Exiles, Exodus, and Promised Lands

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The Tanner Lectures on Human Values

Delivered at

Stanford University
February 22–23, 2006

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PART I

During the momentous Haitian Revolution, from 1791 to 1804, slaves and free blacks defeated not only their masters but also the formidable armies of Spain, Britain, and France. This heroic achievement evoked little applause from American whites, even those who rejoiced over the later Greek and Latin American movements of national liberation. But the French colony of Saint-Domingue had been the rich centerpiece of the New World slave system, and its seismic destruction and transformation into Haiti were turning points in history. Like the Hiroshima bomb, this event could be rationalized—for example, by emphasizing disease as the cause of white defeat—but never really forgotten, since it demonstrated the possible fate of every slaveholding society in the New World. And after winning independence from France, Haiti's ruler, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, ordered the massacre of most of the remaining whites (before he was assassinated himself).

The Haitian Revolution, which had really been unintentionally ignited by the colony's free blacks, put a new perspective on Britain's roughly contemporary founding of Sierra Leone as a refuge for slaves freed during the American Revolution. It also contributed to the growing American interest in the African colonization of America's own free blacks. I should stress that African colonization had earlier and independent origins. But if Haiti's bloodshed and destroyed economy symbolized one of the possible outcomes of slave emancipation, the emigration or removal of free blacks represented a quite different possible "solution" to the problem of slavery, at least in the United States. About the voluntary character of this proposed migration there was considerable ambiguity and debate. Even in the early eighteenth century some antislavery writers had argued that any abolition of slavery would have to be linked with the removal of the freed population,[1] and colonies like Virginia had long required manumitted slaves to leave the state, even if the law was not rigorously enforced. Moreover, partially as a result of religious revivals, visions of black

1. As early as 1713 an antislavery writer could affirm an axiom later accepted by Thomas Jefferson and countless other Americans: it was unthinkable that blacks and whites should live together in freedom. This anonymous writer, included in the work cited below, argued that before being freed, blacks should be given a Christian education and then emancipated if they were willing to be sent back to Africa, where they could further the cause of religion and civilization (John Hepburn, *The American Defence of the Christian Golden Rule; or, An Essay to Prove the Unlawfulness of Making Slaves of Men, by Him Who Loves the Freedom of the Souls and Bodies of All Man* [n.p., 1715], 23–43).

colonists carrying Christian civilization to Africa profoundly influenced nineteenth-century controversies over slave emancipation.

From Jefferson to (and including) Lincoln, many of America's eminent leaders insisted that the blight of slavery could not be overcome unless a distant refuge was found for the black beneficiaries of freedom. This premise, reinforced by fear of a Haitian-like revolution, was angrily rejected by the majority of northern free blacks, who took the lead in challenging the motives of white colonizationists. After 1831 white abolitionists increasingly made the disavowal of colonization the core of their confession of faith; many attacked the American Colonization Society (ACS) and its colony, Liberia, as vehemently as they attacked slavery itself. But despite denunciations by black and white abolitionists as well as by most southern defenders of slavery, who succeeded in blocking the federal financial support needed for any large-scale program, the idea of black resettlement kept rebounding after apparent defeats. Various black leaders from Paul Cuffe to Henry Highland Garnet, Martin R. Delany, Alexander Crummell, and James Theodore Holly promoted their own projects for an African or Caribbean homeland. Delany, according to Edward Wilmot Blyden, a West Indian–born black advocate of Liberian colonization, had the qualifications to become "the Moses to lead in the exodus of his people from the house of bondage to a land flowing with milk and honey."[2] The essential distinction between choosing to emigrate and being colonized by others has usually obscured the fact that the early speeches and reports of the white American Colonization Society, founded in 1816, anticipated the central themes and expectations of black emigrationists from Garnet and Delany in the slavery era to Marcus Garvey in the 1920s.

Modern historians have understandably been hostile to the ACS and its diverse supporters.[3] The colonization movement embodied and

2. Blyden to the Rev. John B. Pinney, July 29, 1859, *New York–Colonization Journal* 9 (October 1859): 3. For more than twenty years Delany had bitterly denounced the American Colonization Society and belittled Liberia. In 1859, however, when he was greeted with enthusiasm by the Liberian people, he dramatically changed his views (see Richard Blackett, "Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell: Black Americans in Search of an African Colony," *Journal of Negro History* 62 [January 1977]: 15; and *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader,* edited by Robert S. Levine [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003], 144–48, 332–35). It should be noted that the ACS, which had always publicly disavowed coercion, had also come to accept the black emigrationists' goal of limited, selective emigration.

3. Recent works on the ACS, which generally take a critical view, include Kenneth C. Barnes, *Journey of Hope: The Back-to-Africa Movement in Arkansas in the Late 1800s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Amos Jones Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822–1900* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991); Claude A. Clegg III, *The Price of Liberty: African*

often encouraged insidious forms of white racism. As a movement seeking the broadest possible white consensus, the ACS, like a political party, embraced a variety of contradictory motives, interests, hopes, and visions —and its leaders included major political figures like Henry Clay. But the simple dichotomy between an ACS Antichrist and abolitionist Redeemers, which abolitionists perpetuated as a way of explaining their own journey from spiritual blindness to a new Reformation, based on racial coexistence, can only obscure our understanding of both movements.

Although colonizationists have conventionally been dismissed as hopelessly impractical visionaries, for example, the history of tens of millions of European immigrants to America shows that they were not so unrealistic in their estimates of shipping capacity, especially if colonization had been financed by the U.S. government's sale of western lands, as reformers originally proposed. The colonizationists were also more realistic than the abolitionists when they argued that white racial prejudice would remain intractable for generations to come, that the achievements of a few individual blacks would not benefit the masses, that progress would depend on black solidarity and collective effort, and that the formal act of emancipating slaves could not be divorced from the crucial need for an economic and social environment in which freed people could exercise their full capacities for human development. Of course, this is not to say that the program of the ACS was the right solution. But if the colonization movement actually represented a dangerous obstacle to African American self-fulfillment, we will never understand or even recognize similar obstacles if we rely on negative caricature and fail to grasp the complexity of the movement's appeal.

At first glance the distinction between emigration and expulsion seems clear-cut. In the archetypal story of Exodus, God enabled the Israelites to flee from Egyptian bondage and undergo the trials and self-purgation that supposedly prepared them for a life of freedom in the Promised Land, although we should remember that the desperate Pharaoh finally ordered the Israelites *to leave* Egypt and then changed his mind and sent his army to capture or kill them. Some five centuries later, when the children of Israel in the Northern Kingdom "sinned against the LORD their God, who had freed them from the land of Egypt," worshiping idols and practicing

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Americans and the Making of Liberia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Lamin O. Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Howard Temperley, "African-American Aspirations and the Settlement of Liberia," *Slavery and Abolition* 21, no. 2 (2000): 67–92.

pagan rites and enchantments, they were punished, according to the biblical Hebrew prophets, by an Assyrian conquest that led to mass deportations from Samaria to Upper Mesopotamia and Media, where ten tribes of Israelites lost their historical identity.[4] In Christian theology, it might be said, the saved emigrate to heaven; sinners are deported to hell or perhaps to purgatory, where they gain a second chance.

On closer inspection, voluntary migrations have seldom been free from pain, nostalgia, and regret; involuntary exiles have *sometimes* found a promised land. Images of colonization and expulsion, particularly since the Protestant Reformation, have been enriched by biblical narratives that were known to some degree by the lowest classes of society and that reach back to the earliest human memories of migration, conquest, deportation, and longing for a lost homeland. Psychologically, such experiences have also echoed the stages of individual life from the departure from a natal family to aging, death, and the succession of generations. Historically, the appeal of a new beginning has usually been mixed with fears of disinheritance, of exile from the graves of ancestors, of becoming, like the biblical Cain, "a ceaseless wanderer on earth," dispossessed of place and society.

The Exodus narrative, which had been so vitally important for the first English colonists in North America, even in Virginia as well as New England, took on poignant meaning for African American emigrationists. In 1820, when the first group of colonists sent out by the American Colonization Society and U.S. government settled at a swampy, unhealthful spot on Sherbro Island, off the coast of Sierra Leone, the colonists were soon decimated by disease. Before dying, the society's white agent granted his commission as leader to Daniel Coker, a mulatto minister and teacher who, on shipboard, may have prevented a black rebellion against white authority. At times of crisis Coker had repeatedly prayed that "He that was with Moses in the wilderness, be with us," and that "He that divided the waters for Israel will open our way, I know not how." By May 1821 Coker confided in his journal that "Moses was I think permitted to see

4. 2 Kings 17. Except where otherwise indicated, biblical quotations are from the Jewish Publication Society translation of *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, 1985). See also William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, eds., *The Ancient Near East: A History,* 2d ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998), esp. 127–34; John Bright, *A History of Israel,* 3d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 269–76; and Hayim Tadmor, "The Period of the First Temple, the Babylonian Exile and the Restoration," in *A History of the Jewish People,* edited by H. H. Ben-Sasson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 133–38. The prophet Hosea's rendering of God's castigation of Israel's sins and threats of terrible punishment became a central homiletic theme in Jacobean England and a main source of the so-called Puritan Jeremiad (Michael McGiffert, "God's Controversy with Jacobean England," *American Historical Review* 88 [December 1983]: 1151–74).

the Promised Land but not to enter in. I think it likely that I shall not be permitted to see our expected earthly Canaan. But this will be of but small moment so that some thousand of Africa's children are safely landed." A century later, Marcus Garvey employed the same precedent in a speech restating the goals of the Universal Negro Improvement Association: "It was because of lack of faith in the children of Israel that they were held up for so long in the wilderness and why so many of them died without seeing the Promised Land. That same lack of faith will be the downfall of many of us."[5]

The Exodus narrative has been central to the Judeo-Christian belief that God shapes the course of human history through a succession of warnings, promises, punishments, and rewards. Taken as the literal transcription of God's revelation to Moses, the story has been recapitulated and transmogrified not only in the Old and New Testaments but also through much of Western history. It has conveyed the astounding message that in the past God actually heard the cries of the *oppressed* and was willing to free slaves from their masters. Indeed, God passed over the brilliant and powerful peoples of the ancient Near East and chose a group of degraded slaves to bear the awesome responsibility of receiving and transmitting his law. Exodus has therefore furnished a model for every kind of deliverance, whether by escape, revolution, or spiritual rebirth. It has helped people understand the pain, suffering, rebellious complaints or "murmuring," as the Bible puts it, and the moral testing that mark the road toward the Promised Land.

Although Christian theologians generally interpreted the Mosaic Exodus as a prefiguration of Christ's redemption of humankind, numerous Christian groups have identified their own sins, afflictions, rewards, and mission with those of ancient Israel. Such views of similitude have ranged from momentary and casual analogies to a sustained sense of *reenacting* sacred history.

There is no need here to consider the convolutions of Protestant covenant theology. It is sufficient to note that by the late sixteenth century, English preachers thought it self-evident that God had chosen England

5. *Journal of Daniel Coker* (Baltimore, 1820), 15–17, 27, 31; Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 22; Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 5:291. Although Garvey denied that he had ever called himself a Moses, he referred continually to the biblical Exodus and to Jewish history in general, including the rise of Zionism. When quoting letters of Coker and other historical figures, I have retained the spelling and punctuation of the specified printed versions, without inserting [*sic*].

for special blessings and responsibilities because, as numerous sermons worded it, "we are like unto the children of Israel." The Israelite paradigm, by affirming the continuity of sacred history and the consistency of God's judgment of nations, enabled preachers to draw upon the matchless eloquence of the Hebrew prophets as they condemned the sins of the land. The evolving Jeremiad, named for the prophet Jeremiah, with its enumeration of collective crimes and its alternative visions of a national holocaust and a New Jerusalem, created a framework for interpreting both the seventeenth-century Puritan Exodus to America and the English civil wars. The Israelite paradigm became so embedded in Anglo-American Protestant culture that such diverse groups as the English and American Puritans, clerical supporters of the American Revolution, the Mormons, and black emigrants and so-called Exodusters pictured themselves being delivered from Egypt.[6]

American colonizationists were hardly eager to identify the United States with pharaonic Egypt or to associate their cause with the notorious expulsions of European history.[7] When Thomas Jefferson wrote that "we should in vain look for an example in the Spanish deportation or deletion

6. Eddie S. Glaude Jr., *Exodus! Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); David Howard-Pitney, *The Afro-American Jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890–1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); Neil Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977); Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832–1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 117, 121. In his two-volume history of religious refugees from antiquity to the 1960s, Frederick A. Norwood pictures Exodus as the paradigmatic event (*Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969]). But for many Christians, the Mosaic Exodus could also prefigure or "typify" a decisive change in an individual's life; for example, this is the way John Bunyan interpreted the publication of his own *Grace Abounding to the Chief Sinners* (Linda H. Peterson, *Victorian Autobiography: The Tradition of Self-Interpretation* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986], 103). For Puritan identification with ancient Hebrews, see Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 65–68, 112–15.

