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DEPORTATION AND COLONIZATION

AN ATTEMPTED SOLUTION OF THE RACE PROBLEM

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I

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DEPORTATION and colonization of the negroes as a solution of the race problem of the United States is not a modern plan. It is as old as the feeling against slavery and the prejudice against the negro race. Had the slaves been of the same race as their masters, there would have been no suggestion of deportation and colonization; the history of the unfree white classes in medieval Europe and in colonial America shows what the solution would have been. But in regard to black slaves there was another problem besides that of status — it was that of race. Was it possible for two free races, unlike in many respects, to inhabit the same territory without racial conflict? After the emancipation of the negro race, this was the problem that had to be solved.

A majority of the people of the later colonial period and the early nineteenth century who opposed slavery believed that deportation must follow emancipation. The plan for the colonization of free negroes in tropical countries had its origin in New England. It was first publicly advocated in 1770 by the Rev. Samuel Hopkins of Newport, Rhode Island, who for several years carried on an agitation on a small scale. Considerable interest in the project was aroused, and numerous individuals who were opposed to slavery and to the presence of negroes in the American population regarded it as the proper solution of the difficulties arising from emancipation. Thomas Jefferson was, in his time, the leading advocate of foreign colonization. He believed that slavery was not a permanent institution and that the negroes when emancipated could not live in the same country with their former masters on terms of equality. In 1784 in his "Notes on Vir-

ginia" he suggested foreign colonization as a possible solution of the problem. In 1801 the Virginia legislature requested Governor Monroe to correspond with President Jefferson in regard to the purchase of lands abroad "whither persons obnoxious to the laws and dangerous to the peace of society may be removed." In reply Jefferson indorsed the plan of colonization and suggested as possible colonies the West Indies, especially San Domingo. A year later he endeavored to obtain the consent of the English authorities to receive American free negroes into the colony of Sierra Leone, and, failing in this, he tried, again also without success, to obtain from Portugal lands in Brazil. In his correspondence Jefferson took the view that the blacks must be drawn off gradually to some foreign land and there protected for a time. In 1804 the Virginia legislature suggested that he set apart a portion of Louisiana as a territory for negroes, but with this plan he was not impressed.¹

Out of this feeling on the part of thoughtful men grew the American Colonization Society which was developed between 1803 and 1817. The actual organization of the Society was probably hastened by the renewed demand of the Virginia legislature in 1816 that the United States should acquire land outside the United States to which free negroes could be transported. Several Southern states indorsed the objects of the Society,² the principal one of which was to encourage emancipation by providing a way for the removal of the freed negroes from the country. Prominent men, among whom were Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Marshall, and Clay, supported the work of the society. Most of the members, however, were from the North and from the border slave states, few residing in the plantation states; and branches of the organization were established in all the states that had large numbers of free negroes. The sentiment that resulted in the formation of the Colonization Society also caused Congress to provide for the return to Africa of certain classes of free negroes

¹ Writings of Thomas Jefferson (ed. 1907), Vol. X, pp. 294, 326; Vol. XIII, p. 10; Vol. XV, pp. 102, 249; Vol. XVI, p. 8. Ames, "State Documents on Federal Relations," p. 195.

² Ames, "State Documents," p. 195.

and slaves captured from slave traders. The Society was used by Congress as its agent, \$50 being appropriated to it for each negro carried back to Africa and maintained there for one year. Under this arrangement Liberia was organized as a colony for blacks, and by 1860 about 18,000 negroes had been transported thereto. During and after the Civil War about 2000 more were carried over.¹

Some opposition to the Society arose in the lower South when the Northern opponents of slavery demanded that the United States government accept emancipation and deportation as a principle to be worked out as soon as possible. In 1824 the Ohio legislature suggested to the other states that the national government develop a plan of foreign colonization with a view to the emancipation and removal of all negroes, and that freedom should be given to all who at the age of twenty-one would consent to go to Liberia. This plan was indorsed by one slave state, Delaware, and six free states, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Jersey, Indiana, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, but was disapproved by Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Missouri, Mississippi, and Louisiana. A few years later (1827) when the Colonization Society was asking for national aid on a large scale, the house of representatives seemed favorably inclined, and the legislature of ten states, including Missouri, Kentucky, Delaware, and Tennessee, indorsed the request of the Society, but the states of the lower South strongly objected. In general the South was quite willing for the free negroes to be removed from the country, but objected to the use of the Society as an active anti-slavery agency.²

The small numbers transported to Africa show that the Society did not and could not solve the free negro problem. For this failure there were several reasons: first, free negroes, hard as was their condition in America, seldom desired to go to Africa, and none except negroes captured from slavers could legally be forced to go; second, the work of the Society was hindered by the growth of radical abolition sentiment in the North during the second

¹ McPherson, "Liberia."

² Ames, "State Documents," p. 203. Herbert, "Abolition Crusade," pp. 41, 45.

quarter of the nineteenth century. The abolitionists, to a certain extent, denied the principle upon which the Colonization Society was founded, namely, that the black race was inferior to the white and that in American society there was no place for the free blacks. Those who advocated deportation were accused of encouraging race prejudice and thus strengthening the bonds of slavery. In the lower South, on the other hand, the Society was regarded as an abolition agency. The active efforts of the abolitionists, and the introduction of the slavery question into partisan politics, weakened the Society and caused greater regard for the rights of the blacks. However, until the Civil War contracts were regularly made between the Colonization Society and the Department of the Interior for the return to Africa of negroes captured from slavers.¹

Few other efforts were made to colonize free negroes. Small numbers of them were sent to the Island of Trinidad, where the English employers were extremely anxious to get better trained labor than could be obtained from the natives,² and a colony was also located in Hayti. In 1862, when the question of acquiring territory for negro colonies came up, Senator Doolittle asserted that President Jackson had once proposed in a cabinet meeting to purchase land in Mexico for colonizing free negroes.³

The free negroes were not content with the position offered them in the Northern states before the Civil War. A national emigration convention of colored people held in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1854 issued an address giving the views of the blacks in regard to the situation in America and stating that there was hope for the race only in a new country. "No people can be free," they said, "who themselves do not constitute an essential part of the ruling element of the country in which they live. . . . A people to be free must be their own rulers"; in America the blacks, slave and free alike, would always be subject to the white man, and "the white race will only respect those who oppose their usur-

¹ Ho. Ex. Doc., 37th Cong., 2d Ses.

