



Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell: Black Americans in Search of an African Colony

Author(s): Richard Blackett

Source: *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 62, No. 1, (Jan., 1977), pp. 1-25

Published by: Association for the Study of African-American Life and History, Inc.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2717188>

Accessed: 10/05/2008 21:54

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=asalh>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We enable the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MARTIN R. DELANY AND ROBERT CAMPBELL: BLACK AMERICANS IN SEARCH OF AN AFRICAN COLONY

Richard Blackett*

The years 1859-1860 represent a crucial and significant period of emigrationist activities among black Americans in the decades before the Civil War. With the war came a rising expectation for an improvement in the economic, social and political life of both the free and enslaved. The 1850s, however, was the decade of emigrationism and the search for a "black nationality." Some saw their future in Haiti, others in Africa and still others in the islands and mainland countries bordering the Caribbean. In turn this sentiment produced an equally powerful determination on the part of other black leaders to oppose all forms of emigration as the deceptive designs of the American Colonization Society, which they saw as the vehicle for the final expatriation of the free black population and the continued enslavement of their brothers in the South. In each case the pro and anti-emigrationist forces claimed to speak for the majority of the black population. While it may not be possible to assess the validity of either claim, it is clear beyond all doubt that the issue of emigration unleashed the most bitter and vitriolic debates among a divided leadership at a time when consolidation of effort was most needed. Each side had its adherents and while emigrationist sentiments may have been limited to only a few, these articulated the strong sense of dismay felt among the free black population. One contemporary, commenting on the popularity of emigrationism, observed that the speed with which a boat travels in a river is not determined solely by its size but also by the velocity of the river's current. In other words, the relatively small number of advocates were in fact part of a strong pro-emigrationist sentiment permeating the free black population. Those opposed had other views. This study sets out to trace the activities of one segment of the emigrationist movement, in the period 1858-1860; the search for an African colony in Abeokuta, Nigeria. It aims to follow the developments leading up to the formation of the Niger Valley Exploring Party of Dr. Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell, and their activities in Africa.

Emigrationism as a viable political alternative to the conventional approaches of the abolitionists came to fruition in the calling of the National Emigration Convention in Cleveland in August 1854. Although this was the first gathering of

*Richard Blackett is Assistant Professor, Department of Black Studies University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Research for this paper was made possible by a small Faculty Research Grant from the University of Pittsburgh and support from the Department of Black Studies and the Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh. The author wishes to thank Professors Leonard Plotnicov, Clarence Rollo Turner and Laurence Glasco for their useful comments.

its kind, emigrationist views began to gain some currency as early as 1847. In that year, the Convention at Troy, New York, heard a proposal for the establishment of a "triangular trade" between Jamaica, the United States and Africa. The proposed commercial company was to be owned and operated entirely by blacks. Although nothing came of the proposal, similar views were expressed in subsequent conventions; Ohio in 1849 and 1852 and Toronto in 1851. Underpinning these views was a determination to find measures for black economic, social and political improvement, and the need to forge a black leadership independent of white America.¹ Delany's call for the Cleveland Convention, although limiting participation to those supporting emigration to the West Indies and Central America, represented an attempt to give these views an organizational basis. His emigrationist arguments had been developed in his book, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered*, published in 1852. Among other things Delany argued that the laws discriminated against the free political and social expression of blacks; in certain periods of a people's history emigration became a political necessity; although black Americans loved their country, the society had rejected them; blacks were too poor and, therefore, could not compete on an equal basis with white Americans; emigration of black Americans would stimulate the re-emergence of the race to its former glory.² Central America was chosen as the area to which the emigrationist should turn, because there one found no inequality based on race, the black population was 21½ million; there was no possible fear of annexation by the U.S., as was the case with Canada, and, finally, it was still in easy reach of the fugitive slave. Although in the Appendix to the book Delany called for the formation of an ". . . expedition to the Eastern Coast of Africa, to make researches for a suitable location on that section of the coast, and for the settlement of colored adventures from the United States and elsewhere," the focus of his interests remained Central America.³

His views were given an organizational foundation at the Cleveland Convention with the creation of the National Board of Commissioners. Addressing the Convention, Delany restated in no uncertain terms that the West Indies, Central and South America were the countries of their choice.⁴ Emigration to Africa was strongly opposed on the grounds that it was associated with the work of the American Colonization Society. Any discussion of Liberia stimulated the most vitriolic abuse. Delany himself called Liberia a "burlesque on government,"⁵ and

¹Howard H. Bell, "The Negro Emigration Movement 1849-1854: A Phase of Negro Nationalism," *Phylon*, XX, Second Quarter, 1959. Delany makes the point of black independence in a letter to Frederick Douglass, in which he says, "We must have a position, independently of anything pertaining to white men as nations." *Frederick Douglass Paper*, July 23, 1852.

²pp. 157 through 203.

³p. 211.

⁴*Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention of the Colored People: Held at Cleveland, Ohio, August 24, 26, 1854*. Pittsburgh: A.A. Anderson, 1854.

⁵*Condition, Elevation . . .*, p. 169.

the Colonization Society, “. . . one of the most arrant enemies of the colored man . . .”⁶ In the following years the National Board was to pursue this Central American and West Indian line.

Given these facts, why did Delany become a proponent of African emigration by 1857-58? It is quite possible that growing American interest in the area, especially the activities of the filibusters and the Anglo-American conflict over areas of the Mosquito Coast of Central America, may have persuaded Delany that the possibility of success in this region would be minimal. Delany, however, explains that this apparent change was really a life-long ambition. Floyd Miller and other biographers of Delany suggest that from his youth Delany had shown a marked interest in the history of Africa and had expressed a determination to visit Africa as early as the 1830s.⁷ Delany in his *Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* says that in the “secret sessions” of the Cleveland Convention, “. . . Africa, with its rich inexhaustable production, and great facilities for checking the abominable Slave Trade, its most important point of dependence, . . . was held in reserve, until by the help of an All-wise Providence we could effect what had just been accomplished with signal success.”⁸ The evidence suggests, however, that in spite of Delany’s professed interest in Africa, the Caribbean area continued to be his focus of attention until about 1857-58. The second Cleveland Convention held in 1856 called for the creation of a National Political Organization to give direction and maintain the establishment of a West Indian Trading Company, and a quarterly periodical, among other things.⁹ In May 1856 Delany wrote Rev. William C. Monroe of Michigan, President of the Cleveland Convention, that he had “. . . held in mature contemplation, the suggestion of holding a great Continental Convention of colored men, to meet at some great convenient central point, *out of the United States*. That point I would suggest, as Kingston on the Isle of Jamaica, West Indies.”¹⁰ He decided, however, to suspend the calling of such a convention for a later date.

It is possible that Delany’s decision to go to Africa may have, in large part, been influenced by the publication of the Rev. Thomas J. Bowen’s *Central Africa* and David Livingstone’s *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*. He says

⁶Ibid., pp. 31-2. See also Delany’s introduction to William Nesbit, *Four Months in Liberia or African Colonization Exposed*, Pittsburgh: Printed by J.T. Shylock, 1855, in which he called Liberia “. . . that miserable hovel of emancipated and superannuated slaves . . .” p. 5.

⁷Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Martin R. Delany and the Emigrationist Alternative*, unpublished Ph.d. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1970. See also Victor Ullman, *Martin R. Delany: The Beginnings of Black Nationalism*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971 and Dorothy Sterling, *The Making of an Afro-American: Martin Robison Delany 1812-1885*, New York Doubleday, 1971. Although Delany’s official biography is informative, it contains too many errors and is, therefore, limited in its usefulness, Frank A. Rollin, *Life and Public Services of Martin R. Delany*, Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1883. Reprinted by Arno Pess and the New York Times, 1969.

⁸Martin R. Delany, “Report on the Niger Valley Exploring Party,” in *Search for a Place: Black Separatism and Africa, 1860*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1971, p. 33.

