Chapter V

THE RISE AND TRIUMPH OF EMIGRATIONISM
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The Rising Emigrationist Sentiment

The impact of the Fugitive Slave Law on the embryonic emigrationist movement was more profound. Delany's entire theory of emigration was built around the fact that the Fugitive Slave Law had made it clear that blacks, free or slave could not co-exist with whites in the U.S. any more. This point was repeated in the debate between the emigrationists and their opponents, as well as in the resolution of the National Emigration Convention. This viewpoint can also be seen in the increasing interest in colonization by blacks as indicated in letters to the American Colonization Society.

Thus, Nathaniel Bowen, a young black, writing in 1853 to the A.C.S. noted: "I have always given the subject of colonization but little consideration till within the last two years.... I can do more ... in Liberia ... than ... in a country where I am not ... a citizen." Similarly, J. W. Jones a "botinast" (sic) or "Indian

1 See Martin A. Delany, The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States Politically Considered (New York, 1868 /1852). Ch. XVI; The 5th resolution of the National Emigration Convention, too, noted that it was the Fugitive Slave Law that had "dispelled the lingering patriotism from our bosoms." See the Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention of the Colored People Held at Cleveland, Ohio, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the 24th, 25th and 26th of August 1854 (Pittsburgh: A. A. Anderson, 1854), p. 20.

doctor" of Ohio noted that free blacks were finding it difficult to remain even in some "free" states because of the black exclusion laws. "I do believe", he noted, "that the two races of people cannot dwell to greater much longer, upon one soil..."

This was reflected in the dramatic revival in the fortunes of the American Colonization Society as well. Renewed attention on the black question was focussed by the debate on the Compromise of 1850. In his famous "Seventh of March" speech, in 1850, Daniel Webster had called for Federal appropriation for African colonization.

The annual receipts of the Colonization Society reflected this change as well. The receipts increased from $29,000 in 1847 to $97,000 in 1851. In the 1850s, the lowest annual income was $55,000, and the highest, in 1859, was more than $160,000. Support for colonization, though niggardly when compared to the scope of the scheme, was forthcoming from several state legislatures as well. Thus Virginia, New Jersey, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Maryland set aside varying amounts towards encouraging colonization.

The expulsion of Ohio blacks, we have noted earlier, had been the occasion for the launching of the Convention Movement. At the 1849 State Convention of Ohio blacks "integrationism" and "emigrationism" were debated. John M. Langston, an early advocate...

3 Ibid., April to June 1853", no. 312.
of emigration, came up against the sentiments of those who, for a variety of reasons, opposed emigration. At the next Convention in 1852, a Convention committee favoured emigration only to lose out on the Convention floor. Langston ably and forcefully argued on the "natural repellency" of races but he could get the support of only a quarter of the delegates. Bell has argued that though the emigrationists numbered 20-25 per cent of Ohio blacks, their influence was considerable and had a disconcerting effect on the black movement as a whole.

Lewis H. Putnam, a black promoter of emigration in New York, formed an emigration organization and received a good response from Governor Washington Hunt for state funds to help his colonization scheme. In Maryland and New Jersey, too, migration received a good deal of attention. Blacks in increasing number emigrated to Canada as well.

The Debate Around the Calling of the Emigration Convention

In 1852, Delany's book advocating emigration appeared, and in the very next year, the plan for translating his ideas calling

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6 Ibid., Bell, pp. 146-9.

7 Ibid.
for a mass national emigration of blacks was set rolling.

Delany's views on the futility of blacks getting meaningful assistance even from friendly whites had hardened by this time. Thus, in March 1853, Delany was critical of Douglass' effort to enlist the assistance of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe to set up a Manual Labour School. He felt that as a matter of policy, Douglass ought to have sought help from "the intelligent and experienced" among the blacks. Whites, he felt, could not possibly know anything about blacks and could "contrive no successful scheme for our elevation." Douglass' somewhat scornful reply was that unless blacks could and did do something for the community's "efficient and permanent aid," striking up "high and mighty" attitudes would be of little help.

In a subsequent reply to another of Delany's letters, Douglass lamented the disunity among blacks and the lack of a national consultative bodies to guide them. Within months, however, their divergent paths became apparent with the meeting of the Rochester Convention of which Douglass was the chief sponsor and the call for the Emigration Convention, inspired principally by Delany. There remained little interaction between these two great antebellum blacks leaders subsequently. Douglass opposed the call


9 Frederick Douglass' Paper, 1 April 1853, ibid., pp. 175-6.

10 Ibid., 6 May 1853, pp. 278-83.
for the National Emigration Convention in no uncertain terms as "unwise, unfortunate and premature." He noted that enemies of the blacks would see it as a move in opposition to the Rochester National Convention and a division in the ranks of blacks.

Some emigrationists did not regard the Rochester Convention in a wholly negative manner. The Rev. James J. Holly noted in the efforts of the Convention the first stirrings for "an informal organization of a denationalized people." Though Holly regarded the Convention's call for a National Council as "premature and sickly"; he, nevertheless believed that it contained the seeds of the "idea of national independence." Later, however, some emigrationists resented Douglass criticism of their effort to hold an Emigration Convention.

Remarkably enough, the person who chose to reply to Douglass, James M. Whitfield, was one of the signatories of the "Address" of the Rochester Convention just two months earlier. However,


See the "Introduction" by J. T. Holly in M. T. Newsom, comp., Arguments Pro and Con on the Call for a National Emigration Convention to be Held in Cleveland, Ohio, August 24, 1853 (Detroit, George E. Pomeroy & Co., 1854).

Whitfield as far back as 1838-1839 had, as a spokesman of the Young Men's Union Society of Cleveland, advocated separate settlements for blacks. In 1841, he moved to Buffalo, working as a barber, but he was a well known poet among blacks. In 1853, he published a book of poems dedicated to Velany. See Joan A. Sherman, "James Monroe Whitfield, Poet and Emigrationist: A Voice of Protest and Despair", Journal of Negro History, vol. 57, no. 2, April 1972, pp. 169-76.
Whitfield maintained, the two conventions were not essentially contradictory when viewed in their totality. Thus, while the Rochester Convention had provided a national organization, it led inevitably to the belief among the blacks "that colored men can never be fully and fairly respected as the equals of the whites, in this country, or any other, until they are able to show in some part of the world, men of their own race occupying a primary and independent position...." For Whitfield emigration was the "manifest destiny" of blacks, a race adventure to develop "a higher order of civilization" which would encompass the tropical areas of the world including America.

Thus was begun a debate on the call for the Emigration Convention. The varying points were put forth in articles and pamphlets that circulated among the blacks. What were the objectives of the proposed Convention?, asked Douglass and others of his persuasion. Would there be a debate in the Convention on the objectives? Whitfield refused to support an idea of any discussion of objectives on the grounds that opponents would excite the "prejudices of the people" against emigration. It was a tacit admission of his fear that the mass of the black community was not yet ready to accept emigration as the only feasible way out of their predicament. Another strong argument against emigrationists was put forward by Williams J. Watkins, at that time the assistant editor of Frederick Douglass' Paper who

14 J. Whitfield in reply to F. Douglass, 25 September 1853, in n. 12, pp. 10-11.
brought up a theme which was subsequently to gain some importance in the debate against emigration. The idea, as expressed by Watkins was, that emigration would remove the free blacks from the "proximity ... of our brethren who are in bonds." This was a significant point, as nowhere in the debate did the emigrationists outline the exact process by which emigration would help the liberation of slaves. What was proposed was the idea that a new black nation, speaking from a position of strength as a nation would demand the liberation of slaves in America. It was a satisfying prospect to contemplate but even the most hardened emigrationist could not hope to convince many that it was an attainable goal in the foreseeable future.

Whitfield tried to argue, nonetheless that the coming into existence of a black nation would give the race an indispensible political weapon. The tendency of political events according to him, pointed to the formation of "a great nation ... in the tropical regions of this continent and its islands." This nation would, Whitfield noted, automatically have blacks in a numerical superiority. Since this demographic fact was unavoidable, blacks were to use it as a political weapon. He agreed that the efforts of earlier colonizers to send blacks to Africa, even if they had brought into existence a black nation, would not have produced any impact on events on America. The situation would be different if such a nation were to arise in the vicinity of the

United States itself. Far from escaping from the battle against slavery, Whitfield argued, the emigrationists' aim was to intensify the battle by bringing into existence a "manly, independent, self-governing" nation such as blacks would never become on American soil.

Watkins complained that while Whitfield's communications were promptly published in such black newspapers as The Aliened American and The Voice of the Fugitive, his own replies were not. In his own journal, he continued his attacks on the emigrationists describing their objectives as vague and ill-founded and even charging that many protagonists of emigration had no serious intention of actually acting on their preachments. On the other hand, he maintained that the aims of the Emigration Convention were a "virtual endorsement" of the American Colonization Society and tended to give "aid and comfort" to the enemy. In a subsequent critique, Watkins softened his tone, but with relentless "assimilationist" logic, exposed the weaknesses of the movement. The whole theory on which the movement was supposed to rest was "radically defective", he charged.