² Ho. Rept. No. 148, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., p. 24.

³ Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., pt. 4, App., p. 85.

pation and acknowledge as equals those who will not submit to their rule." The position of the free negro in the North, the address stated, was precarious; often they were kidnapped and sold as slaves to the South. Some friends of the blacks wanted to see them absorbed into the white race, on terms of equality, but this was impossible. Were master and slave of the same race, laws might easily destroy class differences, but such was not the case; the negro was set apart by his color, which the law could not change, and this marked him for the prejudice of the whites. Besides, the race should not be destroyed; it had a mission, for "in the true principles of morals, correctness of thought, religion, and law or civil government, there is no doubt but that the black race will yet instruct the world."

The Cleveland convention declared that sooner or later a struggle would arise between the colored and white races for control of the world; the colored races were twice as numerous as their overlordling whites and would not much longer submit to the rule of the minority; there was no hope of justice from the white race, which for 2000 years had been encroaching upon the colored races. In order to attain national existence and to be ready for the great conflict, the convention declared that a proper home for the race must be found, a center for organization. And such a place could be found only where the black race was in the majority and constituted the ruling element. The part of the world best suited to this purpose was tropical America, — the West Indies, Central America, and part of South America, — where, it was said, the whites were weak and worthless, where a negro was regarded as their equal, and where as a citizen he was often preferred by the authorities, owing to the jealousy of outside interference in Latin-American affairs and the consequent desire of the natives "to put a check to European presumption and insufferable Yankee intrusion and impudence." The members of the convention were certain that the blacks could organize and maintain a national existence in tropical America. They had their own racial merits and in addition much of the civilization of the whites; and they had never failed to thrive whether in

freedom or slavery. In conclusion the Address declared: "This is a fixed fact in the zodiac of the political heavens, that the black and colored people are the stars which must ever most conspicuously twinkle in the firmament of this division of the western hemisphere."¹

The Address is interesting as showing the opinions of many of the free negro leaders, and of the whites who advised them; it also shows that, perhaps because of the notoriety caused by the filibustering attempts of the time, tropical America, rather than Liberia, was being considered as the future refuge of free blacks.

Before the Civil War it is doubtful if any considerable number of Northern anti-slavery people, except the radical abolitionists, would have advocated emancipation without deportation. To the Southern non-slave holder, who had little sympathy with slavery, the free negro was nevertheless a bugbear, slavery only an attempted solution of the race problem, and if slavery were done away with, the negro must go. As evidence of the non-slave holder's dislike of the negroes, Senator Doolittle, during the debates of 1862 on deportation, declared, apparently upon authority, that Andrew Johnson, when governor of Tennessee in 1856, was called upon by the non-slaveholders in a certain district for arms with which to repress a threatened rising of the slaves. Investigation disclosed the fact that they really hoped to exterminate the slaves, and to protect the latter Johnson had to call out the militia.²

In his opinions Lincoln was representative of both Northern and Southern anti-slavery sentiment. Born in Kentucky and living in a border state of the North, he understood better than most Northerners the feelings of the non-slaveholders of the South. While opposing the extension of slavery to new territories, he did not, until forced to it as a war measure, favor abolition in the slave states. It was his opinion that the physical differences of black and white were so great that the two races could never live together in harmony on terms of equality. During the debates

¹ The Address is printed in Ho. Rept. No. 148, 37th Cong., 2d Ses.

² Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., pt. 4, p. 84.

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with Douglas he said that his first impulse, if the negro should be freed, would be to send them to Liberia. "Let us be brought to believe it is morally right and at the same time favorable to or at least not against our interest to transfer the African to his native clime, and we shall find a way to do it however great the task may be."¹ Lincoln never abandoned these views.

The advocates of gradual emancipation realized that in order to meet the objection to free negroes, some practical plan of procedure must be offered. Deportation and colonization outside of the United States was the usual plan suggested. During the '50's another argument was offered in support of this measure: it was that American free negro colonies in the tropics would serve to extend American civilization and American commerce. In 1857 Horace Greeley in the *Tribune* said: "It is obvious that in this great body of civilized negroes we have . . . a most powerful and essential instrument toward extending ourselves, our ideas, our civilization, our commerce, industry, and political institutions through all the torrid zone." A correspondent in the *New York Courier and Inquirer*, July 23, 1857, voiced a like sentiment when he wrote:

"But the great consideration is that which men appear resolved to conceal from themselves. It shows us that this negro race must necessarily take possession of the tropical regions . . . to which they may be transported. They will expel the whites by the same law of nature which has given the blacks exclusive possession of corresponding latitudes in Africa. [We may hope that the South will want to give up slavery. If so the West Indies and South America are the places for the negroes] . . . It is therefore of the highest importance that those regions be kept open for that contingency."²

The Republicans of the border states and the West were, before 1860, strongly in favor of deportation. The most prominent advocates of this plan were Montgomery Blair, F. P. Blair, and J. R. Doolittle. Their letters contain many references to the colonization scheme. For example, in 1859 F. P. Blair wrote to Doolittle:

¹ Springfield Speech, June 28, 1857. Nicolay and Hay, Vol. VI, p. 354.

² Quoted in Ho. Rept. No. 148, 37th Cong., 2d Ses. .

"I am delighted that you are pressing the colonization scheme in your campaign speeches. I touched upon it three or four times in my addresses in Minnesota and if I am any judge of effect it is the finest theme with which to get at the hearts of the people and [it] can be defended with success at all points. . . . I made it the culminating point and inevitable result of Republican doctrine."