⁹*The Provincial Freeman*, November 25, 1855.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, May 31, 1856.

that he had begun to formulate his plan soon after the 1856 convention and that Bowen's and Livingstone's books increased the interests among other blacks.¹¹ In March or April of 1858 Delany wrote M.H. Freeman of the Avery College in Allegheny City informing him of his plans to organize a group to go to Africa. He also corresponded with Reobert Douglass and Dr. James H. Wilson of Philadelphia, inviting them to join his proposed expedition to the Niger Valley. Douglass accepted but Wilson had to decline the invitation, and Robert Campbell, a teacher at the Institute of Colored Youth in Philadelphia was suggested as a replacement.¹² While organizing his expedition Delany had appended his name to a letter written by two Wisconsin blacks, J.J. Myers and Ambrose Dudley, to an English history professor at the Wisconsin State University, Dr. Joseph Hobbins. The letter, written under the heading of the "Mercantile Lines of the Colored People of North America," enquired about the advisability of locating a colony in either the area of the Zambizi River, Delegea Bay in Portugese East Africa or the Niger Valley. In transmitting the letter to the Royal Geographical Society in London, Hobbins said that the Company intended ". . . to own, equip and to arm its own ships, [and] to man them exclusively with colored sailors . . ."¹³ Copies of the letter were sent to Thomas Clegg, a Manchester cotton manufacturer and to President Benson of Liberia.¹⁴ Delany claims that he was unaware that these letters were sent. The Geographical Society's reply, written by Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, very diplomatically opposed the establishment of a colony in any of the areas suggested, but commended the proposal as showing the power of blacks for independent action, and called on them to avoid the stigma associated with the American Colonization Society, of which he was a member. Hodgkin suggested that whatever their final decision, they should use Liberia to acclimatize themselves to African conditions.¹⁵

Throughout the summer of 1858, Delany continued to plan for his expedition. Financing the trip, however, remained the main problem. On June 17, he wrote the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher concerning the expedition. Delany pointed out that the expedition, which was to sail at the "next favorable season," was the culmination of "years of mature reflection" and was to lay the basis, through the signing of treaties with local chiefs, for the establishment of a colony of selected and skilled individuals. This colony would be composed of agriculturalists, mechanics, competent businessmen, teachers, qualified clergy, a photographer and artist, a surveyor and civil engineer, a geologist and chemist and ". . . per-

¹¹*Official Report*, p. 36.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 37-8.

¹³Joseph Hobbins to the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, June 7, 1858: Myers, Delany and Dudley to Hobbins, May 31, 1858. Archives, The Royal Geographical Society, London.

¹⁴In their letter to Clegg, May 30, 1858, it is stated that, "It is the intention in locating ourselves to introduce the mechanical arts and sciences, also the agricultural and literary influences." *Manchester (England) Weekly Advertiser*, July 17, 1858; J.J. Roberts to Rev. Pinney, *New York Colonization Journal*, October 1858.

¹⁵Reply printed in *Colonization Herald*, March 1859.

sons to fill every vocation necessary to an intelligent and progressive community." Such a colony would in its turn bring enlightenment and Christianization to an otherwise benighted area. In order to accomplish these ends, Delany requested support from the fund of \$150,000 left by the Pittsburgh philanthropist Charles Avery for "... the enlightenment and civilization of the African race on the Continent of Africa." He intimated that while living in Pittsburgh he had been a close associate of the Rev. Avery and the trustees of the Fund and had been appointed Chairman of a select committee to devise plans for the appropriation of the American section of the legacy.¹⁶ Although Beecher was not a member of the American Missionary Association, [A.M.A.] he passed Delany's letter on to the Rev. George Whipple, Corresponding Secretary of the A.M.A. On the same day he replied to Delany, Whipple wrote William M. Shinn of Pittsburgh requesting information on Delany's claims. Shinn replied that although he had little contact with Delany when he lived in Pittsburgh, from the information given him by the Rev. John Peck, an associate of Delany, he was "... constrained to express the opinion that he is not a man to be relied on for any great christian or missionary enterprise. He was one of several who were at different times proposed to fill vacancies in the Board of Trustees of the college, against whom Mr. Avery set his face *firmly* and *decidedly*—*affirmatively* he has the reputation of being visionary and officious and *negatively* he is said to lack some of the indispensable requisites of such a character as you seem to be in search of."¹⁷ Shinn's letter effectively destroyed any hope of Delany getting support from the Avery fund.

Soon Delany was to experience another setback for the third National Emigration Convention, which met at Chatham, Canada, in August 1858, totally undermined his authority and leadership. While restating its position of support for limited emigration to any country conducive to the improvement of black Americans, the report was couched in language conciliatory to other emigrationist sentiments and the general anti-slavery position, which was so heavily attacked in previous meetings. The Convention met, the report states "... to consider all the information received during the year, as to all portions of the world in which the colored people are especially interested and without recommending any place now, especially for emigration, to give encouragement to all who may be determined to remove." The Convention's aim was to bring all emigrationist views under the roof of one national organization and while it rejected the notion of mass emigration, it refrained from promoting any one area. In fact, emigration was not positively asserted; "... the most the Convention thought it could do at the

¹⁶Delany to Rev. H.W. Beecher, Chatham, June 17, 1858, American Missionary Association Archives, Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, Louisiana. (Hereafter cited as A.M.A. Papers); W.M. Cobb, "Martin Robison Delany," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, May 1952.

¹⁷William Shinn to Rev. Geo. Whipple, Pittsburgh, June 26, 1858 and July 12, 1858, A.M.A. Papers. Shinn, a prominent lawyer in Pittsburgh and one of the founders of the prosperous Pittsburgh suburban hamlet of Evergreen was, along with Thomas M. Howe and Josiah King, an executor of Avery's will. *People's Monthly*, July 1871: Charles C. Arenberg, "Evergreen Hamlet," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. 38, Fall-Winter, 1955.

present was to hold its organization in readiness to put to use any openings which might be especially desired." Two amendments to the Constitution were submitted and passed; the first to change the nature of the organization to include, ". . . all colored people interested, and all who really sympathised with them," and secondly to change the name from the Emigration Convention, ". . . to something expressing the consideration of other important matters, generally understood by the meeting as coming within the organization's purview, i.e., taking cognizance of all matters properly concerning the colored people." The result of these amendments was to remove an active emigrationist *raison d'être* and substitute a very general anti-slavery approach.

This policy and its adoption was engineered by William H. Day, who was elected President at the conclusion of the convention. Significantly, it reflected the strong anti-emigrationist feelings of many blacks in Chatham. In this speech to the Convention, Day remarked that he had refused to cooperate in similar meetings because of their emigrationists' approach, and although he favored and supported countries like Haiti he felt, ". . . equally bound in Canada to use every effort to unite the colored people's interest in that of our British brothers here, to know no separate interest; and in the United States to use all honorable means to hasten the day of enfranchisement and freedom." The final report of the Convention included the names of some prominent black citizens of Chatham who previously had withheld their support.¹⁸

The Rev. Holly was later to attack this change in policy. In a letter to Delany he said, ". . . at the biennial convention of 1858, we saw the policy of the movement changed—the platform of 1854 which discountenanced emigration to the Eastern world overthrown—a quiet conservatism inaugurated under the presidency of Professor William Howard Day and this had an offset in yourself at the head of the Central African exploring expedition."¹⁹ Later that year at the Ohio State Convention, Day again expressed his opposition to emigration. The Convention passed a resolution stating, "That we say to those who would induce us to emigrate to Africa or elsewhere, that the amount of labor and self-sacrifice required to establish a home in a foreign land, would if exercised here, redeem our native land from the grasp of slavery; therefore we are resolved to remain where we are, confident that truth is mighty and will prevail."²⁰

Delany had lost an emigrationist organization which may explain his acceptance of all the restrictions imposed by the National Board on his Niger Valley scheme. The expedition was solely ". . . for the purpose of science and for general information; and without any reference to, and with the Board being entirely opposed to any Emigration there as such . . . it being agreed and understood that this organization is, and is to be exempted from the pecuniary responsibility of sending

¹⁸*Chatham Tri Weekly Planet*, August 26, 1858.

¹⁹*Chatham Weekly Planet*, February 21, 1861; *The Weekly Anglo African*, February 9, 1861.

²⁰*Proceedings of a Convention of the Colored Men of Ohio Held in the City of Cincinnati on the 23, 24, 25 and 26 of November 1858*, Cincinnati: Printed by Moore Wiltach, Keys and Co., 1858.

out this Expedition.”²¹ In the following months Delany attempted to form an alternative organization with definite emigrationist leanings in order to give legitimacy to his scheme. What appears to be a rump organization, the African Civilization Society of Canada was formed in November.²² The organization never materialized and with the pressing need to raise funds for the expedition Delany left Chatham towards the end of November. The evidence suggests that with the exception of members of the Shadd family the sympathies of the black community of Chatham were strongly against emigration and in favor of consolidating its interests in Canada as British subjects.²³

The increasing restrictions imposed on the free black population by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 and the Dred Scott Decision in 1857, strengthened the emigrationists’ resolve to leave America. The growing interest in Yoruba was, in large part, due to the Rev. Bowen’s favorable and glowing accounts of the area. For any emigrationist policy to be successful, it was argued, the concept of a “black nationality” had to be closely allied to what Ayandeled called, “the three Cs”; Commerce, Christianity and Civilization.²⁴ The emigrationists, in other words, created their own brand of colonialism and Manifest Destiny. In their view, the economy of these colonies would in most cases depend on the production of cotton, which once established would rival the South in the markets of Europe and thus begin to undermine the foundations of the Southern slave system, leading finally to the emancipation of the slaves. *The New York Colonization Journal* suggested that Delany’s Niger Expedition, if successful, would develop and expand commerce with Africa, extend markets for the manufactured goods of America and Britain and in this way, “. . . the commerce of the world will be stimulated, while Christianity and Civilization will advance to peaceful conquest of that great continent.”²⁵ The African Civilization Society, founded in the summer of 1858 under the Presidency of Henry H. Garnet and a

²¹*Official Report*, pp. 39-40; *Chatham Weekly Planet*, August 26, 1858; The Exploration Party was to consist of Delany as Leader; Robert Campbell as Naturalist; Robert Douglass, Artist; Dr. Amos Aray, Surgeon; and James W. Purnell, Secretary and Commercial Reporter.