The emigrationists in the same fashion as the Colonizationists before them subscribed to the belief that freedom and equality for blacks was impossible in the United States. But the battle for freedom and equality was being fought in the United States and those who advocated emigration could not but be regarded as men who were unnerved by the rigours of battle. He declared:

16 "Whitfield in Answer to Watkins", 15 November 1853, ibid., pp. 14-16.
The black man cannot emigrate from himself. He cannot destroy his own identity. If he leaves the country, he must carry his predilections with him. If these are as they should be, he will here rise. If they are not, he will rise nowhere but must forever occupy a degraded position. (17)

Whitfield rejected the charge that the emigration movement was born of "despondency and despair", on the other hand, he argued that emigration was the only feasible course to attain the "specific end" of black freedom. Having imbued themselves with what they regarded as the lessons of ethnology and history, emigrationists like Whitfield emphasized that the reality of oppression on the basis of race and colour should not be ignored.

History had shown Whitfield argued, that important results followed when a minority of the oppressed emigrated as the Puritans did in the seventeenth century. That experience should be properly understood by blacks, Whitfield continued:

... it is absolutely necessary as a preliminary to the elevation of a proscribed class anywhere, that a portion of their number should go forth and build up their own institutions ... and furnish ... proof of their equal capacity, with the most favored of mankind. (19)

Whitfield was also anxious to prevent an impression gaining ground that the two opposing streams of thought represented two opposing goals concerning the future of the race.

The essential difference between the position of Douglass and the emigrationists was, noted Whitfield, one of tactics. Both

17 William J. Watkins in Frederick Douglass’ paper, 25 November 1853, in Foner, n. 8, vol. 5, p. 299-300.
sought a national organization to gain the common ends of their struggle. But whereas Douglass was, in his opinion, preaching "masterly inactivity" and calling for faith in American institutions, the emigrationists, could no longer accept that policy. They sought a "real" and active national organization to achieve their ends.

Looking back at the debate between Watkins and Whitfield it is easy to see the logic of Watkins' position, as he saw it. He reflected on the fact that the two decades of organized black struggle had been within the ambit of the American system, with blacks espousing values and calling for rights that were upheld for white Americans. The sharp break of the emigrationists with the American ambiance was not appreciated or accepted by most black in the early 1850s. Much less so was the concept of a "national emigration" arising out of the working out of a racial destiny of blacks, as advocated by Whitfield and Delany. Thus on one hand, Watkins refused to come to terms with this central conception of the emigrationists, and on the other, Whitfield could not put across the profound alienation of the national emigrationists from American society.

Martin R. Delany and National Emigration

Undoubtedly, the architect of the Emigration Convention was Martin R. Delany. Born free in Virginia, the grandson of an African chief, Delany and his family moved to Pennsylvania so that

19 Ibid., p. 29.
he could attend school. Active in the antislavery movement, he was the editor of *The Mystery* (1843-1847) and the co-editor of *The North Star* (1847-1849). In the late 1840s Delany attended the Harvard Medical School till the white students petitioned to remove him. In the 1850s, Delany a former student of the Rev. Lewis Woodson, became the exponent of black nationalism.

Delany's 1852 treatise on *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* has been considered as one of the first black sociological writings. Delany was by then the major spokesman of the national emigrationist position. He was aware, of course, that he had to be careful not to allow the strong anti-colonizationist traditions of the black community to confuse the ends he had in view. In his book he outlined the history of blacks in the U.S. and their achievement under the worst possible adversity of slavery. He presented the black case for citizenship and then showed how the Fugitive Slave Law had made a mockery of black aspirations. The way out, Delany indicated, was by means of emigration. This idea of emigration, Delany

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20 For the influence of Woodson on Delany, see Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Colonization and Emigration, 1787-1863* (Urbana, Ill., 1975), pp. 94-105; for an account of Delany's life see Frank Rollin (Frances Rollin Whipper), *Life and Public Services of Martin R. Delany, Subassistant Commissioner, Bureau of relief of Refugees, Freedmen and of Abandoned Lands, and Late Major of the 104th USCT* (Boston, Lee and Shepherd, 1858).

21 Miller, n. 20, p. 126; Delany, n. 1, Ch. II-XVI, Frederick Douglass commented that while Delany's book was excellent in depicting the condition of blacks in the U.S., it left the blacks, where it found them, "without chart or compass". *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, 1 April 1853, in Foner, n. 8, vol. 5, p. 275.
carefully differentiated from colonization. His emigrationism had its historical antecedents in other migrations such as those of the ancient Jews, and of the Puritans to America. This exodus, he felt, would be the assumption by the black race of its destiny and place among the other great races of mankind. Ideas, which saw race as a vehicle of history, were not new. In Europe as well as in the U.S., many thinkers of the time saw history as an unfolding of racial destiny. What Delany did, was to use the theories of his white contemporaries to foresee a great "tropical" nationality of the blacks.

Aware of the possibility of being tarnished by the "colonization brush", Delany rejected Liberia as a possible site of black migration. Noting its "unhealthy" climate and its connection with the Colonization Society, Delany maintained that Liberia was not, under the circumstances, an independent entity, and hence unsuitable for a national emigration.

For blacks, according to Delany, the continent of America was the "destination and home." The Continent had been "designed by Providence as an asylum for all the various nations of the earth," and the blacks were even linked by "consanguinity" to the aboriginals of America. Delany felt that the possible directions of movement for blacks in the Americas, then, were either towards

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22 Delany, n. 1, pp. 159-60.
23 Ibid., p. 169.
24 Ibid., p. 173.
the North, to Canada where many blacks had already found refuge, or to the South. Canada, while not objectionable at that time, lay in danger of being annexed by the U.S. in the future, believed Delany. The "natural tendency" of the black race lay in the direction of the tropics of the American continent, he argued. The region of Central and South America was the "ultimate destination and future home of the colored race on this continent." Delany had, as we have seen, arrived at this conclusion from several angles. He had shown the negative side of Canadian and Liberian emigration, he had also considered the importance of climate as factor. Besides, he drew the inference that the fact that only one-seventh of the region's 25 million population was white, indicated the "natural tendency" of the blacks to form a "great nationality" in the tropics.

Delany noted that the fugitive slaves from the South could more easily make their way to freedom Southwards as they had done Northward to the much more distant Canada. As is known, it was relatively easier for a slave from the Upper South to flee to freedom than for a slave in the Deep South—a region with a far greater concentration of blacks. In Delany's opinion, such a movement Southwards of slaves from the Deep South would deal a heavy blow against slavery.

25 Ibid., p. 173.
26 Ibid., pp. 175-7.
27 Ibid., p. 178.
28 Ibid., pp. 178-91, 214; and 186-7.
Delany's book itself indicated that the strengthened Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was the major cause behind his decision to reject America. Undoubtedly, the new Law propelled many blacks to emigrate—some from fear, but many from a growing consciousness that the only solution to white oppression lay in developing distinct black communities and fostering black racial identity as a means to combat racial repression.

Till Delany's theory of a tropical destiny for American blacks came up, most emigrationist ideas were born out of either compulsion or a desire of individual blacks to seek betterment of their status. In posing emigration as a racial destiny, Delany sought to generate mass enthusiasm among American blacks.

By the time the National Emigration Convention met in 1854, there was an already existing emigrationist impulse directed towards Canada. The Fugitive Slave Law had driven over 20,000 blacks to Canada. Within months of his arrival in Canada in 1850, Henry Bibb had established The Voice of the Fugitive to encourage the settlement and acquisition of British citizenship for blacks. The Refugee Home Society established by Canadian and Michigan abolitionist helped in providing cheap land, schooling and community organizations for the new emigrants.

Along with Bibb, the Rev. J. T. Holly, advocated a North American racial organization and encouraged emigration to Canada. Bibb and Holly promoted a North American Convention in 1851 at

Toronto with Canadian and American blacks participating. While
the Toronto Convention predictably advocated emigration to Canada,
it also called for a black union comprising of the U.S., Canada
and the West Indies.

When Delany gave the call for the National Emigration
Convention, Bibbo and Holly were quick to support it but he found
more determined opposition from Mary Ann Shadd and Samuel A. Ward
who had become more influential in the Canadian black community
by this time. In the columns of the paper, the Provincial Freeman,
they advocated the policy of encouraging blacks to assume British
citizenship and criticized Delany's "tropical" obsession and "nationalist" emigration.

Black Nationalism: The National Emigration Convention

The National Emigration Convention met on 24 August 1854
in Cleveland, Ohio. It was a personal triumph for Delany. An
undercurrent of urgency and uniqueness pervaded the proceedings
as well as in the expectations of its participants.

The largest contingent of delegates came from Pennsylvania,
with Delany's own Allegheny County providing 31 out of a total
of 142 delegates. Half the delegates from Allegheny county were
women. Ohio and Michigan sent 38 delegates each. The other dele-
gates were scattered from all over the North, the mid-West and
the Border States.

30 Miller, n. 20, pp. 109-12.
31 Ibid., pp. 143-4.
Among the prominent participants were Revs. J. T. Holly, William C. Monroe, Augustus A. Green and Delany himself. H. Ford Douglass (no relation to Frederick Douglass), listed as a delegate from Louisiana was in fact a long-time Ohioan, and became prominent in Ohio politics only after the Convention. Delegacy to the Convention was limited to those who advocated emigration and so was participation in its proceedings.

The Convention was, undoubtedly, the most militant expression of black nationalism till that period. The "Prefatory" remarks of the published minutes, however, indicated the weakness of the emigrationists' appeal to the mass of blacks. The appeal was couched with words cautioning all blacks to read the proceedings carefully or else they would remain condemned to "forever to be dupes of and deluded by whites, even our most professed antislavery friends...." Turning away from the white community, the appeal declared to whites that "we ask nothing at your hands, nor desire anything of your giving." The outlook of the Convention can be seen from the resolutions and the "Declaration of Sentiments" of the Convention.

