



**Earnest Sevier Cox**

# LINCOLN'S NEGRO POLICY

It may be regrettable, but it is undoubtedly a truism, that "public opinion" is often the product of slogans. Ask the average American in the street what is our greatest symbol of Sanctuary, and nine times out of ten he or she will suggest the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island in New York Harbor. "Isn't it a symbol of free immigration?" they will ponder.

Few Americans realize that the Statue of Liberty was a gift of friendship from France to the United States, and that the slogan "Give me your tired, your hungry, etc." was inscribed on the plinth much later. The original statue had nothing to do with immigration. The slogan—written by one Emma Lazarus—was added only after Ellis Island became an immigration transit station.

Ask the average American what Thomas Jefferson had to say about race relations, and he or she will undoubtedly quote the slogan inscribed on the Jefferson Monument in Washington, DC: "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free." However, what Mr. Average is unlikely to know is the sentence which followed: "Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government."

Ask again who freed the slaves and why, and the man-in-the-street will correctly suggest Abraham Lincoln, but will undoubtedly have the idea that this was to make American citizens out of the Negroes. Nothing could be further from the truth. Lincoln freed the slaves so that they could be repatriated to Africa. Several times he spoke out against racial integration, and vociferously condemned the idea of having Negro American citizens.

This little book fills in the gaps the regular History books leave out. We will leave it to the reader to determine why it is these gaps exist.

## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

Throughout his adult life the author of this pamphlet had one goal: the settlement of the race problem in the United States. After years of study and contact with Negroes, he was convinced that the problem has no solution save in one or the other of two forms—separation of the races or amalgamation. Convinced that separation is preferable to amalgamation, Earnest Sevier Cox worked with Negro leaders of the "Back-to-Africa" movement, and kept in touch with some of them until his death in April of 1966.

In this pamphlet he shows that Abraham Lincoln repeatedly advocated repatriation of the American Negro in a land of his own where the race would not lose its purity; that, contrary to allegations from some sources that Lincoln changed his views regarding this matter, he was making plans to establish a colony in Africa for American Negroes a few days before he was assassinated.

The efforts of Lincoln, Madison, Jefferson,

Clay, Webster, Grant and other prominent Americans to promote repatriation of the Negro are dealt with in Cox's *White America*. which book is his most complete, and is recognized as one of the best studies of the race problem in America ever written.

Lincoln's *Negro Policy* first appeared in 1938. Readers of today will recognize that every element of the race problem has remained the same, except more sharply defined as our Nation slides toward a chaos made inevitable by the cowardly refusal of whites in America to face up to racial realities and to recognize and support Negro nationalism.

Since 1938 Negro nationalism has grown far faster among Negroes than assimilation-ism, in spite of billions of dollars which have been expended by white assimilationists to propagandize Negroes, and in spite of a press uniformly unfavorable to all manifes-

tations of nationalism among Negroes. Small wonder that some Negroes have been forced to turn to violence in their uncompromising struggle for the racial integrity, freedom and dignity that should be the right of every race, while the professional agitators who preach assimilation have been the recipients of "peace" awards, unlimited amounts of publicity and money and oceans of maudlin tears shed by hypocrites who demand racial integration for others but who would never dream of living in a Negro neighborhood themselves.

This book is reprinted as a memorial to Earnest Sevier Cox, and to the timeless ideals for which he fought throughout a life of self-sacrifice and single-minded dedication. Those ideals are more valid and urgent today than during his life; and if that life helps others to see the truth with a quicker insight, so as to contribute to the one and only responsible solution of America's greatest problem—the race problem—then his works in death will bear a significance of the greatest magnitude.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The following pages give a brief history of the Negro race repatriation movement, and reveal a resurgence of the movement that has obtained substantial bi-racial support.

Some may hold that the title of this treatise is not comprehensive of the text. But, historically, Abraham Lincoln would be classed as the outstanding advocate of the cause of Negro colonization. As the President of the United States he boldly sought to make Negro repatriation a national policy. He placed the issue definitely before the Congress. For the first time since the death of Lincoln, the question of Negro repatriation is again brought forward in the Congress, as the text shows. Full credit is given to

others, black and white, whose efforts preceded those of President Lincoln, and to those who have sought to sustain the cause since his death. The briefness of the text prevents the inclusion of many individuals who labored for the cause, for an adequate history of the movement would require the space of volumes.

The pictures of Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe were obtained from the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce. That of Charles Fenton Mercer was copied from the brief history of Mr. Mercer, by his kinsman, James Mercer Garnett. A picture of Paul Cuffe could not be located. Appreciation is due Miss Dorothy Walton for the excellent idealized drawings herein reproduced, based upon the features of an eminent Negro.

## LINCOLN'S NEGRO POLICY

"I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, and commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy thereof, do hereby proclaim and declare that . . . it is my purpose upon the next meeting of Congress to again recommend . . . the immediate or gradual abolishment of Slavery . . . and that the effort to colonize persons of African descent, with their consent, upon the continent or elsewhere, with the previously obtained consent of the government existing there, will be continued; that on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or any designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever free;"

The Emancipation Proclamation proclaimed freedom for the slaves, and proclaimed



that efforts to colonize them would be continued. In the interval between the reading of this document to his cabinet, while waiting for a Federal victory before proclaiming emancipation of the slaves, President Lincoln assembled free Negroes in the White House and informed them that he intended to enter into a general program which would solve the race problem through a peaceful and voluntary separation of the races. He closed his address to the free Negroes in the following words, "The practical thing I want to ascertain is, whether I can get a number of able-bodied men, with their wives and children, who are willing to go when I present evidence of encouragement and protection. Could I get a hundred tolerably intelligent men, with their wives and children, and able to 'cut their own fodder' so to speak? Can I have fifty? If I could find twenty-five able-bodied men, with a mixture of women and children, good things in family relations, I think;—I could make a successful commencement. I want you to let me know

whether this can be done or not. This is the practical part of my wish to see you. These are subjects of very great importance—worthy of a month's study, instead of a speech delivered in an hour. I ask you, then, to consider seriously, not pertaining to yourselves merely, not for your race and ours at the present time, but as one of the things, if successfully managed, for the good of mankind—not confined to the present generation, but as

From age to age descends the lay  
To millions yet to be,  
Till far its echoes roll away  
Into eternity."