Montgomery Blair wrote to Doolittle about the same date that the North should demand that the emancipated negroes who had been sent to the North by their former owners should be colonized by the general government

"Where they can have political rights and where their manhood would have the stimulant of high objects to develop it, . . . it would rally the North as one man to our ranks. It would do more than ten thousand speeches to define accurately our objects and disabuse the minds of the great body of the Southern people of the issue South that the Republicans wish to set negroes free among them to be their equals and consequently their rulers when they are numerous. This is the only point needing elucidation and comprehension by the Southern people to make us as strong at the South as at the North. If we can commit our party distinctly to this I will undertake for Maryland in 1860."¹

But this phase of the anti-slavery attack had too short a time in which to develop. The Civil War began and the "contrabands" at once became a burden upon the government and a problem for the rulers. The deportation solution was again proposed by such men as President Lincoln and Senators Blair, Doolittle, and Pomeroy, by anti-slavery unionists of the border states, and numerous other individuals. In his first message, December 8, 1861, Lincoln suggested that provision be made for the colonization of freed negroes in a congenial climate. In order to do this he stated that territory would have to be acquired. And in regard to colonization and the purchase of territory he asked "does not the expediency amount to absolute necessity?"² A week later Senator Harlan of Iowa introduced a bill in the senate authorizing the President to acquire the necessary territory. It was

¹ "Publications Southern Historical Association," Sept., 1906.

² Lincoln, "Complete Works," Vol. II, p. 93 (Nicolay and Hay Ed.). See also Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, p. 150.

referred to the committee on territories,¹ but at the time nothing was done.

Early in 1862 the matter of deportation was again brought up in connection with the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. By the act of April 16, 1861, which abolished slavery in the Federal District, an appropriation of \$100,000 was made to be expended under President Lincoln's direction in colonizing such negroes of the District of Columbia as might wish to go to Liberia, Hayti, and other black men's countries. The expense was not to exceed \$100 each.² Lincoln did not think this a sufficient sum, and he had another bill introduced which became law on July 16, 1862. By this law \$500,000 was appropriated for colonization purposes in addition to the \$100,000 previously voted. The next day, July 17, 1862, another act was approved which authorized the President to colonize abroad the negroes made free by the confiscation acts. The proceeds from confiscated property were to be turned into the Treasury to replace the appropriations made for colonization.³

Lincoln and many of his advisers believed that the proposal to separate the races would make many who had been hesitating willing to accept an emancipation policy; even the Confederate non-slave holders would be impressed by it, they thought.⁴ This feeling is reflected in the law of June 7, 1862, providing for the sale of lands in the South by the direct tax commissioners and the setting aside of one-fourth of the proceeds raised in each state to be paid after the war to that state to aid in colonizing the blacks.⁵

Lincoln was not content with these slight inducements to emancipation, and he had another bill introduced by Representative

¹ Cong. Globe, Dec. 10, 1861, p. 36.

² Statutes at Large, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., p. 378; "Official Records of the Rebellion," Ser. III, Vol. II, p. 276; Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., pt. IV, App., p. 348.

³ Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., pt. IV, pp. 410, 413. Off. Recs., Ser. III, Vol. II, p. 885. Statutes at Large, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., p. 582.

⁴ See Doolittle's speeches in Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., pt. IV, App., pp. 83, 94.

⁵ Statutes at Large, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., p. 425.

White of Indiana, who explained that the purpose was to assist emancipation of slaves and the colonization of the freedmen. By this measure it was proposed to appropriate \$180,000,000 to purchase the 600,000 slaves belonging to unionist owners in the border states and \$20,000,000 to be used in colonizing the negroes thus made free, "beyond the limits of the United States." White declared that \$20,000,000 thus expended would repay the nation "a hundred fold in commerce." Evidently he had in mind a negro colonial system in the American tropics. The bill was favorably reported from the committee, but did not become a law, probably because of other colonization measures enacted about the same time.¹

White also made, on July 16, 1862, an elaborate report as chairman of the committee on emancipation and colonization. This committee had been appointed pursuant to a resolution of the house, April 7, 1862, which is said to have been framed by Mr. Lincoln. The committee was directed to report upon three matters: (1) emancipation in the border states and Tennessee, (2) the practicability of colonizing freed negroes, and (3) whether the United States should aid emancipation and colonization. The committee reported that of the 1,200,000 slaves in the border states about half had been confiscated, or removed to the South, or were in refugee camps, while the other half belonged to "loyal" owners and should be paid for by the government, emancipated and colonized.

The committee explained at length the position of the border and Southern states in regard to emancipation; stated that much of the opposition to emancipation was due to a fear of too close association of races and consequent possible intermixture and to the feeling of the whites, especially in the border and free states, and declared that emancipation would result in economic competition of the races. It was the committee's opinion that

"Apart from the antipathy which nature has ordained, the presence of a race among us who cannot and ought not to be admitted to our social

¹ Cong. Globe, July 16, 1862, pp. 3394, 3395. Ho. Rept., 37th Cong., 2d Ses., p. 32.

and political privileges will be a perpetual source of injury and inquietude to both. This is a question of color and is unaffected by the relation of master and slave. The introduction of the negro, whether bound or free, into the same field of labor with the white man is the opprobrium of the latter; and we cannot believe that thousands of non-slaveholding citizens in the rebellious states are fighting to continue the negro within our limits in a state of vassalage, but more probably from a vague apprehension that he is to become their competitor in his own right. [We believe that the white man can furnish all our labor and that] the highest interest of the white races . . . requires that the whole country be held and occupied by those races alone. . . . The most formidable difficulty which lies in the way of emancipation in most if not in all the slave states is the belief which obtains especially among those who own no slaves, that if the negroes shall become free they must still continue in our midst, and . . . in some measure be made equal to the Anglo-Saxon race. . . . The belief [in the inferiority of the negro race] . . . is indelibly fixed upon the public mind. The differences of the races separate them as with a wall of fire; there is no instance in history where liberated slaves have lived in harmony with their former masters when denied equal rights — but the Anglo-Saxon will never give his consent to negro equality, and the recollections of the former relation of master and slave will be perpetuated by the changeless color of the Ethiop's skin. [Emancipation therefore without colonization could offer little to the negro race. A revolution of the blacks might result, but only to their undoing.] To appreciate and understand this difficulty it is only necessary for one to observe that in proportion as the legal barriers established by slavery have been removed by emancipation the prejudice of caste becomes stronger and public opinion more intolerant to the negro race.”¹