The Convention resolutions emphasized the bond of race that should unite all blacks and the fact that the impetus for emigrationism had been the Fugitive Slave Law. The "Declaration of Sentiments" also outlined the black response to the events of previous two decades. The preamble to this document can also be

32 See Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention, n. 1, pp. 7-10, 15-18.
33 Ibid., 5 and 6.
seen as a response to white nationalism. The preamble noted that all white political trends, whether represented by Democrats, Whigs, or Free Democracy, sought to extend "unrestricted liberty to the whites", which was at the cost of holding blacks in "slavery and degradation."

The main document of the Convention was the Report on "The Political Destiny of the Colored Race", presented and drafted by Delany and signed by 11 other delegates including H. Ford Douglass, A. N. Green and J. T. Holly. Its line of reasoning was similar to the one indicated in Delany's book published two years earlier. Delany reiterated, drawing lessons from ancient Rome and contemporary Europe, that unless a class or a group was in the "ruling element", it could not attain its just rights or develop its full capabilities. Since "blackness" was used as the mark of adverse differentiation in the application of the precepts of American Democracy, blacks could achieve their rightful place only if they were a part of the "ruling element" as black people. In the given circumstances, emigration of the black people to places where they could themselves constitute this "ruling element" was the only answer. Presenting a demographic picture of a black-dominant Central and South America, the report projected that area as the pre-ordained destination of the blacks in America. Delany proposed the question of colour as a determinant of future history.

34 Ibid., pp. 19-22, 23; and Miller, n. 20, pp. 148-9.
He noted that the question of colour would be the major issue in the future of world history. For the present, blacks constituting "four-sixths" of all the population of the world "would not passively submit to the encroachment and oppression by whites."

Delany's document, was accepted by the Convention but, the remarks of John M. Langston indicated the dissension in the ranks of the emigrationists. Son of a slaveholder's black mistress, Langston and his brother Charles were educated in Oberlin. They were active among the Ohio blacks in the late 1840s and had, in the 1849 and 1852 Conventions of Ohio blacks, advocated an emigrationist position.

In the National Emigration Convention, Langston suddenly changed his stance and asserted that blacks could achieve success in the U.S. within white society. Langston's stand created some consternation in the Convention as his earlier advocacy of emigration was well known. Langston was, however, at that time an applicant for the membership to the Ohio bar and was admitted within two weeks of the Convention, as one of the country's first black lawyers. Perhaps foreknowledge of this personal success led him to go back from his earlier position. Langston however

36 Ibid., pp. 33-70. See also Sterling Stuckey, The Ideological Origins of Black Nationalism (Boston, 1972), pp. 21-23; Miller, n. 20, p. 149-50. Dubois was to state that the "problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of Color Line...." See W.E.B. Dubois, The Souls of Black Folk (New York, 1970 [1903]).

did not go unanswered. H. Ford Douglass chose to answer him in the convention itself. In Ohio, Douglass had been an active antislavery man, initially advocating political and civil rights for blacks. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, he had become an emigrationist.

Ford Douglass reiterated that the only way blacks could bring about freedom for slaves, was by establishing a black nation within the Americas. He noted that given the trend of the times, there was no alternative to emigration. However, his arguments were not couched in terms of racial destiny as much as in the fact that the United States Constitution had kept the blacks outside the pale of its application. He would be, he said, "an unwilling exile and seek on other shores the freedom which has been denied me in the land of my birth." His stand here, and his subsequent activities in Canada on the eve of the Civil War, indicate that he differed from Delany in several substantial points. In Canada in 1856-1858 for example, he recommended that Canadian blacks support their government which had granted them equal rights. He took the stand that separate black organizations were therefore redundant. Robert Harris has noted that Douglass:


advanced emigration solely as a tactical measure, to uproot slavery ... propounding emigrationism more ... so/ that America would recognize the danger of a large unpredictable group within her midst and grant them equality by first destroying slavery. (40)

It is reasonable to assume that Delany's concept of a "race adventure" and his point of creating an "event" to establish a nationality, were not acceptable to or even understood by many in the black community. That had been evident from the earlier exchanges between William J. Watkins and James M. Whitfield as well. In an exchange in the Christian Recorder, the point was brought out sharply. William B. J. Jackson writing to the editor, noted that the blacks must show that they were capable "of assuming a nationality and cultivating the arts and sciences". The editor, the Rev. J. P. Campbell, tersely noted that Jackson must show what he meant by "assuming a nationality" and that since the black struggle was for natural rights, the question of proving anything to anyone was out of joint. "We must", Campbell cautioned, "follow our own advice and counsel."

The National Emigration Convention and especially its report on the destiny of blacks, represents the highest expression of black nationalism in the nineteenth century. While many other black leaders stressed black racial solidarity and exclusiveness none reached the point of advocating a separate nationhood. The National League floated in the Rochester Convention the year

40 Harris, n. 38, pp. 220-21; and Miller, n. 20, p. 152.
41 Christian Recorder, 4 April 1855.
before was essentially viewed as a transitional platform to carry blacks to freedom and complete equality within the United States.

The National Emigration Convention and the Rochester National Convention were the landmarks of the 1850s. Though the debates preceding and succeeding the Emigration Convention seemed to mark out the respective areas of the two viewpoints sharply, there was, in fact, a considerable overlap in the views and even the protagonists of the two sides, at least initially. Thus, the Rev. A. H. Green, Whitfield and Monroe found nothing contradictory in participating in both the Conventions. The stance of militant self-reliance adopted by both the sides were in effect two sides of the same coin. While the Rochester Convention through the National Council sought to create a nation within a nation, so as to say, the Emigration Convention advocated a nation outside the pale of the U.S. Among emigrationists, too, there was no unanimity of opinion. Not all emigrationists accepted Delany's grand racial mission. Before the Convention itself he had clashed with the Canadian emigrés like Mary Ann Shadd, Samuel A. Ward who advocated Canadian emigration.

Delany's nationalist-emigrationist objection to Canada, however, lay in the fact that unless blacks were in the "ruling element", emigration would not serve their ends. To be in the "ruling element" blacks had to be in a demographic majority. In Canada this was not possible and hence Canadian emigration was rejected.

Between 1854 and 1856, the emigration movement broadened as the provincial group, too, came around to the position of advocating nationalist emigration as well. The movement, however, also began to lose the cohesiveness it had managed to display in 1854. There was also a comparable shift in Golany's stand. Earlier, he had maintained that the United States would annex Canada at any time. Annexation was a certainty, he had argued, by the operation of the very laws which were propelling the blacks to the Central and South America—laws based on racial destiny. Now, Golany not only accepted Canadian emigration, but himself emigrated to Chathar, Canada West.

The Rev. T.J. Holly and Haitian Emigration

Some emigrationists came around to advocating Haiti as the most appropriate location for American blacks. The most active among them was the Rev. J.T. Holly who had been an advocate of Canadian emigration at the National Emigration Convention. Holly now argued that Haiti which was already a black nation should be augmented and strengthened by organized emigration of American blacks to it. Holly proceeded to organize a missionary group that sought to foster emigration to Haiti.

Haiti, had long been admired by blacks as the example of black heroism and capacity for self-government. Touissant L'Ouverture was constantly cited as one of the greatest examples

43 Miller, n. 20, p. 157.
44 Ibid., pp. 158-9.
of black achievement and heroism. Besides, Haiti was near enough to the United States to counter the charges levelled by anti-emigrationists that emigration meant the virtual abandonment of black slaves. The proximity of Haiti was attractive to emigrationists from the point of view of logistics and expense as well.

In 1855, Holly, designated as "Official Commissioner" of the National Board of the National Emigration Convention, visited Haiti. He received no financial assistance as "Official Commissioner," but he drew upon his own resources for this enterprise. In Haiti, he met government officials and negotiated terms which would allow free homesteads and equal civil and religious rights for emigrants. The emigrants would have to do no military service for seven years, and were to be allowed to import tools and equipment for their use. Citizenship was to be granted after one year residence. The National Board was to guarantee the emigration of 200 families a year. Holly also explored the possibility of establishing an Episcopal Mission, and returned by September 1855.

Holly subsequently published his findings on Haiti in 1857. This publication was funded by the Afric-American Printing Company set up by the second Emigration Convention in 1856. This

second Convention, such smaller and of less significance than the 1854 Convention, marked the importance of Holly in the emigration movement at that time. Delany was unable to attend due to illness, and the outcome of the Convention was not fruitful, as its attempt to set up a trading association run by a Board of Trade and a Board of Publications proved abortive.