7. Abraham Lincoln was a notable exception. In a speech eulogizing Henry Clay and praising the goals of the American Colonization Society, Lincoln warned: "Pharaoh's country was cursed with plagues, and his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea for striving to retain a captive people who had already served them more than four hundred years. May like disasters never befall us! If as the friends of colonization hope, the present and coming generations of our countryman shall by any means, succeed in freeing our land from the dangerous presence of slavery; and, at the same time, in restoring a captive people to their long-lost father-land, with bright prospects for the future; and this too, so gradually, that neither races nor individuals shall have suffered by the change, it will indeed be a glorious consummation" ("Eulogy on Henry Clay," July 6, 1852, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln,* edited by Roy P. Basler, 12 vols. [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953], 2:132).

of the Moors," he seems to have meant that, compared to Spain, Virginia would reap far richer benefits and escape far worse calamities by beginning while "it is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably and in such slow degree, as that the evil will wear off insensibly."[8]

In 1832 a fellow Virginian and ardent colonizationist, Jesse Burton Harrison, stressed that "the very last cases to which we would compare such gradual withdrawal . . . would be the expulsion of the eight hundred thousand Jews from Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, or that of nearly a million of Moors under Philip III, or that of the Huguenots from France." The alleged difference had little to do with consent, since Harrison (like Jefferson) spoke frankly of the "deportation" of freed slaves, contrary to the official rhetoric of the Colonization Society. The difference lay in the avoidance of sudden, disruptive change and in the alleged *worthlessness* to Virginia of the black population. In contrast to America's blacks, Harrison affirmed, the Jews, Moors, and Huguenots "carried with them greater personal wealth in proportion to their number, finer skill, and more thriving habits than were left behind them."[9]

Taking our cue from Jefferson and Harrison, I think that movements to colonize America's blacks can be put in clearer perspective if we examine some of the precedents or antiprecedents that were at least vaguely familiar to late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Americans. These historical examples should help us understand the ways in which the colonization movement combined some of the features of deportation with an idealized picture of voluntary seventeenth-century English migrations to North America.

8. Jefferson, "Autobiography," in *Thomas Jefferson: Writings,* edited by Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Viking Press, 1984), 44.

9. [Harrison], *Review of the Slave Question, Extracted from the "American Quarterly Review," Dec. 1832, Based on the Speech of Th. Marshall, of Fauquier: Showing That Slavery Is the Essential Hindrance to the Prosperity of the Slave-Holding States. . .* (Richmond, 1833), 25. On September 10, 1786, Thomas Barclay had written to Jefferson and John Adams from Tangier, attributing the origin of Moroccan piracy to "the expulsion of the Moors from Spain in the reign of Phillip [*sic*] the 3d. when 700,000 were banish'd from that Country" (*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson,* edited by Julian P. Boyd [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954], 10:346–47). J. H. Elliott estimates that after the edict of 1609, approximately 275,000 Moriscos left Spain (out of a Morisco population of some 300,000). From 120,000 to 150,000 Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492 (*Imperial Spain, 1469–1716* [London: Penguin, 1963], 95–98, 301; Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism,* vol. 2, *From Mohammed to the Marranos,* translated by Natalie Gerardi [New York: Vanguard Press, 1973], 199). About 160,000 Huguenots fled from France between 1680 and 1690 (Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983], 3). In 1824 Jefferson was privately proposing the deportation of 60,000 blacks a year, "the whole annual increase," for a period of twenty to twenty-five years (Jefferson to Jared Sparks, February 4, 1824, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson,* edited by Paul Leicester Ford, 10 vols. [New York, 1892–1899], 10:289–93).

Any expulsion or exodus is bound to be seen in a wholly different light by the world's Pharaohs and Israelites. Like the biblical Pharaoh and America's postrevolutionary whites, the persecutors have typically voiced alarm over the supposedly sudden growth of a population of dangerous "strangers" or heretics. Yet the desire to expel or even exterminate these unwanted subversives has been restrained, at least temporarily, by a realistic knowledge of their services.

In medieval Europe, for example, the Church's obsession with religious uniformity was often counterbalanced by a secular recognition that Jews could be extremely useful to the state because of their knowledge of commerce, credit and banking, medicine, and the languages and customs of distant Christian and Muslim lands. In thirteenth-century England, the Crown derived a significant share of its revenue from a few extraordinarily wealthy Jewish magnates. It was not until Henry III's ruinous taxes had impoverished the Anglo-Jewish community that the way was open for the famous expulsion edict of 1290. Two centuries later, when Spain deported a far larger Jewish population, officials tried to keep a few of the irreplaceable Jewish physicians from leaving the country. At the turn of the seventeenth century, proposals to exterminate or expel Spain's Moriscos, that is, Christianized Moors, were resisted by landlords and creditors who relied on their labor.[10]

Such self-interested resistance to deportation could be overcome by a belief in two kinds of danger: first, the fear that the subject population would rise in armed revolt or aid neighboring enemies, and second, the fear that an unassimilated group would corrupt the purity of a religious or national mission. Often the two fears overlapped, as in the prophecies of Jefferson and other white leaders that the continuing presence of America's blacks would either corrupt and undermine the experiment in republican government or provoke what Jefferson frankly and surprisingly called the "exterminating thunder" of "a god of justice," who in an armed struggle would favor the oppressed (this was written five years before the Haitian Revolution).[11]

10. Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), 60–90; Robert C. Stacey, "Royal Taxation and the Social Structure of Medieval Anglo-Jewry: The Tallages of 1239–1242," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 56 (1985): 201, 205; Elliott, *Imperial Spain,* 98, 299–303; Henry Charles Lea, *The Moriscos of Spain: Their Conversion and Expulsion* (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers, 1901), 292–343. Many of the Jewish physicians who did leave Spain acquired great prestige and influence in Turkey (Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews* [New York: George Dobsevage, 1927], 4:401). From the time of Constantine, Christian efforts to expel Jews or force them to convert were partly mitigated by recognition of their mercantile, financial, and scientific services.

11. Jefferson to Jean Nicolas Demeunier, June 26, 1786, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson,* 10, 63.

Internal security served as a pretext, at least, for the expulsion of some 275,000 Moriscos from early modern Spain. Centuries of Christian reconquest had led to the subjugation of large Muslim populations that were often indispensable to the economy but that also rebelled and collaborated with enemy Muslim armies. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Spanish Christians enslaved and massacred the Moors but also intermarried with them; Christian kings prohibited Moors from emigrating to Muslim lands and also expelled them as security risks.[12] The dilemma persisted long after the conquest of Granada, in the south of Spain, finally purged the country of Muslim rulers. The Spanish Moriscos, though nominally Christian, rebelled in the late 1560s when the Crown tried to eradicate their Moorish customs and culture. Envied for their industry and fecundity, the Moriscos were perceived as internal enemies who might support Turkish attacks on Spain. Philip III's decree of 1609 ordering the Moriscos to leave Spain won enthusiastic popular support at the very moment when Spaniards felt humiliated by concessions to the victorious Dutch; the decree was also hailed as an act of mercy to a population that deserved extermination.[13]

Unlike the Moors and the Moriscos, the Spanish Jews had no potential military allies or traditions of armed rebellion, though at least one anti-Semitic text alleged that the chief rabbi of Constantinople had urged Spanish Jews to convert in order to destroy Christianity from within.[14]

While Christians repeated and embellished all the libels fabricated during centuries of anti-Semitic persecution, the Edict of Expulsion of 1492 focused on the dilemma of assimilation, a dilemma experienced in a different form by nineteenth-century free blacks who sought acceptance in the United States. Following the anti-Semitic riots and massacres of 1391, many Spanish Jews converted to Christianity. To prove the authenticity of their faith, a few of these Marranos, or "New Christians," accused

12. For the contradictory policies of Spanish Christian kings toward Muslims, see John Boswell, *The Royal Treasure: Muslim Communities under the Crown of Aragon in the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 293–307; Robert Ignatius Burns, *Islam under the Crusaders: Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 16, 334, and passim; Brian A. Catlos, *The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims of Catalonia and Aragon, 1050–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Mark D. Meyerson, *The Muslims of Valencia in the Age of Fernando and Isabel: Between Coexistence and Crusade* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

13. Lea, *Moriscos of Spain,* 292–365; Elliott, *Imperial Spain,* 227–34, 299–303.

14. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism: The Iberian and the German Models,* Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture no. 26 (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1982), 8–11; Jane S. Gerber, *Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: Free Press, 1992), esp. chap. 5.

others of secret Judaizing practices. Of course, some New Christians did preserve Jewish rituals and traditions, but it was the Inquisition's use of torture that extracted a sufficient number of confessions to cast doubt on anyone with a trace of Jewish ancestry.

The connections between this anti-Semitism and antiblack racism, embodied in the growing Spanish obsession with purity of blood, or *limpieza de sangre,* can be seen in the following text of 1604 by Fray Prudencio de Sandoval, the biographer of Spain's Holy Roman Emperor, Charles the Fifth:

> Who can deny that in the descendants of Jews there persists and endures the evil inclination of their ancient ingratitude and lack of understanding, just as in the Negroes [there persists] the inseparability of their blackness. For if the latter should unite themselves a thousand times with white women, the children are born with the dark color of the father. Similarly, it is not enough for the Jew to be three parts aristocrat of Old Christian, for one family line [that is, one Jewish ancestor] alone defiles and corrupts him.[15]

The Spanish preoccupation with purity of blood merged racism with religious prejudice. In theory, Marranos (the word meaning "swine") were not denied the possibility of Christian redemption. In actuality, they could always be accused of Judaizing practices and be banished or burned alive. By 1492, when the *Reconquista* finally subjected Granada to Christian rule, Ferdinand and Isabella concluded that the Marranos and their descendants would never be free from corruption so long as unconverted Jews were allowed to live in Spain, where they could secretly instruct the New Christians and persuade them "to follow the Law of Moses." One is reminded of the fear expressed by southern slaveholders that slaves would never unquestioningly accept their status as long as free blacks could poison their minds and represent the possibility of a different way of life. Because Ferdinand and Isabella were determined to prevent "our holy Catholic faith" from being "debased and humbled," they ordered all Jews to leave Spain within four months.[16]

15. Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperator Carlos V.,* vol. 82, *Biblioeca de autores espānoles* (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1956), 319. I am much indebted to William Casey King for this reference, and for calling my attention to the related article by Jerome Friedman, "Jewish Conversion, the Spanish Pure Blood Laws, and Reformation: A Revisionist View of Racial and Religious Antisemitism," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987): 3–29. Estimates of the number of converts in Spain by 1492 range from 250,000 to as many as 1 million.