To avoid these difficulties, to convince the poor whites that emancipation would not harm them and to give the negro an opportunity, the committee recommended colonization of freedmen in Central and South America and on the Islands of the Gulf of Mexico — a policy which would “restore to the tropics its own children.” In those lands, it was declared, the whites had

¹ Ho. Rept. No. 148, 37th Cong., 2d Ses., Lincoln in December, 1862, in proposing compensated emancipation, stated, first, that he strongly favored colonization and, second, that free negro labor would not displace white labor or lower wages. See “Complete Works,” Vol. II, p. 274. The American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission felt it necessary in 1863-1864 to declare that emancipation would not flood the North with negroes, but that those already in the North would go South. See “Preliminary and Final Reports,” p. 102. This is the tone of much of the emancipation literature in 1862-1865.

degenerated but the negroes had thriven. Moreover, the North American negroes had become civilized; they had learned to work; they had our language, our religion, and many of our habits and customs, so that "no one should doubt their capacity to maintain a free and independent government under the guidance and patronage of our Republic." The sections of Central and South America considered by the committee were Yucatan, Cozumel, Venezuela, and Chiriqui (now Panama), a province in New Granada (Colombia) near Costa Rica. In New Granada large tracts of land had been granted to the Chiriqui Improvement Company, an American corporation, for colonization purposes.

Besides solving the problem of emancipation and establishing the future of the negro race, the committee believed that other benefits would result from tropical colonization. First, the governments of the Latin-American states would be more stable if under the supervision of the United States. Second, into the former slave states white immigrants would come, and free labor would thus be substituted for slave-labor, the evil economic effects of which might be observed by comparing Kentucky and Ohio, Massachusetts and South Carolina. Third, a considerable commerce would be carried on with these black colonies, populated by 4,000,000 negroes desirous of obtaining the manufactured goods of the United States, thus giving an advantage to American trade similar to that given to England by her colonies. And this commerce would be needed after the war, for many military industries would then cease and for years the trade with the ruined Southern states would be worth but little.

The views as to race relations exhibited in the above report were, and still are to a certain extent, the views of the average white man living in contact with negroes; they were not the views of the radical abolitionists nor of the great slaveholders. Had the Republican party openly advocated such a policy from 1856 to 1860, the non-slaveholding whites of the South would never have supported and forced the secession movement. The committee was composed of men from the border states. Besides White of Indiana, the chairman, Blair of Missouri, Lehman of

Pennsylvania, Fisher of Delaware, Whaley of West Virginia, Casey of Kentucky, Clemens of Tennessee, and Leary of Maryland were members. These were types of the border state men who supported the war, disliked the radical abolitionists, and who during the Reconstruction controversy sometimes became radical Democrats.¹

To the Interior Department was intrusted the execution of the colonization laws referred to above. Secretary Smith employed a Rev. James Mitchell, who later proved to be very troublesome, as an "agent of emigration," and he set up an "emigration office." The public printer prepared for the use of the department 5000 copies of a publication called "The White and African Races," no copy of which can now be found. As soon as the appropriations for colonization were passed, numerous offers were made to the government by individuals and companies desirous of obtaining grants of money for transporting negroes, or by those who wanted to obtain laborers. The President of Guatemala offered several thousand acres of his own land for an experiment in colonization. To F. P. Blair, Jr., he sent the following proposition: each negro family should have free of rent a town lot of two to six acres and timber for fences and houses; farm lands would be rented to the negroes at reasonable rates or they would be hired for \$12 to \$14 a month; supplies would be furnished until they could produce their own.²

The American Colonization Society offered to transport the freedmen to Liberia and support them for six months for \$100 each. Lincoln asked the authorities of this Society to submit a plan for carrying the blacks to Africa, and through them agents were sent to Liberia to investigate conditions with a view to settling a large colony on the St. John River. Lincoln and Secretary Smith finally accepted the proposition of the Society to transport negroes at \$100 per head, but only a few hundred could be persuaded to go. Officers of the Society were authorized by the Secretary of

¹ For the report in full, see Ho. Rept. No. 148, 37th Cong., 2d Ses. See also Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, pp. 123, 150.

² "Pubs. So. Hist. Assn.," Nov., 1905.

*Found in Library
of Congress*

the Interior to go to Fortress Monroe to procure negroes, but Secretary Stanton, who did not approve the deportation plan, refused to allow the officers to go within the military lines, so that their operations were confined to the District of Columbia.¹

Numerous other propositions were made to the Interior Department. A New York association offered to transport negroes to San Domingo for \$20 apiece, give to each fifty acres of land, and guarantee regular employment. Another New York company desired to sell its land in Costa Rica to the United States government. A Mr. Burr offered fifteen square miles in British Honduras for \$75,000. Several offers also came from South America. The President of Hayti, thinking that some money could be made out of the business, sent an agent to the District of Columbia, who found sixty negroes willing to go. The Haytian government promised fifteen acres of land to each head of a family and six acres to each unmarried man, with guarantee of political rights. From 1861 to 1864 several independent colonies went to Hayti, but they were not assisted by the United States government.²

The Dutch minister offered to make a contract with the United States government to carry laborers to Surinam, but his proposition was refused. The officers of tramp steamers going to Australia wanted to take negroes from Hilton Head in South Carolina and Fernandina in Florida, but they were not allowed to do so. Both the Maryland and the Pennsylvania Colonization Societies applied for assistance, which was refused on the ground that only District of Columbia negroes and those freed by the confiscation acts could be transported at public expense. Eli Thayer, of Kansas emigration fame, planned to settle a negro colony in Florida, but it did not materialize. Hiram Ketchum, of the American West India Company of New York, was permitted to take negroes to San Domingo to raise cotton, and a like privilege was granted to the British Honduras Company.

To the Danish government permission seems to have been

¹ Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 55, 39th Cong., 1st Ses. A. Hansen, Consul to Liberia, to Doolittle, April 30, 1863, in "Pubs. So. Hist. Assn.," Nov., 1905.