Holly's account of his Haitian experiences was dedicated to the Rev. William C. Monroe, the President of the first and second Emigration Conventions, who had initiated him into the Episcopal Church. The work was an affirmation of Holly's commitment both the Episcopal Church and to the Haitian emigration movement. Holly's account was a celebration of black nationalism as embodied in the Haitian Revolution. He endeavoured to show how Haitian history, from the revolution against France in the 1790s, to the present, was an achievement of blacks in conditions of adversity more trying than those faced by the Americans during the Revolutionary Era. The defence of liberty and equality by blacks rebelling against tyranny was vindicated by their capacity for "self-government." The black leadership in Haiti, maintained Holly, not only codified democratic laws in advance of even some American states, but had also proceeded to "evangelize" the island. He drew a picture of a prosperous entrepreneurial nation under a leadership, which he argued, was even more stable than

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that of the United States. He defended Haitian monarchical institutions as an "ancient traditionary predilection of the race derived from Africa." He argued that as long as monarchy maintained civil liberty and equality for all its citizens, it would be in American context, a superior institution. His view was that, Haiti represented the "vanguard of the [black] race...with...a name, and a fame...in world's history." He saw American blacks with a "weighty responsibility" to "contribute to the continued advancement of this Negro nationality of the New World."

Floyd J. Miller has noted that "in glorifying a black nationality," Holly's ideas were coincident with Delany's philosophy, however, "Holly's Christian commitment completely permeated his ties to the nationalist emigrationist movement."

Nowhere in Delany's writings was there any appeal to Christian instincts. Delany was quite suspicious of missionaries and was one of the few black leaders who did not invoke Christianity to the aid of the black cause. Inevitably, this led to differing perceptions of the goals of the emigrationist movement by its two great protagonists, J.T. Holly and Martin Delany.

Henry Highland Garnet and his African Mission

In 1858, there was a significant and powerful addition

47 Ibid., Holly, pp. 10-12, 40-43.
48 Ibid., pp. 43-45.
49 Miller, n. 20, p. 168.
to the ranks of the emigrationists in the form of Henry Highland Garnet. Through the 1840s, Garnet had symbolized the most militant section of the black community. During that period his militancy was reflected in his appeal to blacks of the necessity of remaining in the United States to wage the struggle for the liberation of their enslaved brethren. Garnet had tempered his militancy with a consistent belief in the efficacy of political action against slavery. Garnet had been, as we have pointed out earlier, absent from the United States for the first half of the 1850s. On returning to the United States in 1856, he became the pastor of Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York.

Floyds J. Miller writes that the reasons for Garnet's shift to advocacy of emigration are not quite clear. In the view of the present researcher, the shift has to be seen and understood not as an example of ideological confusion but the unrelenting search of a dynamic leader for appropriate modalities for promoting a great objective. It must be viewed in the overall set of beliefs inspiring a given leader, and the specific circumstances, both personal and social by which the leader judged a situation. Garnet's concern was, as the title of his 1848 address put it, "The Destiny of the Colored Race." Would that destiny be realized in America itself or in a haven elsewhere? What needed to be done to fill the minds of his people with some vision of freedom and greatness albeit in some distant future? These were the issues to which Garnet persistently sought to find answers.

50 Ibid., pp. 182-92.
Garnet, like Frederick Douglass, sought to work out what seemed to him the most appropriate tactics in the context of the circumstances and his perceptions of them. He was not an overnight convert to emigrationism in 1858; the idea had been simmering in his mind at least during the previous ten years or so.

Garnet's earlier record at first glance, however, provides little indication of the change that took place in 1858. Thus, Garnet had in his "Address to the Slaves" taken a militant anti-colonization stand, in 1843. In 1848 in his address on the "Destiny of the Colored Race" Garnet even prophesized that a great mixed race would populate the "Western world." As an early supporter of the Liberty Party, Garnet also called for blacks to "maintain a national and patriotic sentiment." He insisted, that in spite of everything, "America is my home and country."

However, like Douglass, it seemed that he advocated voluntary and individual emigration to both Central America or Africa. Nailing Liberian independence in 1847, he had seen Liberia as a beacon of black achievement. This according to one biographer was a pointer to the future. Writing to the North Star in 1849, Garnet noted that Liberian independence would be a great "commercial and a political" boon to the blacks. He prophesized that a strong and independent black nation on the East African coast would crush slave trade, and a regenerative

process in West Africa would actually begin by the economic development of this independent nation. Garnet also advocated cotton production in Liberia to compete with the slave grown cotton of the South. While these earlier "Free Produce" ideas were central to his African emigrationism, the impact of the mood of discouragement and depression in the black community towards a future in America in the 1850s cannot be discounted. Nevertheless, Garnet's change in 1858, appeared sudden and the reasons were not quite apparent. It is possible that his travel in England and his missionary activity in Jamaica in the first half of the 1850s had deepened his perspective towards the possibilities of wider political, religious and entrepreneurial activities for blacks. There were developments taking place in England during that period which might have some impact on Garnet and they deserve a brief treatment at this point.

The African Civilization Society had been originally set up in England by Fowell Buxton. Buxton's aims were to send black missionaries to promote spiritual upliftment as well as agriculture in Africa. This would also help in ending the slave trade. Buxton's Society vehemently opposed slavery and in that respect it remained sharply differentiated from the American Colonization Society.

The Free Produce Movement in England and America was the outcome of the ideas of Fowell Buxton. Buxton's ideas influenced many blacks including Garnet and J.H.C. Pennington. This movement sought to develop alternative areas to produce cotton from

52 Ibid., pp. 72-73.
free labour to compete with slave-grown American cotton.

While the present writer does not have any conclusive evidence, it is reasonable to surmise that Garnet became aware of Buxton's work during his English tour. It was probably from the writings of the Rev. T.J. Bowen that Garnet found inspiration in his own ideas of promoting cotton cultivation in Liberia and missionary work for the uplift of the people of the Yoruba region.

A white American philanthropist, who had also been influenced by Bowen was to join hands with Garnet in the formation of the African Civilization Society in New York in the autumn of 1859. He was Benjamin Coates and he authored a pamphlet entitled "Cotton Cultivation in Africa," which envisaged small teams of black American immigrants organizing themselves into agricultural missions in Africa.

The African Civilization Society

The African Civilization Society was organized in New York in September 1859. Participating in its foundation were the Rev. Theodore Bourne, Henry Highland Garnet, Benjamin Coates and others. The aim of the society, as outlined by its Constitution, was "the civilization and evangelization of Africa." Garnet was elected the President and Bourne was

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appointed Secretary of the organization. The action of appointing a black man President of a multi-racial organization was significant and indicated the commitment of its members towards the genuineness of the Society's stated purposes.

In the same month of the founding of the African Civilization Society, the National Emigration Convention had another meeting, this time at Chatham, Canada West, Delany's new hometown. James H. Whitfield and William C. Monroe were absent and William Howard Day presided. The presence of the J.T. Holly, committed as he was to Haitian schemes of emigration, underlined the differences among the emigrationists. At this meeting, an "African Commission" was set up to organize support for Delany's proposed expedition to Africa. Some confusion was inevitably created between the African Civilization Society and this "African Commission" of the Chatham Convention.

Though the African Civilization Society committed itself to supporting Delany's venture, cooperation between the A.C.S. and Delany was difficult. When it came into existence, the A.C.S. was a predominantly white organization confined to New York City and Philadelphia. Its constitution, as signed by Garnet, indicated its primary aim as "the civilization and Christianization of Africa and the descendants of African ancestors in any portion of the earth, wherever dispersed." Its

54 Miller, n. 20, pp. 192-3; Ofari, n. 51, pp. 79-80; see also the Constitution of the African Civilization Society (copy at Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.).

55 Miller, n. 20, p. 182; and Schor, n. 53, p. 157.

56 See the Constitution, n. 54.
aim was to promote Christian missions, and to destroy the slave trade by promoting cotton and other industry in Yoruba using local labour. Garnet saw black churches in the United States as a recruiting ground for this mission.

Herein lay, the difficulties of co-operation between the two protagonists (if only recent converts) of African emigration. While Delany was extremely suspicious of missionary activity, and built his plans around his own theory of black nationalism born of a racial destiny, Garnet's aims were primarily religious.

How would the other great black leader, Frederick Douglass respond to the two divergent advocates of the emigrationist position? Douglass had long made evident his opposition to the very idea of mass emigration out of America. He printed a letter by Garnet's white associate, Benjamin Coates, calling for colonizing missions to Africa, making it clear that he was doing so out of respect for Coates and for "free discussion."

Separately he wrote a long indictment of Coates, and by implication, the Civilization Society. Repeating his earlier theme of opposition to colonization, Douglass attacked Coates as being the type of colonizationist who showed his care for blacks in America by advocating their cause outside of the country. He felt that constant appeals to colonization and emigration retarded the economic and political development of blacks.

The continuous uncertainty of the black community regarding their place in American society was encouraged and abetted by the colonizationists. Douglass reiterated too, his position that if "free colored men, self-moved" wished to form societies and
committees to emigrate, it could be regarded as regrettable but not objectionable as were the views of colonizationists who advocated emigration as a venture based on racial destiny. The same was his attitude towards self-moved blacks who favoured emigration as a venture prompted by their conception of racial destiny.

