln's symbolic role in simplifying the complex issues involved in Anglo-American relations, the First Lord accepted the gifts, commenting, "I shall treasure mine most deeply, and I know that the officers and men of H.M.S. Lincoln will give theirs pride of place on the walls of their wardroom. No gift from you could have been more happily chosen, expressing as it does your sympathy in the struggle for the preservation of human liberty, the cause to which Abraham Lincoln devoted his life."[1]

Other incidents during the War testified to the same concern on the part of the British authorities to pay tribute to Lincoln and to the resultant gratification expressed by representatives of the United States. Thus in 1942 the Mayor and Corporation of Lincoln selected February 12 as an appropriate date on which to present American Ambassador John Winant with the freedom of the City. Speaking at a luncheon on this occasion, Winant called the choice of date "a generous gesture to his country." After explaining that February 12 was the birthday of the man who had preserved popular

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1 Times, Dec. 27, 1940.

government in the New World and "who symbolized to humble folk in America 'the inalienable right of life, liberty and happiness'", Winant went on to stress the unity of the Allies in fighting to preserve the values which they cherished in common.[1] In the United States a day earlier, British Ambassador Lord Halifax responded to an invitation to deliver an address on Lincoln in the hero's home town of Springfield, Illinois. Declaring that the invitation did him and his country "great honour", Halifax used the occasion to stress the importance of America's role in World War Two.[2]

Thus during both World Wars Britons and Americans used the heroic Lincoln to symbolize "'the commonalty of cultural, moral, and political values' of the British and American peoples"[3] - values which it was claimed were at stake in the conflict with Germany and her allies. In 1943 Sir John Mactaggart, representing officers and members of the American and British Commonwealth Association at ceremonies in London commemorating Lincoln's birthday, laid a wreath on Lincoln's statue inscribed, "A salute from the old democracy to the new." The inscription on another wreath laid on the same occasion read: "To the memory of Abraham Lincoln from his British admirers. He belongs to us all and to the ages."

A year later in a ceremony at the American Embassy in London on February 12, 1944, Colonel John Leslie of Brancaster in Norfolk presented to Lord Zetland, chairman of the National Trust Executive Committee, the title deeds to the site at Swanton Morley on which stood the Lincoln family home. The Times reported that, "It is Colonel Leslie's hope that with American co-operation a memorial will be erected on the site." E. Thurtle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Information, presided at the ceremony, and according to the Times, "said that Colonel Leslie's gift would at any time have been a happy gesture to promote friendship between the American and British peoples."[4]

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1 Times, Feb. 13, 1942.
2 Times, Feb. 12, 1942.
3 Times, April 23, 1947, reporting remarks of U.S. Ambassador Lewis W. Douglas at a dinner given by The Pilgrims, April 22, 1947.
4 Times, Feb. 15, 1943; Feb. 14, 1944.

Nevertheless, with both Governments anxious to encourage good feeling between their countries, Leslie could hardly have timed his gift better.

British and American co-operation in exploiting the heroic Lincoln in order to encourage the Allied war effort and strengthen links between the United States and Britain was also illustrated on the same day, but somewhat differently, when in a joint broadcast from London and New York, the Archbishop of Canterbury told audiences on both sides of the Atlantic that, "if we were to be true to Lincoln's conception of democracy - and every other was at best a parody, and at worst a mere welter of competing selfishness - we must deepen our spirit of dedication while the war lasted and carry it forward in undiminished ardour to the tasks of peace." A Lincoln birthday address spoken from Springfield, Illinois, by the American Vice-President, Henry A. Wallace, was included in the same programme.[1]

An unusual piece of historical writing which dates from this period and was related to contemporary events also played heavily upon mythic images of Lincoln. Entitled A Hundred Minutes with Gladstone, the work was written by popular author Peter Esslemont and was published in Aberdeen in 1941. The volume was a companion to an earlier work by Esslemont entitled 'Brithers A' A Minute A Day with Burns and both set out to study "Brotherhood in sentiment, song, speech and action; the strongest force in national and international life."

Addressing the generation of the then Princess Elizabeth, Esslemont opened his volume on Gladstone with a number of documents relating to the War, including the King's Broadcast Message of September 1939, President Roosevelt's broadcast of March 15, 1941, extracts from speeches made by Winston Churchill in 1940, remarks of Liberal leader Sir Archibald Sinclair, and the text of the Atlantic Charter. These documents were clearly meant to illustrate the

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1 Times, Feb. 14, 1944.

principles of brotherhood in action in the struggle against Nazi Germany, and the comparison between Gladstone and Lincoln which appeared later in the work was doubtless intended as a lesson in the values of international brotherhood. For Esslemont, Gladstone and Lincoln were both symbols of mankind's gradual realisation "that all men are brothers." At the same time, his vision of Gladstone as "Protector of the Oppressed" and "The People's William" must have predisposed him to link his hero with the mythic Lincoln. For in developing his theme Esslemont gave expression to mythic images of Lincoln as a self-made man of the people who had risen to great power and the Emancipator of the American slaves who thus fulfilled his early promise that, "'If I ever get a chance to hit Slavery, I'll hit it hard!'" Through his role in the North's triumphant struggle to preserve the Union and destroy slavery Lincoln became, for Esslemont, a world hero: "The victory was not confined to America. It had enormous influence in hastening every effort for the social welfare and uplift of humanity - a victory for world Brotherhood."[1]

There were other isolated and sometimes strange examples of British exploitation of the mythic Lincoln which testified to his continuing symbolic role in British thought. From time to time he appeared as a hero of the campaign against liquor. British temperance organizations paid tribute to his heroic status in 1865[2] and early British biographies stressed the teetotalism which it was claimed made Lincoln "a friend to Temperance."[3] The image of him as a temperance fanatic was rejected by Binns in his 1907 biography and in Charnwood's 1916 volume,[4] but his life-long abstention from liquor made him useful to the temperance movement on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus on February 11, 1909 the Alliance News and Temperance Reformer, organ of the United Kingdom Alliance for the Legislative Suppression

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1 Peter Esslemont, To the Fifth Generation A Hundred Minutes with Gladstone (Aberdeen, 1941), 8-13, 15, 18, 56-57.
2 See above,
3 Rutherford, op.cit., 87-88; Heroes of the Great Republic, 5.
4 Binns, Abraham Lincoln, 85; Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln, 77.

of Liquor, celebrated the centenary of Lincoln's birth by recalling temperance society resolutions of 1865 hailing Lincoln as the Great Emancipator and the Saviour of his country, and offered a poetic toast to the hero's memory. In its final verses Lincoln the divinely-inspired Emancipator of the slaves in America and the immortal martyr was presented as a model for the temperance crusade, and the hero of "that vast, free, dusky host" and martyr "prince of Liberty" whose memory "future ages shall revere" was toasted in water.

There is evidence that the heroic Lincoln was sometimes exploited commercially. In 1865 the singer Donati included in his programme a new song on the death of Lincoln, which was listed as a major attraction in advertisements for his concerts. Reviewing Donati's concert at Birmingham Town Hall on 8 August, 1865, the Birmingham Daily Post, which had long admired the late President, was, however, less than complimentary about this tribute to his memory, of which the lines "Men of honour, station, income/Sing a dirge to Abraham Lincoln" were all too typical.[1] The staging of Drinkwater's play Abraham Lincoln by Birmingham Repertory Theatre Company provided the occasion for commercial exploitation of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator. An advertisement bill for the play showed a photograph of a Lincoln statue with a small black child polishing Lincoln's shoes. The caption read "Thousands are going to the Abraham Lincoln play in London. This boy in America blacks the boots of Lincoln's statue every day in gratitude for the freedom Lincoln gave the negro race." A postcard advertising the play carried a sketch of the same incident together with a similar caption.[2]

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1 Birmingham Daily Post, Aug. 3, 7, 8, 9, 1865.

2 Items in Lincolniana Collection, MSS Dept., William and Mary College. Drinkwater used Charnwood's biography of Lincoln as a source and dedicated his play Abraham Lincoln to Charnwood. The play was first produced in New York in 1919. / See Searcher, Lincoln Today, 258-59.

Occasionally newspapers or individuals appealed to the heroic Lincoln in order as an endorsement of the particular government policies which they advocated. Thus in December 1915 the Times appealed to Lincoln as "the greatest statesman whom democracy has raised to power" and "this convinced champion of liberty and of popular rights as understood in the Republic" and quoted extensively from his speeches, including his 1862 Message to Congress urging emancipation, in order to endorse its arguments on behalf of the draft in Britain. Similarly in 1939 a correspondent of the Times invoked Lincoln's memory when, defending Chamberlain's pact with Hitler, he quoted from a speech by "another great exponent of appeasement, Mr. Abraham Lincoln." Reflecting the renewed meaning which mythic images of Lincoln found in Britain during the Second World War, another correspondent of the Times writing in 1943 used the concept of the Great Emancipator in a novel way. In his letter the writer, Professor A. L. Goodhart, quoted from a recent speech in which the Archibishop of York had claimed that the argument that social security would destroy initiative "was used by those who had never really known what want was. It belonged to the class of argument which justified slavery and the overseer's lash." Evidently feeling that this was a suitable cause in which to invoke the memory of the Emancipator, Professor Goodhart reminded readers of the Times of Abraham Lincoln's "famous comment" that "'Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.'"[1]

Such political use of the mythic Lincoln, like wartime exploitation of him as a hero of the broad values of freedom and democracy, had little in common with Radical attempts to exploit the heroic Lincoln during the Civil

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1 Times, March 13, 1943.

War and at the time of his assassination. Nor was there real continuity between mid-nineteenth century Radical thought and the persistence of another mythic image much favoured by Radical and working class leaders of the 1860's - that of Lincoln as the workingmen's hero.