16. Graetz, *History of the Jews,* 4:334–422; Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "The Middle Ages," in *History of the Jewish People,* 568–71, 503–90, 620–21; Poliakov, *History of Anti-Semitism,*

Even such classic examples of expulsion usually implied a degree of individual choice and self-definition. Thousands of Spanish Jews, including prominent rabbis, accepted last-minute conversion to Christianity as a lesser of evils. Two centuries later, thousands of French Huguenots preferred Catholicism to exile or death. The French Acadians, whom the British deported in 1755–1756 from Nova Scotia and adjacent territories, could probably have remained in their homeland had they accepted an unconditional oath of allegiance to the British Crown that would have denied, in effect, the political authority of the pope. Some seventy thousand American Loyalists, the first refugees from a modern, secular revolution, also rejected the alternative of a loyalty oath and political conversion. To win acceptance, none of these exiles, with the arguable exception of several thousand African Americans who fled to gain British protection, faced the impossible requirement of changing the color of their skin.[17]

Yet for some Spanish Jews, Huguenots, and other religious and political refugees, the choice of conversion was equivalent to a choice of enslavement. The alternatives were roughly comparable to those offered to a small number of southern bondsmen who were given the choice of emigrating to Liberia or remaining in America as slaves. The meaning of consent is also transformed by violent persecution, which can sometimes bring the oppressors and the oppressed to agree that further coexistence is impossible, especially when the oppressed are perceived or begin to perceive themselves as a separate "nation."

This point is crucially important for an understanding of the occasional cooperation between black emigrationists like Marcus Garvey and white racists. A few references to twentieth-century events will help us appreciate how even coercive colonization can be interpreted as a providential escape. To take the most extreme example, in 1938 the Nazis' persecution of Jews entered a new phase with the *Kristallnacht* beatings, murders, and

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2:147–233; E. H. Lindo, *The History of the Jews of Spain and Portugal* (1848; reprint, New York: B. Franklin, 1970), 325–26. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Jews were also expelled from France and parts of Germany. In 1496, after Portugal had received a massive influx of Jewish refugees from Spain, King Emanuel I ordered them to leave the country but then enabled most of them to stay by forcing their conversion to Christianity.

17. Poliakov, *History of Anti-Semitism,* 2:198–99; Norwood, *Strangers and Exiles* 2:30–54; Charles M. Weiss, *History of the French Protestant Refugees,* translated by Henry William Herbert, vol. 1 (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1854); Bona Arsenault, *History of the Acadians* (Quebec: Conseil de la Vie Française en Amérique, 1966), 105–242; Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Great War for the Empire: The Years of Defeat, 1754–1757* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 243–57; Mary Beth Norton, *The British-Americans: The Loyalist Exiles in England, 1774–1789* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), 8–41, 244–47; Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976).

attacks on Jewish homes, shops, and synagogues. (A century or more earlier, American free blacks were the victims of similar though not centrally organized mob attacks in Philadelphia, New York, Cincinnati, and other cities.) A few days after the *Kristallnacht,* Hermann Göring (whom I actually got to see and watch at the Nuremburg trial) explained privately that the goal of such violence was to force Jews to leave Germany and settle in a distant colony like Madagascar. State Secretary Ernst von Weizäcker and other officials subsequently devoted considerable time to the Nazis' "Madagascar Project."

The idea of colonizing Jews in Madagascar had actually appeared in anti-Semitic literature in the 1920s and had led the Polish government, which was eager to get rid of Poland's so-called superfluous Jews, to sound out the governor-general of the French colony. After finally receiving French consent, Poland dispatched a commission to Madagascar in 1937 to investigate the possibility of founding a Jewish settlement there (the two Jewish members of the commission found the island inhospitable and objected to the commission's report). The fact that Poland and even France were interested in reducing their Jewish populations suggests why neighboring governments refused to take Nazi anti-Semitism seriously or to open their gates to more than a trickle of Jewish refugees. Although some German officials were still considering the goal of colonizing all European Jews in distant territories as late as the summer of 1940, the term *resettlement* soon became a Nazi euphemism for unprecedented mass extermination.[18]

This experience has dramatized both the urgency and the difficulty of finding asylums for peoples subjected to increasingly violent persecu-

18. Jane Kamensky, "Limits of Resistance; The Uncertain Legacy of Ernst von Weizäcker and the Final Solution," unpublished senior history essay, Yale University, 1985; Eugene Havesi, "Hitler's Plan for Madagascar," *Contemporary Jewish Record* 4 (August 1941): 381–94; Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933–1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 184–85; Celia Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland between the Two World Wars* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 136–37; Harry M. Rabinowicz, *The Legacy of Polish Jewry: A History of Polish Jews in the Inter-War Years, 1919–1939* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965), 191–92; Howard Morley Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (New York: Delta, 1977), 267–79, 355–61, 510–11; Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945,* 2d ed. (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1968), 79–82; Gordon A. Craig, "Schreibt un Farschreibt!" *New York Review of Books,* April 10, 1986. There had been a long history of Jewish colonization projects. In the mid-nineteenth century a number of Jewish writers began envisaging a return to the ancestral homeland in Palestine; in the 1890s, as conditions worsened in the Russian Pale of Settlement and as increasing numbers of eastern European Jews found a refuge in the United States, Baron Moritz von Hirsch's Jewish Colonization Association advocated a mass migration to Argentina; even Theodor Herzl, the organizer of the First Zionist Congress, accepted as an "emergency measure" Britain's proposal in 1903 for a Jewish settlement in Uganda, a concession that brought a bitter though temporary division in the Zionist movement.

tion. Few refugee groups in history have been as fortunate as the French Huguenots, who for all their suffering were often aided by foreign neighbors and were able to escape by the tens of thousands to Protestant regions in Switzerland, Holland, the Rhineland, and England. When we evaluate the nineteenth-century African colonization movements, we should keep in mind the range of emotions aroused in our own time by the plight of Soviet Jews, by the demand of Rabbi Meir Kahane and his followers that all Arabs be expelled from Israel, and by Israel's "Operation Moses," which rescued thousands of black Falasha from Ethiopia before being disclosed to the world in 1984. Aiding the persecuted does not usually imply even tacit moral approval of the persecutors; it may, however, serve as a humanitarian cloak for prejudice or imply a pragmatic acceptance of the persecution as an irremediable fact of life.

Despite their humiliation and suffering, exiles and refugees have often found it difficult to view their rejection as permanent. Groups of Spanish Jews, Huguenots, Acadians, and other expatriates addressed kings with petitions or monetary offers in the hope of securing a right to return. The Zionist movement, culminating in the creation of modern Israel, fulfilled some 878 years of Jewish prayers following the expulsion of Jews by the Romans in the first century of the Common Era. Some Moriscos, who retained Christian practice and found themselves despised in Muslim North Africa, slipped back into Spain at the risk of being discovered and condemned as galley slaves. Hundreds of the Canadian Acadians who had been dispersed among Francophobic and anti-Catholic American colonists to the south welcomed the open boats and supplies provided by the governments of Georgia and South Carolina, and sailed up the Atlantic coast in desperate attempts to reach the Bay of Fundy.[19]

For at least two generations after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, many Huguenots awaited the providential event that would enable them to return to France and convert their countrymen to Protestantism. Although some groups of refugees, such as the Huguenots, soon lost their distinctive identity, victims of persecution were no less bound than other emigrants to the culture of their former homelands. In northern Africa, Italy, Flanders, and Turkey, Sephardic Jews continued to take pride in their Spanish language, manners, and culture, which gave them an air of cosmopolitan superiority. When America's black refugees returned to the United States from Haiti, Canada, and Liberia, or preserved American

19. For the deportation of the French Acadians, see John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005).

customs and institutions abroad, they were not thereby betraying their distinctive African American subculture or diluting their resentment toward racist oppression.[20]

Historical comparisons also provide perspective on the mixture of exuberance and despair felt by many exiles as they sought to explain their loss of homes, property, and community, as well as the frightening uncertainty of the future. For faithful Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike, such cataclysms could be comprehended only as the will of God. The deported Moriscos arrived at the Spanish port of Alicante "with music and song, as though going to a festival, and thanking Allah for the happiness of returning to the land of their fathers." Although many Moriscos mistrusted Philip III's offer of free transport and chartered their own ships, others interpreted Spain's sudden reversal of policy as a providential opportunity, as one leader put it, "to go to the land of our ancestors, under our king the Turk, who will let us live as Moors and not as slaves, as we have been treated by our masters."[21]

In 1492 many Jews expressed a similar sense of exaltation and ecstasy as they compared their suffering and banishment to the Mosaic Exodus or saw it as a "third exile," confirming their unique relationship with God. According to the historian Leon Poliakov, it was even said that this exodus would be followed "by a promised land of glory and honor. Others added that it would not be long before Spain recalled her children, so certain exiles, after selling their property, buried their money in the soil of the mother country." After receiving a warm welcome in Turkey, one Jewish poet proclaimed that God had at last provided a safe asylum in which Jews could cast off corruptions and recover ancient truths.[22]

Some Huguenot leaders compared their persecution to that of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews; they also complained that their followers, "like the Israelites, noe sooner past the sea but they forget their deliverance and goe a stray." For Huguenot exiles, however, the central meaning of the Israelites' Exodus was that God would not abandon the faithful who remained within his covenant. The punishment he had inflicted upon such persecutors as Pharaoh and Herod, in the Old and New Testaments, showed that Catholic tyrants would inevitably pay for their crimes; the

20. Lindo, *Jews of Spain and Portugal,* 248–351; Graetz, *History of the Jews,* 4:387–88; Lea, *Moriscos of Spain,* 343–65; Butler, *Huguenots in America,* passim; Gipson, *Great War for the Empire,* 389–96.

21. Lea, *Moriscos of Spain,* 328–31.

22. Poliakov, *History of Anti-Semitism,* 2:199; Graetz, *History of the Jews,* 4:387, 400.

agonies suffered by Protestants within France would soon cease. While Huguenot leaders like Pierre Jurieu recommended emigration to America as a way of escaping conversion to Catholicism, they associated deliverance with the return to a purified France, not with a new promised land. Still, it is noteworthy that when Mademoiselle de Sers wrote to her mother and father, a Huguenot pastor, while sailing to America in 1688, she compared the way God had delivered the Israelites from the hands of Pharaoh to the way he had enabled her faithful compatriots to escape their persecutors and joyfully cross the sea. There is a bitter irony in the fact that Mademoiselle de Sers was bound for Saint-Domingue, or what would become Haiti. She could hardly foresee the chain of events that would lead to the expulsion of whites as a result of the Haitian Revolution, which would then arouse futile hopes similar to hers, in the 1820s, among shiploads of thousands of American free blacks bound by choice for the same island.[23]

When exiles and refugees recalled the biblical Exodus, they seldom referred to its darkest side. When the founders and supporters of the American Colonization Society asserted that "this scheme is from God!" and that "to labour in this work is to co-work with God," they envisioned the salvation of Africa, not the slaughter or displacement of its natives. When Edward Wilmot Blyden wrote to African American friends from Liberia, telling them that God had mandated their return to an African homeland, he quoted from Deuteronomy: "Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers had said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged." But Blyden did not point out that this passage precedes God's angry complaint that the Israelites had been fearful of trying to conquer "a people stronger and taller than we, large cities with walls sky-high."[24]

In Deuteronomy, at the end of the forty years' preparation in the wilderness, the Lord informs the Israelites that they are about to invade and occupy "seven nations much larger than you." God promises he "will

23. Jurieu, *The Last Efforts of Afflicted Innocence* (London, 1682), 62–71, 136; Isaac Minet, epigraph to pt. 1 of Butler, *Huguenots in America;* Jurieu, *Lettres pastorals* (Rotterdam, 1688), 89–91, 120; Jurieu, *Pastoral Letters Directed to the Protestants in France* (London, 1688), 15 and passim; *The Reflections of the Reverend and Learned M. Jurieu upon the Strange and Miraculous Extasies of Isabel Vincent* (London, 1689), 38–39.