His own stand would be to pose arguments demonstrating the unsoundness of the two approaches. Garnet demanded to know from Douglass what were his objections to "the civilization and Christianization of Africa." Douglass replied in a long editorial in the February 1859 issue of his Monthly. Douglass maintained that he had no possible objection to "the civilization or the Christianization of Africa." He considered Garnet's questioning of his position on that regard as absurd. Douglass maintained that he would not accept the validity of the Civilization Society's Mission to "go to Africa, raise cotton, civilize the natives, become planters, merchants, compete with the slaves states...to break down American slavery." His "direct and candid" answer to the Civilization Society was "you go there, we stay here." With healthy skepticism, Douglass noted that the


58 Douglass was as yet still confused about the organization, as he mistook the African Civilization Commission set up by the Emigration Convention in Canada as the major segment of the organization. Miller, n. 20, p. 182.
aim of ending slave trade by African emigration was not likely to succeed against the primitive West African tribes. He noted that the best way to end this trade was to stay in United States and fight for the abolition of slavery. Douglass reiterated the points he had made earlier in his critique to Benjamin Coates. He noted that the activities of the A.C.S. kept perpetuating the idea that Africa and not America was "the Negro's true home." Secondly, and more cogently, he argued that the Civilization Society proposed "to plant its guns too far from the battlements of slavery" to be of any use to black slaves in America. Douglass, concluded by restating his advocacy of individual migration "self-moved, self-sustained" and opposition to any combination or association that promoted mass colonization or mass emigration.

Support for the Civilization Society was not forthcoming from the mid-West either. The State Convention of Ohio blacks in November 1858, with William Howard Day, ironically the President of the last meeting of the National Emigration Convention held at Chatham, Canada West in September, the Langston brothers and William J. Watkins in attendance saw it fit to concern emigration. A resolution noted that emigrationists would be better off if they spent their efforts in fighting slavery in their "native land." Speakers like John T. Gaines even sought to link the aims of the African Civilization Society with those of the American Colonization Society. This remained the main thrust of

59 Frederick Douglass' Monthly, February 1859, pp. 19-20.
the integrationist critique of the Civilization movement.

Douglass and those who felt like him were, of course, not alone in condemning the Civilization society. An entire Convention was stage-managed in New England to condemn Garnet's new ideas. This "Convention of New England Colored Citizens" was held on 1-2 August 1859, and presided over by George T. Downing. Though the main thrust of the Convention resolutions were towards the question of suffrage, the issue of the African Civilization Society led to a bitter wrangle between the Garrisonian majority comprising of Downing, Brown, Bell and others, and the supporters of the Civilization Society like the Jays, J. Jella Martin, James W. Gloucester and J.B. Smith. The Convention President and the other leading Garrisonians, well versed in Convention tactics, succeeded in turning the proceedings into a critique of the A.C.S. in spite of the valiant efforts of Martin and Smith.

Garnet was, unlike his lieutenants Martin and Smith, quite adept at infighting. He scheduled a "return" meeting on the 29th of August and invited all his opponents like Bell and Downing to be present. With an audience organized to taste, Garnet, roundly criticized the recent Convention for vilifying

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60 Proceedings of a Convention of the Colored Men of Ohio held in the city of Cincinnati, on the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th of November 1858 (Cincinnati: Loore, 'ilatsch, Keys & Co., 1859), pp. 7-13; Aptheker, n. 5, pp. 410-3; and see also the report on the Convention in Frederick Douglass' Monthly, January 1859, pp. 4-5.

61 The Weekly Anglo-African (New York), 23 July 1859. The entire proceedings of the Convention are in the 6 August 1859 issue; see also National Anti-Slavery Standard, 17 September 1859.
him. He played his opponents for criticizing his Society but in turn did not permit rebuttals. Undoubtedly, as the Rev. J. Sella Martin pointed out at the outset of the meeting, the enormous prestige of Garnet as an antislavery leader helped him overcome imputations of running a society akin to the Colonization Society.

While presenting the aims of the Society, Garnet was less than honest in juxtaposing his own "sentiments" alongside the stated objects of the Society. When asked by a member of the audience if these represented the views of the A.C.S., Garnet evaded by noting that he was representing his "own views and the objects" of the A.C.S. Thus, while the Society's Constitution made no direct reference to fighting for abolition or against colour prejudice in the United States, Garnet numbered them among his primary aims and objects.

The main plank of religious work and the economic uplift of Africa found the third and fourth place in Garnet's list of priorities. It was obvious that Garnet "selling" the Society to the black community, was probably aware of the contradictions between his personal and the stated aims of the A.C.S. Garnet sought to mobilize black emotionalism by stressing that the

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62 *Weekly Anglo-African*, 10 September 1859; *William C. Hall's account of the meeting can be seen in his letter to the editor of the *Anglo-African*, 17 September 1859.

63 Note the comparison between the actual constitution of the A.C.S. and the aims as outlined by Garnet. See also Douglass' criticism that Garnet was answering "objectors" and not "objections," *Frederick Douglass Monthly*, October 1859, p. 151.
great aim of the society as he saw it was "to establish a grand centre of negro nationality...." This vision of a great African "commercial, intellectual and political" empire was to be restated by Dolany a year later. Closer to the actual stated aims of the Society, Garnet drew up a picture of blacks capturing the foreign commerce in the African West Coast. He noted that this was a historical opportunity for black business enterprise which would have the effect of breaking up slavery and prejudice together. Answering those who criticized the Society for "begging" funds from whites, Garnet pointed out that practically every prominent black leader had used voluntary contributions for his work or personal upkeep.

The meeting was a success. Yet, Garnet's supporters did not press the issue. The resolutions at the end of the meeting cleverly steered clear of any direct endorsement of the Civilization Society. Instead, the resolutions moved by the Rev. J. Sella Martin, chose to hail Garnet's antislavery labours and, drawing from that, offered him "respect and...cooperation." Needless to say, the Garrisonians numbering just six, opposed these apparently innocuous resolutions.

It is clear that by mid-1859 the Civilization Society was beginning to attract the attention of blacks. This was in great part due to the personality of Henry Highland Garnet himself.

64 *Weekly Anglo-African*, 10 September 1859.


His aggressive campaign and stature were a vital addition to the ranks of the emigrationists. Several black leaders like the Rev. J.W.C. Pennington and others, were, however, initially chary of joining the Civilization Society. Pennington disassociated himself from the Society while advocating its claims. Subsequently, however, he accepted membership of the Society in 1861.

Those against the Society did not give up easily, the intensity of their feelings can be gauged by the near-riot which took place in New York on the occasion of a meeting called by George T. Downing and others. This meeting was held in Zion Church on the 12 April 1860, with Downing presiding and J.W.C. Pennington as one of the vice-presidents. The meeting was carefully organized, and the organizers had taken great pains to get condemnations of the Civilization Society from a range of black and white abolitionists like Gerrit Smith, William C. Nell, Robert Purvis, William Wells Brown, Oliver Johnson and others which were read out.

Garnet and his followers were there in force. They demanded the right to speak their word. The tension between the opposing factions was too great, and by the time the organizers' proposed resolutions lumping the Civilization Society and the

67 For Pennington's attitude see Frederick Douglass' Paper, 8 July 1859, cited in Philip S. Foner, n. 8, vol. 5, pp. 452-3. See also the Constitution of the Civilization Society which was modified in 1861 in Howard Brotz, ed., Negro Social and Political Thought, 1850-1920: Representative Texts (New York, 1966), p. 195, where Pennington is listed as an office-bearer of the Society.
Colonization Society together came up, the meeting broke up in a bedlam. One resolution supposedly passed, reported in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, noted that hope for blacks in America did not lie in cotton cultivation in Yoruba or in founding a black nationality but in a "radical change of public opinion" through continued antislavery agitation within the United States.

Garnet staged a return meeting within a few days of having upstaged the previous one. As the meeting was packed with emigrationists, Garnet offered equal time to his opponents but there were none present.

While the bitter fight between the proponents and opponents of the A.C.S. continued, Garnet also set about outlining a plan of action for the work of the A.C.S. At a more peaceful meeting held earlier at the Cooper Institute, New York, Garnet had unveiled his organization's intentions of founding a settlement in the Yoruba region which is part of modern Nigeria. With this settlement as a core, black colonists would teach the local residents to cultivate cotton and other crops. For this purpose "a company of virtuous, intelligent and enterprising" black pioneers would be sent to Yoruba. It was at this meeting that Garnet sought to give the impression that Martin Delany too


69 National Anti-Slavery Standard, 21 April 1860.

70 Weekly Anglo-African, 23 April 1860.

71 Ibid., 17 March 1860.
was part of his organization. He announced that "the Commissioners of the Society, MARTIN J. DELANY and ROBERT CAMPBELL had already negotiated a treaty for land with the Yoruba chiefs."

Delany's African Venture

Delany's decision, in early 1853, to found a colony in the Niger Valley area in West Africa was, perhaps, a more startling turn-around than that of Garnet. Delany had been consistently opposing African emigration on several grounds. In his book, referred to earlier, Delany had rejected Liberia as a possible site for emigration. The association of Liberia with colonizationist ideas was too distasteful for him. Besides, his original theory was based on a black emigration within America. The facts and figures he had presented at the first Emigration Convention underlined this. His interest in Blair's scheme, too, arose from these views.

In 1855, writing an introduction to William Nesbit's "expose" of Liberian colonization, Delany put forward his objections to Liberia in clear terms. He noted that Liberia, as indicated by Nesbit, had a poor potential for growth. Besides, he objected to the white missionary influence in Liberia. For spreading the Gospel in Liberia, he was of the opinion that blacks should have been educated to carry out the task. More cogently, he objected to white missionaries as they perpetuated

72 New York Times, 8 March 1860.
73 Delany, n. 1, p. 163; also Proceedings, n. 1, pp. 65-70; and Martin Delany to Francis P. Blair, Jr., 24 February 1858, n. 45, p. 34.
the stereotype of "the superiority of the white race." 74

Forseeing the missionaries as agents of imperialism, Delany warned that these "men of God" select the best portions of some foreign countries, and are quickly followed by a military operation, which result in the total overthrow and loss of such countries. This process, he noted, could already be seen in parts of Asia and Africa. 75

In 1852 Delany had undoubtedly espoused migration within the hemisphere as the racial destiny of American blacks. However, in an Appendix, he had presented the outline for a project for an "expedition of adventure" to East Africa. Delany's motive then, and his choice of the location indicates, that this was part of his black nationalist philosophy of advocating black organized and black-funded activities to draw attention of the world as well as to enthuse fellow blacks with a sense of pride of achievement.