British biographers of Lincoln played an important role in perpetuating this image of him together with the closely associated tradition that throughout the Civil War the British working classes, and especially the Lancashire operatives, stood firmly behind Lincoln and the North as representing the cause of human liberty. All stressed Lincoln's humble origins, his frontier or backwoods background and the fact that he had once earned his living by manual labour, eulogizing him for having risen "from the humblest situation in life to the highest pinnacle of fame."[1] Similarly most biographers played upon British working class sympathy for the Northern cause and its leader, and in particular the messages sent to Lincoln by workingmen in Manchester and London were used to underline the image of him as a people's President.[2] Contemporary British histories relating to the Civil War years played a part in the perpetuation of this tradition, which was to prove one of the more enduring aspects of the Radical analysis of the War. Thus Goldwin Smith's 1893 outline of American political history claimed that the masses in Britain supported the North once it became clear that the Federal Government was fighting against slavery, and Justin McCarthy's widely-read History of Our Own Times told how though the vast majority of the governing classes were pro-Southern, the artisans "everywhere" gave their support to the North, and how in spite of distress resulting from the cotton famine, "the Lancashire operatives were among the sturdiest of those who stood out against any proposal to break the blockade or to recognise the South."[3]

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1 Shirley, Abraham Lincoln, 5.
2 Heroes of the Great Republic, 113-115; Binns, Abraham Lincoln, 282.
3 Goldwin Smith, The United States: An Outline of Political History 1492-1871 (New York, 1893), 258; Justin McCarthy, A History of Our Own Times... (London, 1905-10 ed.), III, 171.

Only rarely was there any suggestion of continuity with earlier Radical support for the concept of Lincoln as a hero of working class opponents of the South and slavery. The spirit of Radical use of this concept was perhaps best preserved in the attempt by Henry Bryan Binns, mentioned earlier, to incorporate mythic images of Lincoln as the Emancipator and a workmen's hero into his attack upon big business and what he saw as the enslavement of white labour by industry.[1] Lincoln's early British admirers might also have been gratified by the inscription on the Taft statue of Lincoln erected in Manchester which declared that it had been given to the city "in commemoration of Lancashire's friendship to the cause for which Lincoln lived and died, and of the century of peace among English-speaking peoples ..."[2] Yet as a hero of labour Lincoln could also be exploited by those unsympathetic to working class radicalism. Thus in Henry Withers' biography, Lincoln's views on labour, presented as gaining peculiar significance from the fact that he had "commenced life as a working man", were quoted and his belief in the inter-dependence of capital and labour was offered as "a subject which has perculiar pertinence in these days of industrial and social unrest."[3]

In 1917 Lord Weardale claimed that there were in Britain "countless admirers of Lincoln as a popular hero." Certainly, as a few examples will illustrate, there was enduring British support for the tradition that the masses in Britain sympathised with Lincoln and the concept of Lincoln as a workingman's hero who was "born in poverty", was "associated all his life with the 'common' people."[4] Both were central to a 1952 pamphlet by J. R. Pole entitled Abraham Lincoln and the Working Classes of Britain[5] and both appear

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1 See above, pp. 431-2.
2 Unidentified newspaper clipping, Lincolniana Collection, MSS Dept., William and Mary College.
3 Withers, op.cit., 180.
4 Esslemont, op.cit., 56.
5 J.R. Pole, Abraham Lincoln and the Working Classes of Britain (London, 1952 (?)).

in the most recent British biography of Lincoln written by Lord Longford and published in 1974. According to this work, the "opinion-forming" classes in Britain did not, on the whole, emerge well from the Civil War, but "The working classes did something to redeem the national honour." Describing the many messages sent to America by British and Continental labour organizations, Lord Longford commented: "they could never forget the great American statesman who had said: 'Working men are the basis of all government.'"[1]

Longford's work was published several years after the appearance of two monographs which challenged and modified the traditions of British working class support for the North and Lincoln as a working class hero.[2] While popular biography does not necessarily reflect the findings of contemporary historical research, this also reveals the way in which mythic images can survive scholarly challenge. The image of the Emancipator has been subject to such modification since the turn of the century, and more particularly since the 1940's,[3] and this is indeed reflected in British biographies of Lincoln written in the twentieth century and especially after the Second World War.[4] Nevertheless, Lincoln's "heroic role" is the theme of Elizabeth Longford's introduction to her husband's study, and she hints at the Emancipator image as she pictures Lincoln, like Horatio, taking up the double-edged sword (of union and emancipation) "which none but he can wield."[5] Thus Lincoln remains a heroic figure - and doubtless when the British again feel a need to exploit the heroic Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, the Saviour of the Union, the hero of democracy, and even the working man's friend will again come into his own.

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1 Lord Longford, Abraham Lincoln (London, 1974), 212.
2 See above, Chapter Eight.
3 See above, Chapter One.
4 See for example J.R. Pole, Abraham Lincoln (London, 1964) and Longford, op.cit.
5 Longford, op.cit., 7.

Chapter Ten

Conclusions

Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.[1]

The circumstances in which a particular body of myths centering upon Abraham Lincoln and relating to emancipation emerged in the United States and Britain in the mid-Nineteenth Century have now been studied, and some attempt must be made to link together the various themes examined and to draw out the conclusions reached.

The resulting discussion will fall into three parts. Firstly, the historical conclusions reached in the preceding chapters will be summarized. Secondly, the development of myths concerning Lincoln's role in emancipation will be related to the Lincoln Myth as a whole, and certain other mythical images of him which emerged concurrently with those connected with emancipation and which have been touched on earlier will be considered more closely. One purpose of this section will be to offer an explanation of the potency of Lincoln myths as political argument, and their popular development, by demonstrating that the various mythical images discussed enshrine fundamental values of American society in the Northern States after the Civil War and at the same time give expression to centuries-old and powerful mythical themes. In relation to this, it will be shown that the heroic Lincoln fits a pattern common to heroes throughout the world and in all ages, and the continuity between modern heroes and those of ancient tradition, and between political use of heroes and of myth generally in ancient and modern societies, will be discussed. Thirdly, and finally, some general conclusions regarding the myth-making process will be offered.

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1 "Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration" (July 21, 1865), in Poetical Works of James Russell Lowell (London, n.d.), 438. The quotation is taken from the sixth stanza (on Lincoln) which was not recited on July 21, but was written shortly afterwards.

Each of the mythical images of Lincoln discussed in this study owed its emergence and early growth in America to its role in political argument. The society which produced the myth of Lincoln the abolitionist was that existing in the South on the eve of secession. The tradition emerged when radical Southern leaders, urging the establishment of an independent confederacy of slave states as the only solution to the crisis of declining Southern power within the Union and the threatened dominance of Northern society and ideology, developed a series of arguments which aimed to unite Southerners as a politically conscious group and prepare them for the revolutionary action allegedly necessary to preserve their way of life. These arguments included an interpretation of the immediate past which focussed upon and exaggerated the development of anti-slavery sentiment in the Northern free states. By a process of over-simplification, the newly-emerged Republican Party was presented as the political organ of Northern abolitionism, and in the myth depicting Lincoln as an abolitionist Northern anti-slavery trends and the threat to slavery and so to Southern society which they allegedly posed were personified in the Republican presidential candidate who was thus endowed with a fanatical determination to destroy slavery everywhere. This image of Lincoln could not have survived an objective analysis of his public statements on slavery. Though presented as an accurate interpretation of his views and intentions, it was so clearly promoted in order to influence the behaviour of Southerners and with little regard for objectivity, that its status as myth is clear. Through the mythical Lincoln, secessionists were able to identify the alleged enemy of the South in terms which could be eaily comprehended at all levels of Southern society. When myth is utilized in this way, the message can be understood by a child, as an incident recorded by Mary Chesnut reveals. In her diary, Mrs. Chesnut described how, "At McMahan's our small colonel, Paul Hayne's son came into my room. To amuse the child I gave him a

photograph album to look over. 'You have Lincoln in your book!' said he. 'I am astonished at you! I hate him!' And he placed the book on the floor and struck old Abe in the face with his fist."[1]

Though promotion of the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist was at its peak during the Secession Crisis, variants of this myth continued to appear during the Civil War, illustrating the way in which mythical themes can be adapted to changing circumstances. After 1861 the myth was used by Confederate leaders to justify the action which the Southern States had taken and so to stimulate the Confederate war effort. The idea of Lincoln as an abolitionist enemy of the South also served another purpose in wartime. Since the attribution of war guilt to a society is too abstract a concept to be easily absorbed, and becomes especially difficult to assimilate when close links have formerly existed between individuals in the societies in conflict, as was the case during the American Civil War, Southerners tended to project guilt onto representative figures. Thus, as Thomas J. Pressly has observed, Southerners like Jefferson Davis and A.E. Pollard, "expressing a fairly common Confederate sentiment", held Lincoln and a limited number of other "evil" Northerners responsible for the outbreak of war.[2] Thus the mythical image of Lincoln as an abolitionist, developed and perpetuated as part of the ideology of the Southern Independence movement, gained new relevance in a wartime situation.

The images of Lincoln as hero and martyr of black emancipation also emerged as political myths, and though they were products of a society very different from that of the Old South which had developed the tradition depicting Lincoln as an abolitionist, the myth-making process remained the same. In the later case, the myths were part of an interpretation of Secession and the Civil War through which, by depicting Lincoln as a hero

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1 Chesnut, Diary, 202, entry for July 12, 1862.
2 Pressly, Americans Interpret Their Civil War, 97.

of liberty and the nation who had been killed by those who had rebelled to preserve slavery, Republican Radicals and other Northern anti-slavery men sought to stimulate hostility towards both the institution of slavery and former Confederates. In association with other mythical and non-mythical themes, mythical images of Lincoln were used as political arguments designed to win support in the Northern States for an approach to Reconstruction which it was claimed would secure the ends for which Unionists had fought by securing the total and permanent abolition of slavery and destruction of the power of Southern slaveholders.and by perpetuating the power of the Republican Party.