²²Entry under Tuesday, November 23, 1858 in Abraham W. Shadd Ledger (North Buxton Museum, Ontario). Also mentioned in the January 28, 1859 issue of the *Provincial Freeman*.

²³This is borne out by the violent reactions to J.D. Harris when he visited Chatham in October, 1859 to promote Jamaican emigration. A resolution declaring loyalty to the British Crown as British subjects read in part, “. . . we indignantly repudiate and denounce the scheme of endeavoring to effect a dislodgement of our people here, as inhuman, impolite and deceptive in the extreme and that in view of the course pursued, we regard the labors of the white yanke Mr. Stanley, engaged in the trick, as an ally and a confederate of those who put a price on human blood and thus we regard Mr. J.D. Harris who has proved himself a willing tool in the matter, as a deceptive Judas, ready to betray his brothers for 30 pieces of silver.”

It is interesting to note that a number of the signers of this resolution were either elected to the National Board in 1858 or had worked closely with Delany. *Chatham Tri Weekly Planet*, October 8, 1859.

²⁴E.A. Ayandeled, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis*, London: Longmans, 1966, p. 8.

²⁵Quoted in *The African Repository*, December 1858.

rival to Delany's efforts, epitomised this approach. In an open letter to the English, Garnet stated the Society's goals: "We feel it to be our duty, as well as privilege, to give the Gospel and Christian Civilization to our Fatherland With the blessing of God we hope to secure, as the result of our efforts, the triumph of the Gospel in Africa, and the consequent overthrow of idolatry and superstition; the destruction of the African Slave-trade and Slavery; the diffusion of Christian principles of religion, law and order, in Central Africa; and the elevation of our race everywhere."²⁶ Garnet was here articulating the views common to every emigrationist.

This African or black nationality was to be sustained by the production of cotton and other tropical crops, which could find an easy market in industrial Europe. The Rev. Bowen had amply described the extensive growth of cotton, the fertility, the untapped resources, and the potential for huge profits in Yoruba. He envisaged an agency of black Americans for the spread of Christianity and estimated that Yoruba could accommodate 100,000 American colonists.²⁷ The popularity of free-grown cotton got an additional fillip from the publication of Benjamin Coates' pamphlet in 1858. In it Coates argued that the profit motive created and sustained slavery, so that an alternative cheaper source of free-grown cotton in Africa would ultimately lead to the demise of slavery in the South. This effort should be led and controlled by enterprising black men emigrating to Africa in small numbers over a period of years. In order to achieve this Coates suggested the formation of a new society that would bring together all the friends of freedom in America. He, therefore, proposed the formation of an "African Civilization Society."²⁸ Whether or not Coates was the leading spirit behind the formation of the Civilization Society is difficult to determine, but in a letter to Alexander Crummell he claimed credit for its formation, "Some of my friends were at first rather jealous of my proposed settlement at Abeokuta, in Egba and Yoruba country-and the organization of the African Civilization Society." He saw his suggestion as a matter of expediency aimed at avoiding the "obnoxious term of Colonization"²⁹

²⁶British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University: *Official Report*, pp. 107 through 121.

Alexander Crummell addressing newly arrived Barbadian immigrants to Liberia said, "Our mission is evidently to organise the native labor all around us; to introduce regulating and controlling law among them; to gather their children into schools, in order to train their intellects; to make these people civilized and Christian people; and to incorporate them into our Republic as citizens, and into the Church of God as brethren!" Alexander Crummell, *Africa and America: Addresses and Discourses*, New York: Negro University Press, 1969.

²⁷Rev. T.J. Bowen, *Adventures and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of African from 1840 to 1856* (2nd ed.), London: Frank Cass and Co. 1968.

²⁸Benjamin Coates, *Suggestions on the Importance of the Cultivation of Cotton in Africa in Reference to the Abolition of Slavery in the United States through the Organization of an African Civilization Society*, Philadelphia: C. Sherman and Sons, 1858.

²⁹Benjamin Coates to Alexander Crummell, Philadelphia, April 14, 1862, Correspondence of Benjamin Coates. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania; *New York Daily Tribune*, December 18, 1858.

The whole issue of blacks growing cotton in Africa produced a furor of opposition from a number of black leaders. George T. Downing called the Civilization Society, "Mr. Benjamin Coates'" and an off-shoot of the American Colonization Society—all aimed at ridding the country of the free black population and hoped that Garnet "... will not long be entwined in this spool of spurious Coates' cotton." Frederick Douglass stringently opposed all forms of emigration and in reporting on the Ohio Convention's opposition to emigration observed that, "Colonizationists of the country have not succeeded in their attempts to stuff their ears and eyes with '*cotton in Yoruba*.' They think the *Ex-ploring Expedition* to Africa is not much to be *de-plored*, as it has not *yet* sailed, and will not probably, until the *spring*—the *first favorable spring*! As to the African Civilization Society, John T. Gaines thought he discerned in it 'the same old Colonization *coon*.'"³⁰ The pro and anti-emigrationist forces were now locked in one of the most bitter and vitriolic confrontations and although that issue will not be dealt with here, suffice it to say that it left black leadership in total disarray until the outbreak of the Civil War. This was the situation in which Delany found himself when he arrived in New York towards the end of 1858 with little possibility of gaining financial backing for his expedition.

Matters were made worse for Delany by a split in the ranks of the Niger Valley Exploring Party. Throughout the preparation for the African trip and their activities in England in 1860, Robert Campbell showed an independence of spirit in many respects similar to that of Delany's. Campbell, born in Jamaica in 1829 of mulatto and Scots parentage, was a self-made man. After being apprenticed as a printer for five years, he entered a normal school for two years, then became a parish teacher in Kingston. In 1853 he arrived in New York after spending some time in Central America. Two years later he was appointed scientific teacher at the Institute of Colored Youth in Philadelphia.³¹ It was the kind of life that Delany, himself, could be proud of, but it did not make for the easiest of relations in these difficult times. In October 1858 Campbell had denounced Delany's actions to Frederick Douglass, stating that his name was being used without his sanction and "... contrary to my expressed injunction." Although he supported the idea of an exploration party to the Niger he made it clear that he disapproved of Delany's operations. He called the plan premature as he saw little hope for financial support. While, like other emigrationists, Campbell saw free-grown cotton as the vehicle for the destruction of southern slavery, his letter announced the severing of ties with Delany's Niger Party.³² Although Campbell soon rejoined the Niger Valley Exploring Party, he was to maintain an independence of action. Unlike Delany, Campbell was not averse to accepting support from whites. Floyd Miller points out that Campbell even joined ranks with the Rev. Theodore

³⁰*New York Daily Tribune*, December 10, 1858; *Douglass Monthly*, January 1859.

³¹Robert Campbell to Lord Broughman, London, June 25, 1861. Broughman Papers, University College, London University, England.

³²*Frederick Douglass' Paper*, October 29, 1858. Quoted in Floyd Miller, op. cit., p. 214.

Bourne, Corresponding Secretary of the African Civilization Society, in an attempt to co-opt Delany's expedition for the Society.³³

In a circular issued by Campbell supporters in Philadelphia it was stated that: "The object of the expedition is to seek out, for a colony, a location processing the advantages of a healthy climate, productive soil, and facilities for trade, and in which the natives are amicably disposed towards strangers, and inclined to appreciate the advantages of contact with civilization and Christianity," which was exactly Delany's intention before the Chatham convention.³⁴ The circular was signed by a number of prominent white Philadelphians, many of them active in the Pennsylvania State Colonization Society. That Society, on December 14, 1858, voted \$60 to pay the passage of Campbell to Liberia.³⁵ This flew in the face of all that Delany stood for and further strained the relationship between the two members of the Expedition Party. In the opening months of 1859 both Delany and Campbell concentrated their fund-raising efforts in New York City. On February 15, Delany wrote Garrison asking for his support in finding a reputable publisher for his proposed novel, *Blake*, which was being serialized in the *Anglo-American Magazine* as he thought he "... could make a penny by it ..."³⁶ Royalties from the book would help to pay for the expedition. But in this he was unsuccessful.