² New York *Tribune*, Feb. 28, 1863. Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, pp. 150, 152.

granted to take volunteer laborers to the sugar plantations of St. Croix on the following terms: contracts to be made for one year, at the end of which time the laborers might change employers; nine hours of work a day was to be given; laborers were to have garden "patches"; and no whipping was to be allowed except upon sentence of an officer. Charles W. Kimbell, formerly United States consul to Guadaloupe, desired similar privileges and asked to be sent to Martinique and Guadaloupe to "make the necessary arrangements for the reception of sixty or eighty thousand emigrants free of all charges of transportation." In commenting upon these propositions, Secretary Smith said: "The act of April 16 [1862] may be regarded but as the commencement of a great national scheme which may ultimately relieve the United States of the surplus colored population."¹ None of the parties above mentioned except the American Colonization Society had the direct financial support of the United States government. They carried out some negroes — how many it is impossible to say, for no records were kept, but certainly not many hundred.

The United States government, on its own account, made two distinct efforts to settle negroes outside of the United States — one colony was to be planted in Central America and another on Isle à Vache, or Cow Island, near the southwest coast of Hayti. President Lincoln was most interested in the proposed Central American settlement and used his influence with Congress and with the leading free negroes to secure a colony there. He brought the matter up frequently in cabinet meetings, but most of the members were opposed.² On August 14, 1862, a delegation of negroes was invited to see Lincoln in regard to the proposed Central American settlement. Colonization was necessary, he told them plainly, because the blacks and whites were so different that each suffered from contact with the other; in this country the negroes were nowhere given equal rights, so let them go where they would

¹ Report from Interior Department on Colonization, in Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 55, 39th Cong., 1st Ses. Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, p. 152.

² See Nicolay and Hay, Vol. VI, p. 125; Chase's "Diary," July 21, 1862; Welles, "Diary," Vol. III, p. 438.

have equality; except for slavery there would have been no war, and further trouble might be expected if the races remained together; for a few leading negroes, living in comfort, to oppose colonization was selfish; they ought to sacrifice their own comfort for the good of the race; if the free negroes would go away, the whites would be willing to emancipate all; the more capable negroes ought to go first, not the newly freed; and Liberia was a good place, though at present he (Lincoln) was thinking of Central America, where the white people had no objection to the blacks and where the blacks could hope for equality.¹

The border state Congressmen were assured by the President that if their states would emancipate the negroes, plenty of room could be found for them in Central America.² Doolittle and Pomeroy began active efforts to find negroes for a colony, and Pomeroy issued an address to the negroes of the United States advising them to accept the President's suggestions.³ In a letter to Doolittle, to whom he gave credit for the passage of the colonization laws, Pomeroy gave his views on the matter. Others, he said, wanted only freedom for the blacks; he himself wanted "rights and enjoyments for them." "Can he secure them with the white man? — what are the teachings of two hundred and fifty years of history! Only this, that the free colored men of the free states are doomed to a life of servile labor . . . no hope of elevation. . . . I am for the negro's securing his rights and his nationality in the clime of his nativity on the soil of the tropics. . . . Nothing will restore this Union but a probable solution of the problem — what shall be the destiny of the colored race on this continent?"⁴

At first Lincoln was anxious to purchase territory for settlement in order that the United States government might exercise control over the negro colonies. But he was prevented from doing this in Central America by the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, which pro-

¹ Lincoln, Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 222.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 205.

³ Moore, "Rebellion Record," 1862, Vol. V, p. 65. Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, p. 123.

⁴ "Pubs. So. Hist. Assn.," Nov., 1905.

hibited the United States from exercising control over any part of Central America. When A. W. Thompson of the Chiriqui Improvement Company, indorsed by Pomeroy, offered to colonize negroes in Chiriqui province, New Granada, Lincoln wished to accept the offer. Thompson claimed to have control of 2,000,000 acres on the Isthmus beyond the boundary of Central America, *i.e.* below Costa Rica, and thus not subject to the terms of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. The land contained some coal deposits, and Thompson was anxious to secure a contract to supply the navy with coal.

Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, wrote in his diary that on September 11, 1862, Senator Pomeroy's scheme for deporting negroes to Chiriqui came up for discussion in the President's cabinet. Welles was opposed to Thompson's project and he believed that Pomeroy had a financial interest in it. Under date of September 26, 1862, Welles recorded that at several recent cabinet meetings the subject of deportation had been discussed. In fact, he stated that it had been under discussion almost from the beginning of the administration. "The President was in earnest about the matter, wished to send the negroes out of the country. Smith, with the Thompsons, urged and stimulated him and they were as importunate with me as the President." Lincoln, Blair, and Smith favored the Chiriqui scheme, while Welles, who pronounced it "a fraud and a cheat," with Chase, Stanton, and Bates, opposed it, the latter only because Thompson's title to the land was disputed. On September 23, Lincoln asked each member of his cabinet to consider seriously the subject of acquiring territory to which the negroes might be deported. He "thought it essential to provide an asylum for a race which we had emancipated, but which could never be recognized or admitted to be our equals." Blair and Bates were in favor of compulsory deportation, while the other members of the cabinet believed that voluntary emigration would solve the problem.¹

¹ After 1862 Welles makes no further mention of the subject of deportation and seems not to have known that Lincoln had already made a contract with Thompson. Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, pp. 123, 150, 162; Vol. III, p. 428.

Lincoln, however, had accepted the offer of Senator Pomeroy to supervise the work of colonization without charge, and a contract was made with Thompson on September 12, 1862, so framed as to safeguard the rights of the negroes. It contained the following provisions: Pomeroy or some other agent of the President was to investigate conditions and supervise the settlement; Thompson was to be responsible for the conduct of the colonists, and the United States was not to be compromised with New Granada; equality of citizenship was to be secured for the blacks; Thompson was to give land with good titles to the negroes — twenty acres to each adult male, forty acres to the head of a family with five children, and eighty acres to each head of family with more than five children; the United States would pay the costs of surveying the lands, and as fast as the land should be settled the government would pay \$1 per acre for not more than 100,000 acres, thirty per cent of the payments to go to Thompson and seventy per cent to be used in making roads and wharves; furthermore, when Pomeroy should report that one settlement had been made, then the United States would advance Thompson \$50,000 to aid in the development of coal mines, this sum to be repaid in coal for the use of the United States navy.