Once again, over-simplification played a vital part in the process of myth creation, as the complex web of events and trends which had brought about civil war in America was reduced to the single and easily comprehended theme that slavery had caused the War and, in a final act of rebellion, had assassinated the President who had declared liberty to the slaves. Once again, but this time by Northerners themselves, the anti-slavery trends in antebellum and wartime Northern thought, as well as the developments which brought about wartime emancipation of the slaves, were personified in Lincoln.

In the propaganda of those who advocated a Radical approach to Reconstruction in 1865 and exponents of Congressional Reconstruction policies in the elections of 1866 and 1868 all aspects of the Lincoln Myth were utilized. Thus the tradition viewing Lincoln as the People's President was used to emphasize his role as representative of Northerners generally whose acts, including emancipation, were sanctified by the will of the people, while that of Lincoln as the Saviour of his nation reinforced claims that the future security of the Union lay in the hands of the political party which had put Lincoln into office. Myths relating to emancipation were, however, especially valuable for they sanctified the destruction of slavery, and it was emancipation, and the need to preserve

the results of emancipation, which lay at the heart of the approach to Reconstruction advocated by those who opposed the call by National Unionists in 1866 and Democrats in 1868 for rapid restoration to their rightful place in the Union and in national government of the former rebel states. In particular, the image of Lincoln as Martyr-Emancipator of the black race was valuable to all who called for harsh measures against those described as belonging to the slave-owning oligarchy of the South or for equal rights for the freedmen, and to those Radical Republicans who urged the adoption of limited or universal Negro suffrage in the South. Such appeals to mythical images of Lincoln were not directed solely at white audiences. In particular, the concept of Lincoln as a hero of emancipation was utilized by white and black Republicans seeking the support for their party of Northern and Southern blacks. Nor was exploitation of the heroic Lincoln confined to exponents of Congressional Reconstruction. The potential political value of mythical images of Lincoln was also recognized by their opponents, and appeals to Lincoln's memory permeated National Unionist rhetoric in 1866 and were utilized by Democrats when in 1868 they sought to detach the heroic Lincoln from his close association with the Republican Party.

Mythical images of Lincoln relating to emancipation were essentially a product of white thought, but black Americans played a crucial role in their development. The tendency of Southern slaves to personify in Lincoln the anti-slavery trends of the Civil War, and so to view him as their friend and to associate him with their hopes for future freedom prepared the way for their acceptance of him as a personal emancipator in 1863. These early mythical images of the Northern President played a crude political role in simplifying complex pre-war and wartime developments and preparing Southern blacks to seize the opportunities for freedom presented by the Civil War. In addition, black acceptance of the myth of the Great

Emancipator, for which these earlier black images of Lincoln had prepared the way, facilitated its development.

Particularly important in this respect was political use of the image of Lincoln as Martyr-Emancipator by those black leaders who after the Civil War co-operated with white anti-slavery men to secure Radical Reconstruction, and who sought both the sympathy of Northern whites and the votes of Southern blacks in the name of the heroic Lincoln. When the collapse of Radical Reconstruction in the late 1870's forced black leaders to abandon the struggle for full citizenship rights in the South, they did not reject the society which had proved itself unwilling or unable to secure for blacks fulfilment of their aspirations. Integration into existing American society remained the goal which most black leaders pursued for their race, and respect for the values, and the myths, of that society continued. Consequently, though they turned away from political activity as a means to improve the condition of black Americans, conservative black leaders used mythical images of Lincoln as a hero of their race to win not only black sympathy but also, and more crucially, economic support from middle and upper class whites for the educational schemes and other programmes of social improvement by which they hoped to facilitate black integration into white society.

While the origin and early development in America of mythical images of Lincoln relating to emancipation owed much to their role as political myths, most survived the political programmes with which they were first associated to become part of America's national mythology. Only the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist did not long survive, and the contrast between its early demise and the enduring nature of the concept of the Martyr-Emancipator makes clear the crucial role of myth in representing fundamental beliefs and values of the society which produces it. The vision of Lincoln as an abolitionist enemy of the South symbolized the exaggerated fears of anti-slavery Northern radicalism which were a vital theme in secessionist

thought in the antebellum South. The Civil War destroyed slavery and with it the slavery-based society that had given birth to this mythical image of Lincoln, making inevitable the disappearance of a myth which could have no meaning in a postwar society forced to come to terms with the destruction of its peculiar institution.

The myth of the Great Emancipator, and to a lesser extent that of the Martyr to Liberty, were more enduring because they represented fundamental themes in the victorious free labour society of the Northern States and of American society in general. Crucially these images of Lincoln enshrined the theme of liberty which played a vital role in American thought from the time of the founding of the first colonies. By relating wartime emancipation of the slaves to this vital American theme, the concept of Lincoln as the Emancipator ensured him enduring recognition as a hero.

Since the development of Lincoln myths was not confined to America, an understanding of the process whereby myths find meaning outside the society in which they originate has been sought by studying British responses to mythical images of Lincoln. What this has revealed is that in Britain as amongst many white Americans the concept of Lincoln as a hero and martyr of liberty initially emerged as political myth. This was because the Civil War and so the myths associated with it became an issue in British politics during the 1860's. Yet while mythical images of Lincoln continued to find meaning for British people throughout the late Nineteenth and into the Twentieth Century, this reflects detachment of the heroic Lincoln from the political cause with which he was first associated in Britain and his emergence as a symbol of the broad values of freedom and democracy.

When the Civil War broke out, many British Radicals feared that the collapse of the Republic, especially under the challenge of what they saw as a slave-holding aristocracy, would weaken if not destroy the case for suffrage reform at home. These Radicals and their allies amongst liberal reformers, anti-slavery men and women, and pro-Northern working class leaders

were therefore predisposed to pay tribute to Lincoln as a symbol of the Northern war effort, especially since he represented values of the North's free labour society which they deeply admired. At the same time, their hostility to slavery, which they denounced as the oppression of labour, made them particularly inclined to view Lincoln as a hero of liberty when he adopted a policy of emancipation. These men were, moreover, especially anxious to promote this image of Lincoln, partly because they hoped it would stimulate sympathy for the North in a society where most were at least nominally anti-slavery, and partly because they could associate the heroic emancipator of black labourers with their own campaign to extend the suffrage to the working masses in Britain. The image of Lincoln as Emancipator therefore found significant support in Britain some time before it made any notable impact on the thought of white Americans, for in the Northern States, where the Emancipation Proclamations did meet with some praise, widespread hostility to abolitionism and anti-Negro feeling prevented this image from being politically useful before Lincoln emerged as a hero in a more general sense.

The heroic Lincoln's role in symbolizing republicanism and popular government in the rhetoric of those who sought to promote the cause of suffrage reform in Britain ensured that the developing Lincoln myths would find little favour with those who took a conservative stand in politics at this time. Widespread sympathy with the Confederacy also limited support for heroic images of the Northern leader. However, in 1865 a generally felt desire to conciliate the victorious North combined with genuine horror and regret at the manner of his death to encourage a more generous assessment of his qualities. At the same time, British conservatives, well aware that Radicals and their allies were drawing from the North's victory a moral on the virtues of popular government, were anxious to deny to their opponents opportunities to exploit Lincoln's assassination and associate the heroic Lincoln more closely with their cause. The result was that in addresses and resolutions

adopted by public bodies and at meetings dominated by the middle classes, representatives of the more conservative elements of the governing classes produced somewhat generalized tributes to Lincoln which, though they undermined Radical exploitation of his death, prepared the way for the later emergence in Britain of mythical concepts of Lincoln as the symbol of those values which Britons and Americans alike claimed to cherish.

These more general tributes of 1865, as compared with Radical and working class tributes in which Lincoln myths and in particular that of the Martyr-Emancipator did appear, are an interesting indication of the way in which acceptance and rejection of the myths of another society are shaped by political as well as cultural forces. It is clear that, as indicated above, those who produced local government and other similar tributes to Lincoln believed that the extensive sympathy for the Confederacy displayed by the middle and upper classes during the Civil War might have alienated the now victorious Unionists in America and that they consequently sought through recognition of the assassinated President's heroic status to conciliate Northern opinion and so re-establish friendly relations with the United States. At the same time, these classes could not share all the values enshrined in Lincoln myths. Thus, for example, the concept of Lincoln as a man of the people could find only limited support amongst those who opposed the extension of political rights to working men generally.[1] The tributes drafted by representatives of these classes were therefore a compromise between their desire to conciliate Americans, their rejection of certain American values enshrined in the heroic Lincoln, and their unwillingness to promote the Radical interpretation of the Civil War which the Lincoln myths represented.

Lincoln may have remained a hero for those Radicals and anti-slavery men and women who saw him as such during the Civil War, but it was the general recognition in 1865 of his role as the symbolic representative of such values as humanitarianism, which Britons and Americans both cherished,

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1 Goldwin Smith claimed that for the upper classes democracy meant that Lincoln was elected because he was "a 'brutal boor'": Goldwin Smith, "The Experience of the American Commonwealth", in Essays on Reform (London, 1867), 217-37, p.221-222. For Smith's own attitude to Lincoln as a symbol of democracy see below, p.474.

which laid the basis for the survival of mythical images of Lincoln in Britain. Indeed, once the heroic Lincoln had been detached from his early associations with British radicalism, even the image of the Emancipator was generally acceptable as symbolizing that concern for human freedom which to Britons and Americans alike is a fundamental characteristic of a democratic society. This has made it possible for the British to exploit heroic concepts of Lincoln, including that of the Emancipator, whenever they wish to emphasize those values which Britain and the United States hold in common and thereby promote goodwill between the two nations. Consequently, the enduring character of British support for mythical images of Lincoln has been particularly clear on such occasions, and notably during the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 Wars, when Britain and America co-operated in what was widely seen in both countries as a struggle to preserve the values of freedom and democracy which, perhaps more than any other hero, Lincoln, in his dual role as Emancipator of the slaves and saviour of his nation, best symbolizes.