In addition to strong opposition from anti-emigrationist forces and competition from the African Civilization Society, Delany and Campbell had to contend with the growing interest of the American Colonization Society in the colonization of Yoruba. Irrespective of Delany and Campbell's view on the merits of the Colonization Society's interest in Yoruba, association of interest was strong grist for the anti-emigrationist mill. This fact must have further limited the range of possible support for the expedition. With the publication of Bowen's book and its call for the colonization of Yoruba, the Rev. Gurley of the Colonization Society began to promote Yoruba colonization in earnest. Gurley was supported in this move by the Rev. Pinney of the New York State Colonization Society. The three promoted their efforts in the *African Repository*, the Society's journal, in which letters from Bowen extolling the merits of Yoruba were frequently published. At the annual meeting of the Society in 1858, Gurley, Pinney and Bowen introduced their Yoruba proposal. In pushing for an expedition to explore the Niger, Bowen recommended the establishment of a line of settlements passing through Yoruba,

³³Floyd Miller, op. cit. pp. 216-7; The Rev. Bourne was one of the leading advocates of emigration and an African nationality. In this new nation free-grown cotton would ultimately lead to the demise of southern slavery, increase commerce on the west coast of Africa, bringing with it Christianity to the African peoples. He developed these views in a series of articles published in the *Christian Intelligencer*, organ of the Dutch Reform Church, June 24, July 8, July 15, July 22, August 12, and September 9, 1858. Later they were published as a pamphlet, *African Evangelization and Civilization*, n.p., n.d.

³⁴*North American and U.S. Gazette*, December 3, 1858.

³⁵Minutes of the Meetings of the Pennsylvania State Colonization Society. Library, Lincoln University, Pennsylvania.

³⁶Delany to Garrison, New York, February 15, 1859. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

which would expand the market for U.S. goods. He suggested that the vacant lands in Yoruba could sustain 100,000 colonists and that the commerce resulting from their presence would expand to the point where it would be necessary to construct an extensive railway system. He concluded by suggesting that these efforts should have both the sanction and support of the Liberian government. The Foreign Relations Committee, comprising Pinney, Gurley and Bowen, recommended to the Executive Committee the sending out of a Special Agent to Yoruba and resolved: "That the propriety and practicability of the establishment of colonial settlements on the slave coast, and the adjacent kingdom of Yoruba, is a subject worthy of the consideration of this Society, and of the friends of African colonization." The Executive Committee, however, took no action on this recommendation.³⁷ It was Gurley's intention that Bowen would be the agent of the Society and, if possible, head of the Recaptured African Agency on the west coast of Africa. He wrote to Bowen, "I have much hoped that you might have this [Agency], long enough at least to return to Yoruba and make a full report in regard to Colonization there and make all preliminary arrangements for that end."³⁸ It is clear that in spite of the Executive Committee's reticence to act on these recommendations, Gurley was determined to push forward with his plan. In May he wrote to Pinney, "I shall take an early opportunity to confer with Mr. Latrobe in regard to the Colonization of the Lands near the Niger. I am very much impressed with its importance."³⁹ In order to accomplish this, however, Gurley thought the rising interest in emigration among blacks had to be influenced by the Society and persuaded Bowen to make a lecture tour of the North describing Yoruba and promoting the interest of the Society and Liberia.⁴⁰

In February 1859, Campbell and James Purnell visited the headquarters of the Society with letters of introduction from Pinney, Coates and others in the hope of getting support from the Society. In discussions with Gurley they agreed to first visit Liberia on their way to Yoruba.⁴¹ Above all else, Gurley was concerned that the Expedition and the proposed colony should not fall under the influence of the British. He wrote Bourne in March, "It is possible that a settlement of American blacks near Lagos if under special British protection might obtain some aid from Englishmen, but it would be very unfortunate for the character and destiny (*sic*) of

³⁷"Forty First Annual Report of the American Colonization Society, January 19, 1858," in *American Colonization Society Annual Report with the Minutes of the Annual Meeting and of the Board of Directors. 1 - 21st 93d; 1818-1908/10* New York: Negro University Press, 1969, pp. 24,25,54, and 55.

³⁸Gurley to Bowen, May 8, 1858, Vol. 43, Series 2, Reel 233. American Colonization Society (ACS) Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

³⁹Gurley to Pinney, May 9, 1858, Vol. 43 Series 2 Reel 233. ACS Papers.

⁴⁰Gurley to Pinney, August 31, 1858, Vol. 43 Series 2, Reel 233. ACS Papers.

⁴¹Gurley to James Hall, February 15, 1859; Gurley to Joseph Tracy, February 16, 1859; Gurley to William Coppinger, February 17, 1859, Vol. 43, Series 2, Reel 233. In the Journal of the Executive Committee it was recorded that Campbell and Purnell agreed to "... visit Liberia and confer fully with the Government of that Republic in regard to their subsequent proceedings ..." Vols. 19 thru 21, Series 5, Reel 292. ACS Papers.

such settlement either to ask or receive such protection. [It would be] much better to have it connected with Liberia or [for it to have its] own independence."⁴² In April Campbell returned to Philadelphia to raise funds, and William Coppinger confirmed Gurley's fears that Campbell intended to visit England on his way to Lagos. While Campbell was in Philadelphia, Delany and Purnell visited Boston.⁴³

In spite of Delany, Campbell and Purnell's efforts and Gurley's interest, money was hard to come by. The Executive Committee of the Society had failed to act upon the recommendations made at the 1858 annual meeting. Pinney had earlier lamented that their failure to act had meant a loss of one year and now suggested to Gurley that, "... a preamble and resolutions should be passed offering them aid and cooperation and thus in effect directing and controlling their movement. Suppose the Resolution should after a preamble reciting our large views about Africa—our actions in 1858—and our wishes to obtain information proceed by reference to the understood plan of these intelligent explorers, to the importance of friendliness between the Liberians and any new settlements, and therefore that the Liberian Government should be invited to appoint one or more commissioners and that to further such an exploration the A.C.S. should offer a free passage to three of these explorers in the *M.C. Stevens* to Cape Palmas and appropriate \$1,000.00, one half to aid the Commissioners from Liberia."⁴⁴

Gurley himself was disposed to offer them a free passage in one of the Society's ships. On April 15, 1858, Pinney wrote Gurley a very excited letter, saying that Campbell had decided to go to England on the 23rd, because "they are all tired of begging here." Fearing that British support would also mean British influence, Pinney proposed to write Campbell suggesting he make a direct appeal to the Society for aid and give up the English visit. James Hall of the Maryland State Colonization Society thought, however, that because the expedition had some merit the Society should give them \$1,000.00 "out and out," to spend as best they saw fit, but counselled against formally tying Liberia to it.⁴⁵ The Executive Committee was deadlocked over appropriating funds to the Expedition, and could agree only on offering a free passage on the Society's ship sailing on May 1. Pinney rightly feared that the Society had lost a "... precious opportunity by neglecting to aid these colored explorers," and Coppinger observed that "none of the party are particularly impressed with the favor . . ." of a free passage.⁴⁶

⁴²Gurley to Bourne, March 3, 1859, Vol. 43, Series 2, Reel 233. ACS Papers.

⁴³Coppinger to Gurley, April 4, 1859; Tracy to Gurley, April 5, 1859, Vol. 155 Series 1, Reel 86. ACS Papers.

⁴⁴Pinney to Gurley, November 8, 1858, Vols. 153-4, Reel 85., ACS Papers.

⁴⁵Pinney to Gurley, April 11 and 15, 1859; James Hall to Gurley, April 22, 1859; Coppinger to Gurley, April 22, 1859, Vol. 155, Reel 86; Gurley to Pinney, April 9, 1859, Vol. 44, Series 2, Reel 234. ACS Papers.

⁴⁶Journal of the Executive Committee, Vols. 19 thru 21, Series 5, Reel 292; Gurley to Pinney, April 23, 1859, Vol. 44, Series 2, Reel 234; Pinney to Gurley, April 28, 1859; Coppinger to Gurley, April 22, 1859, Vol. 155, Series 1, Reel 86. ACS Papers.