To organize the project, Delany had mooted a Confidential Council which, as a supreme body, would create a Board of Commissioners for the East African project. The explorers or "adventurers" could, in time, become possible colonizers. It was evident that he was influenced by the publication on the African explorations by Livingstone and others. Delany was soon fired with the mission to inspire blacks with the spirit of adventure born of nationalism arising out of the historic ties of blacks to Africa. He hoped that this spirit would help

74 Nesbit, n. 57, pp. 3-5.
75 Ibid., pp. 5-8.
promote the goal of black rule over the black continent.

In outlining the mode of raising funds Delany now realized that a pragmatic approach was the only answer. Thus he proposed for his West African venture, fraternal assistance from England and France. He saw both the commercial nations funding such a project of exploration in part due to benevolence, and in part to enlightened self-interest. The potential wealth that such discoveries could unfold, he believed, would be enormous. The enlightened co-operation between Europe and the prospective black nations in the tropics could be of mutual benefit.

The account of his West African expedition was written as the *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party*, which indicated primarily the new depth of his commitment to Africa as well as to emigrationism. The *Report* was presented by Delany to William Howard Day, President of the Emigration Convention since 1858. In spite of the fact that Delany looked on his expedition as activity arising from the earlier National Emigration Conventions, in 1861, he declared, "I have outgrown, long since, the boundaries of North America, and with them have also outgrown the boundaries of their claims." This statement indicated the distance he had travelled from the heady days of the first National Emigration Convention.

To Africa, then, he addressed his ideas, born out of his

struggle of the previous twenty years. The great endeavour would again be contingent on an idea of nationhood. This, to Delany meant a combination of territory, population and natural resources. In Yoruba, where Delany had negotiated, what later proved to be an abortive treaty for land, all these elements were present. Lagos was the focus of a large hinterland where cotton could be grown in enormous quantities to challenge slave-grown American cotton. In any case, American cotton production, Delany felt could not hope to match the natural advantages of climate and soil available in Africa. Besides, Delany argued, control of cotton production was destined to be an African monopoly. In Africa they held the land, in America they held the labour. If black slaves could produce so much cotton, he reasoned, black freemen could easily double the output.

The great African nationality envisioned by Delany was thus to be backed by a commercial empire. Such a nationality or the prospects for such a nationality, declared Delany, took precedence over all other preoccupations of black Americans. The growth of the African nation would, of course, Delany pointed out, spell the doom of slave trade directly, and cotton slavery in America indirectly. Delany, with the awareness of having found his mission concluded his report, noting, "I return, of course, to Africa with my family."

In August 1858, Delany sought to get the endorsement of

78 Delany, n. 77, pp. 55-56, 59, 61.
79 Ibid., p. 63.
80 Ibid., p. 75.
the National Emigration Convention that had gathered at Chatham, Canada West, now a shadow of its former self. Not only did Gelany fail to get any endorsement for his venture, but the Convention retreated from Gelany's earlier formulation of emigration as a nationalist venture to merely approving all emigrationist ventures--individual or otherwise. Gelany had to be contented with an appointment as the chief commissioner of an "African Commission" created by the Convention. The outcome of the Convention was hardly surprising considering the ambivalence of its President, William H. Ray towards emigration. A few months later, at a convention of blacks in Ohio, he had attacked emigrationism directly. However, some form of endorsement seemed to have been important for Gelany and his expedition maintained the fiction that it was a product of the National Emigration Convention.

In April 1859, Gelany set off for Liberia along with the venerable old President of the first and second Emigration Conventions, the Rev. William C. Enmore. Gelany spent nine months in Africa, and returned to the United States via England at the end of 1860. In Africa, Gelany travelled to Lagos from Liberia. From there he went upriver to Abokuta, where in December 1859, along with Robert Campbell, he signed a treaty for leasing land from the Igbo of Yoruba. The treaty entitled the explorers the right "on behalf of the African race in America," to settle anywhere in the Abokuta area.

81 Miller, n. 20, pp. 179-33; and Blackett, n. 53, pp. 6-6.
82 Gelany, n. 77, pp. 34-35.
The Rev. Alexander Crummell and Africa

An American migrant to Africa was to have considerable influence on the ideas of Martin Delany on Africa. He was the Rev. Alexander Crummell. Crummell had received his earlier education with Henry Highland Garnet and had been active in antislavery work in New York and Rhode Island. In 1847, he left for England and after studying in Queen's College, he became an Episcopal missionary in Liberia. When Delany went up the Cavalla River in the Yoruba region, Crummell had accompanied him. Both Robert Campbell and Delany were helped by Crummell in their African sojourn. Crummell outlined his views on the role of Afro-Americans in Africa in a letter to Charles B. Dunbar in September 1860. This letter was printed the following year in his work The Future of Africa.

In this essay, Crummell openly acknowledged the role of Delany and Campbell in shaping his ideas. At some remove from the events of the decade, Crummell's ideas were more pragmatic and objective. He thus accepted the fact that black Americans by virtue of their three centuries of domicile in the United States, as well as their economic and other contributions to that country, were just in accepting themselves as Americans.


85 Ibid., p. 170.
Crummell's views on as to how the Afro-Americans should relate to Africa were based plainly on a sense of racial solidarity, which can even be described as pan-Negro nationalism. However, Crummell in his essay emphatically denied pan-Negro nationalistic ideas. On the other hand he stressed a sort of ethnicism, based specifically on the needs of Africa as a backward and needy continent. In this light, he welcomed "adventurous, enterprising colored men" like Delany who were doing their "temporal" duty by Africa. On the other hand, he, as a clergyman and missionary, stressed an equally pressing if not more important duty of evangelizing Africa.

While the economic uplift of Africa was felt by Crummell as a vital goal, he could not, due to his own position, but help stressing on the importance of missionary work. It is in this context that he criticized American blacks for exhibiting a "stolid inhabitativeness." Crummell explained that blacks as a community indicated an unwillingness to move from their places of abode even under the worst of circumstances. In a pointed dig at Frederick Douglass, he noted that even after the Fugitive Slave Law, he had moved northwards, but only to Rochester, N.Y., in close proximity to Canada. Along with this conservative tendency, noted Crummell, American blacks displayed, "a want of missionary zeal." Observing these tendencies Crummell declared that: "Self-preservation, self-sustentation, are only

86 Ibid., p. 173.
87 Ibid., p. 174; see also Wahle, n. 83, p. 390.
single items in the large and comprehensive category of human duties and obligations." Crummell's view of emigration was thus very much in line with the views of the African Civilization Society. While he maintained the importance of black entrepreneurial activity in Africa, his main emphasis was on the evangelization of Africa. These two tasks, were, in Crummell's view, especially enjoined on the American blacks and indeed all blacks around the globe.

We can thus see clearly the similarities in the view of African emigration as espoused by Crummell and those declared by Delany in his Official Report. Floyd J. Miller sees a sharp cleavage of views between the two resting primarily on their differing emphasis on the role of religion in regenerating Africa. In the opinion of the present writer, Miller's contention is not strictly accurate. In comparing the views, we must not forget their different backgrounds. Delany was throughout his earlier career a strictly secular theoretician. Crummell was, right from the beginning, a clergyman, and a missionary. If we allow for these differences there is a remarkable convergence of views. Delany, in his Official Report portrayed the work of Liberian missionaries with a considerable amount of

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88 Crummell, n. 67, pp. 176-7.
89 See Crummell's footnote, ibid., p. 178.
90 Ibid., p. 179; see also Wahle, n. 83, pp. 390-2.
91 Miller, n. 20, p. 204.
sympathy, considering his earlier anti-clerical suspicions. If Crummell stressed the importance of missionary activity in the "regeneration" of Africa, Delany emphasized the importance of economic development for this "regeneration". Further, both were united in trying to rally American blacks to undertake this "regeneration" as their task, the only difference being, that while Delany had given up all hopes of an American citizenship for blacks, Crummell conceded their right to the claim of remaining American. Delany's claim that he had "outgrown the boundaries of North America" and Crummell's appeal to American blacks to involve themselves in Africa out of racial solidarity can really be seen as two sides of the coin which represents this mid-century manifestation of pan-Negro nationalism.

It is easy to see in the ideas of Crummell and Delany the antecedents of the beliefs that helped shape Henry Highland Garnet's commitment to the African Civilization Society. Both Crummell and Garnet agreed with the main aim of the Civilization Society--"the evangelization and civilization of Africa." Delany conceived his aim as an act of "Moral, Social and Political Elevation of Ourselves, and the Regeneration of Africa."

92 See Martin Delany, n. 77, pp. 52-53. Delany pointed out that the practice of changing names by missionaries was not good. By changing native names to Christian ones Delany warned, Christian missionaries were linking up Christianity with a certain loss of identity. This was a remarkably perceptive statement given the general temper of the times. See also Blackett, n. 53, pp. 15-16.