It is well known that the cult of Lincoln did not go unopposed. Two early biographers of Lincoln, Ward H. Lamon and William H. Herndon, sought to check what they saw as the romanticization of him by emphasizing his frontier origins and western character. Their attempts, which provoked bitter criticism from admirers of the heroic Lincoln, contributed less to an objective analysis of Lincoln's life than to his emergence as a western, folklore hero.[1] A somewhat different type of dissent was represented in works published in America in the later Nineteenth Century which tried to expose the mythical character of the heroic Lincoln.[2]

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1 Ward Hill Lamon, The Life of Abraham Lincoln (Boston, 1872); William H. Herndon and Jesse William Weik, Herndon's Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life (Chicago, New York and San Francisco, 1889). On the latter work see especially David Donald, Lincoln's Herndon (New York, 1948), Chapters Eleven and Twelve. On Lincoln in folklore see also Richard M. Dorson, Folklore: Selected Essays (Bloomington and London, 1972), 118-25.

2 For example, D.B. Turney, The Mythifying Theory (Metropolis, Ill., 1872). Such works are discussed in Basler, The Lincoln Legend.

However, as preceding chapters of this study have already shown, some Americans rejected mythical images of Lincoln at a much earlier date. At the very time when Lincoln myths were emerging in America, some Northern abolitionists rejected the image of Lincoln as Emancipator, and Southerners generally dismissed Lincoln's claim to heroic status, preferring their own heroes of the "Lost Cause" such as Lee. It is also clear that the image of black Americans worshipping Lincoln as their hero and saviour created primarily by white myth-makers over-simplifies and distorts the reality of post-Civil War black attitudes towards Lincoln. In particular, it ignores the sophisticated political use by black Americans of mythical images of Lincoln and the critical attitude towards the concept of the Great Emancipator shown by some black spokesmen. Indeed, some blacks expressed their rejection of this image of Lincoln at a very early date. Thus at an emancipation celebration in Chicago in 1870, one of the city's young black spokesmen, Lewis B. White, declared that, "He considered that President Lincoln only issued the Emancipation Proclamation because he was compelled to do it in order to save the Union, and he also believed that the negro had no one but himself to thank for freedom and liberty; he fought his way to it, and he alone deserved the credit of securing the great boon."[1] White's remarks reflect early disillusionment with the postwar Republican Party resulting from its failure to secure equal rights for black men, and he criticized that party for the defeat of the Fifteenth Amendment in Illinois. It is difficult to tell how widespread such radicalism was amongst Northern blacks, although it echoes the critical attitudes towards the Republican Party which were not uncommon amongst Northern blacks before and during the Civil War. However, black leadership generally preferred to pay tribute to Lincoln and so to the values he represented throughout the late Nineteenth Century.[2]

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1 Remarks at Chicago, Jan. 1, 1870: Chicago Tribune, Jan. 3, 1870.

2 Indeed, a recent work published by the black university, Howard University (Washington, D.C.), which seeks support from the still white dominated government and educated classes in America for affirmative action by the Government to secure more places for blacks in institutions of higher education, refers to "Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator". See John E. Fleming, The Lengthening Shadow of Slavery - A Historical Justification for Affirmative Action for Blacks in Higher Education (Washington, D.C., 1976), 121.

This study has paid close attention to those mythical concepts of Lincoln which relate to emancipation, but it has been clear throughout that these are part of the collection of images of him which together make up the "Lincoln Myth". It is, indeed, their existence as part of a greater whole which helps to explain the potency of individual myths. The image of the Emancipator, for example, can scarcely be invoked without carrying with it some hint of Lincoln not only as a martyr to liberty but also as saviour and martyr of his nation, as well as a host of lesser myths.

It is this multi-faceted character of the heroic Lincoln which accounts for his importance in political argument. Nor is this simply because the various mythical images of him can be adapted to serve a variety of purposes, although discussion of the 1866 and 1868 election campaigns has shown this to be the case. For what has made Lincoln a potent and enduring national myth useful to politicians from the 1860's onwards is the way in which mythical images of him represent many of the most cherished values of American society, making him, as one admiring biographer wrote, "the ideal American, realising in his life all that America is and hopes and dreams."[1] Crucially, in representing these fundamental values, the heroic Lincoln has become a symbol of democracy as it has been understood by generations of Americans in the decades following the Civil War. "Millions there are", declared Carl Sandburg in an address delivered before Congress to commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the hero's birth, "who take him as a personal treasure. He had something they would like to see spread everywhere over the world. Democracy? We cannot say exactly what it is, but he had it. In his blood and bones he carried it."[2]

A glance at the emergence of this concept of Lincoln as a hero of

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1 Brand Whitlock, Abraham Lincoln (London, 190(8)), 185.
2 Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln: The Prarie Years and The War Years, 3 vols., paperback edition (New York, 1960), I, 15.

democracy, therefore, will not only help to place myths relating to emancipation within the context of the Lincoln Myth as a whole, but will also help to explain their potency by illustrating how a variety of mythical images, including that of the Emancipator, have combined to form the compelling vision of Lincoln as the personification of democratic values. At the same time, this discussion will confirm the conclusion reached in the earlier chapters on myths concerned with Lincoln's role in emancipation, that the role of mythical images in symbolizing cherished values of society made them politically useful and that this political significance contributed to their early development.

A product of Lincoln's role as wartime leader of the American Republic under challenge, and of the interpretation of the Civil War as a struggle to preserve democratic government for American and the world which Lincoln articulated so powerfully in his Gettysburg Address,[1] the broad image of Lincoln as a hero of democratic values was firmly established within a few years of his death. In January 1866, for example, the New York Times described him as, "the chosen and idolized representative of the principles - social, civil and judicial - which lie at the foundation and enter into the structure of the best system of government ever devised for the protection of the sacred rights of mankind, and their advancement in civilization."[2]

Its political usefulness in the early years of Reconstruction contributed to the development of this image of Lincoln. During the 1866 and 1868 elections, it was particularly valuable to those who asserted that a victory for opponents of Congressional Reconstruction would threaten the survival of democratic government in America, one of the chief objects for which, in the eyes of all Unionists, the war had been fought. For these

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1 Address delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetary at Gettysburg, Pa., Nov. 19, 1864, Lincoln, Works, VII, 22-23.

2 New York Times, Jan. 15, 1866.

Republicans, Lincoln was a symbol of democracy partly because, according to their interpretation of events, the Civil War had begun when his election by democratic processes, "through the regulated voice of freemen",[1] had been challenged by "a rebellion begun for the express purpose of overthrowing Republican institutions".[2] In addition, Lincoln was hailed as the hero who had preserved republican government against the combined efforts to destroy it of an aristocratic slave-holding rebellion in the South and Democratic sympathizers with the Confederacy in the North who were depicted as allies of aristocracy in Britain and autocracy in Europe.[3] As this suggests, when in 1866 and 1868 exponents of Congressional Reconstruction called for policies which would destroy slavery and the power of the old slaveholding aristocracy of the South, and declared the nation's mission to be the establishment of government on the basis of human liberty,[4] they used not only the image of Lincoln as Emancipator, but also that of him as a hero of democracy to attack their opponents. Thus at a Republican mass meeting in support of Grant and Colfax in 1868, Edwin M. Stanton, paraphrasing the Gettysburg Address, reminded his audience that the Founding Fathers had established republican government in America, and asked, "in the voice of Abraham Lincoln", as he expressed it, if the North's dead had given their lives in vain and if the great heritage consecrated by their blood should perish. "Let your hearts speak as though you stood by Abraham Lincoln", he urged, "and declare there is no one among you but will labor to complete the task of the illustrious dead by establishing the foundations of the Government again."[5]

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1 Benjamin F. Butler at Worcester, Mass., Sept. 9, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.

2 Speech of John A. Logan at Morris, Ill., Sept. 1, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 2, 1868.

3 Speech of John Jay, President of the Union League Club of New York, at a Republican rally, New York, Sept. 17, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 18, 1868.

4 Speeches of Hon. Henry O'Connor of Iowa and Carl Schurz at Chicago, Sept. 18, 19, 1868: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 19, 21, 1868.

5 Stanton at Cleveland, Ohio, Oct. 8, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 9, 1868.

Integral to this broad concept of Lincoln as a hero of democracy were a number of mythical images of him each representing fundamental values of American society. To demonstrate the points made above, the discussion that follows will centre upon two such images, that of People's President and merciful hero, before returning to that of Lincoln as Emancipator.

The concept of Lincoln as the People's President was crucial to his role as the heroic representation of the values of democracy. For implicit in the American understanding of democracy was a belief that in exercising their authority those who governed reflected the will of the people. To his admirers, Lincoln did so. In him was found, as Don E. Fehrenbacher has observed, "A man of the people and yet something much more, sharing popular passions and yet rising above them - here was the very ideal of a democratic leader, who in his person could somehow mute the natural antagonism between strong leadership and vigorous democracy."[1]

The hero who is acclaimed as a man of the people is not peculiar to America, but may emerge whenever a society or individuals within it, attach importance to the feelings and digity of the mass of its members. In 1860 the United States already had a history of doing so, and of producing heroes who were hailed as representative types of the American people. This had not been the case in Britain, but as, in the mid-Nineteenth Century, educated and influential opinion in the country began to attach importance to the sentiments of the masses, two British contemporaries of Lincoln, John Bright and William E. Gladstone, were hailed as "Tribunes of the People".[2] However, this concept of a popular hero was not identical to its American counterpart. For the American man of the people was expected to have risen from the ranks of the masses, a role which though Bright and

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1 Fehrenbacher, "Only His Stepchildren: Lincoln and the Negro", op.cit., 265.