In this White House address to free Negroes, President Lincoln offered Federal aid to those who would volunteer for colonization and stated that he would begin the movement if as many as 25 would volunteer.

#### NEGRO MEMORIAL

Below will be given extracts from a memorial to President Franklin D. Roosevelt by

the Peace Movement of Ethiopia ("Ethiopia" is here used in a Scriptural sense, and is equivalent to "Africa"), stated to be signed by more than 400,000 Negroes, requesting Federal aid for those who desire to emigrate to Liberia and settle there upon lands held in trust for emigrants from the United States. Many of the applicants had been reduced to the relief rolls, and they appealed to the President to use the relief funds to aid them in taking up holdings in Liberia.

". . . The signatories pay no dues or other fees and the officers of the Peace Movement of Ethiopia serve entirely without pay, meeting their expenses wholly out of their own meager resources. Nor do our plans involve the taking over of any Government Funds. We propose that the Federal Government meet directly such initial expenditures as the launching of adopted plans involves." (Here follows a recitation that many of the applicants were born in the South, came to the North to better their condition and found themselves without opportunity to earn a

livelihood in their abject new state.) "We are simple-minded, sincere, lowly, law-abiding workers who have maintained traditions of simple honesty, industry, and frugality, as much from choice as from necessity. Few of us have education, but we have learned not to heed the blandishments of self seeking politicians, imposters, and the unworthy and the undesirable products of a hectic civilization that is foreign to our nature.

"We have a vivid realization of the hardships and toil that the fruition of our plans in a strange land entails. But we are inured to toil and the ultimate goal of social and economic freedom gives us the heart to welcome the hardships for our children's sake . . . Given an opportunity in our ancestral Africa, the knowledge of farming and of simple farm machinery and implements, which we have acquired here would enable us to carve a frugal but decent livelihood out of the virgin soil and favorable climate of Liberia. . . We are a liability now, and any cost of this project, no matter how great,

would still, we sincerely believe, be a sound investment for the American people. . . . We, the subjoined and accompanying signatories, merely ask respectfully that we be eliminated from an overcrowded labor market and given a helping hand in establishing such social and economic independence as we are fitted for—establishing it where it will give no offense and where it may serve as an object lesson to tempt those who remain."

### VIRGINIA MEMORIAL

President Roosevelt, through his secretary, Mr. McIntyre, replied to the Memorialists, recognized the difficulties of the situation and regretted that it was not practical at that time to consider their proposed steps for repatriation. The Memorialists then sought assistance from Virginia, which State had taken the initiative in acquiring the territory which is now Liberia, and the General Assembly of Virginia passed the following Memorial to Congress, February, 1936.

"Whereas there is valuable land sparsely

populated in the republic of Liberia, a portion of which land is reserved for American Negro colonies, and many of our Negroes evidence a desire to live in an independent nation of Negroes and strive to achieve a high and honorable race destiny:

"Therefore be it resolved by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the General Assembly of Virginia memorialize the Congress of the United States to make provisions for the colonization of persons of African descent, with their own consent, in Liberia, or at any other place or places on the African continent."

#### EXTRAORDINARY APPEAL

The "Peace Movement's" appeal to President Roosevelt would be classed, I think, as the most extraordinary Negro racial document in the history of the nation. The program of the organization is restricted to a single purpose—"To Return People of African Descent To Their Motherland, Africa". It marks, however, but one of an historical ser-

ies of Negro effort to effect racial repatriation. The Universal Negro Improvement Association, under leadership of Marcus Garvey, proclaims the ideals of Negro blood integrity, Negro advancement culturally and racially, and a repatriation movement with Liberia as its initial objective.

Before we survey, historically, Negro effort to re-establish the American portion of the race in the land of its ancestors, we should know something of the history of the British Colony of Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa in which recaptured slaves and certain blacks from Great Britain, the United States, and the British West Indies had been colonized. President Jefferson corresponded with the Sierra Leone Company and sought to secure the consent of that country to receive Negro emigrants from the United States. The British rejected Jefferson's proposal and gave as one reason for their refusal to receive emigrants from the United States what amounted to a severe condemnation of the character of the Amer-

ican Negro as a nation builder. It was stated that the British Negro—those that had been received from Great Britain and the British West Indies—had the qualities requisite for freedom, and for establishing a nation of their kind, but that the American emigrants were a worthless and troublesome element. An unfair estimate we think, and one not so favorable to the British, for the American Negroes that had been repatriated by that country were those who had been lured from their masters in the Revolutionary War, and this condemnation of their late war comrades seemed to imply that only worthless Negroes had joined the British forces.

#### PAUL CUFFE

Within a decade an able American Negro—Paul Cuffe—succeeded in doing what President Jefferson had failed in doing. He obtained the consent of Sierra Leone to a program for reception of American free Negroes. Paul Cuffe was a native of Massachusetts. He was the son of Cuffe Slocum, a slave who



by industry had purchased freedom. Because it pertained to former slave status, the surname "Slocum" was abandoned. When Paul had become adult he was described as tall, well formed, and athletic; a man of remarkable dignity, tact, and piety.