Campbell sailed for England on April 23 taking with him letters from Benjamin Coates and others introducing him to Gerald Ralston, Liberian Minister in London, to Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, English philanthropist and a Vice-President of the Pennsylvania State Colonization Society, and to Thomas Clegg, a Manchester cotton manufacturer actively involved in the promotion of cotton production in Africa. In May Campbell issued a Circular from England calling for support for the expedition in which he stated that “. . . (the) enterprise is of importance in the Evangelization and Civilization of Africa, and in affording an asylum in which the oppressed descendents of that country may find the means of developing their mental and moral faculties unimpeded by unjust restrictions, it is regarded as of still greater importance in facilitating the production of those staples, particularly Cotton, which now are supplied to the world chiefly by Slave Labour.”⁴⁷ Ralston who gave Campbell letters of introduction to Henry Christy, a prominent industrialist and philanthropist and to Edmund Ashworth, a Bolton cotton manufacturer and later President of the Manchester Cotton Supply Association, considered Campbell “. . . a most clever and industrious man and every way competent to give a correct and reliable account of what he sees.”⁴⁸

Through the efforts of Christy, Campbell was given access to maps of the west coast of Africa at the Royal Geographical Society.⁴⁹ The trip to England proved financially rewarding for the Exploration party for by the end of May Campbell had already raised £200.⁵⁰ While there he had a meeting with the Rev. Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society [C.M.S.], which had been involved in missionary work in Yoruba since the 1840s and had attempted along with Thomas Clegg to stimulate the production of cotton for the British market in the area around Abeokuta. Venn, however, failed to give his support to the Niger Party's efforts on the grounds that Campbell had broken with his friends in America. More to the point, Venn observed that in a later meeting with Theodore Bourne, who was acting as agent of the African Civilization Society in England, Bourne could not adequately explain the relationship between Campbell and the Civilization Society, “. . . except that if Mr. Campbell succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the chiefs and obtained territory the Society would be able to avail themselves of his position.” Venn called the entire effort “visionary” and was gener-

⁴⁷Circular, May 13, 1859, BFASS Papers; *Official Report*, pp. 43-4.

⁴⁸Ralston's letter published in *The Colonization Herald*, February, 1860; Ralston to Gurley, June 24, 1859, Vol. 155, Series 1, Reel 86. ACS Papers.

⁴⁹Henry Christy to Secretary of the R.G.S., May 19, 1859, R.G.S. Archives.

⁵⁰Christy to Lord John Russell, July 29, 1859; Ashworth to Lord Malmesbury, May 20, 1859, FO2/30. In a letter to Lord Russell two years later, Campbell explained the reasons for his visit to England; “I was . . . determined that I should visit England to secure the cooperation particularly of those who desire the development of the cotton trade in Africa. Arriving in this country I met with several of the most influential members of the Cotton Supply Association with those veteran philanthropists, Robert and Josiah Foster, with Henry Christy, Samuel Gurney and others, who warmly aided my efforts . . .” Campbell to Lord Russell, London, July 25, 1861, FO84/1160. Foreign Office Documents, Public Records Office, London.

ally opposed to the settlement of any large numbers of black Americans in Abeokuta.⁵¹

But where Campbell had failed to win the support of Venn and the C.M.S. the leading anti-slavery men gave the effort their full sanction. Ashworth applied to the Foreign Office for a free passage for Campbell in one of the government-subsidized packets running between Liverpool and Lagos. In his letter, Ashworth praised the efforts of the Niger Party, observing that the expedition was being undertaken at their own costs and free from any association with other emigration societies. More importantly Ashworth was of the opinion that should the proposed colony develop industry and promote the cultivation of cotton and other products, the result would be an increase in “. . . commercial intercourse with the natives and settlers advantageous to all parties.” Like Christy, he saw black American emigrants as the “skilled cultivators” stimulating this development. Ashworth also called on the Foreign Office to give the seal of official protection to the proposed colony. As a result, Campbell was given a free passage and a letter of introduction by Lord Malmesbury to the acting Consul in Lagos, Lieutenant Lodder, in which Lodder was instructed to give Campbell and his companions assistance and protection as he would any other foreign citizen, but cautioned that “. . . Her Majesty’s Government cannot undertake to guarantee the safety of the proposed settlement in Africa.” Interestingly, in Malmesbury’s reply to Ashworth the word “colony” is scratched out and replaced by the words “settlement,” “or establish themselves for the purpose of growing cotton.” As we shall see British interest in that area worked against the acceptance of an independent colony existing in Abeokuta.⁵² Campbell sailed from Liverpool on June 24, making a brief stop in Liberia, where according to the *African Repository*, he left the impression that the expedition and colony could operate under the auspices of Liberia. He finally arrived in Lagos on July 21, 1859.⁵³

While Campbell was in England, Delany continued his efforts to raise money in America, with little success. By the time he sailed on the *Mendi* for Liberia on May 24, the Niger Valley Exploring Party had been reduced to two. Like Campbell he had refused the offer of a free passage on a ship of the Colonization Society, but took letters of recommendation from Pinney of the New York Society.⁵⁴ Money, however, remained the main problem. Writing from Lagos, Campbell told Henry Highland Garnet that Delany had arrived in that city with \$23. It is no wonder that Delany was pleased with the success of Campbell’s efforts in England, although later he was to condemn Campbell for his initiative.

⁵¹Henry Venn to Rev. Henry Townsend, October 23, 1859, CA2/085. Church Missionary Society (CMS) Papers. CMS Archives, London.

⁵²Ashworth to F.O., May 30, 1859; Christy to F.O., July 29, 1859, FO2/30; F.O. to Ashworth, June 11, 1859, FO2/28. F.O. Documents. Robert Campbell, *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland. An Account of A Journey Among the Egbas and Yorubas of Central Africa in 1859-60*, in *Search for a Place*, op.cit. p. 162.

⁵³*Pilgrimage*, pp. 157 and 160; *The African Repository*. November 1859.

⁵⁴*The New York Colonization Journal*. November 1859.

In fact Delany was certain that Campbell's acceptance of support from both white Americans and Englishmen had jeopardized the independence of the Expedition and went so far as to suggest that this difference of approach between himself and Campbell created strong opposition to him by many white Philadelphians, thus delaying the beginning of the Expedition. To be sure, there is some truth in this, but Delany deliberately or inadvertently ignored the depth and strength of opposition to emigration among the black leadership. This, in addition to the competition from the African Civilization Society for the limited resources available for such a scheme, increased the Niger Valley Party's difficulties.⁵⁵

Delany arrived in Monrovia on July 12 and was immediately invited to lecture to local groups. The warm reception given Delany by the citizens of a country which he had castigated and vilified for over twenty years must have caused him some discomfort. He was continually invited to give lectures, deliver sermons and attend official functions. This is how the *Liberian Herald* announced his arrival: "The arrival of Martin R. Delany in Liberia is an era in the history of African Emigration, an event doubtless, that will long be remembered by hundreds and thousands of Africa's exiled children. The news of the advent to these shores of the farfamed champion of the elevation of the colored man in the United States and this great antagonist to the American Colonization Society spread throughout the country of Monserrado with astonishing rapidity and persons from all parts of the country came to Monrovia to see this great man." According to Dr. H.J. Roberts, Delany was enamoured by Liberia to the point that he would "... not be surprised should Dr. Delany recommend Liberia to the people of color as the fairest hope for themselves and their posterity." Blyden asked whether Delany is the "moses to lead in the Exodus of his people from the house of bondage . . . ?" and recommended that he be encouraged and supported in his efforts.⁵⁶ With this kind of reception it is no wonder that Delany had to rethink his position on Liberia. In a letter to Pinney he said: "I am highly interested in, and pleased with Liberia and her people, a noble, struggling people, who only require help from the intelligent of their own race, to make them what they desire and could be."⁵⁷

Delany also had several important meetings with government officials at which the issue of the role of the Liberian government in the Yoruba scheme was

⁵⁵Campbell to Garnet, Lagos, December 15, 1859, *New York Daily Tribune*, February 10, 1860; Delany to Pinney, Monrovia, August 3, 1859, *The New York Colonization Journal*, November 1859; *Official Report*, pp. 40-42.

⁵⁶*Official Report*, pp. 47-52; *The Weekly Anglo African*, October 1, 1859; *The African Repository*, October 1859.

⁵⁷*The New York Colonization Journal*, November 1859; *The African Repository*, November 1859. Later in London Delany went even further in his praise of Liberia saying, "It is a glorious country, and I only regret that we of America so long remained unacquainted with this noble band of brothers, who have always loved us with a heart's warm zeal, and through coldly and indifferently treated by us, ever bore it with patience, anxiously awaiting and hoping that the day might come when we would look on them with favor, and approbate their struggling efforts for liberty and an African nationality . . . I pledge them the heart and hand of a brother to stand by them in one common cause." *The New York Colonization Journal*, June 1860.

discussed. Although partial to the proposed colony, President Benson informed the Colonization Society that Liberia's involvement would depend on the Society or someone else's bearing the costs for the first few years. Benson had gathered unofficially that Delany was in favor of the colony operating under the auspices of the Liberian government.⁵⁸ Before leaving Liberia Delany visited Crummell in Cape Palmas where he spent one month exploring the interior. He left Cape Palmas on September 15 arriving in Lagos five days later.