24. American Colonization Society, *Second Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1819), 193; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 17; Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 8–9; Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Deut. 1:19–45.

dislodge those peoples before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them at once, else the wild beasts would multiply to your hurt." After guaranteeing victory over the idolatrous nations that occupied the Promised Land, God issues an unequivocal command: "You shall not let a soul remain alive." And when Joshua's troops eventually capture Jericho, the Bible reports, "they exterminated everything in the city with the sword: man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and ass."[25]

In actuality, archaeological evidence indicates that the Israelites slowly infiltrated the Land of Canaan and did not exterminate their enemies. God's war sermon probably reflects a postsettlement lament that the Israelites' adoption of idolatrous customs and intermarriage with Canaanites could have been prevented by killing off the native inhabitants.[26] Moreover, Talmudic and medieval rabbinic commentators insisted that God's ruthless commandment could never serve as a precedent for other times and peoples. Even the New England Puritans, who sometimes referred to Indians as Canaanites and Amalekites, were extremely reluctant to invoke God's commandments to annihilate specific pagan tribes. Nevertheless, the conquest of Canaan provided an example of divinely sanctioned colonization and violent *displacement* that was not lost on the English colonizers of Ireland and then North America.[27]

The Virginia Company, which founded Jamestown in 1607, expressed benevolent concern for the Native Americans. English settlers would introduce them to the Bible, "cover their naked miserie, with civill use of foode, and cloathing," teach them how to make productive use of their time and land, and welcome them with "equall privileges" into the English community. As Edmund S. Morgan puts it, the promoters of colonization hoped for more than profits: "Theirs was a patriotic enterprise that would bring civility and Christianity to the savages of North America and

25. Josh. 6:21.

26. Deut. 7:1–2, 22–24, 20:16–18; William W. Hallo, "Deuteronomy and Ancient Near Eastern Literature," in *The Torah: A Modern Commentary,* edited by W. Gunter Plaut (New York: URJ Press, 1981), 1381; Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 143–44.

27. Historians long assumed that the early "Calvinistic" Afrikaners invoked the Israelite model of a chosen people to legitimate their divine commission, based on Deuteronomy, to "smite" and enslave the black heathen, to flee "Egypt" in the Great Trek, and to establish a promised land of white supremacy. André du Toit has carefully traced the origins of this historical interpretation, which appears to be a myth largely created by the missionary David Livingstone but was then appropriated, in the early twentieth century, by the Afrikaners themselves ("No Chosen Peoples: The Myth of the Calvinistic Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology," *American Historical Review* 88 [October 1983]: 920–52).

redemption from idleness and crime to the unemployed masses of England."[28] The failure of all these expectations did not kill the initial dream or deter Virginians and other Americans from applying a very similar formula, more than two centuries later, to the colonization of Africa.

Frequently likened to the founders of Plymouth and Jamestown colonies, the African American settlers in Liberia occupied their own "Canaan" and confronted their own natives, whose population had not been depleted in advance by alien diseases such as those that wiped out whole communities of eastern Indians before Jamestown and Plymouth were settled.[29]

Like the Puritans, the Liberian settlers and their patrons were alert to the dangers of "counterconversion"—of colonists assimilating the ways of Canaan. Ralph Randolph Gurley, the Connecticut-born and Yale-educated secretary of the ACS, warned that without the "means of Christian improvement," the Americo-Liberians (as they were called) would quickly become indistinguishable from the African natives except "by the sturdiness and variety of their vices."[30] The location and very meaning of a promised land were complicated by the need to conquer Canaan while looking backward across the sea for standards of justification and moral as-

28. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), 47. The English, like other European colonizers, always expressed a desire to convert the Indians to Christianity. But since professions of fairness and goodwill were coupled with fear and brutal violence against "savages" who were seen as the agents of Satan, historians continue to debate the meaning of Indian-white relations (see esp. Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629–1700* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1969], 11–13, 123–24, 137–39, 147–53; Yasuhide Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian: White Man's Law in Massachusetts, 1630–1763* [Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1986]); Karen Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580–1640* [Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980]; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* [Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973]; and Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620–1675* [Boston: Little, Brown, 1965]).

29. I am aware that the eastern Indians who were removed west of the Mississippi were also placed in the role of "colonists" living in regions already inhabited. But even the Cherokees were not expected to civilize and regenerate the entire West. Apart from criticism from opponents of removal that civilized tribes would be surrounded by violent "savages," little thought seems to have been given to the specific cultural implications of westward removal.

30. W. W. Schmokel, "Settlers and Tribes: The Origins of the Liberian Dilemma," in *Western African History,* edited by Daniel F. McCall, Norman R. Bennett, and Jeffrey Butler, Boston University Papers on Africa (New York: Praeger, 1969), 4:158. In 1842 missionaries at Maryland's colony of Cape Palmas charged that the settlers, having been removed from the wholesome restraints of the United States, had lapsed into vices that set the worst example for Africans and thwarted missionary work (Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831–1857* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971], 138).

sessment. Would New England, Virginia, or Liberia redeem their flawed progenitors, or become dissolute clearings in a distant wilderness?

Among the world's emigrants and colonists the Puritans and Quakers were exceptional in their relative affluence, education, and political experience, a point frequently noted by free black critics of the American Colonization Society, who objected to the apparent absurdity of expecting similar feats of nation building from illiterate former slaves.[31] Although English Puritans were despised and persecuted by their High Church countrymen, their errand into the wilderness was not governed and interpreted by a Puritan Colonization Society that regarded them as a "vile excrescence" and a "foul stain" upon the nation. Such epithets, pervasive among white supporters of black colonization, had been applied to Jews, Moriscos, convicts, and other victims of deportation. But the voluntary emigrants to Liberia found themselves in a bizarre and unprecedented position: they were assigned the mission of "saving" America by vindicating their race and civilizing Africa—as President John Tyler put it, "Monrovia will be to Africa what Jamestown and Plymouth have been to America"—yet they themselves were the very "corruption" whose so-called purgation would supposedly purify the United States.[32]

Nevertheless, the more articulate white supporters of African colonization, especially the religious activists, viewed their own errand as a providential opportunity to cleanse the United States of slavery and racial conflict, the twin diseases that imperiled America's Christian and republican mission. The official journal of the ACS even claimed that colonizationist activity was rapidly dispelling white racial prejudice, since "it is impossible, in the nature of things, that unkind feelings or prejudice towards a people can long survive benevolent efforts for their improvement."[33] Benevolent actions, in other words, would purify the more nega-

31. See, for example, the letter of Richard Allen to *Freedom's Journal,* November 2, 1827, 134.

32. Tyler, an ardent defender of slavery and president of the Virginia Colonization Society, is quoted in Katherine Harris, *African and American Values: Liberia and West Africa* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 61. Lawrence J. Friedman, "Purifying the White Man's Country: The American Colonization Society Reconsidered, 1816–40," *Societas* 6 (Winter 1976): 1–23, presents a fascinating psychological analysis of "the parallel between the colonizationist's underlying quest for purity and the human defecation process" (16). He fails, however, to give adequate attention to the theme of racial elevation and redemption, or to the concern of many colonizationists for the practical consequences of slave emancipation.

33. *African Repository and Colonial Journal* 13 (October 1837): 310. Although this claim was clearly an attempt to answer accurate charges that many colonizationists fanned the flames of racism, it is still remarkable that colonizationists would admit that racial prejudice could be overcome, a belief that would appear to undermine the very raison d'être of the ACS.

tive motives and emotions that brought support for those very actions. Spokesmen for the ACS, including some southern slaveholders, confidently predicted that American blacks would prove their capability for civilization and vindicate their race as soon as they were freed from the degrading and demoralizing effects of racial prejudice. Despite the accusations made by abolitionists, the speeches and publications of colonizationists very rarely implied that blacks were innately or permanently inferior to whites.

For example, even a brief seven years after Liberia's somewhat traumatic and disease-ridden founding in 1822, the great political leader Henry Clay praised the "skill, bravery and power" of the black Americo-Liberians and cited their achievements as proof that the vices commonly ascribed to American blacks "do not spring from any inherent depravity" but were rather the result of the "invincible prejudices" and discrimination of American whites.[34]

According to Robert Goodloe Harper, the aristocratic Maryland lawyer and politician who gave Liberia its name, the blacks who were hopelessly debased in the United States by the stigma of racial slavery would be wholly transformed within an environment of dignity and equality: "They would become proprietors of land, master mechanics, shipowners, navigators, and merchants, and by degrees schoolmasters, justices of the peace, militia officers, ministers of religion, judges, and legislators." Once they were removed from the social and psychological oppression of whites, Harper affirmed, America's blacks would "soon become equal to the people of Europe, or of European origin, so long their masters and oppressors." George Washington Parke Custis, step-grandson of the first president, contrasted the bloodshed of the Spanish conquest of America with the redemptive role the United States would soon play in Africa; future generations of Africans "will not think of Cortes or Pizarro—the name of America will be hailed with enthusiasm by millions on that vast continent that are now unborn."[35]

According to many bombastic colonizationist orations, the ultimate fate of millions of American slaves—and, by implication, of America's republican institutions—would depend on the black colonists' success

34. Temperley, "African-American Aspirations," 71–72.

35. Harper to Elias B. Caldwell, August 20, 1817, ACS, *First Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1818), 20–21; ACS, *Seventh Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1824), 14; *African Repository and Colonial Journal* 13 (October 1837): 310; *African Repository and Colonial Journal* 14 (January 1838): 20.

in civilizing Africa, eradicating the slave trade, and building a free and prosperous society that would be as attractive to American blacks as the United States had proved to be for European immigrants. Liberia's mission was so abstract and grandiose that it almost precluded serious discussion of capital investment, technological assistance, labor skills, and markets.

Still, some former slaves like John Kizzel, who had been freed by the British and had settled in Sierra Leone, reassured fellow black Americans that they were being offered the opportunity to return to their ancestral homeland, and had nothing to fear regarding native Africans. Unlike the Europeans who colonized America, blacks were not aliens in Africa and faced nothing like the centuries of Indian warfare in North America. "Brethren," Kizzel exclaimed, "you know the land of Canaan was given to Abraham and to his seed; so Africa was given to our forefathers and to their children." Like the biblical Joseph, Africans had been sold wrongfully into a strange land. "It is God," Kizzel reassured African Americans, "who has put it into the hearts of these good men to assist you back to your country."[36]

The American Colonization Society happily endorsed this analogy and added a second crucial argument: missionaries had found that the "native tribes" in the Sierra Leone region were said to be eager to welcome an American colony. The Africans were "more mild, amiable, and docile; less warlike than the aborigines of America." Reports from Sierra Leone proved that "instead of the war-whoop of the savages, armed with the implements of death and torture, they go to meet their friends and brothers, a generous, humane, hospitable race, who already welcome their approach, as the harbinger of civilization and social happiness." If the American settlers took as their model the "gentleness, forbearance, and moderation" of the Quaker founders of Pennsylvania, they could be assured the same rewards of uninterrupted peace and friendly intercourse with the aborigines.[37]

In 1834 Philadelphia and New York colonizationists actually founded

36. *Journal of Daniel Coker,* 48; ACS, *Third Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1820), 121. Kizzel had been born in Sierra Leone before being taken to America as a slave. In 1792 he joined the 1,190 black refugees who chose to leave Nova Scotia and accompany the large expedition to Sierra Leone, led by John Clarkson, the brother of the English abolitionist leader Thomas Clarkson.

37. ACS, *Third Annual Report,* 19; ACS, *Fourth Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1821), 62.

a settlement in Liberia based on Quaker principles of pacifism and anti-slavery. The next year King Joe Harris's Kru warriors wiped out this Bassa Cove community in a midnight attack, killing twenty of the colonists while the survivors fled in panic through the forests to Monrovia. The response from the settlers' newspaper, the *Liberia Herald,* was predictable: "Such is the dastardly, unprincipled disposition of these half cannibals, that nothing but a knowledge of superiority, in point of physical force, on the part of foreigners, will keep them to the terms of any compact made with them." Before long, Americo-Liberian clergymen were reported to be saying, "The best way to civilize these Natives is with powder and ball."[38]

PART II

In 1924 W. E. B. Du Bois, America's great black leader, proclaimed from Liberia that "Africa is the Spiritual Frontier of human kind—oh the wild and beautiful adventures of its taming!" He described Monrovia as "a city set upon a hill." This was the image taken from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount that the Puritan John Winthrop had made the emblem of New England's and America's mission to the world. But in 1924 Du Bois's ideal of tropical paradise was the antithesis of Winthrop's ideal of a disciplined, enterprising Christian commonwealth, an ideal accepted in large measure by the nineteenth-century black and white founders of Liberia.