At the age of 16 Paul Cuffe was a sailor on a whaling vessel. He was captured by the British and held prisoner for some months. He studied arithmetic and navigation. When he was 21, he and his brother, John, contested the legality of denying suffrage to colored citizens who paid taxes, and shortly afterwards Negroes acquired legal rights and privileges in Massachusetts. When he was 34 years old he built a public school house and employed a teacher. He became captain of his own vessel, acquired other vessels, and at the age of 47 owned one ship, two brigs, several smaller boats, besides property in houses and lands. He early became interested in Negro repatriation, and in 1811, with a crew of Negro seamen, sailed to Sierra Leone and made arrangements there for the reception of

Negro emigrants from the United States. The second war with Great Britain intervened and it was not until 1815 that he could begin his plan. In that year, at his own expense, he carried a ship load of emigrants, free Negroes — from Massachusetts to Sierra Leone. He died in 1817, the year in which white Americans decided upon a plan to assist Negro repatriation.

CHARLES FENTON MERCER In the General Assembly of Virginia, 1777, a committee of which Thomas Jefferson was chairman reported favorably on a measure for the emancipation and colonization of Virginia slaves. Its term required the acquisition of territory and a plan for gradual colonization, sending out young men at the age of 21, young women at the age of 18. It was proposed to establish and sustain them until the colony had acquired strength. After the War for Independence several of the States emancipated their slaves and a number of leading white men in these States sought to promote a colonization movement to repa-

triate the freed men. Before definite measures could be effected the French Revolution had begun and the world was in discord and uncertainty until Napoleon had fought his last battle, in 1815.

With the exile of Napoleon there was a general peace for the first time in forty years. Immediately we find the friends of Negro repatriation at work. Charles Fenton Mercer, a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, introduced a resolution requesting the President to acquire land for a colony for free Negroes and for slaves who should be made free. This memorial was passed by an almost unanimous vote, December, 1816. Tennessee and Maryland made similar requests. Early in 1817 a group of distinguished citizens gathered in Washington and formed the American Colonization Society. The purpose of the organization was to promote the cause of Negro repatriation. Land would have to be acquired for a colony, and ways and means for its settlement would need to be formulated. The task would be too great

for a group of private citizens, but it was believed that the Society, if aided by the Federal government, could begin the repatriation movement and that thereafter the Federal government could take over the movement.

When it had set forth its purpose of Negro repatriation, the American Colonization Society enlisted in its ranks probably the most distinguished body of citizens enrolled by any organization during our national history. Bushrod Washington was its first President. Francis Scott Key, John Randolph, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Charles Fenton Mercer, John Marshall, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Abraham Lincoln, and a host of other able Americans, men and women, as members of the Society sought to make Negro repatriation a reality. Rufus King, in the United States Senate, proposed that proceeds from the sale of the Public lands, after certain obligations had been paid, be used by the Federal government in a general scheme

of Negro colonization. Madison, and Marshall, as private citizens concurred in the King proposal. But the Federal government was not to take over the repatriation movement, for, in Congress, the "Slave Power" raised its head and struck at every move that was made to assist the cause of emancipation and colonization of the slaves.

When Congress would not grant aid, and the repatriationists themselves were without strength to acquire and colonize a territory, it seemed that the cause was a hopeless one. But it was not hopeless. Charles Fenton Mercer, who had sponsored the Virginia memorial which requested the President to acquire land for a Negro colony, had been elected to Congress. He was known as an able man. He now was to prove that he was a great man, possessed of political genius in dealing with his own race, and a humanitarian spirit which was to stamp him as a foremost benefactor of the Negro race. Mercer moved by indirection and involved the Federal government in the acquisition of land and the trans-

portation of colonists.

The importation of slaves was illegal, but they were being "bootlegged" into the United States. Mercer struck at this traffic. In the Anti-Slave-Trade Act of March 3, 1819, initiated and aided through Congress by Mercer in such manner as to secure the unanimous support of that body, an appropriation of funds was made to return to Africa slaves illegally brought into the United States. When the time came to execute the provisions of this Act, Mercer is found advancing to President Monroe the plausible theory that if the unfortunate captives should be returned to the coast of Africa and released there they would probably be re-inslaved and possibly some of them returned again to the United States. President Monroe was in full sympathy with the colon-izationists. He determined to obtain land on the West Coast of Africa where slaves illegally imported into the United States could be placed and cared for by the Federal government. In co-operation with the Colonization

Society he sent out agents to acquire territory, and sent out American free Negroes to aid in its administration. This was the initial step in obtaining the land now known as Liberia, the capital of which—"Monrovia," was named for President Monroe.

The Act of 1819, however, was merely the beginning of Mercer's work in opposition to the slave trade and in behalf of Negro repatriation. In 1820 he succeeded in having citizens of the United States who engaged in the slave trade adjudged pirates, who "on conviction shall suffer death".

In 1823 he submitted a resolution (which was passed)—"Resolved, that the President of the United States be requested to enter upon and prosecute from time to time, such negotiations with the several maritime powers of Europe and America, as he may deem expedient for the effectual abolition of the African slave trade and its ultimate denunciation as piracy under the laws of nations, by consent of the civilized world." In his resolution of 1824 (which was passed) the Presi-

dent was requested to lay before the House the result of his correspondence with other nations "relative to the denunciation of the African slave trade as piracy." In 1830 Congress published a volume of 293 pages (Rep. No. 248) dealing almost exclusively with Mercer's official efforts for the promotion of Negro repatriation and the suppression of the African slave trade. It is probable that his subsequent efforts were equally as great.