Delany arrived in Lagos to find that Campbell had already left for Abeokuta. He was impressed with Lagos as a trading city run by blacks and suggested that all it needed were black men and women of the right stamp to make it one of the most desirable cities in the world. He wrote Garnet describing the welcome he received, the invitation of the people to black Americans to come to Lagos and the fact that he was given two acres of land in the heart of the city for his personal use on his return to Lagos. He concluded that men like Garnet and Holly could find room in a place like Lagos for their full personal growth and expression.⁵⁹

In Lagos Campbell had made contacts with the Crowther family and had been informed that the Alake of Abeokuta would welcome the emigration of black Americans, especially if they settled between Abeokuta and Lagos on the Ogun River.⁶⁰ The Crowthers were highly influential in both Lagos and Abeokuta. Samuel, Sr., was the leading native missionary of the Church Missionary Society and would later become the first Bishop of that region. He had accompanied the ill-fated Niger River Expedition sent out under the auspices of the British government in the early forties. His son, Samuel, Jr., had read medicine at London University, and Josiah had been trained at Thomas Clegg's Manchester factory. On arriving in Abeokuta, Campbell was to get a foretaste of later problems. The Rev. Henry Townsend, English missionary of the Church Missionary Society and confidant of the Alake, openly opposed their proposed settlement. Given Townsend's influence with the Alake, his opposition would have made it impossible for Delany and Campbell to achieve their objectives. Campbell, therefore, had to work fast. He held a meeting with Townsend in which he explained the objects of their efforts, its support from the leading anti-slavery men in England, and even suggested, undoubtedly untrue, that the Rev. Venn had intended to give him a letter of introduction to Townsend. Townsend appears to have been temporarily impressed by Campbell's argument for he accompanied him to a meeting with the Alake at which the objects of the expedition were explained.⁶¹

Once Delany arrived in Abeokuta on November 5, the Party began working on procuring the means for their proposed colony. Initial meetings were held with the local authorities as a means of introducing the subject of black American settle-

⁵⁸Stephen Benson to Gurley, August 1, 1859, Vol. 9, pt. 2, Vol. 10, pt. 2, Series 1B, Reel 159. ACS Papers.

⁵⁹Delany to Garnet, February 1860, *New York Daily Tribune*, May 4, 1860; *Official Report*, pp. 67-8.

⁶⁰Campbell to Garnet, Lagos, August 1859, *New York Daily Tribune*, October 14, 1859.

⁶¹Campbell to B. Coates (?), Abeokuta, October 3, 1859. *The New York Colonization Journal*, January 1860; Townsend to Venn, September 6, 1859, CA2/085. CMS Papers; *Pilgrimage*, p. 170

ment in Abeokuta. Both men also involved themselves in local improvement societies. Campbell, along with Samuel Jr., and Josiah Crowther called a meeting of local merchants and residents to form The Abeokuta Road Improvement Society. The Society proposed to build a road running from Abeokuta to Aro and Agbamaya in order to improve the transportation of cotton between Abeokuta and Lagos. Samuel Crowther, Jr., had been involved in the building of cart roads between Ake and Aro, the nearest landing to Abeokuta on the Ogun. The Committee on the new Society consisted of Campbell, C.B. Maculay and J.G. Hughes, native catechists. A number of the English missionaries, including Townsend, were made honorary members of the Society. Delany was later added on his arrival in Abeokuta. It was estimated that about £100 was subscribed to the Society.⁶² Campbell had also assisted the Rev. Townsend in reorganizing his printing press for the publication of his newspaper the *Iwe Irohin*. Both Campbell and Delany also advised Samuel Crowther, Jr., on the reorganization of the lyceum at Abeokuta at which Campbell gave the first address at its reopening in January 1860. Delany was invited by the Wesleyan Missionary Society to read the sermon on December 26, and on the following day, a treaty was signed with the Alake and Chiefs of Abeokuta allowing for the settlement of emigrants from America in the area around Abeokuta.⁶³

With the successful signing of the treaty, Delany and Campbell set out to explore Yoruba. They left Abeokuta on January 16, 1860, visiting Ikaye, Oyo, Ogbomishaw and Ilorin on their outward trip. On the return trip to Abeokuta they separated at Oyo because of the Ijaye War, which by then had engulfed almost the whole of Yoruba. Campbell returned to Abeokuta *via* Ischin, Awaye, Bioloranpellu and Berecada and Delany *via* Iwo and Ibadan. In spite of the widespread nature of the war, Delany and Campbell were determined to establish their colony in Abeokuta. The day of their departure from Lagos for England, Macaulay told Venn that they had succeeded well in their efforts and were returning home to wind up business and make arrangements for their return.⁶⁴

While Delany and Campbell were preparing for their return to Abeokuta, a bitter controversy developed over the legality of the treaty. The main opposition to the Americans came from the Rev. Henry Townsend, who had been a missionary in Toruba since 1844, had established the first mission in Abeokuta in 1846, and had very strong views about the ability of Africans to conduct their own affairs. The rising strength and influence of the Sierra Leonians (Saros) flew in the face of all that Townsend knew about the ordained relationship between black and white. These returning Sierra Leonians who were formerly from the area around

⁶²*The Cotton Supply Reporter*, August 1860; *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, March 1, 1858.

⁶³J.F.A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1851-1891; The Making of a New Elite*, London: Longman, 1965. Samuel Crowther, Jr. to Venn, Abeokuta, February 5, 1860, CA2/085, CMS Papers; Edward Bickenteth to the General Secretary, Abeokuta, January 4, 1860, Gold Coast 1859-1867, Methodist Missionary Society Papers, London.

⁶⁴Description of the tour in *Official Report and Pilgrimage*; Macaulay to Venn, Lagos, April 9, 1860, CA2/085. CMS Papers.

Abeokuta had been captured as slaves, freed by the British and taken to Sierra Leone. To men like Venn of the C.M.S these "liberated Africans" were to be the native agency for the propagation of the gospel and "civilization" on the west coast of Africa. Townsend had his own ideas and made it quite clear to Venn that he was opposed to these "Sierra Leone Fops" teaching at the mission's school, a job fit for only a talented white man. He believed that the failure of the Cotton Institution set up in Abeokuta by Venn and Thomas Clegg was attributable to "... giving too much liberty to the native agents" and the only way they were going to attract young men to the Niger was to give them white men as leaders, for blacks were just not capable. Townsend vehemently opposed Venn's plans to make Crowther, Sr., Bishop of the West Coast, for as a black man he lacked the qualities of leadership. In fact the conflict between Townsend and the Crowthers originated in the nomination of Crowther Sr. over Townsend as missionary on the Niger River Expedition in 1841. Townsend's views could be summed up in his own words; "There is . . . another view that we must not lose sight of viz., that as the negro feels a great respect for a white man that God kindly gives a great talent to the white man in trust to be used for the negro's good. Shall we shift the responsibility? Can we do it without sin?"⁶⁵

With the Crowthers sponsoring their efforts, Delany and Campbell were sure to run afoul of Townsend. The treaty with the Alake was ratified on December 28, 1859, by the "executive council of chiefs and elders." The version published in both Delany and Campbell's reports of their journey states that the Kings and Chiefs had given black Americans the right and privilege to settle in common with the Egba people on land not otherwise occupied; that the settlers had legal jurisdiction over matters affecting them; that they should be skilled and on arrival introduce plans for the dissemination of their skills and knowledge among the local people; that the laws of the Egbas would be strictly respected by the settlers and that in matters affecting both groups, a commission of equal number of Americans and Abeokutans would be appointed to settle the matter.⁶⁶

Soon after the signing of the treaty, Townsend moved to have it quashed. As early as September he had expressed reservations about the proposed settlement: "I have a doubt about American projects. I don't know what to say or do in it." This proposed colony of "civilized heathenism," as he later described the effort, had to be aborted. In fact he informed Venn that the coming of Delany and Campbell to Abeokuta was symptomatic of brewing trouble.⁶⁷ In early 1861, Consul Foote informed the Foreign Office that: "The Alaka and Chiefs declared

⁶⁵Eugene Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society, Vols I and II*, London; CMS, 1899; J.F.A. Ajayi, "Henry Venn and The Policy of Development," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, I, December 1959; Townsend to Venn, June 2, 1859; Townsend to Venn, February 28, 1860, CA2/085 CMS Papers; Ajayi, *Christian Missions*, p. 182

⁶⁶*Official Report*, pp. 77-8; *Pilgrimage*, pp. 248-250; Copy enclosed in African Aid Society to F.O., February 7, 1861, FO 84/1159. F.O. Documents.