2 See, for example, Caledonian Mercury, Jan. 5, 1866. Trygve Tholfsen points out that in the 1860's the Radical campaign to secure leadership of the working classes reached a climax, and Radicals sought to flatter working men. See Tholfsen, "The Transition to Democracy in Victorian England", International Review of Social History, IV (1961), 226-48., p. 243.

Gladstone could not, American heroes like Andrew Jackson[1] and, even more successfully, Lincoln did fulfil,[2] and which, together with the concept of the self-made man, enshrined the belief crucial to American society's image of itself that in the United States any man could rise by his own exertions to a position of great influence.

From the first Lincoln was hailed as the "People's President" who symbolized the values of popular government which he himself ably articulated.[3] Indeed, the political value of this image was clearly apparent to Lincoln and his supporters. Consequently John Locke Scripps' 1860 campaign biography stressed that Lincoln was "self-made" and that in youth he had shared the day to day life of ordinary men and women in frontier society and "grew up in full sympathy with the people...united to them all by that bond of brotherhood among the honest poor - a common heritage of labour."[4] Similarly, a biographical sketch of Lincoln published by the Chicago Press and Tribune on May 19, 1860 presented him to the electorate as "The People's Candidate for President."[5]

It was an image that politicians continued to find useful after Lincoln's death. Thus, for example, during the 1866 congressional elections, when politicians of conflicting opinions sought support from the voters by appealing to the people as the final tribunal in America, they played upon the memory of Lincoln as the People's President, who symbolized republican government in America, to endorse themselves and

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1 See Richard H. Brown, The Hero and the People: The Meaning of Jacksonian Democracy (New York and London, 1964), 1-8. On Jackson as
2 a "self-made man", see Ward, Andrew Jackson, 166-80.

2 See "Lincoln: The Democrat as Hero" in Wecter, The Hero in America, 222-72. Wecter comments that the masses came to accept Lincoln as one of themselves, and quotes the Lansing (Michigan) State Republican of Feb. 10, 1864 as saying that, "Mr. Lincoln is the only President we have ever had who may be said to be from the working class of people..." (p.246).

3 See, for example, his speech to One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment, Aug. 22, 1864, Lincoln, Works, VII, 512.

4 Scripps, Life of Abraham Lincoln (1961 ed.), 33, 40.

5 Quoted in ibid., 170 (appendix).

their policies. That some who utilized this image of Lincoln had faith in its potency because they believed it to reflect basic values of their community is suggested by a motto prepared by Radical Thomas Webster as part of the decorations of National Hall, Philadelphia, on the occasion of the Southern Loyalists' Convention in 1866. Hung beneath a marble bust of Lincoln, the motto read: "Born of the people, well he knew to grasp the wants and wishes of the weak and small, therefore we hold him with no shadowy clasp, therefore his name is household to us all."[1]

The image of Lincoln as a merciful hero, and an associated concept of him as a friend, or the best friend, of the defeated South, have been touched on earlier in the context of his emergence as a popular hero,[2] but merit further consideration here because they have long been fundamental to Lincoln's role as an exemplar of democracy. This was particularly the case in the Nineteenth Century when the ideal statesman was expected to display the qualities of a Christian hero. Lincoln's well known dislike of signing death warrants for Union soldiers convicted of desertion has been immortalized in myth in the tale of the sleeping sentinel, which is based on historical events.[3] However, it was Lincoln's alleged leniency towards the Union's Confederate enemies which proved a more significant aspect of the enduring image of him as a leader who tempered justice with mercy, a quality which most societies claim to revere and which has found expression in religious and secular heroes throughout the world. While this image has endured because it represents a value which is universally cherished, its early development in America was undoubtedly stimulated by its political usefulness during Reconstruction.

As the discussion of political use of mythical images of Lincoln in 1865 has already indicated,[4] the idea that in removing Lincoln God intended to replace the merciful hero with a sterner leader who would not flinch

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1 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.
2 See above, 283-85.
3 See Thayer, Abraham Lincoln, 327-29.
4 See above, Chapter Three.

from meting out justice, as represented by a Radical approach to Reconstruction, to Southern rebels, was prominent in anti-slavery propaganda at the time of his assassination. However, it was a very different political use of this image of Lincoln which contributed to its development in the later 1860's. For the idea that the heroic Lincoln had favoured merciful treatment for ex-rebels was particularly valuable to all who opposed the Reconstruction measures adopted by the Thirty-ninth Congress. Thus a resolution adopted by the National Union State Convention of Massachusetts at Boston on October 3, 1866 urged support for "the wise and humane policy of amnesty and pardon...matured by the lamented Lincoln, our late President, and nobly and consistently carried out by his successor..."[1] According to one of his supporters, Johnson, in his Reconstruction policy, was "seeking to employ conciliation rather than coercion" and was thus "illustrating one of the beautiful characteristics of President Lincoln."[2]

Fundamental to this concept of Lincoln as a merciful hero were the closing words of his Second Inaugural Address of March 4, 1865,[3] and many who urged rapid restoration of the former rebel states to their proper place in the Union quoted these. A resolution adopted at a rally of Johnson's supporters held in New York on September 3, 1866 evoked the image of Lincoln as a merciful hero and friend of the defeated South when it declared, "and now 'with malice toward none, and charity for all,' and hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder with our Southern brethren, we pledge ourselves to ignore all sectional differences..." At the same meeting one speaker quoted Lincoln's words of mercy in full and drove home what he considered to be their message for Reconstruction when he declared, "Gentlemen, take these counsels with you, take them to the polls..."[4]

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1 World, Oct. 4, 1866.
2 James E. Harvey to Henry J. Raymond, Aug. 9, 1866, quoted in New York Times, Sept. 16, 1866.
3 Lincoln, Works, VIII, 332-33.
4 Fifth resolution and remarks of Perkins Cleveland of Hartford, Conn.: New York Times, Sept. 4, 1866.

Exponents of Congressional Reconstruction sought to counter such exploitation of this image of Lincoln. Addressing a mass meeting at Philadelphia, Radical Hannibal Hamlin insisted that the rebel states could not be readmitted to representation in Congress until equal rights were guaranteed for all men. "I would welcome them with open arms", he added, "and speak with them according to the grand policy of Abraham Lincoln, 'With charity for all and malice toward none.' But have we not won the right to determine that those whose hands are steeped with blood shall not determine our future?"[1] A report of Henry Wilson's speech at New York on October 15, 1866 recorded his declaration that, "the Southern states... could not get into Congress until they showed signs of repentence. When they do this we will show them that the great Republican party entertains 'charity for all, malice toward none.'"[2] Nevertheless, the image of Lincoln as a merciful hero was necessarily more effective in the rhetoric of those urging lenient treatment of former rebel states, and such early political use laid the foundation for an enduring tradition that had the magnanimous Lincoln lived, Reconstruction of the Union would have been achieved more rapidly and with less bitterness.[3]

In symbolizing mercy, the heroic Lincoln represented a quality which people living in a democratic society, and, as indicated, especially one which aspires to being a Christian society, expect their heroes to display. It is, however, a quality which is generally less valued in times of crisis when myth is at its most potent. Only when Republicans had triumphed in

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1 Speech of Oct. 3, 1866; New York Tribune, Oct. 4, 1866.
2 New York Times, Oct. 16, 1866.
3 "No legend of the Civil War is more persistent than the belief that, if Lincoln had lived, the years of reconstruction that followed would have been different: that the magnanimous Lincoln, the great humanitarian, would not only have restored the "proper practical relations" between the Southern states and the Federal government, but also would have effected an emotional reconciliation between the members of a momentarily estranged American family." Hesseltine, Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction, 11. See also Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln, 454-55.

the presidential election of 1868 and felt to be past the crisis which they had perceived in the Democratic Party's challenge for power in that year, did the Chicago Tribune feel able to take as its motto Lincoln's phrase, 'With malice toward none, with charity for all.'[1] More crucial to the meaning of democracy as understood by Americans at all times, and especially in what have been viewed as periods of national crisis, has been concern for human freedom. The hero who serves as a pattern for members of the democratic society to emulate, and as their inspiration when that society is believed to be threatened, must therefore symbolize opposition to the oppression of human beings. Lincoln's mythical role as Emancipator of a race and martyr to its freedom was therefore central to his emergence as an exemplar of democracy. Indeed, from the first eulogists presented the Emancipator as democrat, as when in an address delivered in June, 1865, Professor Thomas Chase claimed that Lincoln, "very early saw the flagrant inconsistency of human slavery with the theory of our institutions..."[2] Thus the concept of the Martyr-Emancipator was one of a collection of mythical images of Lincoln which gained potency from their role in representing fundamental values of American society, and in particular from which in combination they made the heroic Lincoln a symbol of democracy who had enduring value for generations of Americans.

Lincoln's American admirers were from the first sure that as a hero of democracy he had meaning for human beings everywhere. For in their view he had died, as one eulogist of 1865 asserted, "fighting the battles of humanity."[3] In fact, it does seem that it was the heroic Lincoln's role in representing cherished values of American society, and as an exemplar of democracy, that explains why Lincoln myths found meaning outside America in the case studied earlier, that of Great Britain.

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1 Chicago Tribune, Nov. 4, 1868.
2 Chase, Address on the Character and Example of President Lincoln, 18.
3 Our Martyr President, 130 (Rev. John McClintock).

Clearly those Britons who in the 1860's developed mythical images of Lincoln were admirers of what they saw as the American experiment in 'popular government', who were predisposed to pay tribute to many of the values of American society, and following the North's victory and Lincoln's assassination in 1865 they were quick to hail the murdered President as a hero of democracy.