Mercer led three great movements, any one of which should give him a high place in American history. The colonists who established a Negro republic were aided by many white men, but their chief indebtedness is to Mercer. And when the slave trade, the age-long agony of Africa, had ceased, no one more than Charles Fenton Mercer had influenced its suppression.

### WRATH OF THE SLAVE POWER

Mercer had been supported and protected by the great men of his day, but he was younger than most of them, and when his ef-



forts had brought upon him the wrath of the growing Slave Power, he stood alone. The records of his great achievements were submerged beneath the rising tide of pro-slavery oratory, sermons, editorials, laws, and literature. But Negro students are showing an interest in Mercer's labors and it may be that a Negro historian will reveal him as a benefactor of the Negro race who served it in such measure as to cause his own race to grow cold in its memory of him.

### OHIO PLAN

With the acquisition of territory and the evidence of Negroes volunteering for colonization in far greater numbers than the Colonization Society could accommodate, there arose high hope that the Negro race could be transplanted to the land of its ancestors if government assistance could be obtained. In answer to the "State's Rights" pleas of Federal inability to aid the movement, a far reaching step was taken by the State of Ohio.

The legislature of that State, through its

Governor, communicated to the other States a request that the several Governors submit to their respective legislatures a plan by which the Free States, with the consent of the Slave States, would enter with them into a scheme for the emancipation and colonization of all slaves. This "Ohio Plan" provided that the institution of slavery might continue while repatriation was being effected and that slaves who would not volunteer to take part with their blood brethren in building a nation should not be deemed worthy of freedom.

The epochal effect of the Ohio Plan is difficult to ignore but it is a difficulty which the historian has succeeded in surmounting. The Free States acceded to the Ohio Plan. The Slave States rejected it. Here is the first division between the North and the South on the Negro race question. It was over Negro colonization. The Free States were aligned in a program which would tend to achieve the ideal of a white race in a white nation, an ideal which was rejected by the

Slave States.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

However much this sectional division over emancipation and colonization of the slaves may have been ignored by the historian, it was not ignored in its day; for the rejection of the Ohio Plan led to the rise of the Gar-risonian Abolitionists. William Lloyd Garrison was a supporter of the American Colonization Society. In Congress, the Slave Power had held that constitutional limitations rendered the Federal government incapable of effecting Negro repatriation. It had, however, given evidence of a sympathy with the idea. The result of the Ohio proposals revealed the Slave States in a true light as supporters of slavery, and as opponents of Negro repatriation on any large scale, for not only had they denied Federal ability to aid the cause, they had refused State's co-operation which would effect the same purpose.

Garrison turned upon the Colonization Society and characterized it as being merely an instrument of the Slave Power for removing

troublesome free Negroes from the presence of the slaves, with the intention of perfecting the subjection of the hapless Africans who were not free. The general plan of the Society was to colonize "Those who were free, and those who should be made free". The latter provision drew forth the frenzied ire of the Slave Power. It accused the Society of being an instrument of the Garrisonian Abolitionists. The sustained attacks upon the colonization movement by Garrison and the Slave Power would have obliterated it had it not been supported by men of great eminence, for Garrison and the Slave Power had the ears of the nation. Reputedly they were arch enemies, but in reality they had much in common. Both opposed colonization of the Negro. Both sought to destroy the Union. Garrison, at least in theory, advocated amalgamation of the races. The Slave Power opposed amalgamation as a theory but some of the slave owners seem to have practiced it. RECONSTRUCTION Garrison and the Slave Power limited the

activities of the Colonization Society but they could not destroy the Society. Some twelve thousand emigrants were established in Liberia. The Civil War merely suspended its operations. Important movements to Liberia continued after the Civil War. It was the Reconstruction Era which devitalized the society as an agency for Negro repatriation. In 1870, though emigrants were sent to Liberia, we find Agents of the Society reporting to the parent organization that Reconstruction politicians were everywhere among the Negroes urging them to abandon the idea of a Negro nation, and prepare instead to take over the land of their late masters.

The American Colonization Society has maintained its charter and has a complement of officials.\* When it relinquished control of Liberia to the American Negroes and their children residing there, the Society retained substantial portions of that country for settle-

\*The American Colonization Society does not seem to be functioning in 1967.—Ed.

ment by future emigrants from the United States. It is this land, thus held in trust for emigrants from the United States, which is referred to in the 1936 Virginia memorial to Congress (given above).

### HENRY M. TURNER

In 1834, when Garrison and the Slave Power were well under way in their attack upon those who sought to colonize the Negro, there was born near Abbeyville, South Carolina, a Negro boy—Henry McNeal Turner—who was destined to be the outstanding advocate of Negro repatriation when the Negro had been made a citizen, and suffrage could not be denied because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Turner, like Cuffe, was free born. It is a significant fact that the eminent Negro leaders who encouraged the race to achieve race progress through race nationality, as other races had done, were men who had never been slaves. In most of the Slave States, it was unlawful to teach a Negro to read or to



Paul Cuffe



Bishop Henry M. Turner



Marcus Garvey



Mrs. M. M. L. Gordon



Thomas Jefferson



Charles Fenton Mercer



James Monroe



Abraham Lincoln



write. This law could not be completely enforced, for many Negro youths of marked intelligence who were liked by white people were taught to read and write. Young Turner did menial service for certain white lawyers and was not only taught to read and write but taught a fair amount of history and arithmetic. In Baltimore he studied grammar, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

Turner entered the ministry and after some years became a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, an all-Negro organization. In Washington, he attracted the attention of President Lincoln who appointed him Army Chaplain for the first colored troops used in the Union Army. When the war was over he was sent with the Reconstruction forces into Georgia, but resigned his commission in order to build up his church. He continued in politics. He was a delegate to the Georgia Constitutional Convention in 1867, and was a member of the State Legislature for Bibb County. In 1869 he was appointed Postmaster of Macon through the

influence of Senator Charles Sumner, but relinquished the position in deference to opposition of white people to the appointment. In the Church, he was made manager of its Book Concern, became Bishop of Georgia, and for twelve years was Chancellor of the Negro school which is now Morris Brown University, in Atlanta. During his official visits to Africa he introduced Methodism there, and became a staunch advocate of Negro repatriation.