⁶⁷Townsend to Venn, September 6, 1859; Townsend to Venn, February 7, 1860; Townsend to Venn, February 8, 1861, CA2/085. CMS Papers.

that this (treaty) is a downright fabrication and that they signed no Treaty; but that the Alake granted Dr. Delany and Mr. Campbell's request to make farms is true . . . " Nine witnesses signed a pledge that no treaty was made or leave given to form a colony "without the walls of Abeokuta." All the Alake would say was that Delany and Campbell had requested a lot of land for farming and he had granted their request. At the time of Foote's writing the British had already occupied Lagos and had made it known that the interior represented their sphere of influence. Foote was, therefore, proud to announce that: "The Alake will not accept the person of any white man who does not come to him recommended by the English consul, the Church or Wesleyan Missionaries." In a later letter he observed that while the Alake was willing to give farms to emigrants as was the case with the Sierra Leonians, " . . . *we will not have another people among us with another Government.*" More to the point he said that the Alake " . . . cannot legally alienate a foot of ground. It can only be done by the chiefs and Elders on the spot chosen and they must then submit to the Obini or Council." He concluded that the supposed grant to Delany and Campbell was " . . . so much waste paper." ⁶⁸ It is clear that both Foote and Townsend had brought their combined pressure on the Alake to rescind his concession. "After a lengthy discussion between the Chiefs, they agreed not to sign any treaty or enter into any agreement of any kind with any Foreign Nation or Individual without the consent of the English."⁶⁹

After his death, Foote was replaced by McCosky, who was less pro-Egba than his predecessor. The latter informed the Foreign Office that in his judgement, based on extensive enquiries, a treaty was in fact signed by the Alake in the presence of his elders and messengers of the chiefs, and that the chiefs later appended their names to the document. In McCosky's view there was " . . . no doubt that the subsequent denial of the treaty by the Alake and Chiefs was the effect of arguments used to them by residents there opposed to the scheme. The Republic of Liberia was held out as the result of a similar system of emigration from America. It was represented that the immigrants would erect Forts and opportunity afforded they [*sic*] would drive the natives from the country and take possession of the soil." He reiterated that all proper procedures were followed and that the later opposition was the product of pressure on the Alake by certain individuals, whom he did not name. But in his letter McCosky included two articles from Townsend's paper the *Iwe Irohin*, which left no doubt as to the source of the pressure.⁷⁰

In the March and April issues of the *Iwe Irohin* Townsend made his position clear. He said he had seen a copy of the treaty in Campbell's hand but that the Alake knew nothing about it. Townsend showed his utter contempt for the people among whom he worked reasoning that " . . . the Alake had signed the treaty

⁶⁸Foote to F.O., March 4, 1861; Foote to Wylde, April 6, 1861, FO 84/1141. F.O. Documents.

⁶⁹Foote to F.O., May 8, 1861, FO 84/1158. F.O. Documents.

⁷⁰McCosky to F.O., June 5, 1861, F.O. 84/1141. F.O. Documents.

knowing what he was about—we doubt very much. In fact, after years of personal experience of his character, we feel bound to believe him when he states deliberately that he knows nothing of the treaty.” He reasoned that even if the Alake had signed the treaty, it was illegal for it contravened the Egba custom of ownership and failed to recognize the people’s right to participate in such a matter. The treaty, Townsend added, had no guarantee for fulfilling the provisions. “Messrs. Delany and Campbell have given no bond for the due fulfillment of their part of the contract *viz.* that the settlers shall bring with them intelligence, education, a knowledge of the arts and sciences, agriculture, and other mechanical and industrial occupations, which they shall put into immediate operation, by improving the lands and by other useful avocations.” In his view, assurances had to be given to those who had labored for civilization and Christianity that their efforts would not be in vain for he was convinced that the introduction of a large number of black Americans “ . . . with certain notions of freedom, republicanism, and contempt for their uncivilized fellowmen . . . ” would have grave consequences. But Townsend would have been acting totally out of character if he had not blown his own trumpet: “There are white men still in Abeokuta who were the pioneers of this great work and through the Mercy of God still have to watch over the work that they were providentially called upon to commence”⁷¹

Samuel Crowther, Jr., one of the witnesses to the signing of the Treaty and an arch enemy of Townsend, attacked Townsend’s position in a series of letters to the African Aid Socieity, an organization set up in London to aid Delany and Campbell in carrying out their emigration scheme. Crowther observed that the treaty was read and signed by the king in the presence of the elders and representatives of the chiefs. The only point of difference was Article I, which the Alake insisted should read in part, “ . . . the right and privilege of farming in common with the Egba people and of building their houses and residing in the town of Abeokuta and intermingling with the population.” The Alake reasoned that the immigrants should be under his control, be within the reach of his protection from assaults by neighboring tribes, give assistance in the protection of Abeokuta and that the Abeokutans should receive some immediate and tangible benefits from the presence of the immigrants. It is interesting to note that both Delany’s and Campbell’s recording of the treaty fails to make any mention of these important qualifiers. If Crowther is right, then the independence of the colony would be in question and may to some extent explain why Delany and Campbell failed to mention this change and simply reproduced the original draft of the treaty. Crowther further mentioned that Chief Ojubonna had informed him of opposition to the treaty from jealous individuals, which corresponds to McCosky’s opinion of the issue. Townsend, he said, felt that he should have introduced Delany and Campbell to the Alake and that the opposition of the Alake to the treaty was attributable to Townsend’s influence as secretary to the Alake. Crowther supported McCosky’s opinion that Townsend had told the Alake that once the immi-

⁷¹*Iwe Irohin*, March and April 1861. Enclosed in McCosky to F.O. *Ibid.*

grants were established they would turn against him and seize the town. Of the nine people who signed the letter to the Foreign Office supporting Townsend's position, one was a teacher under Townsend, another was his interpreter and six were Sierra Leonians who Crowther suggested were under the influence of Townsend. In all his time in Abeokuta, Crowther said he found no opposition by the natives to the proposed colony; on the contrary there was wide support for the scheme.⁷²

It becomes very difficult to determine exactly what transpired at the December 28 meeting because of the welter of contradictory opinions and interests. However, it is quite clear that both Delany and Campbell misunderstood Egba land laws. The Rev. Bowen had wrongly suggested that land could be purchased from the Egba for the establishment of an American colony and Delany and Campbell's intention was to acquire a tract for their colony. Foote, Townsend and later Richard Burton the famous explorer, all observed that such grants contradicted Egba laws and customs. Burton said, "Whatever be the tenure of property in ground, it cannot permanently be given or sold." This, however, assumes that Article I of the treaty as printed by Delany and Campbell was not amended. If, as Crowther suggested, the Alake had been opposed to the notion of an outright possession at the signing of the treaty and had in its place allowed for "... the right and privilege of farming in common with the Egba people" then the issue is a false one. More to the point, those opposing the colony conveniently overlooked the fact that in Lagos both Europeans and Sierra Leonians held land in spite of Lagos' laws and traditions. Later, of course, other European nations would ignore the laws and customs with open contempt.⁷³

Even with this explanation of Article I there are still points in Articles II and IV on which the opposition to the treaty was on more solid ground. Article II left legal investigations concerning the settlers totally in their hands, while Article IV, although recognizing Egba laws, nonetheless apparently gave unusual powers to the settlers in issues where "both parties are concerned." It states that in such a situation "... an equal number of commissioners mutually agreed upon shall be appointed who shall have power to settle such matters." This would have provided the colony with a large measure of independence of action on legal matters, which did not square with Crowther's interpretation of the Alake's position, namely, that the colony should come under his protection. One suspects that the Alake saw this as a military advantage against his adversaries. Ayandele has suggested that the Alake saw these groups as useful allies in the wars involving neighboring tribes and that his acceptance of them was dictated by this political

⁷²Three letters from S. Crowther Jnr. to the African Aid Society, April 18, 1861. Enclosed in Lord Alfred Churchill to F.O., April 22, 1861, FO 84/1159. F.O. Documents. S. Crowther, Sr. in a series of letters to Venn interprets the issues similarly, saying that Townsend had deliberately distorted the facts. Crowther to Venn, April 4, 1861, CA3/04/52; April 6, 1861, CA3/04/66. CMS Papers.

⁷³R.F. Burton, *Abeokuta and the Cameroons Mountains Vol. I*. London: Tinsley Brothers, 1863, pp. 96-7; Jean Herskovits Kopytoff *A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The "Sierra Leonians" In Yoruba, 1830-1890*, London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965, p. 89.

consideration. This may explain why he permitted the establishment of the colony, an *imperium in imperio*, among his people.⁷⁴ In all of this, not one of the parties involved considered the reasons why the Alake first permitted missionaries to enter his city, and secondly, allowed for the establishment of a colony of foreigners.

