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By CHARLES H. WESLEY

The Negro in the Organization of Abolition

*A paper read at the Fifty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the
American Historical Association, 1940*

THE Abolition Movement was an organized activity in which representatives of both races participated. Negroes were allied with anti-slavery organizations as delegates and members, and by themselves initiated independent activities for the freedom of the slave population. The opinion which has prevailed that Negroes were not aggressive in the struggle for their own freedom is not corroborated by the facts and their logical interpretation. There were Negroes who organized societies for abolition purposes and joined with the group efforts for freedom in their local communities. Others manifested active interest in abolition in its national phase and shared in the rise of its epoch of immediatism.

When the first public step in the announcement of a new Abolition Movement was taken with the publication of *The Liberator* in Boston on January 1, 1831, William Lloyd Garrison addressed a statement to his "free colored brethren". He stated that their advancement would be a leading object of the paper and he expressed the hope that "some patronage" would be given to the paper by them. That this assistance was granted was admitted by Garrison when he later said that he struggled through the first year of the existence of *The Liberator* with about fifty white subscribers and four hundred colored subscribers.¹ Of its first four agents three were Negroes, Messrs. Philip A. Bell of New York City, Joseph Cassey of Philadelphia and William Watkins of Baltimore.

The announcement of the publication of this paper in August, 1830, attracted the attention of Negroes and their response showed their interest. On December 31, 1830, James Forten, wealthy Negro sailmaker of Philadelphia, wrote to Garrison at Boston, stating that he was happy to learn that *The Liberator* was to be established and that he hoped that it would be "the means of exposing more and more the odious system of slavery and of raising up friends to the oppressed and degraded people

¹*The Liberator*, Vol. I, No. 1, January 1, 1831, p. 3; Vol. V, No. 1, January 3, 1835; *Proceedings of the Fourth New England Anti-Slavery Convention held in Boston May 30, 31 and June 1 and 2, 1837*. Boston, 1837, pp. 48-

49. For a brief discussion of the number of subscribers to *The Liberator*, see Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse*, New York, 1933, pp. 50-51.

of colour throughout the Union".² Forten sent with this letter fifty-four dollars and the names of twenty-seven subscribers. One month after *The Liberator* was issued Forten again wrote that the paper was highly valued by all and enclosed twenty dollars for additional subscriptions.³ It seemed probable that "a significant part of the indebtedness of *The Liberator*" was carried by Forten.⁴ From Pittsburgh, John B. Vashon, Negro proprietor of a public bath house and the organizer of an anti-slavery society in this city, sent fifty dollars during the second year of *The Liberator*. This sum was acknowledged by Garrison.⁵ On March 31, 1831, Forten wrote that he was pleased "to see how all the people of color, subscribers to *The Liberator*, speak in praise of it".⁶

This opinion was expressed by several groups. A meeting, described as an "enthusiastic" one, was held in Philadelphia on March 1, 1831. It was designated as "a convention of young men of color". Resolutions were adopted stating that they would give support to *The Liberator*, and accord was expressed with the views and sentiments of Garrison.⁷ From Boston another group forwarded a letter pledging their support and sending with the letter "a very generous and seasonable donation". A meeting of Negroes in New York City resolved that they would use every effort to procure subscribers for *The Liberator*. Similar action was taken by Negroes in Rochester, New York, New York City and Middletown, Connecticut.⁸

Free Negroes were also contributors to the columns of *The Liberator*. They sent in reports of their meetings, letters and comments upon events affecting their condition. They purchased advertising space in the paper. As agents for its sale and distribution, they were especially active in Philadelphia, New York City and Boston.

The support of the free colored people was acknowledged in an appeal for assistance during the fourth year of the publication of *The Liberator*. A circular was issued in 1834 by Garrison and Knapp which stated that

²James Forten to William Lloyd Garrison, December 31, 1830 (mss). William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, *The Story of His Life told by His Children*, Vol. I, p. 223; For a sketch of Forten's life, see William C. Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with sketches of several colored persons*. Boston, 1855, pp. 166-181. (Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library).

³Forten to Garrison, February 2, 1831 (mss). Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

⁴William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, *The Story of His Life told by His Children*. Vol. I, p. 433n. New York, 1885-1889.

⁵Garrison to Vashon, December 2, 1832 (mss). Concerning Vashon, see Nell, *op. cit.*,

pp. 181-188. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

⁶Forten to Garrison, March 31, 1831 (mss). Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

⁷*The Liberator*, Vol. I, No. 11, March 12, 1831, p. 43.

⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. I, No. 29, July 16, 1831, p. 115; No. 30, July 31, 1831, p. 117; No. 36, September 3, 1831, p. 143. These actions were due in part to Garrison's addresses to the colored people interpreting his purposes. See Garrison, *An Address delivered before the Free People of Color in Philadelphia, New York and other cities during the month of June, 1831*. Boston, 1831.

only one-fourth of the total number of subscribers were white. They added, "the paper then belongs especially to the people of color—it is their organ—and to them its appeal will come with peculiar force".⁹ When a division arose in the ranks of the abolitionists, and the anti-Garrisonians had organized, Garrison issued an appeal addressed to "My Colored Brethren." He said, "Stand by me now, as you have hitherto done and we will soon scatter to the winds this lofty but fragile fabric of persecution, pride and cowardice".¹⁰

In response to the appeal for financial assistance, Henry Williams, an untutored Negro of New York, sent a request for aid to prominent Negro citizens of the District of Columbia, "in behalf of the committee to assist us (the coloured citizens of N. Y.), in the great and noble undertaking to save *our paper, The Liberator*, which is under a great embarrassment at this time".¹¹ The conclusion is inevitable that without the assistance of the free Negro population in the eastern urban centers, *The Liberator* would have been greatly reduced in its income and support.