A native New Englander and the first black to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard, Du Bois had long been fascinated by the African roots of what he termed "American Negro culture." Late in 1923 he had been sent to Liberia as President Coolidge's envoy and minister plenipotentiary for the inauguration of President C. D. B. King. After walking for hours in the bush and visiting a Kru village, Du Bois made the romantic discovery that "efficiency and happiness do not go together in modern culture," that "laziness; divine, eternal, languor is right and good and true." Even as he rebelled against the compulsions of his own internalized work ethic, Du Bois's allusion to the "mud town Plymouth Rock" and to the "city set upon a hill" seemed to reinforce the central hope of Liberia's history: that African Americans, having been cruelly excluded from the promise

38. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 61; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement,* 234–36, Schmokel, "Settlers and Tribes," 4:167.

of American life, which they had helped create, could find fulfillment and dignity in a regenerated "America" on the shores of Africa.[1]

Du Bois's rhapsodic response to African culture (which really meant no support for "back to Africa" movements) illustrates the complexity of modeling African colonization on the myth of America as the Promised Land. Unlike Du Bois, Liberia's nineteenth-century settlers had not studied anthropology and failed to share his poetic delight in what he praised as the "ancient witchery" of Africa's medicine and his appreciation of the villagers' "leisure of true aristocracy, leisure for thought and courtesy, leisure for sleep and laughter." With a few exceptions, the Americo-Liberians had been no less ethnocentric than the white settlers of North America. They too sought to escape an Egypt or Babylon and build a city on a hill that would reap the full material and spiritual rewards of Christian civilization. They too experienced uncertainty and homesickness as they struggled to find a new identity that would help to liberate their brethren from the oppressions of history.

Despite the optimistic rhetoric of the American Colonization Society, conflicts between settlers and African ethnic groups had erupted with disturbing frequency since 1787, when Britain established a precarious colony at Sierra Leone as a refuge for London's indigent blacks. In 1789, for example, a Temne king destroyed Sierra Leone's main settlement, Granville Town, in retaliation for the burning of a Temne village by British marines. Aided by a few fugitive settlers and tribal allies, the Temne's King Tom led full-scale attacks on Fort Thornton in 1801 and 1802. Ironically, the rebellious Trelawny Maroons, who had been deported from Jamaica and then sent to Sierra Leone from Nova Scotia, had the military skills that helped to save the colony. Counteroffensives were then required to pacify

1. Du Bois, "Little Portraits of Africa," *Crisis* (April 1924): 273–74; Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 124–26; David L. Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 118–28; Rayford W. Logan, ed., *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Profile* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1971), 225–27. M. P. Akpan suggests that Du Bois, who was known to be Marcus Garvey's "most formidable African-American opponent and critic," was sent to Liberia to help sever that country's links with the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Although Du Bois dreamed of an African civilization "without coal, without noise, where machinery will sing and never rush and roar, and where men will sleep and think and dance," he urged the State Department to provide the Liberian government with expert advice on economic development, education, transportation, and sanitation. He never visited the hinterland, where President King's officials were involved in the oppression and virtual enslavement of native peoples ("Liberia and the Universal Negro Improvement Association: The Background to the Abortion of Garvey's Scheme for African Colonization," *Journal of African History* 14, no. 1 [1973]: 123; Du Bois, "Little Portraits," 274).

the natives and force them to accept British interpretations of treaties and land cessions.[2]

Neither the British nor the Americans had learned much from the disastrous mistakes of New World colonization. Apart from choosing unhealthful, malaria-riven sites that guaranteed devastating mortality from disease, they failed to comprehend that non-Europeans would not willingly accept Western ideas of land use, private property, and political authority. Christian humanitarians, eager to replace the slave trade with legitimate commerce, never anticipated that increasing exports of camwood, rice, ivory, palm oil, and hides would simply increase the demand for slave labor in domestic African economies. The power of West African political regimes and alliances hinged on the control of extensive trade routes for domestic products as well as access to Western firearms, textiles, rum, tobacco, and iron tools and utensils. For centuries the diverse ethnic groups of Upper Guinea and the Grain Coast had preserved their sovereignty while conducting business with European traders. Unlike Native Americans, West Africans had developed complex networks of trade that had long supplied Europe with most of its gold. As the historian Paul E. Lovejoy puts it, West Africa had been "fully drawn into the capitalist world market." The Anglo-American humanitarians could not see that they were building an entrance ramp on the road to imperialism. Within a generation after the founding of Liberia, small Americo-Liberian settlements extended for four hundred miles along the Grain Coast.[3]

When the Reverend Samuel J. Mills and Ebenezer Burgess explored the Sierra Leone coast in 1818, searching for a site that would satisfy the needs of the American Colonization Society, they found "great tracks" of uninhabited land on Sherbro Island. After dispensing rum and other gifts to numerous African officials and chieftains, they discovered that these

2. On the early settlement of Sierra Leone, see Lamin O. Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 41–45; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 24–25, 89-92; and A. P. Kup, *Sierra Leone: A Concise History* (London: David and Charles, 1975), 123, 164–66.

3. Paul E. Lovejoy, written comment on my second Tanner Lecture on Human Values, Stanford University, February 23, 2006; Howard Temperley, "African-American Aspirations and the Settlement of Liberia," *Slavery and Abolition* 21, no. 2 (2000): 67–68; Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad,* 41–45; Svend E. Holsoe, "A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821–1847," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 4, no. 2 (1971): 331–56; P. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 135–36, 159–70; Philip D. Curtin et al., *African History: From Earliest Times to Independence,* 2d ed. (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 197–200, 331–37.

"children of nature" were incapable of understanding the benevolent objectives of the Colonization Society and were unwilling to sell even vacant land. Three years later Eli Ayers and Captain Robert Field Stockton, a U.S. naval officer, encountered still greater resistance at Cape Mesurado, east of Sierra Leone on the Grain Coast. Only after aiming cocked pistols at King Peter's head were Stockton and Ayers able to extort a treaty ceding the cape to the Colonization Society for less than three hundred dollars in trade goods.

Ayers, Jehudi Ashmun, and the first black settlers quickly learned that their security required more than professions of peace and goodwill. Though weakened by fever, Ashmun exploited African tribal divisions while mounting brass cannon and building a stockade and martello tower. By November 1822 he was prepared for the mass assault of hundreds of native warriors who nearly overwhelmed the thirty-odd defenders before a cannon's repeated charges of grapeshot tore bloody holes in their ranks. In a second confrontation, an African American woman, Matilda Newport, supposedly turned the tide when she ignited a cannon at point-blank range with her glowing pipe.[4] For Americo-Liberians these legendary exploits signified the triumph of civilization over barbarism, much as similar victories over Indians became part of a mythology justifying the white Americans' possession of North America.[5]

Like the seventeenth-century English colonists and the chartered companies that subsidized them, the Americo-Liberians and white ACS

4. As late as the 1950s Liberia celebrated a Matilda Newport Day in honor of the Americo-Liberian woman who had supposedly turned the tide of battle against native Africans (Temperley, "African-American Aspirations," 84). For broader recent works on the history of Liberia and the ACS, see Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Claude A. Clegg III, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Catherine Reef, *This Our Dark Country: The American Settlers of Liberia* (New York: Clarion Books, 2002); and Ibrahim Sundiata, *Brothers and Strangers: Black Zion, Black Slavery, 1914–1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

5. Tom Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 44–45, 65; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 62–68, 88–90; Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), 114–22; C. Abayomi Cassell, *Liberia: History of the First American Republic* (New York: Fountainhead, 1970), 67–78; Holsoe, "Study of Relations," 336–40. Holsoe shows there was much division among the indigenous chieftains over the acceptability of the settlement. Sao Boso, ruler of the powerful Condo confederation, who came down to the coast from Bopolu, favored peace and amicable commerce. But after Sao Boso returned home, the Dei chiefs began plotting an attack. Sao Boso's death in 1837 led to several years of heightened disorder and conflict (ibid., 337–51). For contradictory attitudes toward Native Americans in English colonies, see Michael L. Oberg, *Dominion and Civility: English Imperialism and Native America, 1585–1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

officials insisted that their purchases of land would not deprive "the Natives of the Country" of a single "real advantage." On the contrary, according to the prevailing ideology, memorably expressed in a deed for land along the St. Paul River, the settlements would "improve [the natives] and advance their happiness, by carrying Christianity and civilization to the doors of their Cabins."[6]

This supposedly progressive objective was closely tied to the U.S. government's belated commitment to enforce its laws prohibiting Americans from participating in the African slave trade. Although President Monroe had been persuaded by his cabinet that the Constitution barred the government from purchasing land or directly supporting a colony for America's free blacks, the Slave Trade Act of 1819 provided a pretext for indirect aid. Monroe concluded that government funds *could* be used to prepare and support a site for resettling Africans rescued from illicit slave ships by a special U.S. naval squadron. The privately governed colony of Liberia thus became an official refuge for Africans saved by the U.S. government from becoming slaves in Cuba or other parts of the New World. Federal funds appropriated to benefit African recaptives, as they were called, initially helped to subsidize Liberian housing, education, defense, and the purchase of agricultural equipment—a huge sum that the government had in no way anticipated.[7]

Natives who resisted the extension of Americo-Liberian settlements along the coast were accordingly portrayed as enemies not only of Christian civilization but also of selfless efforts to suppress the slave trade, the primal crime that had crippled and corrupted Africa. Although the ACS continued to stress the "friendly character" of the colony's relations with native tribes, it also underscored the colonists' need and desire for naval protection: "The influence of the United States squadron on the African

6. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 73.

7. Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad,* 198–202; Katherine Harris, *African and American Values: Liberia and West Africa* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 18–22, 33–36; Temperley, "African-American Aspirations," 68. Although the United States continued to maintain an informal presence in Liberia as well as an official agency for disposing of recaptives, these intimations of colonialism were more than counterbalanced by a Jacksonian hostility to federal spending and by a racist refusal, from 1847 to 1862, to recognize a government, including Haiti, ruled by blacks. American colonizationists were forced to rely on private philanthropy and intermittent support from state governments. Even in the late nineteenth century Liberia was unable to arouse the interest of either the U.S. government or private financiers in projects for building roads and railways to the interior, a fact that casts doubt on claims of American imperialism, as distinct from Americo-Liberian imperialism (see M. B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841–1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7, no. 2 [1973]: 224).

coast has been of vast advantage to Liberia. It has given the native tribes a better idea of the American character and resources, and has tended to quell their turbulent feelings and cause them to seek . . . a closer connection with the commonwealth of Liberia."[8]

The free blacks and mulattoes who first emigrated to Liberia were dependent on the coastal peoples for food, trade, and knowledge of the environment. The Dei and other coastal groups called the black and mulatto settlers "Americans" or even "white men." Though cautiously willing to profit from the methods of the non-African world, they often looked with contempt upon former slaves or descendants of slaves. If the darker-skinned Americo-Liberians seemed African in appearance, they still deferred to whites, not to the authority of local kings.