To Pomeroy was given control of the expedition and its finances. Secretary Smith instructed him that his expenses, but no salary, would be paid, that he was authorized to organize the colony and supervise it, and that if he found Chiriqui unsuited, he might take the negroes elsewhere, though not to Guatemala or Salvador, which had raised vigorous objections to negro colonization. The Treasury Department immediately placed \$25,000 at the disposal of Pomeroy. During the month of September, 1862, he paid \$14,000 of this amount to Thompson, and on April 4, 1864, he paid Thompson and W. E. Gaylord \$8732.37, this being the remainder of the \$25,000. He himself had expended about \$2300. Secretary Seward sent circulars to the Central American states and to England, France, Denmark, and the Netherlands, — countries which had tropical colonies, — inviting negotiations and suggestions with respect to colonization. From the Central American

governments came prompt responses: they wanted no negro colonies which would be under any sort of control by the United States, and most of them objected to any kind of negro colonization. In October Pomeroy wrote to Doolittle: "I have 13,700 applicants. I have selected of them 500 for a pioneer party," but Seward, he said, had stopped the colonization on account of the attitude of the governments in Central America.¹

Professor Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian Institution helped to put an end to the Chiriqui scheme by declaring that the coal on Thompson's property was worthless, and the Central American states not only protested against colonization, but denied the legality of Thompson's title to the land. So ended the attempt to settle negroes in Central America. What became of the \$25,000 is not known. Pomeroy's accounts had not been settled in 1870. He seems to have lost Lincoln's confidence, and there is no evidence that many negroes were sent to Chiriqui.²

The colonization on Isle à Vache promised to be more successful than the Central American attempt. Of several propositions to carry negroes to Hayti, Lincoln preferred that of Bernard Kock (or Koch), who had leased Isle à Vache from the Haytian government for twenty years. The island was about twelve miles from Aux Cayes on the mainland, contained about one hundred square miles, had good soil for cotton culture, and was not subject to epidemics. On December 31, 1862, Lincoln, anxious to get the colonization experiment started, made a contract with Kock to carry 5000 negroes to his island for \$50 per head. Kock was to secure from the Haytian government a guarantee of equal rights for the blacks, furnish them houses, gardens, and food, build churches and schools, and give them employment under white superintendents at wages ranging from \$4 to \$10 a month. Kock took this contract to New York and Boston capitalists and asked

¹ "Pubs. So. Hist. Assn.," Nov., 1905. Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, p. 162.

² On the Chiriqui enterprise see Nicolay and Hay, Lincoln, Vol. VI, pp. 356-359. Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 55, 39th Cong., 1st Ses. "Pubs. So. Hist. Assn.," Nov., 1905. Lincoln's Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 490. Ho. Ex. Doc. Nos. 222, 227, 41st Cong., 2d Ses. Welles, "Diary," Vol. I, pp. 123, 150, 162; Vol. III, p. 428. Diplomatic Correspondence, 1862-1864.

for financial support. He proposed to carry 500 negroes out at once, and to raise in 1863 a thousand bales of sea island cotton which would be worth at the prices then prevailing nearly a million dollars. The outlay, he thought, need not be more than \$70,000. The capital was promised, several hundred negroes were ready to go, a ship was chartered, and supplies collected at Fortress Monroe. But the opponents of negro colonization now asserted that Kock was in league with Admiral Semmes to abduct and reënslave the negroes and that he was of doubtful character, consequently Lincoln canceled the contract.¹

Certain New York capitalists, Jerome, Forbes, and Tuckerman, who had subscribed to the Kock company, were so impressed with the scheme that they purchased the Haytian lease and then sought to obtain a contract from the government similar to that made with Kock. Usher, who had succeeded Smith as Secretary of the Interior, was assured that the contractors were reliable men, and the contract was made by him with Forbes and Tuckerman on April 6, 1863. By this agreement the negroes were to be looked after for five years by the contractors, and upon proof of successful settlement the United States was to pay \$50 per head for each negro colonist. The contractors intended to send Kock out as governor, and the money was furnished by Jerome, who, for some reason, was in bad repute with the government. But of the connection between the two men and the contractors the government authorities knew nothing at the time. Tuckerman, in 1886, asserted that Lincoln pressed the contract upon Forbes and himself, urged that they "as a personal favor" accept it and help him carry out the plan which he had so much at heart. Unwillingly, he says, they agreed to ship the first 500 negroes, for whom provision had already been made.²

An expedition was started at once for Isle à Vache. The *Ocean Ranger* left Fortress Monroe with about 500 negroes, "the poor refugees," according to Tuckerman, "flocking on board,

¹ Nicolay and Hay, Lincoln, Vol. VI, p. 359. *Magazine of American History*, Vol. XVI, p. 329.

² *Magazine of American History*, Vol. XVI, p. 330.

shouting hallelujahs and in some instances falling on their knees in thanksgiving for the promised blessings in store for them." Kock, the governor or manager, with several white superintendents, accompanied the negroes to the island. On the voyage the negroes were not well cared for, smallpox broke out, and twenty or thirty persons died, among them several of the whites; the blacks had to purchase drinking water from the ship's steward, and the food was bad. They were landed during the rainy season, but found no houses and but little lumber out of which to construct them, and were forced to build rude huts for shelter. Kock brought no supplies, no seeds, and no implements, but, being charged with the discipline of the colony, he brought handcuffs, leg chains, and stocks. He proved to be despotic and incompetent, and some of the negroes were maimed for life by his harsh discipline. He managed to get all the coin money that the negroes had, and paid them for their work only in paper money which he had printed. The exasperated blacks finally drove him off. When his employers, who cared only for the promised one thousand bales of cotton, heard of this, they stopped the meager supplies which they had been sending, and left the negroes to shift for themselves. Tuckerman's account (1886) does not agree with the above, which is based on the records of the Interior Department. He says that "no sooner were the survivors landed and the necessity for manual labor on their part apparent than the lowest characteristics of the negro — indolence, discontent, insubordination, and finally revolt — prevailed. Mistaking liberty for license, they refused to work and raised preposterous demands for luxuries to which they were wholly unaccustomed during servitude." He further states that discontent was fostered by the natives, who wished the colonists to desert and become Haytian subjects. This "we refused to allow the freedmen to do."¹