Bishop Turner is described as being very tall, with powerful frame and massive head. Like Paul Cuffe, he had a commanding personality. When we consider the personality and the achievements of these two eminent Negroes we are aware that they were not ordinary individuals but capable men who boldly proposed that the Negro in America cut loose from his moorings and voyage to a land and a government of his own.

Bishop Turner knew that the race problem was more than a problem of slavery and that it would continue as long as white women

bred white children and Negro women bred Negro children. He held that the Negro would more likely obtain 499 acres of land and an hippopotamus in Africa than obtain the promised 40 acres of land and a mule in America. When told that the Negro, if he remained here, could profit by the achievements of the whites and there was no need for racial and national independence, he held that freedom for racial initiative was a prerequisite for racial progress, and that in this respect the Negro would be better off in Hell than in the United States.

Cuffe had not witnessed organized opposition to Negro repatriation. The life-span of Turner, however, covered the development of organized opposition. Daniel Webster proclaimed, in the Senate, that he would be disposed to favor the appropriation of almost any sum of money for Negro repatriation if a Southern Senator would bring forth a measure to effect it. But the Slave Power was adamant. Turner also witnessed the complete reversal of the splendid Northern position,

held for half a century. The Slave Power held the Negro for his labor. The Garrison-ians had long promised the Negro's vote to the politicians who could free them and confer suffrage upon them. Turner saw the complete triumph of the Garrisonians, but an incomplete triumph for the Negro, in his opinion, for when he had become an old man he wrote to W. P. Picket, who was preparing a publication, *The Negro Problem—Abraham Lincoln's Solution*, the following letter, Jan. 1% 1907: "... I pray God that you will continue in the great work in which you are engaged, and move this country to help the Negro to emigrate to the land of his ancestors. "I know all about Africa. I have been from one end of it to the other. I have visited that continent as often as I have fingers upon my hand, and it is one of the richest continents under heaven in natural resources. This country is not compared to it, and millions of colored people in this country want to go. But to pay our way to New York, then to Liverpool and then to Africa is too much for

the little wages the white people pay to our workers. Give us a line of steamers from Savannah, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Pensacola, Florida; or New Orleans, Louisiana, and let us pay as much as the million or more white immigrants pay coming from Liverpool, London, and Hamburg to this country, and the Negro will leave by thousands and by tens of thousands, yes, by millions. . .

#### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Let us return to the colonizationists' struggle with the Slave Power and with Garrison. The closing phase of the struggle was marked by the rise of the greatest of the colonizationists—Abraham Lincoln—to the exalted position of President of the United States. For many years Garrison's *Liberator* had carried "No Union with Slave Owners" as a motto on its front page. Garrison had oftentimes declared that nothing could bend his will, but, under the leveled gaze of Lincoln's Garrison

recoiled, and future issues of the *Liberator* were singularly free from proposals to destroy the Union. The other advocate of disunion was not easily suppressed. The President believed that the forces which had proclaimed a dissolution of the Union had been rallied by, and were rallying around, the Slave Power. The Slave Power sought to destroy the Union! It was a fitting thing, then, that the Union should destroy the Slave Power.

The Emancipation Proclamation states that the effort to colonize persons of African descent, with their consent, would be continued. It will be found that the Executive efforts which were to be continued had been directed toward obtaining land upon which Negro emigrants might settle; devising plans for compensated emancipation of the slaves; obtaining an appropriation from Congress with which to begin colonization; and, an official request to Congress for a Constitutional Amendment to sustain a colonization program.

When the President considered voluntary emancipation of the slaves, he, at the same time, proposed their colonization. When he proposed compensated emancipation of the slaves, he proposed their colonization. When he proclaimed their forceful emancipation, he promised their colonization, and in keeping with the promise he submitted certain definite colonization plans to Congress. Wherever there is found a proposal for the solving of the slavery phase of the race problem, there will he found a supplementary proposal for the solution of the problem in its entirety.

The executive efforts with regard to Negro colonization were not measures for the preservation of the Union. Emancipation was a war measure but colonization was to be a post-war measure, by its nature contingent upon maintenance of the Union. Racial separation is a concept which extends beyond politics into the realm of race.

#### SEPARATION OR AMALGAMATION

The President had not suddenly jumped

to conclusions with regard to racial separation. In the years of his public life which were the background of his Executive decisions there is found a clear view of his philosophy of the race problem. A race problem, produced by contact of races, was a problem that could not be solved except through the separation of the races or by their blood amalgamation. Racial separation is not a necessity. It is a possible choice between the alternatives. Its execution would be a herculean task. No capable mind would propose such a task without having considered the issues involved in holding the races together. For many years, "separation," had been Mr. Lincoln's choice between the alternatives. The Slave Power had stood between the nation and the choice of "separation." The Emancipation Proclamation was an instrument designed to destroy the Slave Power, and was a fit instrument to bring forward the concept of racial separation, though its attainment would be a post-war program.