For their part, the settlers felt infinitely superior to seminaked heathen who had no understanding of private landownership, who believed in trial by an ordeal of poison, and who enslaved and sold their neighbors. Like numerous other groups of exiles and refugees, the Americo-Liberians attempted to replicate the culture they and their forebears had syncretized in their recent homeland. The more privileged settlers relished imported American foodstuffs and disdained such local staples as cassava, plantain, and palm oil. In the sultry heat they wore black toppers, long frock coats, and heavy silk gowns. Amid the "riotous" vegetation, under the "pitiless" African sun that later enraptured W. E. B. Du Bois, they reconstructed the churches, lyceums, benevolent societies, schools, poorhouses, and fraternal orders of Jacksonian America. Ironically, in cities like Philadelphia it was precisely such institution building that had most enraged American whites, who wanted to keep blacks in their "place." In light of the Liberian context, one may note a further irony: in the United States blacks had often honored such institutions with the proud adjective *African.*[9]

The settler society, to be sure, was anything but homogeneous. Though

8. *African Repository and Colonial Journal* 21 (February 1845): 42. Ralph R. Gurley, the leading agent and fund-raiser for the ACS, argued that biblical and secular history showed that God's "usual mode of civilizing a country is, by planting there, colonies of civilized men, with whom the natives may amalgamate, or before whom they must disappear, as their own character and conduct shall decide." Gurley admitted that most colonies had been guilty "of more or less injustice to the aborigines around them," a fact that aroused some prejudice against colonization itself. He insisted, however, that "a rigidly impartial examination of facts would generally show, that the natives themselves are not blameless; that they unjustifiably provoke the treatment under which they suffer" (*African Repository and Colonial Journal* 25 [April 1849]: 103).

9. W. W. Schmokel, "Settlers and Tribes: The Origins of the Liberian Dilemma," in *Western African History,* edited by Daniel F. McCall, Norman R. Bennett, and Jeffrey Butler, Boston University Papers on Africa (New York: Praeger, 1969), 4:157–58; Harris, *African and American Values,* 60–63; Akpan, "Black Imperialism," 219–21, 225–26; Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 53–59.

sharing a common heritage of persecution, the Americo-Liberians were divided by distinctions of complexion, class, wealth, skills, and education. By 1841, when Joseph Jenkins Roberts replaced the last white governor, a small merchant oligarchy had won control of most of the colony's productive resources and political power. Roberts, a wealthy mulatto merchant and philanthropist, belonged to a network of elite families, many of them from Virginia, who had been born free and had immigrated during the first years of settlement. If this oligarchy curtailed opportunities for later immigrants, the great majority of whom were former slaves, their achievements also undercut theories of racial incapability.[10]

There is an obvious danger in drawing generalizations about Americo-Liberian culture from the behavior of a few elite families or even from the hundreds of letters of former slaves who became artisans and farmers in Liberia. These literate blacks, even those who suffered from privation and poverty, were a privileged group by virtue of their literacy.[11] Furthermore, their letters were crafted for the eyes of former owners, benefactors, and ACS officials. Yet the very existence of such a correspondence is highly significant. Few exiles and expatriates have cared to address their former oppressors, describing their achievements and hardships, their hopes and grievances. Few oppressors have shown continuing solicitude for members of a despised and outcast group. The former slaves who appealed for aid, approval, and family news also rejoiced over finding a land free of racial prejudice, a land where whites addressed them as "mister" instead of "boy"—and even tipped their hats and sometimes stepped aside on the pavement when a black man approached. Although the letters from Liberia may have minimized the increase in Africanisms in Americo-Liberian culture, they gave expression to a governing ideology that extolled enterprise and self-respect and that decried the life of "savages" who rejected the clothing, tools, and Bible of civilized life. As the historian Howard Temperley puts it: "Rejected, denounced, exiled [in the United States], there was no more dedicated group of Americans than the black settlers of Liberia."[12]

10. Harris, *African and American Values,* 63, 66–68; Akpan, "Black Imperialism," 218–19, 225–29; Schmokel, "Settlers and Tribes," 162–66; Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 13, 31–59; Tom W. Shick, "A Quantitative Analysis of Liberian Colonization from 1820 to 1843, with Special Reference to Mortality," *Journal of African History* 12, no. 1 (1971): 45–59.

11. Though Virginia, like most southern states, passed laws containing severe penalties for teaching slaves to read or write, it is clear that the laws were not fully enforced. In 1843 nearly half the population of Monrovia was literate (Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 37). The rate of literacy was of course much higher among freeborn blacks than among manumitted slaves.

12. Temperley, "African-American Aspirations," 76–77, 89. See also Bell I. Wiley, ed., *Slaves No More: Letters from Liberia, 1833–1869* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1980).

In 1840 Peyton Skipwith almost mimicked the rhetoric of an American frontiersman when he described his adventures in a punitive expedition against Getumbe, a Gola chieftain who led a federation of native rebels some fifty miles inland from Monrovia. Skipwith, a skilled mason and devout Christian, had been emancipated in 1833 by John Hartwell Cocke, a Virginia planter, reformer, and active leader of the ACS. Cocke had sent Skipwith, together with his wife and six children, to Liberia. It was in a letter to Cocke that Skipwith recounted his march, "rifle in hand," through "the wild bush" with some three hundred militiamen led by Joseph Jenkins Roberts, who would be elected the first president of the independent republic. Skipwith reported that "a savage host" of about four hundred men had attacked a missionary village defended by what he called "three Americans" who "whipt the whole enemy. They killd on the feeld above 20 dead, and god he only knows how many was wounded and carread away.... The Battle lasted about one Hour fifteen minutes. How this was done they had and over quantity [that is, a surplus] of musket loded and had nothing to do but take them up and poor the Bullets in thire flesh and they would fall takeeng fingers and tearing the flesh asunder."[13]

Sion Harris, one of the defenders of the mission houses, described the same surprise attack "by about 3 or 4 hundred warriors" in a long letter to Samuel Wilkeson, president of the ACS board of directors. After firing repeated volleys into the enemy's ranks, Harris found himself facing "the head man": "I took deliberate aim at him (he was half bent, shaking) and brought him to the ground, cut off his knee, shot him in the lungs and cut of[f] his privets." Harris later delivered the leader's head, which had been cut off by an African recaptive, to the governor of the colony.[14]

Peyton Skipwith saw little kinship between his own family, who were intent on improving themselves in grammar school and at the Baptist Church Sunday School, and the "crooman" (Kru) who was about to be executed for brutally killing "an American boy." Skipwith reflected that "it is something strange to think that these people of Africa are called our ancestors. In my present thinking if we have any ancestors they could not have been like these hostile tribes in this part of Africa for you may try and distill that principle and belief in them and do all you can for them and they still will be your enemy."[15]

13. Skipwith to Cocke, April 22, 1840, in *Slaves No More,* edited by Wiley, 52–54. For an account of the origins of the conflict, see Holsoe, "Settler-Indigenous Relations," 350–51.

14. Harris to Wilkeson, April 16, 1840, in *Slaves No More,* edited by Wiley, 220–23, 332. Wiley notes that the passages about mutilations were crossed out in the manuscript and omitted from the ACS's published version.

15. Skipwith to Cocke, ibid., 53.

There were, of course, profound cultural differences between the eastern woodland Indians of North America and the sixteen African ethnic groups that eventually fell under the political hegemony of Liberia. The Mandinka, to cite only one example, were skilled in metallurgy and political organization and were successful in converting many Vai and members of other ethnic groups to Islam. Nevertheless, colonization threatened West Africans and Native Americans in somewhat similar ways.

Like many white colonists in North America, many Liberian settlers were initially unprepared for agricultural life in a foreign environment. As merchants and middlemen who had access to American credit and exports, the Americo-Liberian leaders increasingly monopolized the natives' supply of imported commodities while insulating themselves in self-contained communities. As their numbers increased and their settlements expanded, they also destroyed forests and game; exploited tribal rivalries; endangered traditional commercial networks, including the lucrative slave trade; and demanded obedience to their own laws in exchange for schools, markets, and police protection. Above all, they strove to civilize the natives and to enlarge their own territory, as Edward Wilmot Blyden put it at the time of the American Civil War, "by fair purchase and honourable treaty stipulations, preparatory to the influx of our worn-out and down trodden brethren from abroad."[16]

Although some West Africans welcomed the settlements and even sent their children to Monrovia to be "made Americans," as they termed it, King Bowyah expressed the views of many African leaders when he appealed in 1851 for British aid against Liberian encroachments on Afro-British trade. Writing to the British council in Monrovia shortly before an African attack on a Bassa Cove settlement, Bowyah complained that the "Americans" were trying to seize his country: "I write this to let you know that this country is not belong to Americans, and I will not sell it. I have this Country from my Fore Father, and when I die, I wish to left to my sons. I want all English to come here and make trade with my people."[17]

16. Wiley, introduction to *Slaves No More,* 4; Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 29–30, 109; Akpan, "Black Imperialism," 220–23. It should be noted that Blyden was one of the few Liberian leaders who developed a deep respect for African customs and institutions, which he sought to preserve (see Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832–1913* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1970], chap. 4).

17. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 106–7. It is important to note that after 1868 the indigenous Africans were classified as "aliens," subject to government regulation with respect to employment, property ownership, forms of dress, and the right of movement; it was only in 1905 that the ruling elite extended citizenship to the great mass of people. There were also striking differences between Liberia, a politically independent country that depended financially on an essentially proslavery United States (before the election of Lincoln, whose administration was the first to recognize both Liberia and Haiti), and Sierra Leone, a Crown colony

As late as 1887 Americo-Liberian captives released by Dwallah Zeppie, a Gola leader, reported that their captor intended to drive the settlers back to the cape. Fearing that the Gola and Mandinka threatened the crucial supply of rice from interior farms, President Hilary R. W. Johnson dispatched an expeditionary force that in 1890 finally captured Dwallah Zeppie and pacified the St. Paul River region. At this time the Liberian troops refrained from the kind of wholesale slaughter that in 1890 brought the American Indian wars to a shameful end at Wounded Knee. Yet in the early twentieth century, when the government organized the Liberian Frontier Force to impose order in the hinterland, the troops plundered villages, raped native women, hanged local chieftains, and seized livestock and slaves. This ruthless exploitation represented something more than the greed of undisciplined soldiers. Government officials continued to profit from a system that subjected Liberia's indigenous majority to corrupt and inequitable tax levies and that allowed the forcible recruitment of slavelike laborers, many of whom were shipped to the Spanish island of Fernando Po, in the Bight of Biafra, where they suffered high rates of mortality and continued to labor at least into the 1930s.[18]

Though I am reminded of the enslaved Native Americans who were shipped much earlier by New England colonists to the West Indies, we should not lose sight of the obvious and monumental differences between Africans and Native Americans, and between African and North American colonization. Few accounts of Liberian history make note of the division between the largely Muslim interior and the Kru coast, or of the fact that the seafaring Kru fishermen shunned both literacy and Christianity.[19] The settlers of Sierra Leone and Liberia did not advance across the continent, seizing all the land and herding the native inhabitants into a

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governed by an essentially antislavery Britain (Temperley, ""African-American Aspirations," 82–86; Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad,* 4–11, 238–49, and passim).

18. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 96, 98–99; Akpan, "Black Imperialism," 229–34. By 1930 the League of Nations International Commission on Inquiry into the Existence of Slavery and Forced Labor in Liberia, including the prominent African American Charles S. Johnson, had discovered that the Liberian Frontier Force was enslaving many Africans who were shipped to plantations on the island of Fernando Po. Yet Johnson was not allowed to publish his full report on this revival of slavery until after World War II. See Johnson, *Bitter Canaan: The Story of the Negro Republic* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 8–9, 90–91, 176, 178, 180–90; and Ibrahim K. Sundiata, *From Slaving to Neoslavery: The Bight of Biafra and Fernando Po in the Era of Abolition, 1827–1930* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996). I am much indebted to Professor Sundiata for sending me a copy of an early version of his work long before it was published. Ironically, British naval patrols had long used Fernando Po as a base for intercepting slave ships.

