

# The Passing Scene

## Sin Of Omission As Demonstrated Again In An American History Book

BY P. B. YOUNG

SO MUCH "history" has been written that minimizes, or ignores almost entirely, the part American Negroes have played in building America, and in preserving her freedom from external and internal enemies, that it seems unimportant to mention a new-comer to this collection of inaccurate and biased literature. But the latest volume, considering the enormity of its offense, in the name of history, is receiving some attention in this column.

"A Picture History of World War II," is the title of 364 pages (724 photographs), and text, on the late world conflict. It is published by Life Magazine and its affiliates. The compilation was supervised by a board of editors. One very careful student of literature examined the volume from cover to cover, and found that the only reference to the part Negroes played in World War II is a picture of a colored man in Naval uniform playing an accordion at the late President Roosevelt's funeral. That is all the notice that the volume gave to the one million Negro fighting men who participated in the war.



MR. YOUNG

"It seems incredible," wrote Roy Wilkins, NAACP executive secretary, to Andrew Heskell, publisher of Life Magazine, "that any board of editors in this post-war period could have got together a book of 364 pages of pictures and text on World War II and failed to include at least two or three photographs indicating that one-tenth of the population of America had its share of men in the uniform of their country, doing their best all over the world in the fight against Hitlerism and Japanese Imperialism."

Then, after giving Mr. Heskell assurances that he was not trying to maintain that Negroes won the war or any great operation of it, Mr. Wilkins gave a brief summary of some of the things that Negro Americans did:

"Negro engineer and labor units helped to build the airfields in the English countryside from which our bombers raided Europe each night; Negroes in the Merchant Marine helped to carry supplies on the long Murmansk run and to other ports in the world; Negro fighter pilots helped to cover the Anzio beach-head landings and later flew cover for our bombers working on southeast European targets; Negro American truck drivers helped in the vital supply line for Montgomery's troops against Rommel in North Africa; Negro American truck and quartermaster troops were also an important part of the famous Red Ball supply line across Europe after the Normandy invasion. Doyle Miller, a Negro mess attendant, was one of the heroes of Pearl Harbor; Negro engineers and construction companies helped in building bases in the Pacific and had a conspicuous part in the building of both the Alcan highway and Ledo road; the Negro combat troops were in both Europe and the Pacific; in the latter theatre Negro units participated in the Okinawa and two Ijima assaults; the late General Patton had at least one Negro tank outfit with him; Negro troops participated in the Battle of the Bulge, and in the Navy, in the latter years of the war, Negroes in ratings other than of mess attendant did their share of fighting"

Life's history production is in the American tradition. Mr. Wilkins' magnificent protest has been backed up by many others, but we doubt that the publishers will reconsider their omissions.

In the public and private libraries of this country may be found many volumes purporting to relate American history. Practically all of these volumes have the characteristics of the "Picture History of World War II." Thus, the American people as a whole, and peoples in other parts of the world who read American history, do not know of the part dark-skinned Americans have played in the building of this nation. Negroes have made their contribution in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, railroad building, mechanical inventions and scientific discoveries. In peace and war, Negroes have borne a part of America's burden.

In America's war for independence; in the second encounter with Great Britain in 1812; in the war with Mexico; the Civil War; the Spanish-American War; World War I, and World War II, American Negroes proudly played their part, but no American historian has had the decency or the honesty to record the facts truthfully.

From the time that the American child enters the elementary school, until he completes his college education, he studies text books, and listens to instructors who distort the truth and closes his mind to the real facts of Negro life, and to the contribution the Negro American has made to the development of his country.

In the two volume study of all phases of Negro life in America (An American Dilemma) by Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish Sociologist, the following statement appears: "White people, generally, know little or nothing about the Negro's performance as a soldier. Deliberate attempts have been made to minimize the Negro's military record."