For these pro-Northern Radical and working class leaders, 'liberal institutions' had been on trial in America during the Civil War,[1] and Lincoln, whose symbolic role as Northern leader was recognized in Britain,[2] had emerged as a hero of the Unionists' struggle to preserve republican and democratic government. In common with Americans, they hailed him as 'self-made' and a man of the people, "the wisest, greatest, ablest and noblest representative of labour that ever existed on this earth..."[3], who had risen by his own efforts, from the ranks of working men,[4] to become a hero for the "toiling millions" of the world.[5] Moreover, even more closely than did his American admirers, they associated Lincoln as the hero who had freed the slaves with the cause of democracy as they linked the emancipation of black labourers in the South with their own struggle to secure political rights for the mass of working men in Britain.[6]

For these men, then, the heroic Lincoln was the ideal type of a democratic leader. As Thomas Bailey Potter, after eulogizing the late President as the heroic representative of democratic values in America, declared, "...his life is gone, but his example is not lost, and his name

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1 "Honestas" to Editor, Caledonian Mercury, May 3, 1865. See also above, Chapter Eight.
2 Earl Russell, speaking in the House of Lords, May 1, 1865, described Lincoln as a symbol of the Northern cause; P.A. Taylor, addressing a public meeting in London, April 29, 1865, presented him as a symbol of the re-union of North and South through emancipation: Bee-Hive, May 6, 1865.
3 Mason Jones addressing a working men's meeting, London, May 4, 1865: ibid.
4 Address adopted by working men's meeting, London, May 4, 1865: ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 See above, Chapter Eight.

will be venerated in England and America."[1] According to one working class spokesman, the American hero would be "a pattern and an example" for good men to follow.[2] Before the Civil War, said Goldwin Smith, America had few great examples of public character. "The public men of the democracy lacked the potent teaching of such examples," he claimed, and American statesmen lacked dignity, for, "A democratic leader scarcely knew what his ideal was." The Civil War had changed this situation, he claimed, by providing new examples of "the true democratic type." Predominant among these was Lincoln, who "presented the ideal of a true servant of the people." Thus for Smith, too, Lincoln was the model democratic statesman: "His example and the type of character which he has set before public men, as much as the victory which his patient wisdom, his constancy, and integrity mainly achieved, will protect for ever the cause for which he toiled and died; so that, in his own words, government for the people and by the people shall never perish from the earth."[3]

The development by Radical and working class spokesmen of the image of Lincoln as the heroic representative of democratic values was stimulated by its political usefulness in the struggle for franchise reform in Britain. Partly because of this, it did not find widespread acceptance among members of the educated classes, many of whom found the prospect of American democracy becoming an example for Britain to follow an alarming one.[4] Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, the desire to pay tribute to the murdered Lincoln in 1865 led to a reassessment of his qualities which prepared the way for his emergence as a symbol of values cherished by Britain

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1 Speech at working men's meeting, London, May 4, 1865: Bee-Hive, May 6, 1865.

2 Mr. Leicester (glass maker) at working men's meeting, London, May 4, 1865: ibid.

3 Goldwin Smith, The Civil War in America: An Address read at the Last Meeting of the Manchester Union Emancipation Society (London, 1866), 65.

4 Jordan and Pratt, Europe and the Civil War, 68.

in common with America. Consequently, there was in 1865 growing support for the concept of Lincoln as a model statesman, and he was widely hailed as a hero of humanity and, especially by those urging lenient treatment of the former rebel states, a merciful hero,[1] images which were later integral to the British vision of him as the democratic ideal. Moreover, during the later Nineteenth and the Twentieth Centuries, as both Britain and the United States increasingly saw themselves as upholding the values of representative government in co-operation with each other, Lincoln's role as an exemplar of democracy gained fresh meaning in Britain. So, in 1907, one of his British biographers hailed Lincoln as "the greatest of the popular statesmen of the last century, the most notable figure among the leaders of the English-speaking democracy." Similarly, the author of a 1934 work included Lincoln amongst the small number of Democrats he selected as being great "either in the extent to which they embodied in their lives and characters the democratic temper and attitude to mankind, or in the measure of their contribution to the democratic movement."[2] Various mythical images of Lincoln symbolizing the values of democracy as understood by Britons and Americans alike emerged in British writings on him. Thus in Britain as in America he emerged as a hero of freedom, a hero who exemplified the qualities of honesty and mercy, and a man of the people who embodied their best characteristics and "set indeed a nobler standard of human stature before the world..."[3]

It was then the role of the heroic Lincoln in representing values fundamental to American life but having meaning also for non-Americans which made possible the emergence of mythical images of him in societies

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1 Brighton Gazette, May 4, 1865; Earl Russell speaking in House of Lords, May 1, 1865: Bee-Hive, May 6, 1865.

2 Binns, Abraham Lincoln, ix; Barratt Brown, Great Democrats, 9.

3 See, for example, Binns, Abraham Lincoln, 3, 291, 343-45; Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln, 67, 455; Heroes of the Great Republic, 74, 99-100, 103-4. For Lincoln as a Christian hero, see, for example, Binns, Abraham Lincoln, 317-22, 345-51.

other than his own. At the same time, tributes to Lincoln as the ideal type of a democratic leader have had enduring value for non-Americans who wish to promote good relations with America by emphasizing that they also cherish the values which he represents.

This is clear from a speech made by David Lloyd George, leader of the British Liberal Party, at Springfield, Illinois in 1923, in which he sought to emphasize the abstract values which Britons and Americans held in common by eulogizing the American hero in whom they were personified. Thus to Lloyd George it seemed that Lincoln was "a man loved by the people in all lands, a man beloved by those who do love the people in all lands." Having paid tribute to Lincoln as a man of the people, Lloyd George evoked the image of him as a merciful hero, and gave it meaning for postwar America and Europe, when he declared that one message of the heroic Lincoln was, "Clemency in the hour of triumph." Lloyd George also presented Lincoln as a hero of democracy as he stressed that the values of democratic government shared by Britain and America were at risk from the rise of dictatorships in Europe, and declared that "today, when Democracy is in greater peril than it has probably been in your life time or mine, the message of Abraham Lincoln carries across the waves, and will, I hope, be heard in Europe and will impel the democracies of Europe to fight against the wave of autocracy that is sweeping over our continent." Thus expressing his belief that the American hero had meaning for and could serve to unite and guide those non-Americans who cherished the values he represented, in what Lloyd George alleged to be an hour of crisis, he continued, "His (Lincoln's) influence upon democracy in England is deep, and I believe permanent, and if the peril reaches our shores, the words of Abraham Lincoln will be an inspiration and a strength for those who will be battling for the cause of the people." Finally, declaring his conviction that America and Britain would again unite in defence of freedom as they had during the

1914-1918 War, Lloyd George developed the concept of Lincoln as a hero of liberty as he predicted that, "men taught in the principles of Abraham Lincoln, will yet save the world for liberty, for peace, for good will and honest men.[1]

The mythical images of Lincoln as a hero of black emancipation discussed in this study, and the concept of him as saviour and martyr of his country, which has been mentioned from time to time, also enshrined fundamental values of mid-Nineteenth Century America. Thus, for example, as the hero of black freedom Lincoln represented both the belief that slavery clashed with the claim that all men are born equal, a fundamental tenet in the American understanding of democracy, and, in his role as father figure to the black race, that paternalism which has long characterized the thought of white Americans sympathetic to attempts to improve the status of black Americans. Similarly, as martyr-hero of his nation, Lincoln symbolized that faith in the necessity for and glorious character of sacrifice in a just cause which any community at war must cherish, and which is strengthened by victory, and the related glorification of death in the service of the nation which is an essential constituent of patriotism.

However, the mythical images of Lincoln as saviour and martyr of his country and Martyr-Emancipator of the black race are amongst the most powerful of Lincoln myths, and have found enduring meaning for both Americans and non-Americans, and enduring significance in political argument, not only because they represent beliefs and values cherished by inhabitants of the United States, but also because they express and combine centuries-old and potent mythical themes.

Crucially, these images of Lincoln link together ancient and universal mythical themes in the narrative of a hero who arises to free and save his

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1 Lloyd George, Abraham Lincoln, 8, 11-13.

people and then dies for them. The concept of the Saviour-Emancipator, placing Lincoln firmly in the tradition of Moses and generations of later heroes who have symbolized mankind's struggles against oppression, is a compelling mythical image. Moreover, few symbols can match the emotive power of martyrdom as a stimulus to action. Writing from New York in 1861 and referring to the funeral of Unionist Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, who had been murdered by a secessionist while taking down a rebel flag in Alexandria, Joseph Hodges Choate commented in a letter to his mother, "His death has stirred up the feelings of the firemen and other 'roughs' among us to a very excited state and has given a great impetus to enlistments here among the classes which are most likely to make the best soldiers."[1]

Implicit in, and helping to explain the potency of, martyrdom is the age-old mythical theme of regeneration through death, a theme evoked by Lincoln's words delivered on the burial ground for Union soldiers at Gettysburg when he urged those present to resolve with him, "that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -..."[2] This was the theme which Henry Ward Beecher exploited when in 1865 he pledged his congregation, by the blood of the martyred Lincoln, to "receive a new impulse of patriotism" and to hate slavery with "an unappeasable hatred."[3] It was also the theme which Butler, echoing Beecher's language, sought to utilize against Johnson and on behalf of a call for equal rights for blacks during the election campaign of 1866.[4] When the martyr-hero is also recognized to have been divinely-guided and

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1 Letter of May 27, 1861, quoted in Martin, Life of Joseph Hodges Choate, 221.
2 Lincoln, Works, VII, 23.
3 Our Martyr President, 46.
4 Butler at Boston, Sept. 13, 1866: Chicago Tribune, Sept. 14, 1866.

to have possessed super-human powers or qualities, he also comes to represent, as was the case with Lincoln,[1] one of the oldest and most potent of all mythical themes, that of the redeemer or dying god.[2] This theme was touched on by all who like Isaac N. Arnold saw in Lincoln's life and death a parallel with "the advent of the son of God to redeem the world from the slavery of sin..."[3]

The mythical Lincoln does not only represent certain powerful themes often found in narratives of heroes, but also displays many of the salient characteristics traditionally attributed to heroes. Thus he convincingly demonstrates continuity between heroes of ancient and traditional societies and modern day heroes who owe their existence in part to the printed word.