19. Paul Lovejoy, written comment on my second Tanner Lecture.

few barren reservations. Africans were far less vulnerable than the Native Americans to alien diseases and cultural exploitation. Above all, the low level of immigration limited encroachments on the stability of African societies. Between 1820 and 1867 only 13,000 American blacks, 90 percent from the South, arrived in Liberia. This small number was augmented by 5,722 African captives freed by American naval ships. For more than two decades one-fifth of the American immigrants died during their first year in Africa. By 1843, largely as a result of malaria and other infectious diseases, 4,571 immigrants had left a surviving Americo-Liberian population of only 2,388. In other words, despite the ideology of nation building, the Americo-Liberian population was equivalent to that of a small American town ruled by a mayor or in New England by a first selectman.[20]

Considering the imperialistic control exercised by this minuscule group, which by 1880 claimed sovereignty over six hundred miles of the African coast and over territory extending inland as far as the Niger River, one wonders what might have occurred if the settlers' appalling mortality had been quickly overcome. What if colonizationists had succeeded in their goal of transporting a million or more African Americans to a Greater Liberia, or had even matched the British government's efforts in assisting the immigration between 1820 and 1850 of more than 200,000 Europeans to Australia? It is clear that the goals of the Liberian government were continually thwarted by the nation's failure to attract significant immigration. But given the hopes of black and white colonizationists, including several American presidents, it might be interesting to speculate about the effects of massive immigration to a country of limited resources and technology, a country whose expansion would have inevitably collided in the late nineteenth century with the European "Scramble for Africa."[21]

20. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 26–27, 50; Shick, "Quantitative Analysis of Liberian Colonization," 45–59; Wiley, *Slaves No More,* 311n2. Wiley calculates a total by 1866 of 13,136 immigrants sent under the auspices of the ACS and the Maryland State Colonization Society. This number was augmented by 5,722 "repatriated" African captives who were freed by the U.S. Navy and taken to Liberia; 4,701 of these recaptured Africans landed in Liberia in a single year, 1860. The ACS also listed 346 immigrants from Barbados and 9 from Indian Territory (Shick, *Behold the Promised Land,* 68, table 16; ACS, *Fifteenth Annual Report* [Washington, D.C., 1867], 95). According to an estimate in July 2003, of a Liberian population of 3,317,176, 2.5 percent were descended Americo-Liberians and 2.5 percent from the repatriated slaves or "Congo-people" (*2004: The New York Times Almanac,* edited by John W. Wright [New York: Penguin, 2003], 619).

21. Despite the official goal of assimilation, only a few hundred Africans, together with two or three favored tribes, had become Liberian citizens after the first twenty years of settlement. In 1884 Liberian tribal delegates were given the right to speak in the legislature on matters concerning their respective tribes, but this reform brought little power. It was not until the administration of President William V. S. Tubman (1944–1971) that the government adopted

But this emphasis on black imperialism, however justified by the continuing disfranchisement and exploitation of the vast majority of Liberia's population, obscures the symbolic importance of the settlers' achievement in the nineteenth century. The Americo-Liberians, one must remember, were all former slaves or the descendants of slaves. Even the elite Johnsons, Roberts, Barclays, Shermans, and Tubmans belonged to the most degraded and persecuted caste in North America, a caste that increasing numbers of American whites thought incapable of self-government or anything but the most menial labor. From the very outset, Liberia's racial and ideological mission was defined by Western criteria of historical progress. It is clearly unfair to judge the Americo-Liberians' treatment of aborigines by higher standards than those applied to white colonists from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.[22] Despite a shortage of capital, labor, and political experience, the Americo-Liberians established a constitutional republic in 1847 and maintained their independence during a prolonged period when Britain and France were gnawing at their borders and when foreign debt and economic dependency increased the dangers of annexation. Competing in a capitalist world market with the most exploited and colonized regions of the tropics, Liberia developed successful rice, sugar, and coffee plantations. Unfortunately, the perils of this route became evident in the late nineteenth century, when the global agricultural depression gave a decisive advantage to Cuba, Brazil, and other countries that profited from more plentiful or easily regimented labor.[23]

With limited aid from the United States, the Americo-Liberians built churches, schools, and a college; their political parties maintained relative stability; they tried to emulate the American judicial system. They also succeeded in assimilating large numbers of Africans liberated from slave ships

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a serious "Unification Policy" (Schmokel, "Settlers and Tribes," 171, 172; Akpan, "Black Imperialism," 228, 234–35). African resentment toward the continuing dominance of the small minority of Americo-Liberians contributed to Samuel K. Doe's bloody coup of 1980 and, beginning in December 1989, to the appalling civil war and anarchy brought on by Charles Taylor, which claimed well over 200,000 lives, uprooted at least half the population, and destroyed most of the country's infrastructure. Despite the survival of some American traditions and institutions, Liberia even in the early 1980s had a per capita income (four hundred dollars) below that of Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Egypt; in 2004 literacy in Liberia stood at 38 percent, compared to 76 percent in Jamaica (*New York Times Almanac; The World Almanac and Book of Facts: 2004* [Mahwah, N.J.: World Almanac Books, 2003]; Web site for *Habitat for Humanity Africa/Middle East,* info@habitatame.org.za.

22. Shick touches on this question when he briefly compares the nineteenth-century development of Liberia, South Africa, Australia, and Argentina (*Behold the Promised Land,* 135–43).

23. Ibid., 114–18, 141–42.

by the U.S. navy. These recaptives, or Congoes, as they were called, were initially adopted as apprentices by Americo-Liberian families, who were compensated by funds appropriated by the U.S. government. Although a few recaptives resisted assimilation and tried to flee to their homelands, the majority learned English, adopted Western dress, and welcomed the opportunity to become citizens. These exiles had already been violently uprooted from family and kin. The fear of reenslavement, reinforced by memories of kidnapping or trumped-up judicial proceedings, may have contributed to their adaptability. Because the recaptives were familiar with African crops and agricultural techniques, they were more successful than the Americo-Liberians as farmers and pioneers. They also found it easier to interact and intermarry with the indigenous populations. The mediating role assumed by these emancipated slaves showed the wisdom of the Liberian government in according them citizenship and in rejecting petitions to deny them land and reduce them to perpetual dependency.[24]

If Liberia's modest achievements failed to influence the rising intensity of white racism, in both America and Europe, the very survival of the nation made an important though often overlooked contribution to black pride and hope. By 1850 African American activists had been committed so long in their hostility to the ACS and even to the word *colonization* that reassessments were difficult, even in a decade when the Fugitive Slave Law, the *Dred Scott* decision, and other events demolished much of the lingering hope that the United States would fulfill its Revolutionary promise, the promise that Henry Highland Garnet still found embedded in "that sacred declaration." Yet a year before the Fugitive Slave Law, Garnet proclaimed, "I would rather see a man free in Liberia, than a slave in the United States."[25] And one point upon which the various factions of black abolitionists agreed was that the future condition of free blacks, wherever they resided, would largely determine the fate of America's slaves. This had always been the underlying premise of the colonization movement, even though the ACS leadership had thought it politically prudent to refrain from any official commitment to emancipation. Therefore, for black abolitionists as well as for most colonizationists, the achievements of Liberia were loaded with symbolic meaning.

24. Ibid., 66–72, 113; Akpan, "Black Imperialism," 227; Schmokel, "Settlers and Tribes," 159.

25. Martin B. Pasternak, *Rise Now and Fly to Arms: The Life of Henry Highland Garnet* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1995), esp. chap. 10. I am also drawing on a brilliant research paper on Henry Highland Garnet by Seth Moglen, now a professor at Lehigh University, written when he was an undergraduate student at Yale.

For early black nationalists like Edward Wilmot Blyden, the founding of Liberia gave substance to a growing faith that Africa's ancient glories, the glories of Egypt, Nubia, and Carthage, could be restored throughout West Africa. Martin Delany, long a bitter opponent of the ACS, experienced a sense of exaltation similar to Blyden's when he arrived in Monrovia in 1859 and informed an enthusiastic public gathering that "the desire of African nationality has brought me to these shores." Hilary Teague, the wealthy editor of the *Liberia Herald,* had earlier told a similar group that "upon you . . . depends, in a measure you can hardly conceive, the future destiny of the race. You are to give the answer whether the African race is doomed to interminable degradation . . . a libel upon the dignity of human nature; or whether they are capable to take an honorable rank amongst the great family of nations."[26]

When Henry Highland Garnet advocated selective emigration to Africa as a means of creating what he termed a "Negro nationality," he was not envisioning a black empire or a mass withdrawal from the United States. For Garnet and other black nationalists of his time, the crucial goal was to free individual blacks from the subservience, dishonor, and persecution they suffered simply by virtue of being black. In 1859 Garnet described to a large audience his dream of establishing "a grand centre of Negro nationality, from which shall flow the streams of commercial, intellectual, and political power which shall make colored people respected everywhere."[27] Always flexible concerning the site of such a model colony, Garnet was particularly drawn to the thought of Christianizing Africa while simultaneously destroying the slave trade and growing enough free-labor cotton to undermine the economy of the southern states. Essentially, he dreamed of replaying the history of America's founding on a track that would erase every trace of racial bondage. His pilgrims and founding fathers, with

26. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden,* 52. After landing on Liberian soil late in 1850, Blyden described in the official journal of the ACS "the delight with which I gazed upon the land of Tertullian, ancient father in the Christian Church; of Hannibal and Henry Diaz, renowned generals; yes, and the land of *my* forefathers." Hollis R. Lynch, "Pan-Negro Nationalism in the New World, before 1862," in *The Making of Black America: Essays in Negro Life and History,* edited by August Meier and Elliott Rudwick (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 51, 52, 58; Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden,* 24–25; ACS, *Tenth Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1827), 9; ACS, *Fourteenth Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1831), vii–xi; *African Repository and Colonial Journal* 14 (January 1838): 20. Blyden has wrongly been seen as the originator of such views. It was really the white colonizationists who had much earlier helped to popularize the views of Count Constantin-François Volney and other supposed authorities who had affirmed that the Egyptians and eminent North Africans of antiquity, including St. Augustine, were black.

27. Moglen, paper on Garnet, 40; Pasternak, *Rise Now and Fly to Arms,* passim.

their sobriety, civic virtue, and independent farms, would provide blacks with the pride and national consciousness needed to shape their own lives and ensure the freedom and equality of their posterity.

I have suggested that the earlier colonization movement contributed to this nationalistic hope not only by founding Liberia and prophesying the missionary achievements of an Americo-Liberian civilization but also by underscoring the futility of individual progress for blacks living in a society dedicated to white supremacy. While conveying this message, the ACS bitterly alienated blacks by its own racist language and by its refusal to respect black leaders, organizations, and institutions. The ACS showed no interest in finding or negotiating with a black Moses. Yet colonizationists and black nationalists agreed that slave emancipation in the northern states had led to a brutal social reality that threatened the fundamental principles of the Republic, namely, the existence of an expanding urban population that lived in abject poverty, a population deprived of education, civil rights, and any hope of meaningful improvement. It was no accident that in later years Edward Blyden and Marcus Garvey both welcomed incidents of racial oppression that might enable more blacks to perceive the true character of American society and thus emigrate to Africa.