## LINCOLN AND JEFFERSON

The racial philosophy of Abraham Lincoln differs little, if any, from that of Thomas Jefferson. Each weighed the "alternatives" and each chose separation. They considered the issues involved in holding the races together. Mr. Jefferson said, "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free: nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government." He declared that he wished for the Negroes the full liberties of men, but in a country of their own in a climate congenial to them.

Shortly before his election to the Presidency, Mr. Lincoln went into more detail in this respect. In a Douglas-Lincoln debate, Senator Douglas had said, "For one I am opposed to Negro citizenship in any and every form. I believe this government was made by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever." To these sentiments Mr. Lincoln replied, "I will say, then,

that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races—that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to inter-marry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality."

Thus we see the background of the mental processes which led the President to include a plan of Negro colonization in the Emancipation Proclamation. The views of the President, however, and the similar positions held by Mr. Jefferson, and by Mr. Douglas, on this matter, were not views peculiar to these men but were similar to those held by other eminent statesmen from the foundation of the Republic until the triumph of the Garri-sonian Abolitionists. Had any of the previous Presidents had the power, and the will, to

free the slaves, it is improbable that the concept of racial separation would have been omitted from the document ordaining freedom. The ideal of emancipation and colonization may be said to have been a national ideal, not opposed save by the limited number who owned slaves, and by a lesser number, probably, who had continued in support of Garrison.

### "WILL"

There could be no better preface for President Lincoln's executive acts than his precise statement in a debate with Senator Douglas, "Such separation if effected at all, must be effected by colonization: and no political party as such is now doing anything directly for colonization. Party operations at present only favor or retard colonization incidentally . . . what colonization most needs is a hearty will . . . Let us be brought to believe that it is morally right, and at the same time favorable to, or at least not against, our interests to transfer the African to his

native clime, and we shall find a way to do it, however great the task may be." It was in this speech that Mr. Lincoln declared that separation of the races was the only "perfect way" to prevent amalgamation of the races, thus placing opponents of separation in the position of not desiring a "perfect way" to prevent amalgamation.

Compelled to use military forces to maintain the Union, the general government was soon in possession of Negroes liberated from persons in arms against the Union. President Lincoln acted in keeping with his race ideals, and with his conception that Negro repatriation was properly a concern for a political party, and properly a function for the Federal government. In his First Annual Message he referred to this class of liberated Negroes and proposed that Congress consider colonizing them "at some place or places in a climate congenial to them. . . If it be said that the only legitimate object of acquiring territory is to furnish homes for white men, this measure effects that object: for the

emigration of colored men leaves additional room for white men remaining or coming here".

### SOUTHERN ECONOMY

President Lincoln knew that Southern economy was based on cheap Negro labor and white men's labor made cheap through competition with Negro labor. He was of Anglo-Saxon descent, born in the South. He knew that the "upper class" Southerners, so called, while boasting of Saxon blood, for the first time in Saxon history were maintaining an economy under which the poor of the race were compelled to compete against the lowly and helpless Negro in order to get food for their children. Again, in his Second Annual Message, he refers to the competition of the races—"Reduce the supply of black labor by colonizing the black laborer out of the country, and by precisely so much you increase the demand for, and wages of, white labor."

## ALL CLASSES

The question of what classes of Negroes would be entitled to government assistance in the President's scheme of colonization is easily settled—his plans included all classes. There were three classes: free Negroes, slaves held by loyal citizens, and slaves held by persons in arms against the general government. July 12, 1862, the President assembled members of Congress from the border States and told them he favored compensated emancipation and colonization. August 14 he assembled free Negroes in the White House, urged colonization upon them, and asked for volunteers. September 22 he issued the Emancipation Proclamation which would affect slaves held by citizens in arms against the Union, and more than half of that document, prior to announcing freedom for the slaves, is given to the question of Negro colonization.

The boldness of Abraham Lincoln's spirit and the comprehensiveness of his plans

would justify our statement above that he is the greatest of the colonizationists. A distinguished British Jew, Lord Melchett, considered the application of the "selective-age" principle to the colonization of Polish Jews to relieve the race pressure in that country. Discussing the effect of transferring vigorous youths he said: "Careful statistical inquiry shows that the effect on the future numerical strength of a given population, if all persons of the age-group are removed annually, is very striking. The effect of such a transference would be to nearly halve the original population in 20 years, and in about 40 years to reduce it to about 14 percent of its former size." President Lincoln knew that a race could be transferred by removing only a portion of its numbers, and so did Thomas Jefferson, for the latter proposed that the selective-age group be composed of males of the age of 21, females of the age of 18. The effect of this method would be that the increase of the race would tend to be in its new home, its decrease be in its old home.

## LITTLE MEN—NORTH AND SOUTH

The tragic death of President Lincoln gave opportunity for men of lesser mold to suppress the Negro repatriation movement in the North, just as the Slave Power in the South had brought to naught the initial repatriation movement which had been set in motion by the most eminent statesmen that the South had produced. There is ample evidence that these little men in both North and South were actuated by prospects of personal gain, and that their unwillingness to give the Negro a nation of his own was not unrelated to their plan to retain the Negro here and use him for their own peculiar advantage. The conferring of citizenship upon the Negro, however, did not suppress the Negro's desire for independent nationality. As a "citizen", the Negro clamor for separate nationality continues, and its expression exceeds that of the free Negro in the days of slavery.