To Lincoln the failure of this enterprise was a bitter disappointment. Soon after the *Ocean Ranger* had sailed for Hayti the State Department learned that Bernard Kock was the prime mover in the expedition; and that Leonard Jerome had furnished

¹ *Magazine of American History*, Vol. XVI, p. 329.

the capital. Secretary Usher at once informed Tuckerman and Forbes that they might count upon no more contracts, for the connection of Kock and Jerome with the undertaking was regarded as an act of bad faith to the United States. From Confederate newspapers Lincoln learned that the negroes had been neglected, and he caused remonstrances to be made to the contractors. Jerome now came forward and avowed his intention to expend no more money for the negroes. Usher tried to hold Tuckerman and Forbes to their contract, but soon found that they were acting only for Jerome. He charged Tuckerman and Forbes with acting in bad faith throughout the transaction and informed them that no money would be paid until the contract was carried out. To Jerome he wrote: "Candor induces me to inform you that when your name was proposed as one of the contracting parties by Mr. Tuckerman I declined to have it inserted [in the contract] because I did not think that your avocation and habits of life would induce you to persevere in the enterprise if it should prove disastrous and unprofitable."

Reports of bad conditions in the colony continued to come in, and Lincoln was troubled by the accounts of the sufferings of the negroes.¹ Finally D. C. Donahue of Greencastle, Indiana, was sent in October, 1863, to investigate conditions on the island. In his report to the Secretary of the Interior, he described the situation of the blacks as deplorable and their treatment by Kock and his men as inhuman. Instead of preparing to care for the negroes for five years, as they had agreed, the contractors had already ceased to furnish supplies.² Donahue found 378 negroes out of about 500 who had been carried from Fortress Monroe, and for several months supplied them at the expense of the United States government. He thought that the principal cause of the failure

¹ See Eaton's "Grant, Lincoln and the Freedmen," p. 91.

² On the other hand, Tuckerman stated in 1886: "Shiploads of provisions and other necessities were forwarded and instructions of the most concise and liberal nature were given for the maintenance and support of the families until they could be returned to the United States under proper protection. All this involved great delay and . . . eight months of anxiety and expense on our part." The loss, he said, was about \$90,000, which Congress refused to pay. See *Magazine of American History*, Vol. XVI, pp. 329-332.

was mismanagement, for the soil was good and cotton could be profitably raised. Then, too, the Haytians were opposed to the colony. Koek had not received permission to colonize the island, nor had anything been done to secure citizenship for the colonists. Another difficulty in the way of successful colonization lay in the fact that the American blacks were quite different from the Haytians in language, customs, religion, and ideas of government. The negroes wanted to return to the United States, and the Haytians were anxious for them to go. It was Donahue's opinion that a successful colony could not then be developed in Hayti.¹

Reluctantly Lincoln abandoned his second serious attempt at colonizing the blacks, and on February 8, 1864, he requested Stanton to send a ship to bring the Cow Island colonists back to the refugee camps in the District of Columbia.² For some reason practically all of the colonization work had been done more or less in secrecy. When the *Ocean Ranger* took the five hundred negroes from Fortress Monroe to Hayti there were few who knew what was being done, and hence there arose the widespread rumor that the negroes were simply kidnapped and turned over to the Confederates. Even more secret was the bringing back of the colonists. The ship *Maria L. Day* was chartered at New York and provisioned as for a voyage to Aspinwall to take on five hundred United States troops returning from California. Captain Edward L. Hartz was placed in charge, with directions to proceed toward Aspinwall and with sealed orders which he was to open when he reached 20° north latitude.³ He found 293 negroes on the island under Donahue's care; the others had died or wandered away. Clothes were distributed to the destitute, and on March 4, 1864, the return trip was begun. On March 20 the colonists were landed at Alexandria, Virginia, and the venture was at an end.⁴ For several years the contractors made efforts to collect their

¹ Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 55, 39th Cong., 1st Ses. Nicolay and Hay, Vol. VI, p. 359.

² Off. Recs., Ser. III, Vol. IV, p. 75. Lincoln's Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 477.

³ Off. Recs., Ser. III, Vol. IV, p. 76.

⁴ Nicolay and Hay, Vol. VI, p. 359. Welles, "Diary," Vol. III, p. 428. *Magazine of American History*, Oct., 1886.

expenses from the United States government but did not succeed.¹

Though Lincoln still believed in the necessity for colonization, the failure of the Cow Island colony prejudiced the blacks against such attempts and strengthened the efforts of those whites who now opposed colonization and favored the incorporation of the negroes into the American population. In December, 1862, Lincoln had stated in his message that the failure of the Central American scheme had disappointed many negroes who wanted to leave the United States, and that only two places were left to which they might go — Liberia and Hayti — but that they were unwilling to go to these places.² Now, after the failure of the Kock expedition, Hayti was out of the question.

The Secretary of the Interior, in December, 1863, reported that the negroes were no longer willing to leave the United States, and that they were needed in the army. For these reasons he thought that they should not be forcibly deported. Referring to some attempts to settle negroes in the North, he declared that "much prejudice has been manifested throughout most of the free states in regard to the introduction of colored persons," yet he thought it might be possible to use them in constructing the Pacific railways, where labor was needed and where there would be no objection to them.³

In Congress opinion was turning against colonization, and in March, 1864, Senator Wilkinson introduced a bill to repeal all measures making appropriations for deportation of negroes.⁴ He declared that these attempts had been "extremest folly" and that the results had been "hazardous and disgraceful."⁵ On July 2, 1864, Lincoln signed an act repealing all the laws relating to negro colonization.⁶

¹ Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 55, 39th Cong., 1st Ses. *Magazine of American History*, Vol. XVI, p. 332.

² Lincoln, "Complete Works," Vol. II, p. 262.

³ J. P. Usher, Report of Sec. of Interior, Dec. 5, 1863.

⁴ Cong. Globe, March 15, 1864, p. 1108.

⁵ Cong. Globe, May 11, 1864, p. 2218.

⁶ Cong. Globe, 38 Cong., 1st Ses., pt. 4, App., p. 249.