Campbell was later to give a rather half-hearted account of the treaty and its implications. He reiterated that the Egbas were very enthusiastic about black Americans coming to live among them. “. . . expecting, in return, nothing more than that we should bring with us and diffuse among them education and a knowledge of the useful arts of life.” This was a most simplistic interpretation and may have been an attempt to answer the objections of Townsend and others that Article III, in particular, and the treaty in general, provided no mechanisms for implementation. In fact Campbell was very defensive about the whole treaty. He told Lord Russell that the treaty was signed “in order that we should be able to show to the friends and patrons of our movement, as well as to our people in America some tangible evidence of the results of our labours in Africa. We drew up a document, perhaps rather inappropriately called a treaty, which received the full concurrence of every native authority of any note in Abeokuta. So far as they themselves were concerned, however, this was quite unnecessary, as without such a formality we could have gone to the country and enjoyed the same privileges in common with other immigrants.”⁷⁵ This interpretation comes very close to Foote’s view of the agreement made between the Alake and Delany and Campbell. Delany saw the issue differently for on his return to Canada he began organizing the nucleus of his future colony.

Delany and Campbell returned to America at the end of 1860 after their visit to England. In England they were successful in persuading a number of industrialists and anti-slavery men to support and promote their emigration scheme. The African Aid Society was founded in July 1860 with the expressed purpose of promoting emigration to Yoruba. Lancashire and Scottish cotton manufacturers supported the plan on the grounds that a successful colony could provide them with an alternative source of cotton and relieve their dependence on the South. At a time when talk of secession and civil war was widespread, Delany and Campbell’s plan came as a god-send to the English cotton interest. Anti-slavery advocates argued that the successful production of free-grown cotton in Abeokuta would ultimately undermine the basis of the South’s economy and lead to the emancipation of slavery.

It was with great hope that Delany and Campbell began to make arrangements for their return to Africa. Back in Chatham, Delany began to organize a small group of skilled laborers for the return to Abeokuta. He went on lecture tours of Canada and the northern states in the hope of winning support for the colony, but with little success. The black communities were even more divided over emigra-

⁷⁴ Ayandele, *op.cit.*, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁵ Campbell to Lord Russell, Enclosed in African Aid Society to F.O., July 25, 1861, FO84/1160. F.O. Documents.

tion in 1861 than when Delany had left for Africa. Dr. James McCune Smith accused Delany and Campbell of condoning slavery in Africa, by their recognition of the domestic institutions of the Egba. The accusation was a rather spurious one as Campbell observed in his reply to Smith: "I have no notion of law apart from equity and would respect the 'domestic institutions' in Abeokuta no more than James McCune Smith would respect the Fugitive Slave bill by voting under the Constitution of the United States, by virtue of which that God-defying measure is sustained." The whole issue of the Abeokuta colony became entangled in the dispute over the African Civilization Society and African colonization, which had divided the black leadership while Delany and Campbell were abroad.⁷⁶ Along with the Rev. William King of the Buxton Settlement in Canada, Delany drew up a list of prospective emigrants, which they sent to the African Aid Society. The emigrants were to pay their way out and on arrival in Lagos were to be given some support from the A.A.S. to travel and establish themselves in Abeokuta.⁷⁷ King wrote Fitzgerald of the A.A.S. that Delany was ready to return to Abeokuta with two or three families.⁷⁸ In April 1861, Delany wrote Lord Russell saying that he intended to return in June and asked the Foreign Office to grant him a free passage from Canada to Lagos for his family of nine, "a young female friend in the family and a girl." The Foreign Office bluntly refused saying that "... His Lordship has no power to order a free passage to Africa."⁷⁹ Again Delany found himself without the means to effect his scheme.

As late as August 1862 Frederick Douglass commented on Delany's determination to return to Africa, but by then black Americans had turned their attentions to participation in the Civil War in the hope of winning their freedom and rights as citizens.⁸⁰ The Rev. King best summed up the situation: "In the spring of 1861 I had several young men prepared to go out as pioneers of the Colonies. While I was corresponding with the Society [A.A.S.] in London about sending the young men out, the Southern States seceded and war was declared. I then wrote to the Society in London that the sword had been drawn from the scabbard and would not be returned, until liberty was proclaimed to the captives. The market for slaves as far as the United States was concerned would come to an end with the war. The young men interested to go out to Africa to colonise the West Coast

⁷⁶Dr. James McCune Smith to *The Weekly Anglo African*, January 5, 1861; Campbell to *The Weekly Anglo African*, January 19, and February 9, 1861.

⁷⁷*African Aid Society First Report From July 1860 to The 31st March 1862*, London: Printed by W.J. Johnson, n.d. p. 54.

⁷⁸Fitzgerald to Thomas Hodgkin, August 22, 1861. Letters from Dr. Thomas Hodgkin 22. V. VI 1859-24 II 1866, Thomas Hodgkin Papers. Held privately by Hodgkin family, Warwickshire, England. An African Aid Society was formed in Chatham. The members were O.P. Anderson, I.D. Shadd, J.A. Harris, Amelia Shadd, J.A. Harris, Amos Aray, Robinson Alexander, Sarah Armstrong, Minerva Caldwell and J.C. Cain. The Rev. William King Papers. On microfilm at the Chatham Public Library, Chatham, Ontario.

⁷⁹Delany to Lord Russell, Chatham, April 2, 1861, FO 84/1159; Russell to Delany, April 23, 1861, FO84/1158. F.O. Documents.

⁸⁰*Douglass Monthly*, August 1862.

were prepared to go south to fight for liberty as soon as the opportunity would be given them to enter the Northern Army."⁸¹ Delany was soon to be commissioned to raise black troops for the Northern Army and later given the rank of Major. Campbell on the other hand was not to be distracted by the Civil War from returning to Africa. He returned to England in 1861 and from there to Lagos the following year, where he became a prominent citizen as founder and editor of the *Anglo-African Weekly* newspaper.⁸² This effort to establish an African nationality fell prey to the opposition of English missionaries in Abeokuta, English imperialist expansion and the outbreak of the Civil War in America.

The Niger Valley Exploring Party was fathered by the oppression of black Americans, cradled in the increasing subjugation, which reached its apogee in the 1850s and nursed by a black nationalist "ideology." It was the culmination of African emigrationism in the period before the Civil War and its importance is to be measured, not by its failure to materialize, but by the fact that it was fostered and carried out by blacks, acting independently, in large measure, of white Americans. Independence of action and self-reliance were the principal underpinnings of black nationalist "ideology." Emigrationism was seen by Delany and other nationalists as a politically viable tactic at times when the hopes and aspirations of blacks were thwarted by increasing oppression. The 1850s was such a period. In that decade alone the Fugitive Slave Act, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott Decision, the expulsion of the free black populations from many southern states, the open flaunting of the restrictions on slave trading, the growing demand for the annexation of Cuba, the failure of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and many other developments made it increasingly clear that the future of the free black population in America was very much in doubt. Every emigrationist movement among black Americans from Paul Cuffee to present-day back-to-Africa advocates has been influenced by similar reasoning and events.

But there are other important dimensions, which have been overlooked by most analyses of black nationalism. First, that the internal logic of an "ideology," which posits that blacks are a nation within America, as Delany does, leads ineluctably, in periods of increasing oppression, to a search for a land base. Put another way, no nation can exist as a viable entity without a homeland, to which allegiance can be given and from which succor gained. This may explain to some extent the variety of emigration schemes in this period. The thinking behind the proposed Abeokuta colony may give an insight into the second dimension. In a racially oppressive society like America, built on the exploitation of blacks, ideologies of change, at some point in their development, look backwards, as it were, for alternative frames of reference. To blacks in the "diaspora" that leads to Africa. Africa, the "core of their existence," to use Sartre's phrase, becomes the antithesis of white oppressive societies, whose history and achievements have been attained through the enslavement of African peoples. Africa, as in Delany's

⁸¹*The Autobiography of The Rev. William King*, (unpublished). William King Papers.

⁸²Fred I.A. Omu, "The Anglo-African, 1863-65," *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 90, September 1966.

thinking, was to provide, therefore, both a landbase and a psychological homeland. The Yoruba colony was the culmination of Delany's black nationalist thinking.

This examination of the Niger Valley Exploring Party and the developments surrounding it should be seen in this light if its importance is to be understood. The divisions within the black communities reflected in the pro and anti-emigrationist movements of the 1850s also offer useful pointers to present-day problems. What is interesting is that the differences between Delany, Garnet, Douglass, McCune Smith and others, for example, were relatively insignificant, when compared with the issues and problems confronting black Americans, yet they were unable to come together. In many instances interpretations were deliberately distorted for political effect creating divisions based less on ideology or political expediency, but more on personal interests. The periodical reappearance and popularity of emigrationism among black Americans, nonetheless, shows its historical resonance.