MARCUS GARVEY

When the venerable Turner wrote the let-



ter quoted above, there was in Jamaica (British West Indies), a Negro youth, Marcus Garvey, who was destined to be the greatest advocate of race progress, race integrity, and race nationality, that the Negro race has produced. With good education, Garvey, in his youth, brooded over the disadvantages suffered by his race, in contrast with other races. Highly endowed with qualities which made him the outstanding champion of Negro race advancement, he organized the Universal Negro Improvement Association. An able publicist, he spoke in terms that interpreted the race's innermost desire for economic progress, blood integrity, and race nationality. With the purpose to unify the Negroes of the New World with those of the Old, Garvey's organization became international. It developed into a far flung empire of sentiment and practical effort. Its membership is said to have reached a total of more than six million. The writer of this article has personal knowledge that the organization was wide spread, for he corresponded with members

of it in 26 of the States; in Jamaica, Panama, Honduras, Cuba, Haiti, San Domingo; and several other countries, including supporters of the movement in three or four political divisions of Africa.

The Garvey movement succeeded in doing well what other Negro repatriation movements had failed to do—it gained the attention of the American press. There was provision for organized hilarity among the Garvey following when their organization met in convention. The American press deals understandingly and leniently with the American Legion's "40 and 8," but the organized buffoonery of the Universal Negro Improvement Association's conventions was played up by the press almost to the exclusion of the great ideals of the organization.

This Negro organization, in a plan to aid Liberia, believed that it had acquired certain rights in that country and sent out a shipment of goods of the value, it is said, of \$50,000, when the Liberian end of the agreement was rescinded. It was about this time

that other American citizens were more successful in acquiring holdings in Liberia, but the other Americans, not being of Negro descent, could not become citizens of Liberia, nor hold title to its land. This obstacle was overcome by leasing a million acres of Li-berian land for a period of 99 years.

Garvey had said much about the white man seizing Negro Africa and holding its people in subjection. He foresaw the time when Africa would be ruled by the Africans. In opposing the white occupation of Africa, Garvey was not more intemperate than Bishop Turner had been, but Turner's declaration to the effect that the British would be defeated and driven back to the waters of the Thames, attracted little attention in Europe. Garvey aroused interest there, for a vast concourse of Negroes in the Old World and the New, gave the nod of assent to Gar-vey's doctrine of Africa for the Africans.

Opposed by many Negro leaders who felt that they were being displaced, particularly by the type of leader who favored amalgamar

tion and not separation as a solution of the race problem; opposed, possibly, also by whites in high places who feared international objection to the doctrine of Africa for the Africans; Garvey, nevertheless, was secure. His enemies were numerous, and some of them powerful, but they could not break his hold on the common people of the Negro race. But Garvey undertook to finance the Black Star Line of steamships to trade among Negro peoples and assist in carrying emigrants to Africa. He was convicted of having used the mails to sell stock in the Black Star Line, stock deemed by a white judge and jury not to have been of immediate or prospective value. This conviction was before the mighty economic collapse known as "the depression" which began in 1929. Garvey had been considered an impractical dreamer, "afflicted with a Messianic complex," from whom the stock purchasing individuals of his race should be protected. Shortly after his conviction much stock issued by "practical" men, not afflicted with a Messianic complex

in any form, was as worthless as the stock of the Black Star Line.

President Coolidge commuted Garvey's sentence, but Garvey was an alien, and was automatically exiled from the United States. His popularity was not greatly reduced by the prison sentence, for his followers, generally, were in sympathy with the purpose of the Black Star Line. But his imprisonment deprived him of active leadership. His exile from the United States separated him from the largest group of his followers, and the world-wide depression also served to reduce the organization's great membership. It continues, however, and is rebuilding a large membership.

#### M. M. L. GORDON

After the exile of Garvey there arose Negro leaders, several of them, who sought to effect a minor program of Negro repatriation. Their particular interest was directed toward securing and developing small concessions in Liberia, or in effecting small settlements

on Liberian land. Garvey had proved to be the greatest of the Negro publicists and the greatest of the Negro organizers. There was now to arise a mighty Negro repatriation movement not dependent upon press publicity. Garvey aided the cause of Negro repatriation, but his organization also carried other concepts of racial uplift. The new movement is confined to a single ideal—"To Return People of African Descent To Their Motherland, Africa." It was this new movement, a "Peace Movement," which prepared the giant Negro memorial to President Roosevelt, as given above.

The leading personage in securing this great petition to the President was a woman, Mrs. M. M. L. Gordon, President of the "Peace Movement"—an indomitable spirit, making hundreds of speeches, carrying on extensive correspondence, rallying those whose hope was weak, and instilling a rugged enthusiasm for the cause of Negro repatriation.

The memorial is wholly the work of Negroes. In its implications it would affect the

future of the white race and the black as no other measure brought forward since the days of Abraham Lincoln could affect them. In the scant space given in the press to the Negro memorial there was a tendency to treat it lightly.

Paul Cuffe relied upon his personal resources to begin the repatriation movement. Marcus Garvey sought to have Negroes buy their own ships. Cuffe's purpose was understood and supported by eminent white people. Garvey begged for white understanding and support, but it was not accorded him. Bishop Turner frankly recognized that any effective program of racial repatriation was beyond the power of the American Negro, and he held that the movement should have bi-racial support, for both races would profit by it. The President of the "Peace Movement," her capable advisors, and the signers of the mighty memorial asked for white support on the assumption that the movement would benefit the condition of the whites, particularly white laborers. Lincoln and Clay

often used a similar approach—an economic one. But the signers of the memorial showed as well a spiritual longing to live among a people of their own kind.