In some ways Lincoln's life does seem to conform to the traditional pattern of a hero's life noted by scholars of myth.[4] His early struggles to rise above a poor frontier background echo the striving against adversity which is a familiar episode in heroic narratives.[5] Like the heroes of old, he passed through a fiery ordeal - in Lincoln's case the Civil War - and grappled with the "monster" slavery, which he slew, thus winning recognition of his heroic qualities and acquiring fame and honour in the closing months of his life. Again like the heroes of old, tragedy overshadowed his life, and he died at the height of his power and glory.[6] Yet it seems clear that the myth-makers have emphasized some aspects of Lincoln's life and ignored or underplayed others in order to mould his story into a pre-conceived pattern which confirms his status as a hero. A few examples will illuminate this point, which merits consideration because the mythical Lincoln's ability to

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1 For some Lincoln was becoming a super-human being during his lifetime. The New York Times (Sept. 28, 1868) recalled how one little girl "when she saw Abraham Lincoln for the first time...exclaimed, 'Why, mamma, he's only a man!'"

2 See Basler, The Lincoln Legend, 4-5, and Lewis, Myths After Lincoln, especially pp. 92-105, 349-51.

3 Speech at Emancipation Day Celebration, Chicago, Jan. 1, 1870, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 3, 1870.

4 See above, p. 14.

5 Raglan, The Hero, 139.

6 As, for example, did Arthur.

fulfil traditional roles of the hero helps to explain his enduring potency. The discussion will focuss upon two time-honoured and revered roles of the hero, that of prophet and saviour.[1]

Narratives which develop heroic concepts of Lincoln often depict him as a prophet, dwelling upon solemn predictions attributed to him or describing the dreams which troubled his last years and which seem, in such accounts, to foretell his martyrdom.[2] In the light of the Civil War Lincoln's 1858 warning that the United States government could not endure permanently half-slave and half-free might seem to those who eulogized him after his death a "prophetic announcement",[3] but the myth-makers went further, putting prophesies into the hero's mouth. Thus in a revised version of his 1882 biography of Lincoln, William H. Thayer attributed to the young Lincoln the prediction, prompted by the sight of slaves in New Orleans, that, "A nation that tolerates such inhumanity will have to pay for it." There is no authenticated record of the conversation between Lincoln and his companion, trader Denton Offut, in which this comment was allegedly made, but the prediction fits in admirably with the images of Lincoln as prophet and Emancipator. Both images dominated Thayer's account of Lincoln's preparation for the presidency. It was clear to Thayer that, like Biblical heroes, Lincoln was prepared by God for the role he was to play, and even before he took office, "His language was that of prophecy, and his spirit was that of Christian hero and martyr."[4] Thus Lincoln became for hero-worshippers, in the words of one of his contemporaries writing in the early Twentieth Century, "the great American prophet."[5]

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1 On the hero as prophet see Carlyle, "Lectures on Heroes", op.cit., 216-42,

2 Binns, Abraham Lincoln, 335-36.

3 Isaac N. Arnold speaking at Emancipation Day Celebration, Chicago, Jan. 1, 1870, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 3, 1870.

4 Thayer, Abraham Lincoln, 162, 277-79.

5 Lyman Abbott, Silhouettes of My Contemporaries (New York and Toronto, 1922), 298.

Even more crucial to his heroic status is Lincoln's ability to fill the role of saviour. This heroic image, which has appeared in bodies of myth throughout the world from the earlierst times,[1] is clearly a peculiarly potent one, and it is not suprising that it has played an important part in making Lincoln an enduring hero and one who is politically useful. When in the later 1860's politicians sought to win popular favour by endorsing themselves through association with the heroic Lincoln it was his role as martyr-hero and saviour of the country which they exploited. Republican rhetoric of 1866 and 1868 was pervaded by images of Lincoln as the supreme patriot who had died to preserve his nation, images symbolized in references to him as "the patriot Lincoln", the "martyred President" and the nation's "sainted dead".[2] At a Republican demonstration in Chicago one speaker called upon Illinois to "continue through all time, by her vote, to honor him who gave his life to save his country."[3]

The enduring character of this image of Lincoln is illustrated in Roy P. Basler's study of the Lincoln Legend,[4] but an anecdote recorded in a Nineteenth Century biography of John Bright suggests that this was an image central to the way in which Americans presented their hero to the world. Addressing a British audience, an American speaker allegedly declared that Lincoln was one of the three men most loved by Americans, "because he was the saviour of his country..."[5] So, from an early date, the heroic Lincoln filled two vital roles traditionally associated with heroes, earning, as one biographer writing a volume on Lincoln to commemorate the centenary of the hero's birth declared, "the immortal glory of all the prophets and saviours of the world."[6]

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1 Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, 293-97.

2 Henry Wilson at Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1866 and Benjamin F. Butler at Worcester, Mass, Sept. 13, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 14, 1866; Chicago Tribune, Sept. 7, 1866.

3 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24, 1868.

4 Basler, The Lincoln Legend, passim.

5 Mr. Page, a New York merchant, speaking at Gravel Hill Ragged School, Salford, n.d., quoted in Robertson, Life and Times of John Bright, 404. Americans also sought to encourage friendly relations with other nations by paying tribute to their heroes: the third man named by Mr. Page was John Bright. Many other tributes by Americans to John Bright can be found in British and American newspapers of the 1860's, 1870's and 1880's. Washington was the first hero named.

6 Brand Whitlock, Abraham Lincoln (London, Edinburgh, New York, 1908), 185.

The functions fulfilled by the mythical Lincoln also reveal continuity with heroes of the past. Like them he is seen as the immortal mouthpiece of timeless truths. Thus a resolution adopted by the New York State Republican Convention at Syracuse in September 1866, which presented the heroic Lincoln as a symbol of democratic government, urged citizens faithful to the Union to "close up the mighty line, and...move on to assured triumph that, in the words of our beloved and immortal leader, Abraham Lincoln, who, though dead, yet speaketh, "The Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."[1]

Closely associated with this theme is the idea that Lincoln has returned or will arise again, which is a modern version of the age-old myth of the hero's second coming.[2] Two twentieth century examples reveal yet again the potency of myth in times of crisis. In a poem inspired by the outbreak of the 1914-1918 War, Vachel Lindsay, blending mythical images of Lincoln, wrote:[3]

> He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
> He is among us:- as in times before!
> ...
>
> He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
> Shall come;- the shining hope of Europe free:
> The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
> Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

Seventeen years later, in the midst of the Depression in America, it seemed to one hero-worshipper that the times were ripe for Lincoln to come again, and he prayed to the hero to, "Arise! Stand forth that we may gaze upon thy furrowed face. Look upon us; pity us; speak to us as thou didst at Gettysburg; stretch forth thy hand; point the way of destiny and duty

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1 Resolution adopted Sept. 5, 1866: New York Tribune, Sept. 6, 1866.
2 Nilsson, op.cit., 15; Charles Squire, Celtic Myth and Legend (London n.d.), 334-35.
3 "Abraham Lincoln Walks At Midnight", in Mark Harris, ed., Selected Poems of Vachel Lindsay (New York, 1967 ed.), 129-30.

that America may be thy living monument down to the end of time. Oh, Lincoln, come down from thy summit of bronze and march."[1]

This study, and in particular the discussion of use of the heroic Lincoln during the 1866 and 1868 election campaigns, also indicates continuity with the political use of myth and heroes in earlier times as revealed by Martin Nilssen's monograph relating to Ancient Grece. A few examples will demonstrate this.

Like the heroes of the Ancient Greeks, Lincoln played an important role in uniting diverse peoples, both within American society and in relations with foreign countries such as Britain. In the national context, the growth of a western, folklore Lincoln and his integration into the Lincoln Myth[2] reflected and aided the triumph of national sentiments over sectionalism. As in Ancient Greece, tributes to the hero were a sign of loyalty, a function clearly illustrated when in September 1866 the Southern loyalists gathered at Philadelphia paid tribute to Lincoln and arranged for a delegation from their convention to visit the hero's tomb in Illinois. The role of journeys to the shrines of heroes in Ancient Greece in linking the people of outlying areas to a region whose favour or protection is sought perhaps also found a parallel in this instance, the visit to Lincoln's shrine symbolizing unity between those represented by the Southern Loyalists' Convention and the people of the Northern States to whom the loyal Southerners were appealing for protection against their alleged enemies.

The ancient role of the hero in defining enemies was also clearly illustrated by political use of the heroic Lincoln in the later 1860's. Thus in 1866 the Chicago Tribune depicted Andrew Johnson as an enemy of loyal men by claiming that he had hated and was disliked by Lincoln and that

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1 Remarks of Dr. John Wesley Hill as reported in the National Republic, Feb., 1931, quoted in Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought. An Intellectual History since 1915 (New York, 1940) 411.