I should emphasize that black nationalism was not necessarily linked with emigration, but few of the major black leaders could resist the appeal of emigration in the late 1850s, when conditions became increasingly bleak. Some, including Garnet and James Theodore Holly, risked the charge of racial treason by making overtures to the ACS. At no time in the nineteenth century, however, did a significant number of blacks seem willing to leave the United States. Even Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, who tried to appeal to the profound disillusion in the 1880s and early 1890s, following the grim failure of Reconstruction, was no more successful than previous emigrationists in recruiting converts.[28]

The number of black emigrants, however, may not be as significant as the persistence and continuity of the vision. It was the vision of the early black ship captain Paul Cuffe, and the white colonizationists he inspired, that was transmitted erratically over the course of a century until it ultimately ignited the first mass movement in African American history. Today, it is difficult to understand the elation and pride that swept through America's urban black community in 1924 when Marcus Garvey, who had

28. Stephen W. Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African-American Religion in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), passim.

been deeply influenced by Edward Blyden, dispatched a delegation to Liberia and eulogized that nation's founders and rulers: "They have been able," Garvey said, "to arouse the sleeping consciousness of the four hundred million Negroes of the world to go to the rescue, to help build Liberia and make her one of the greatest nations of the world. And we are going to do it." Tacitly repudiating the long struggle of American abolitionists to discredit the ACS, Garvey applauded what he called "the white friends of the Negro in America" who had helped establish "the only independent nation on the West Coast of Africa," and who a century earlier had anticipated the glorious hour when American blacks would liberate and repossess the African continent.[29]

Garvey had founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in Jamaica, in 1914, after living in England and Central America. Influenced by Booker T. Washington's achievements at Tuskegee Institute, Garvey was primarily concerned with racial uplift and self-improvement. The entire world, he pointed out, looked down upon blacks as inferior and degraded beings, as a people devoid of national, commercial, or social status. In 1914 Garvey called on the sons and daughters of Africa to defy "the scornful designation of 'nigger' uttered even by yourselves, and be a Negro in the light of the Pharaohs of Egypt… Hannibals of Carthage, L'O[u]ve[r]tures and Dessalines of Hayti, Blydens, Barclays and Johnsons of Liberia, Lewises of Sierra Leone, and Douglass's and Dubois's of America, who have made, and are making history for the race, though depreciated and in many cases unwritten." After attacking the privileged blacks for shirking their responsibility, Garvey pointedly observed that this same elite, for all their pretensions, "are snubbed and laughed at just the same as the most menial of the race, and only because they are Negroes."[30] This was the very heart of Garvey's early message, although his proposed solutions soon changed, especially after his move to Harlem in 1916.

Edward Blyden had frequently employed the imagery of the Mosaic Exodus and had also concluded by the end of the nineteenth century that blacks and Jews, allied by divine guidance and by what he called "a history almost identical of sorrow and oppression," were destined to become

29. Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers,* 7 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983–1989), 5:586–87 and passim.

30. Garvey, "A Talk with Afro-West Indians: The Negro Race and Its Problems," ca. July–August 1914, in Hill, *Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers,* 1:55–57.

the spiritual leaders of the world. In 1898 Blyden published a book titled *The Jewish Question,* in which he expressed admiration for "that marvelous movement called Zionism."[31] Marcus Garvey and his followers found similar inspiration in both the biblical and Zionist sense of mission.

For Henrietta Davis, international organizer of the UNIA, Garvey was "the reincarnation of King Solomon." More frequently, he was perceived as the black Moses who faced even more stupendous obstacles than a hard-hearted Pharaoh. Garvey himself noted that "we have been as much enslaved mentally, spiritually and physically as any other race and a fair comparison is the race that Moses led out of Egyptian bondage." In 1924 Dr. George Alexander McGuire recalled the "solemn awe" that swept the throngs of New York's Liberty Hall, four years earlier, when the UNIA ratified its Declaration of Rights: "It was as though we were standing at the foot of Sinai when the Decalogue was pronounced."[32] Garvey repeatedly compared his tribulations to those of Moses, who endured similar recalcitrance, slander, and backsliding. He also found it reassuring to see what he termed the intrinsic parallels between the liberation of Africa and the Israelites' recovery of their Promised Land.

In 1919 Garvey admonished blacks to be as determined to reclaim Africa and found a government there as modern Jews had been to recover Palestine. Garvey's interpretation of Jewish achievements combined anti-Semitic mythology with empathetic admiration. In a speech in 1921 Garvey informed his listeners that for centuries Jews had been a despised race in Europe, "buffeted worse than the Southern Negro today." Even in the United States "it was a disgrace to be a Jew." "What did the Jews do?" Garvey asked. They were too few in number to carry out any physical conquest. Therefore, they had devised a master plan for the financial conquest of the world. Jewish financiers had brought on the First World War, presumably as a profit-making venture, and had then abruptly stopped the war when they were promised the possession of Palestine. In Russia, where pograms had slaughtered millions of Jews, Trotsky and the financiers had engineered a revolution that had destroyed the czar and put a Jew (Trotsky) in command. "The Jew has gone back to Palestine," Garvey concluded, "and the Jew it is that has the world in the palm of his hand." None of this seems to have been said in a tone of disapproval. On the contrary, Garvey was

31. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden,* 64.

32. Hill, *Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers,* 2:67, 5:127, 621.

exhorting his followers to learn from the Jewish example. He predicted that as blacks became truly self-governing in Africa, the example would help to liberate blacks in all parts of the world.[33]

According to his close associate Dr. McGuire, when Garvey was convicted of mail fraud, he delivered the simple, reverberating sentence: "Gentlemen of the jury, this is a spiritual movement. . . . The Jews made of Zionism a spiritual movement and today the goal is achieved, the fact accomplished. Africanism must become a universal spiritual movement among Negroes."[34]

By any material measurement, Garveyism was an even more disastrous failure than the colonization movement. The Black Star Line and Negro Factories Corporation quickly sank in a sea of incompetence and corruption. The Liberian government suddenly severed ties with Garvey after first showering him with every encouragement. Exploited by fellow blacks, spied on by the federal government's Bureau of Investigation, Garvey was finally imprisoned, pardoned, and deported to Jamaica. But among blacks throughout the world he was not forgotten.

In 1965, for example, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. laid a wreath at Garvey's shrine in Kingston, Jamaica. Before an audience of some two thousand, King summed up Garvey's meaning for nonseparatist blacks: "Garvey was the first man of color in the history of the United States to lead and develop a mass movement. He was the first man on a mass scale and level to give millions of Negroes a sense of dignity and destiny and make the Negro feel he was somebody."[35] This, we should recall, was the professed goal of Liberia's founders, although in one sense Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement were precisely what the ACS wanted to prevent. In pre–Civil War America no one could foresee the circuitous route by which the example of Liberia would help nourish black nationalism, which would nourish, in its turn, an increasingly popular domestic demand for equal civil rights.

How do these developments, culminating in the early 1920s with Marcus Garvey and the first mass movement in African American history, affect our evaluation of the colonization movement? No doubt, early colonizationists of both races would feel vindicated if we allowed them a *selective* glimpse of American history from 1860 to 1960, a panorama that

33. Ibid., 3:215–16, 5:621.

34. Ibid., 5:627.

35. David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 428.

included the crushed hopes of Reconstruction; the suffering inflicted by the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow; the lynching between 1889 and 1946 of nearly four thousand individual blacks; the growth of festering urban ghettos; the persistence of white racism and black deprivation; the report that even by 1980, a half century after the predicted termination of the most gradual emigration plans, blacks constituted 12 percent of the nation's population but 45 percent of the inmates of state and federal prisons; that in family income blacks ranked thirteenth out of fourteen American ethnic groups, earning on average 60 percent of the income of whites, 50 percent of the income of Asian Indians, and only 46 percent of the income of Japanese Americans. Despite some improvements in the past quarter century, the comparative statistics are still appalling. In 2004 blacks still earned only 61 percent of the household income of non-Hispanic whites. Even more striking, in 2004 nearly one-quarter of American blacks fell below the poverty line, as opposed to 8.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites (up from 8.2 percent in 2003).[36]

With respect to the intractability of prejudice and racial conflict, the colonizationists were clearly better prognosticators than the abolitionists. Edward Blyden and Marcus Garvey acknowledged this point. The white Garrisonians would have been dumbfounded by Garvey's continuing praise of their colonizationist enemies. On the other hand, one can hardly imagine the shock that white and black colonizationists would experience if they could have viewed the *recent* history of Liberia, Haiti, and Sierra Leone. The glaring defect in the colonizationist ideology was the refusal to recognize the vital contributions that blacks had made and would continue to make to American civilization. Even the best-intentioned white reformers and missionaries remained obstinately blind to the fact that from the beginnings of American history, the lives of blacks and whites had been intertwined on the most complex social, cultural, economic, and psychological levels. America, that mythic amalgam of hope, abstract principles, and mission, has been as much black as white. Yet for some blacks, the "moral sublimity of the puritans," as Garnet put it, could best be recovered by black pioneers in Africa.

This reasoning brings me at last to the true and insidious meaning of the white colonization movement, which was never dependent on the number of blacks shipped off to Liberia. It was sufficient to use philanthropic

36. Andrew Hacker, "Black Crime, White Racism," *New York Review of Books,* March 3, 1988, 36–41; http://www.census.gov/PressRelease/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html.

language to expatriate the entire race, like the Jews, Moriscos, and Acadians of the past; to wall blacks off as an extraneous and dangerous presence that someday, somehow, would disappear and no longer affront white vision. Psychologically and ritualistically, the ACS "deported" blacks while affirming their capacity to flourish in a distant, tropical climate. This strategy is deceptive precisely because it is seldom cynical and has usually been combined with genuine goodwill.

For example, in his annual message to Congress in 1862, Abraham Lincoln described his unsuccessful efforts to find sites for voluntary black colonization in which emigrants would be protected "in all the rights of freemen" and ensured conditions "which shall be equal, just, and humane." Liberia and Haiti, Lincoln observed, are, "as yet, the only countries to which colonists of African descent from here, could go with certainty of being received and adopted as citizens." Unfortunately, the president added, few of the blacks contemplating emigration were willing to go to either Liberia or Haiti. For Lincoln, a man of goodwill who thought he knew the blacks' best interest, the problem seemed insoluble.[37]

As the war progressed, however, Lincoln soon abandoned colonization and saw the necessity of combining racial coexistence with equal protection of the law. Two months before Lincoln was assassinated, William Henry Channing, the abolitionist chaplain of the House of Representatives, invited Henry Highland Garnet to deliver a sermon to Congress commemorating the recent passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Garnet, who had been born a slave and had in 1843 exhorted America's slaves to rebel, who had temporarily emigrated as an expatriate to Jamaica and had then become an ardent supporter of the Union cause, identifying Lincoln with the biblical Joshua, was the very first black to address Congress.

After depicting slavery as the "concentrated essence of all conceivable wickedness . . . snatching man from the high place to which he was lifted by the hand of God, and dragging him down to the level of the brute creation where he is made to be the companion of the horse and the fellow of the ox," Garnet interpreted the war, as Lincoln himself had done, as a divinely inflicted punishment and as a warning of the nation's fate if it failed to atone for its injustice and fulfill its high principles. What is most striking in view of the themes of these lectures is Garnet's powerful transfiguration of the Exodus trope. "The *nation,*" Garnet said, "has begun its exodus from worse than Egyptian bondage; and I beseech you that you say to the

37. Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln,* 12 vols. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953–1990), 5:520–21.

people, *'that they go forward.'*"[38] In other words, it was not only the slaves or the African Americans who stood in need of deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In the United States, whites themselves were yoked to the blacks they had enslaved. The nation as a whole, modeled on ancient dreams of deliverance and fulfillment, could march no further forward than all the victims of its self-betrayal.[39]

38. Garnet, *A Memorial Discourse… Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives, Washington City, DC, on Sabbath February 12, 1865* (Philadelphia, 1865), 77, 74, 89 (italics added).

39. Since the 1980s I have been working on a very long-term project, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation,* while also taking time to write and publish five other books. My Tanner Lectures are an updated and wholly revised version of three chapters from *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation,* which I first gave as the three W. W. Cook Lectures in March 1988 at the University of Michigan Law School. Then in April 1988 I presented a *very* abbreviated talk on this subject at the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Society (published that year in the society's *Proceedings*). Much later I condensed some of this material for the Jefferson Lecture, given on November 3, 2004, at the University of California at Berkeley. I have greatly benefited from the responses I received to these earlier renditions of the material on "colonization," and am now especially grateful to the Discussants, Professors Lawrence D. Bobo, Eric Foner, Paul Lovejoy, and Walter Johnson, and to Stanford University, for providing me with an experience that will greatly improve and enrich the final versions of the chapters I have mentioned. I also wish to thank the multitude of students, colleagues, and librarians who have made this work possible. I owe a special debt to Philipp Ziesche, who for several years has helped me as a research assistant while completing his own doctoral dissertation.