### AMERICAN NEGROES ARE DIVIDED

American Negroes are divided on the question of repatriation as a solution of the race problem. This we know, for some of the Negroes openly advocate amalgamation of the races. The failure of the repatriation-ists to gain the support of the whites, is held by the amalgamationists to be an evidence that their own preferred solution is to win public approval, and that in no distant future the two races will merge into a mulatto type.

With Garvey and Gordon dead, the amalgamationists feel secure, but not quite secure, for a recent memorial to Congress by a great State asking that body to assist Negroes who desire to settle in Liberia, encouraged the repatriationists, and at the same time created misgiving and uncertainty in the hitherto confident ranks of the amalgamationists.



There are not many white people who know of this division in the Negro race for it seems to be generally assumed by the whites that all Negroes would welcome the chance to lose their race identity by mixing with the whites. What type of Negro, then, are the repatriationists who propose to maintain the Negro type under conditions which would insure race integrity?

Racially, those who propose to maintain their racial type and achieve conditions to insure this purpose, would be the biological element upon which the race would have to depend. Racially, this element would be the elite of the race, while, racially, those with adverse proposal would be racial refuse, however valuable their qualities as individuals.

The fact that Negro leaders, the eminent ones named in this article, and a host of others less known to fame, have always obtained an important following when advocating Negro nationality is evidence that the Negro has pride in his race and a practical desire for it to stand alone and strive as

other races. But it is evidence ignored by many white people who glibly state that the Negro has neither desire for race integrity nor ambition to achieve race nationality.

It is evident that the Reconstruction Amendments to the Federal Constitution did not operate to deaden the Negro desire for race nationality. In addition to the Negro nationalists who have kept their ideal since these Amendments, there also have been capable white individuals who advocated Negro nationalism. President Grant; United States Senators—Ingalls of Kansas, Morgan of Alabama, Tillman of South Carolina, Vardaman of Mississippi, and Garraway of Arkansas; Governors—Jelks of Alabama, and Broward of Florida, are on record as favoring racial separation.

The Negro nationalists were profoundly grateful for the Virginia memorial to Congress on their behalf. But there is, I believe, equal if not better evidence of potential white support for their cause in a measure brought forward in Mississippi in 1928. It

was passed by a great majority in the Senate, reported favorably by the House Committee on Federal Relations but lost in the last days of the session. In Virginia, Negroes appeared before Committees and sympathetic white citizens gave them support. In Mississippi no Negroes had requested aid. The measure originated within the Senate, and it is a majestic one, showing a lofty sense of responsibility of the white race to provide for and to give full aid to Negroes who desire a national home.

#### MISSISSIPPI SENATE RESOLUTION

"Be it resolved, by the Senate of the State of Mississippi, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that we do hereby most solemnly memorialize the Congress of the United States of America to request the President to acquire by treaty, negotiations or otherwise from our late war allies sufficient territory on the Continent of Africa to make a suitable, proper and final home for the American Negro, where under the

tutelage of the American government he can develop for himself a great republic, to become in time a free and sovereign state and take its place at the council boards of the nations of the world, and to use such part of our allied war debt as may be necessary in acquiring such territorial concession, to the end that our country may become one in blood as in spirit, and that the dream of our forefathers may be realized in the final colonization of the American Negro on his native soil, and that the spirit of race consciousness now so manifest in the American Negro may be given an opportunity for development under the most advantageous circumstances."

Abraham Lincoln, in his great understanding and foresight, had not only been deeply concerned about the repatriation of the millions of slaves in the South, but was also particularly disturbed about the black troops to be discharged from the Union army. He

felt that this situation would aggravate the wounds of the war, and would jeopardize the development of a friendly feeling between the two sections.

This is most clearly evidenced by a conversation that Lincoln had with Benjamin F. Butler in early April of 1865. Butler narrates in his autobiography what the President said on this occasion:

"But what shall we do with the negroes after they are free? I can hardly believe that the South and the North can live in peace, unless we can get rid of the negroes. Certainly they cannot if we don't get rid of the negroes whom we have armed and disciplined and who have fought with us, to the amount, I believe, of some one hundred and fifty thousand men. I believe that it would be better to export them all to some fertile country with a good climate, which they could have to themselves.

"You have been a staunch friend of the race from the time you first advised me to enlist them at New Orleans. You have had

a good deal of experience in moving bodies of men by water,—your movement up the James was a magnificent one. Now, we shall have use for our very large navy; what, then, are our difficulties in sending all the blacks away?

"If these black soldiers of ours go back to the South, I am afraid that they will be but little better off with their masters than they were before, and yet they will be free men. I fear a race war, and it will be at least a guerrilla war because we have taught these men how to fight. All the arms of the South are now in the hands of their troops, and when we capture them we of course will take their arms. There are plenty of men in the North who will furnish the negroes with arms if there is any oppression of them by their late masters.

"I wish you would carefully examine the question and give me your views upon it and go into the figures, as you did before in some degree, so as to show whether the negroes can be exported. I wish also you

would give me any views that you have as to how to deal with the negro troops after the war."\*

The significance of this conversation between President Lincoln and General Butler is that it clearly establishes Lincoln had not changed his views on the subject of Negro colonization towards the end of his life. Indeed it shows he held these convictions to the very end, as his death occurred no more than a week or ten days later on April 15, 1865.

Thus we find some of the last words Lincoln uttered were on the need to colonize the Negro, and it is not strange that this was so, for these thoughts expressed the very core and foundation of his Negro policy. With him gone the nation lost one of its greatest opportunities to eliminate the Negro problem from the United States of America for all time.

\* Butler's Book, pp. 903-904.