2 Basler, The Lincoln Legend, 15-16.

he was attacking the friends of the late President. Similarly this paper described the leading men in states reconstructed under Johnson's guidance as "the men who slew Abraham Lincoln".[1] In 1868 Democrats made use of the hero in the same way, claiming that the Radical Republicans had been enemies of Lincoln and were bent upon removing from power those who had been his friends.[2] During both campaigns the heroic Lincoln was also used to identify friends. Like heroes in ancient societies, Lincoln also served, both in American life generally and in a narrowly political context, to arouse patriotic sentiments, particularly upon the great festivals associated with him such as the anniversary of his birthday or Emancipation Day.

Finally, as in Ancient Grece, the heroic Lincoln played a role in foreign relations. Tributes to the hero by representatives of foreign powers were a means of promoting good relations with the United States, and, for example, a portrait of Lincoln formed part of the decorations of a room where in 1866 the Merchants' Club of St. Petersburg gave a dinner for a visiting American delegation at which speakers stressed the friendship existing between the Russian and American peoples.[3] British use of the heroic Lincoln, which has been discussed in detail, also demonstrates the enduring role he played in relationships between Great Britain and the United States.

Though Lincoln clearly reflects continuity with the heroes of traditional myth, he also demonstrates the rapidity with which modern heroes are created. Modern myths spread rapidly because the printed word, particularly in the form of newspapers, takes images created by myth-makers to a mass audience. Political use of myth clearly plays a significant part in this process. While biographies, poems, novels and plays, all of which

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1 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 7, 10, 14, 1866.
2 Speeches of Hon. James F. Babcock at Brooklyn, Sept. 10, 1868, and John T. Hoffman at Brooklyn, Sept. 21, 1868: World, Sept. 11, 1868; New York Times, Sept. 22, 1868.
3 New York Tribune, Sept. 4, 1866.

may help to develop or perpetuate myths, are not usually politically inspired,[1] newspaper leaders and articles often are, and these, together with press reports of political meetings and speeches, have been shown in Lincoln's case to have played a significant role in creating and publicizing myths and so in contributing to their rapid growth.

The connection between politics and the creation of myths may well represent a crucial distinction between heroes of ancient myth and those created by modern societies. For while the former were closely associated with religion and religious ritual, heroes in modern times, though their cults may imitate religion, are secular in character. Moreover, while the Ancient Greeks clearly found their myths and heroes politically useful, political exploitation does not seem to have contributed to their emergence. On the other hand, mythical images of Lincoln relating to emancipation first emerged on a significant scale in America as part of a political campaign to ensure the total and permanent destruction of slavery, and political use of these and other images of him made a significant contribution to the development of the Lincoln Myth. In Britain, too, Lincoln first emerged as a hero in a political context. At this point, therefore, it seems appropriate to add some final comments concerning the myth-making process and, in particular, the creation of political myth.

Politicians are well aware that they fulfil a role as interpreters of the past. This is clear from comments made during the presidential election campaign of 1868. One Republican told an audience of Irish-Americans that, "We cannot understand the present fully but by the light of the past."[2] Urging the election of Grant, the New York Tribune commented, "It makes our recent history coherent and logical."[3] Politicians of all

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1 Campaign biographies and campaign songs are obvious exceptions.
2 Speech of Senator John Conness at New York, Sept. 30, 1868: New York Tribune, Oct. 1, 1868.
3 New York Tribune, Sept. 5, 1868.

persuasions demonstrate in their speeches a concern to study the lessons of the past. They are also all too sure that their opponents are distorting the facts of what has happened.[1] At the same time they stress, and presumably believe, that their own interpretation of the past is correct. "I stand here to make no assertions that will not be verified by the records of this day and of the immediate past..." insisted one Republican speaker in 1868.[2]

Yet it is clear from this study of early political use of mythical images of Abraham Lincoln that an objective record of the past is seldom, if ever, politically useful. "I invariably cringe", wrote historian Thomas A. Bailey, "when a politician voices the sonorous 'History teaches,' because I know that he is going to make it teach whatever he wants it to teach."[3] When politicians interpret events, they are seeking a "usable past",[4] and what they tend to create is political myth. When they reject the historical "truths" offered by their opponents they do so not because they seek an objective account of the past, although they may believe this to be their motive, but because what is asserted to be fact conflicts with their own interpretation of events. As Harry Levin has commented in another context, "Here is where the game of debunking starts, in the denunciation of myth as falsehood from the vantage point of a rival myth."[5] This is clearly demonstrated in the preceding chapters on the political use of Lincoln myths during the election campaigns of 1866 and 1868, but a single example from the latter campaign will illuminate the point. The Chicago Tribune, recalling how, as it claimed, Southern Democrats had been chagrined by the election of so moderate a Republican as Lincoln because the nomination and election as President in 1860 of the more radically anti-slavery William H. Seward would have facilitated the enactment of their scheme to destroy the Union and

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1 A point clearly illustrated in Chapters Four and Five.

2 Speech of Hon. John Griswold, Republican candidate for Governor of New York, at Ploughkeepsie, New York, Sept. 16, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 17, 1868.

3 Thomas A. Bailey, "The Mythmakers of American History", JAH, LV (July, 1968), 5-21, p. 10.

4 A phrase used in another context by Gerald N. Grob in "Reconstruction: An American Morality Play", see Geroge Athan Billias and Gerald Grob, eds., American History: Retrospect and Prospect (New York, 1971), 191-213

establish a slave empire, commented, "All these facts of history are studiously concealed from their hearers by copper-rebel (Democratic) orators."[1]

This does not mean that politicians in general deliberately distort the past, although some may do so. Politicians may appreciate the effectiveness of the mythical arguments they exploit, without recognizing the mythical character of these arguments. For myth-making is a mental activity common to mankind everywhere and in all ages, though in varying degree and form, and so pervades every sphere of life. Even in the case of Nazi politicians, whose language was heavy with mythical themes, it is difficult to determine the extent to which those who exploited myths believed in them.[2]

As the preceding chapters have shown, myth fulfils a variety of functions in modern political life. Above all, myths, including those which centre upo heroes, are practical arguments justifying policies designed to preserve, or overthrow, the existing political order. A primary object of any politician is to present a clear, simple and coherent interpretation of events which will stimulate people to support the policy or course of action advocated, and myth, which had the capacity to simplify complex experience and create emotional mass support for a given course of action or a political leader,[3] serves this purpose admirably. Thus in modern politics as in traditional society, myth is a unifying and motivating force, an impetus to action. In the case of Lincoln myths, this role is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the rhetoric of secession in 1860 -1861. For, as has been shown in Chapter One, the image of Lincoln as an abolitionist, which radically pro-slavery Southern politicians presented as an accurate interpretation of his position on slavery, was a mythical argument

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1 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 23, 1868.
2 Hatfield, "The Myth of Nazism", op.cit., 199.
3 Orlow, "The Conversion of Myths into Political Power", op.cit., 906.

used to stimulate emotional mass support for secession.

It is well known, however, that myth can become a mental strait jacket confining those who subscribe to it to a particular course, which may lead to disaster.[1] Thus, according to Robert Lee Wolff, Mussolini's commitment to what seems to have been a mythical image of a revived Roman Empire caused him to follow policies which contributed to his downfall.[2] It can also be argued that this occured in the South in 1860-1861 when a mythical vision of the society of the Old South enshrined in the plantation myth, together with mythical images of the North symbolized in the tradition depicting Lincoln as an abolitionist, not only united Southerners who accepted secessionist arguments but also bound them to a course of action which brought about the destruction of their society more quickly than acquiescence in the Republican victory of 1860 could have done.

As the Secession Crisis demonstrated, the value of myth as political argument is accentuated in times of crisis, and this perhaps explains why the creation of a sense of crisis is a significant part of many political campaigns. In 1865 Lee's surrender and the devastated condition of the Southern States confirmed that the Confederacy had collapsed and that the American Republic had survived the crisis of Secession and Civil War. Yet in 1868, though the North's victory had been followed by three years of peace and disbandment of the armies that had fought the war, it seemed to Republican politicians in the Northern States that they were involved in a "momentous contest" on which depended the fate of the Union and the preservation of peace,[3] and to their Democratic counterparts that "the time is critical and the danger imminent", and that the Republic had never

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1 See, for example, Hatfield, "The Myth of Nazism", op.cit., 213.

2 Robert Lee Wolff, "The Three Romes: The Migration of an Ideology and the Making of an Autocrat", in Murray, ed., Myth and Mythmaking, 174-98, p. 175-76.

3 Appeal issued to the people by the Republican Committee of Onondaga County, New York: New York Times, Sept. 5, 1868; speech of Benjamin F. Butler at Worcester, Mass., Sept. 9, 1868: New York Tribune, Sept. 10, 1868.

been in greater peril.[1] "A time to try men's souls" was how one Congressman described Reconstruction in 1866, but as Murray Edelman has observed, "All times are 'the times that try men's souls.' The age one lives in is always in crisis, and especially so since newspaper reading became common."[2] For this reason, and because it serves multiple functions, myth is perennially useful in modern society.

Writing of the period during which the foundations of Athenian greatness were laid, Nilsson commented, "This age had still a living belief in myths and the faculty of creating new ones had not vanished."[3] In fact, as many studies have made clear, modern man continues to believe in myths and to create them. Moreover, as this study has shown, in the complex political life of Nineteenth Century America myth played an important role, and served as wide a range of purposes as Nilsson showed that it did in Ancient Greece. What this suggests is that for the modern community, and particularly in its political life, interpretation of the past is primarily a means to cope with the present and find guidance for the future, and the product of such interpretation - myth - continues to fill a vital social and political need.

1 Speeches of Hon. E. Cowan at Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 19, 1868, and Hon. Thomas J. Cremer at New York, Sept. 8, 1868: World, Sept. 9, 22, 1868.

2 Clarke of Ohio speaking in House of Representatives, Feb. 24, 1866, Cong. Globe, 39 Cong., 1 sess., 1015; Edelman, Symbolic Uses of Politics, 13.

3 Nilsson, op.cit., 49.

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