93 See Crummell, n. 67, pp. 174, 177; Delany, n. 77, pp. 11, 55.
Delany's secular commitment was clear, firstly towards the blacks in the U.S. and secondly to Africa. The use of the word "regeneration" itself did not imply religious regeneration only but a commitment to the economic uplift of Africa.

There was a persistent misunderstanding that Delany's expedition was commissioned by the A.C.S. This was evident from Garnet's claim that Delany and Campbell were officers of the African Civilization Society. Though Delany in England in 1860, did not dissociate himself from the A.C.S. too vigorously. Nevertheless, with the help of William Howard Day he was able to convince the newly formed African Aid Society in England of his independence from the A.C.S. The African Aid Society was an off-shoot of an earlier group set up to aid the projects of the African Civilization Society. Based in London, and comprised of antislavery merchants, its aim was to develop areas where cotton could be grown with free labour. Delany toured Britain funded by the Society. Here he pressed his theme of free labour cotton supply for the British economy arising from the possible success of the Yoruba scheme. Delany categorically maintained however that the Yoruba venture could

94 Delany, n. 77, p. 11; see also the Constitution of the African Civilization Society, n. 54. It must be pointed out that the commitment of both the missionaries and the entrepreneurs was not new. In the first quarter of the 19th century we have the example of Daniel Coker who went as a missionary to Sierra Leone as well as that of Paul Cuffee who had several trading ventures in Africa which he conducted in his own ship. Miller, n. 20, pp. 27-33, 71.

95 Miller, n. 20, pp. 220-3.
only be a self-reliant all-black scheme. Any assistance from the British, would be treated strictly as a loan and repaid.

Pelany reached the United States at the end of 1860 after an absence of nearly 1½ years. In that period several things had changed. The martyrdom of John Brown in 1859 had electrified the black community. Its impact on the scribendi, though persistent, emigration movement had been perceptible. In mid-1859 when he left, Garnet was just emerging as an emigrationist. By the end of 1860, however, Garnet had become an immense asset to the emigrationist cause. At this time Douglass and other anti-emigrationists were busy with the Presidential poll supporting the Republican Party. The election of Lincoln that year was to set off a chain of events which were at that time still unforeseen.

Emigration High-tide: Blacks and Haiti

In 1859, when the emigration movement turned towards Africa, a small but consistent group of Haitian emigrationists remained. In the Chatham Emigration Convention in September 1859 the Rev. J.T. Holly had successfully out-manoeuvred Pelany.

Pelany, n. 77, pp. 70-71; and Miller, n. 20, p. 226. Interest in African emigration was not only confined to groups organized by Garnet and Pelany only. There was, for example, a "Cambridge Liberian Emigrant Association" set up by a group of Cambridge, Mass. This group believed that "the time has come that Africa should become a Nation," and that American blacks had a vital role to play in this process. See a pamphlet issued by this group in "Pamphlets on Slavery," compiled by T.M. Higginson available at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
This last meeting of the Convention was a parting of ways for Holly and Delany. This convention, as we have noted refused to endorse Delany's African scheme. It did not support Holly either, but gave a general endorsement to emigrationism.

Like both Delany and Garnet, Holly, in the period 1858-1860 did not effect any major upsurge in favour of emigration. Nevertheless, in these years, Haitian emigration received a boost from several other factors which made it appear subsequently as the closest movement to a mass upsurge that antebellum emigrationism was to see.

The most important stimulus for Haitian emigration was the attitude of a new government of Haiti under President Geffard. The stagnant economy of Haiti was the major problem before its government. The government hoped that the introduction of American emigrants, comprising of skilled labourers, would stimulate the economy. To this end the Government went to great lengths to help promote emigration.

In 1859, the Haitian Government gave a call for emigration in the form which held considerable appeal to the American blacks under severe pressure already. F.B. DuBois, the Secretary of Interior and Agriculture in Haiti addressed the appeal thus:

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97 Killer, n. 20, pp. 181-2.
98 This point was stressed by Douglass as well, see "Emigration to Hayti," Frederick Douglass' Monthly, January 1861, p. 236.
men of our race dispersed in the United States. Your fate, your social position...daily becomes worse...contempt and hatred increase against you.... Come, then, to us! The doors of Haiti are open to you. (99)

In the surcharged atmosphere among the blacks, this appeal could evoke some response. The only antebellum emigration movement that approached anywhere near success was begun.

John H. Rapier Jr., brother of James Rapier, later Congressman from Alabama, joined a stream of several hundred free blacks who migrated from Louisiana to Haiti in 1859. Rapier, who moved to Haiti to seek his fortune gave a clear picture of the conditions in that island in letters to his uncle and his father. He pointed to the caste distinctions between mulattoes and blacks on the island; the army was mulatto officered, and several key posts in Haiti were under mulattoes. Further Rapier noted, the importance of American emigrants several of whom occupied key posts in the Haitian government.

The beginnings of the indentured labour system were already visible in Haiti indicating a relative labour shortage. Writing to his father, Rapier noted that this system had spread throughout the island. In this context, the Haitian ruling

99 Reprinted in Frederick Douglass' Monthly, January 1861, p. 399.


elite was as eager to get American emigrants, as were the protagonists of the Haitian emigration to get to Haiti.

Having failed to get support of the Chatham Convention, Holly attempted to rally the Episcopal Church to fund him. Here too, he met with only limited success. However, he organized the fourth annual meeting of the Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting the Extension of the Church among Colored People. The Convention somewhat predictably declared, "that the people of Hayti, from contiguity of position, historical coincidents, and similarity of destiny, have peculiar claims upon American Christians for their sympathy and support," and endorsed the call for establishing a mission on the island. The fact however remained, that the Convention was one only in name, and only three of Holly's fellow black Episcopal pastors attended the gathering.

In the months June 1855 to January 1860, Holly also used the pages of The Anglo-African Magazine to promote Haitian emigration. Holly's views were put forward in an article in serial form in the latter half of 1855. The article was published in seven instalments. Holly's central argument rested on the desirability of American emigration to Haiti to provide the necessary boost for the development of a great black nationality. Holly discussed at length the problems that Haiti suffered from. Besides, the rule of despotism Holly argued, Haiti was plagued by the Roman Catholic Church. This Church "covered with the superstition of the dark ages" was inadequate in the face of Haiti's

102 Weekly Anglo-African, 22 October 1859.
spiritual and cultural needs.

The emigration to Haiti by American Protestant blacks would be the best possible way to create in this black nation the core of a great black Renaissance, Holly asserted. Emigration by blacks would maintain the racial homogeneity in Haiti. Besides bringing the influences of a "maturer civilization," American blacks would bring a better religion as well. As Holly envisioned it:

...the emigration movement thither should assure the shape of well organized religious communities headed by an educated ministry.... Agriculture should be made the chief industrial basis of these communities... there should [also] be interspersed in all communities such mechanics and handicraftsmen as may be necessary to supply the immediate wants of such primitive settlements.

To answer critics who opposed mass emigration as abandonment of their enslaved brethren, Holly argued that slavery was not a peculiarly American system, but had its real basis in the prevailing international political and economic system. Holly thus argued that "a strong, powerful, enlightened and progressive negro nationality," was a vital element in the destruction of slavery and the slave system. It was towards fulfilling this end that black American Protestants had a vital role to play.

The Haitian government decided to appoint an agent to promote emigration and all the work associated with it. James

Redpath, a white journalist and abolitionist was appointed to this post in the summer of 1860. The Haitian Government, according to its agent, agreed to pay the passage of the emigrants willing to take up farming in Haiti, and pay for their upkeep for the first eight days on the island. Besides, the emigrant farmers would be given land to settle on which they could buy in instalments. The emigrants would be granted full protection of law and citizenship after a year's residence. Predominantly Roman Catholic Haiti assured the largely black Protestant American emigrants that their religious freedom would be guaranteed. The first generation emigrants were also waived compulsory military service. The emigrants could leave when they pleased, barring those who had come under government expense, who would have to stay on for three years.

The type of incentives offered were also indicated by John Sapier's description of the visit of the Rev. William P. Newman, a black Canadian clergyman. Newman was feted by the Haitian elite, the Chief of Police, General Larotte offered Newman a plantation free of cost for 10 years. His stay in Haiti was looked after by the Government. Newman had claimed that he could get 4,000 emigrants from Canada West's black community. As Newman was, in reality, quite incapable of


105 Ibid., pp. 94-96; see also "Report to the President of Haiti by the Office of the Secretary of the Interior and of Agriculture, Section of the Interior," in Frederick Douglass' Monthly, November 1860, p. 359.
organizing such a migration, he put forward demands for all sorts of additional concessions which the Haitian Government turned down.

Another advocate of Haitian emigration, was J. Dennis Harris who had in November 1858, fought against the anti-emigrationists in the Ohio State Convention. Subsequent to that he had written a letter to Francis P. Blair, hailing his colonization plan. Harris' letter was published as an appendix with Blair's Boston speech. There he had noted that within the Americas, Central American seemed the only viable proposition for a black migration. Canada, besides being too cold, precluded the possibility of blacks from being "identified with the ruling power of...[the] nation."

In 1859, Harris formed a Central American Land Company in Cleveland. The Company planned "to send out as early as the first day of December 1859, a delegation of colored men as Commissioners to select a permanent location, purchase the land, and upon their return sell the same to such persons as wish to establish themselves in a free and independent country." H. Ford Douglass served as a field agent for short-lived Company of which Harris was the general agent.