The Interior Department gradually discontinued its "emigration office." In May, 1863, Usher attempted to get rid of Rev. James Mitchell, whom Lincoln had appointed as "agent of emigration," but Mitchell continued in office for a year longer. Usher complained that Mitchell, without permission, corresponded in the name of the department on emigration matters. He was forbidden to do this, and the records of his office were called for. These he refused to give up, and he was discharged at the end of June, 1864. For months he besieged the Secretary of the Interior for an extra year's salary, but finally dropped out of the records in 1865.¹ When, in 1870, the House called for the accounts of the emigration agents, it was found that \$38,329.93 had been expended by them. Of this \$25,000 had been paid to Senator Pomerooy, and the remainder had been expended by other agents. The American Colonization Society returned in 1864 the \$25,000 that it had received in 1863.²

After the failure of foreign colonization the advocates of separation of the races suggested that sections of the South be set apart for the negroes. Some thought that South Carolina and Georgia should be given them;³ others that the lower Mississippi valley should be cleared of whites and divided among the ex-slaves; a third proposition was that in each Southern state a section should be set apart for the blacks. Senator Lane of Kansas strongly advocated a bill to set apart for the blacks that part of Texas bounded by the Rio Grande, the Gulf, the Colorado River of Texas, and the Llano Estacado. Lane thought that the negroes should be forced to go to this region at their own expense. The United States might use, he said, the \$600,000 already appropriated to purchase titles, might carry colored troops out there and discharge them, and then send their families to them. Thus would be formed the nucleus of a negro state. He stated the following reasons for favoring colonization: the North was opposed to the negro as a laborer and wanted no mixture of races;

¹ Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 55, 39th Cong., 1st Ses., pp. 45-47.

² Ho. Ex. Doc. No. 222, 41st Cong., 2d Ses.

³ Governor Cox of Ohio supported this plan. See Welles, "Diary," Vol. II, p. 352.

in the South the whites would hate the ex-slaves whom they had so mistreated; the sentiment in favor of negro rights, now so strong, would in time die out and the negro would be left with no chance for social or political equality; at the end of the war there would be a surplus of labor, due to the discontinuance of war industries and to the discharge of soldiers; it would be impossible to give to the negroes the lands of their masters and to secure quiet titles, for even if the Southern men were killed, the women and children would remain, and, after amnesty, would hold the lands. "I had hoped," he said, "the time should come when the foot prints of the white man should not be found on the soil of South Carolina," but in this matter the best interest of the blacks must be considered. Lane's bill was favorably reported but did not become a law.¹

President Lincoln continued to believe that deportation was the only permanent solution of the problem. General B. F. Butler, who had had considerable experience in dealing with negroes in Virginia and Louisiana, was called into consultation by Lincoln soon after the Hampton Roads Conference. Butler says that Lincoln asked him to report upon the feasibility of using the United States navy, which would soon be free from war service, to deport the negroes. The President told Butler that he feared more trouble between the North and the South "unless we can get rid of the negroes," especially the negro soldiers, who, he thought, were certain to give trouble; that the Southern whites would be disarmed at the end of the war while the negroes either had arms or could easily get them from the North; and that a race war might result. The question of the colored troops, Lincoln said, troubled him exceedingly. He believed that all of them should be deported to some fertile country of the tropics. Butler, a few days afterward, made an oral report in which he made the famous assertion which is still quoted: that all the vessels in America could not carry away the blacks as fast as Negro babies were born. However, in order to dispose

¹ Cong. Globe, Jan. 13, 1864, pp. 145, 238; Feb. 4, p. 480; Feb. 11, p. 586; Feb. 17, p. 672. Welles, "Diary," Vol. II, p. 352.

of the negro troops, Butler proposed that he take them to Panama and use them in digging the canal. One-third of them could labor on the canal, one-third could raise food, and the other one-third could provide shelter, etc. The wives and children of the soldiers could be sent to them. Butler states that Lincoln was impressed by this proposition and asked him to confer with Seward to see if foreign complications were to be feared. Butler wrote out a report which he carried to Seward, who, knowing Lincoln's interest in the problem of the negro troops, promised to examine the matter carefully. But the murder of Lincoln and the wounding of Seward put an end to this plan.¹

While few practical attempts were made to separate the races, yet much opinion in the North was in favor of it, until the end of the war. Especially was this true of the army, which to the last cared little for the negro *per se*. This feeling that the blacks should be set apart is shown in the regulations made from 1862 to 1865 by officials controlling the blacks in the Mississippi valley and on the Atlantic coast, which almost invariably prohibited whites from entering the black communities. Sherman in his famous Field Order No. 15, setting aside the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina for the negroes, directed that no whites were to be allowed to live in the negro districts.²

Since the close of the war there has been much discussion of deportation and colonization, but very little effort has been made to colonize. The American Colonization Society kept up its work after the war, but could get only a few hundred negroes a year. Bishop Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was for years the leading exponent of the colonization idea, and while his views have been indorsed in theory by many of his race, relatively few of them have gone back to Africa. After the failure of the "Exodus" movement of 1879-1882 to Kansas there was strong sentiment among the negroes in favor of "separate national existence." The "United Transatlantic Society," organized during the '80's by one of the "Exodus" leaders, reflected

¹ This is Butler's statement. See "Butler's Book," pp. 903-907.

² See Fleming, "Doc. Hist. Recon.," Vol. I, p. 350.



this feeling but had slight results.¹ One thing that has prejudiced the Negroes against going to Liberia or to other proposed places of settlement is the fact that many swindlers have taken advantage of the various colonization schemes to defraud the negroes by collecting passage money from them and giving them fraudulent tickets.² Negroes who went to Liberia have come back with bad reports of the country. The Negro and the Southern white, each in a way, favor colonization. Some Negroes would be glad to go if they were sure of doing as well in Africa as in the United States, while every white man would be glad to have the entire black race deported — except his own laborers.³ Any organized emigration scheme invariably meets more or less forcible resistance from the employers of black labor.

¹ See *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1909, p. 77.

² The latest of these schemes was reported in January and February, 1914. See *Literary Digest*, March 21, 1914.