107 F.P. Blair, n. 45, p. 34.

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sgP.nt for Ohio, Holly for New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Samuel V. Berry, successor to William C. Monroe's

St. Matthey's Church in Detroit handled Michigan, Henry Highland Garnet in spite of his Civilization Society commitments, was

agent for New York.

The Last Bastion: Frederick Douglass

and Haitian Emigration

The most startling development at the end of 1860 was

the endorsement of Haitian emigration by Frederick Douglass the

most persistent foe of emigration through the antebellum decades.

As late as the spring of 1860, Douglass had maintained his opposition to the new developments in the Haitian emigration move- ment. He conceded however, that Haitian emigration looked

attractive in view of Geffard's invitation.

Through 1860, we can detect in Douglass' writing an increasing pessimism towards the prospect of blacks in America.

In a letter to James Redpath in June 1860, Douglass noted that

"I have little hope of the freedom of the slave by peaceful means." A letter to William Still in July was even more pessimistic. Noting that while twenty years earlier slavery

109 Frederick Douglass' Monthly, January 1861, p. 399.
110 Frederick Douglass' Monthly, May 1859, pp. 68, 70.
seemed fomed, the events of the 1850s had "changed the whole appearance of the struggle." He reiterated his faith in God and advised still not to despair.

The November presidential election which was to elect Lincoln was still months away. Douglass emphasized to Gerrit Smith that he could not accept Lincoln, but hoped that Smith and his friends among the Radical Abolitionists could find an alternative. The Republican Party, now a political force in the North, was attempting to shake off its allegedly "pro-Negro" bias by taking a stand against the antislavery agitation and also against black equality and black citizenship. This Douglass felt, was not only suicidal for the Party but a grim importent for blacks. Douglass with his meagre resources, had advocated a policy of using the Republicans, but they ended up using the antislavery movement for their own ends. Gropping with these new realities, Douglass could find no easy answer. He called all those within the Party to support Charles Sumner and warned the Republicans that if they lost sight of the "anti-slavery sentiment" which had given birth to their Party it would be finished.

115 Frederick Douglass, "The Republican Party," Frederick Douglass' Monthly, August 1860, p. 308.
Writing in his *Monthly* on the prospects of the future, Douglass saw it shrouded "in doubt and gloom." Douglass was appalled by the seemingly "terrible paradox" with which whites celebrated their own democracy and were totally indifferent to slavery in their system. Without stating it, Douglass was moving to the belief that an insuperable gulf separated the whites and blacks in America. As the election campaign intensified the Republicans maintained their distance from the antislavery forces. Douglass saw this in the opposition of New York Republicans to granting blacks in that state equal elective franchise. The defeat of a measure to the effect in the November 1860 election in New York by 337,934 votes to 197,503 along with the victory of the Republican Party in the same state was a severe blow to Douglass. The fact that blacks had had to single-handedly agitate for the measure which would open elective franchise to all adult blacks (till then only those paying $2.50 in taxes were entitled to vote), indicated that the Republican Party was not at all interested in black rights.

A more important element in Douglass' thought was his perception of Abraham Lincoln, the Republican President-elect. Earlier we have pointed out that Douglass had expressed his inability to support Lincoln. Consistently Douglass campaigned and spoke on behalf of those Republicans who openly avowed antislavery sentiment. Lincoln's defensive stance against imputations...

116 Ibid.
of his being pro-black could hardly have endearred him to Douglass. Thus, Douglass saw in his election no danger to the status quo in the country. The persistently defensive tone of Lincoln vis-a-vis the South convinced Douglass that: "Slavery will be as safe, and safer, in the Union under such a President...." Douglass' ambivalence towards emigration was already visible in the autumn of 1860. In the November issue of his Monthly, he published without comment, a translation of a report of the Haitian Government on the feasibility of encouraging emigration from the United States.

By January 1861, Douglass veered around to endorsing emigration. Writing on "Emigration to Hayti" Douglass conceded that there had always been in the black community, a "more or less strong" tendency to migrate to Haiti. He noted that he had opposed emigration because it tended to weaken black self-development within the United States. Outlining the reasons for the sudden strength of the movement, Douglass pointed out that the main reason was the political stability of the Haitian Government under Geffard as compared to the insecurity and instability faced by the black community in the U.S. Within the U.S., the Dred Scott decision, the increasing economic pressure on blacks by white migrants and more recently the rejection of an equal black franchise in New York indicated a further hardening

118 Frederick Douglass' Monthly, December 1860, p. 370.

of the anti-black sentiment in the U.S. In a sombre note he added:

While we have never favored any plan of emigration, and have never been willing to concede that this is a doomed country, and that we are a doomed race in it, we can [now] raise no objection toward the present movement toward Haiti. (120)

Evidently, then, for Douglass emigration was a measure designed for an extreme situation. He now claimed that he had always looked on emigration as "a possible necessity." With some caution, he expressed the view that even at that time (in January 1861) the necessity had not "yet fully come."

His concept of Haitian emigration was that of a strategic retreat. In Haiti, he felt, blacks would be in close proximity to the U.S., in fact, at "the very portals of slavery," and not as advocated by the others, in the "pestilential shores of Africa." Here, American blacks could move into the Caribbean, South and Central America with its population of over 12 million "who only wait for the life giving and organizing power of intelligence to mould them into one body and into a powerful nation."

In the May issue of his Monthly, Douglass reprinted the invitation of the Haitian Government to American blacks to take refuge in Haiti, outlining the facilities to be provided to emigrants as well as the conditions of civil and religious liberty existing there.

120 Frederick Douglass, "Emigration to Hayti," Frederick Douglass' Monthly, January 1861, pp. 386-7.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid., p. 392.
In the March issue of his *Monthly*, Douglass clarified: "Those accustomed to the culture of cotton, rice, sugar and tobacco, and who have been driven North by the oppressive laws of the slave states, would do well to... go to Haiti." However, he noted, that those owning property and established in the U.S. would be "unwise" to leave immediately. He said, "not in favor of wholesale and indiscriminate emigration to Haiti."

The most remarkable fact was that Douglass was, in a sense not saying anything new he was actually using arguments he had developed earlier. Douglass reprinted these arguments almost word for word from a major speech he had made at the annual meeting of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society seven years earlier just when he was fighting emigrationism tooth and nail. It is evident from the speech that when Douglass wrote out his endorsement of emigration, he consulted the text of his earlier speech. In the light of this consistency of ideas, we must consider his endorsement of emigration as a strictly strategic move. On a direct query as to whether he planned to go to Haiti, Douglass answered: "No, we do not expect to go to Haiti under any circumstances now existing or apprehended... Nevertheless, we shall rejoice in the success..."

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123 *Frederick Douglass' Monthly*, March 1861, p. 420.

those who emigrate we are resolved to visit them.

Portentous development were even at that point evolving the significance of which even Douglass had not grasped adequately. On 20 December 1860, the South Carolina legislature had passed an ordinance of secession by a unanimous vote and the Stars and Stripes was hauled down at Charleston. During January 1861, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas passed secession ordinances. The following months saw the convocation in Montgomery, Ala. of a so-called Confederate Government. Once again the nation appeared to be on the brink of a crisis—this time, the signs were far more ominous than in the earlier sectional crises which were successively resolved by the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850. Those Compromises had brought more distress and sorrow to the blacks. Compromise efforts were once again vigorously underway. Would they succeed or, would the crisis escalate into open military conflict? A war between the North and the South, were it to result in victory for the former, could well be the means for the elimination of slavery. But there were not many among even thoughtful Americans, of whom Douglass was one, who believed that open warfare between the sections was imminent. This appears to be the explanation for Douglass envisaging a visit to Haiti by the end of April 1861.

On 12 April 1861, Confederate batteries commenced their...

125 Frederick Douglass' Monthly, March 1861, p. 420.
bombardment of Fort Hunter. The following day Lincoln called
for the enlistment of 75,000 militia. This was followed by the
passage of the ordinances of secession by the other Southern
states—Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas. The
war between the States was on.

It was Frederick Douglass who was among the first to see
that the outbreak of the Civil War was a development of the most
profound significance for the cause that he had fought for over
many long years. He promptly dropped his plan for his visit to
Haiti which clearly justifies the inference that his endorsement
of emigration was a tactical move, in the given circumstances,
a measure of strategic retreat.

The outbreak of the Civil War meant that the entire prob-
lem needed to be looked from a new perspective. In that persp-
ective, Douglass believed, the one place for American blacks
to stay was the United States of America itself. Wrote Douglass:

The last ten days have made a tremendous revolu-
tion in all things pertaining to the possible
future of the colored people of the United
States. We shall stay here [in the U.S.]... and serve the cause of freedom and mankind. (126)

This notice was appended to a long article announcing 127
his visit to Haiti, "to see things as they really are."

For Abraham Lincoln and foremost Northern whites, the
war that had begun was a war for the preservation of the Union.
Ending of slavery was initially no part of their war aims. But

126  Frederick Douglass' Monthly, May 1861, p. 450.
127  Ibid., p. 449.
to Frederick Douglass and his black compatriots, and to a small number of whites, the war was taken to mean not merely an effort to preserve the Union but to eliminate slavery and to move in the direction of combating racial inequality and oppression in the United States.