A second step in the organization of immediate abolition was the formation of an anti-slavery society. After several unsuccessful meetings, finally on January 1, 1832, at a meeting in the schoolroom of the African Baptist Church in the Negro section of Boston, the New England Anti-Slavery Society was organized. An address was later published espousing the doctrine of immediate abolition, signed by seventy-two persons, about one-fourth of whom were Negroes.¹²

During the same year the New England Anti-Slavery Society adopted a resolution at its annual meeting inviting the Negroes "to form auxiliaries to this society".¹³ This invitation was undoubtedly due to the fact that Negroes had already held three annual conventions, in 1830, 1831 and 1832 in Philadelphia, and these showed that Negroes had considerable power of organization.¹⁴ These conventions were called by Negroes and conducted by them, although they were visited and addressed by Garrison,

⁹Garrison and Knapp, *Shall the Liberator Die?* (A Circular. Boston, 1834).

¹⁰*The Liberator*, Vol. V, No. 6, February 7, 1835, p. 23.

¹¹Henry Williams to Mr. F. Datcher, J. F. Cook, A. Price, D. Carroll, A. Waring and others. New York, June 23, 1834 (mss). The original of this letter is in the possession of Professor J. Welford Holmes, Winston-Salem Teachers College, Winston-Salem, N. C.

¹²William Lloyd Garrison, *Boston Anti-Slavery Days*. A paper read to the Bostonian Society Council Chamber, Old State House, May 10, 1905, p. 86; William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, *The Story of His Life told by His Chil-*

dren, Vol. I, p. 282; *The Liberator*, Vol. V, No. 1, January 3, 1835, p. 3.

¹³*The Constitution of the New England Anti-Slavery Society*, with an *Address to the Public*, Boston, 1832, p. 6.

¹⁴"First Colored Convention." *The Anglo-African Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 10, October, 1859, pp. 305-310; *Minutes of the First Annual Convention of the People of Color*. Philadelphia, 1831; *Minutes and Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Color in the United States. Held by adjournments in the City of Philadelphia, from the 4th to the 13th of June, inclusive, 1832*. Philadelphia, 1832.

Lundy, Jocelyn, Tappan and other friends of the Negro people. The publication in New York City of *Freedom's Journal* in 1827, first Negro newspaper, and the distribution in 1828 of the incendiary pamphlet by David Walker of Boston, *Walker's Appeal*, were also indications of Negro militant attitudes prior to the rise of Garrisonian Abolition. It is significant that leading participants in these movements among Negroes were also organizers and supporters of the movement for the immediate abolition of slavery.

The first Negro association to take advantage of the invitation by the New England Anti-Slavery Society was the Massachusetts General Colored Association. A chief objective of this association was the abolition of slavery. A communication was sent by the association to the New England Anti-Slavery Society, which expressed approval of the objects of this Society and the desire to become an auxiliary to it. This association was accepted as an auxiliary organization.¹⁵

The mission of Garrison to England was encouraged and financed partly by donations from the free Negro population. On October 16, 1832, Joseph Cassey of Philadelphia, a Negro manufacturer of wigs and other decorations and also an agent for *The Liberator*, wrote a letter to Isaac Knapp, Garrison's associate, in response to a suggestion from Knapp, stating that Garrison was "a suitable person" for the mission of securing aid in England for the manual labor school for Negroes and of attacking the program of the Colonization Society. He agreed to send the letter without intimating that the suggestion had originated with Knapp.¹⁶ Garrison secured the approval of the New England Anti-Slavery Society but he was without funds for such a journey and an appeal was issued to the "Friends of Emancipation".¹⁷

As a result of Garrison's appeal, contributions began to be sent in immediately and among them were funds from Negroes. Meetings were held for this purpose in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Providence, Newark, and Brooklyn.¹⁸ It was announced that about one-half

¹⁵The communication was signed by Thomas Dalton, president; William C. Nell, vice-president, and James C. Barbadoes, secretary. *First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, presented January 9, 1833*. Boston, 1833, p. 7; *The Abolitionist*, Vol. I, No. 2, February, 1833, p. 20; *The Liberator*, Vol. I, No. 22, May 28, 1831, p. 87.

¹⁶*Joseph Cassey to Isaac Knapp*. October 16, 1832, (mss); *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New England Anti-Slavery Society presented January 15, 1834*. Boston, 1834, p. 10. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

¹⁷*The Liberator*. Vol. III, No. 10, March 9, 1833, p. 39; *ibid.*, No. 11, March 16, 1833, p. 43.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. III, No. 12, March 23, 1833, p. 47; No. 15, April 13, 1833, p. 59; No. 19, May 11, 1833, p. 74; No. 21, May 25, 1833, p. 83. William Lloyd Garrison, *Address on the Progress of the Abolition Cause, delivered to African Abolition Freehold Society of Boston, July 16, 1832*. New York, 1832; *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Vol. III, No. 6, Third Series, April, 1833, p. 82.

of the amount collected, which was \$624.50, was contributed by Negroes.¹⁹ They were interested in his trip and also showed their esteem for him by giving him several presents. Notable among the organizations contributing gifts were the Colored Female Religious and Moral Society of Salem, the Juvenile Garrison Independent Society of Boston, the Mutual Relief Society, the Colored Female Literary Society and the Colored Female Tract Society, all of Providence.²⁰ Towards the expenses of his return trip, Garrison was loaned \$200 by Nathaniel Paul, Negro clergyman, then in England for the purpose of raising funds to assist the Wilberforce Colony in Canada. Garrison acknowledged this loan and endeavored to repay it by a draft on Arthur Tappan. It is not clear that the loan was ever repaid.²¹ Continuing this support, the Garrison Colored Society of Boston in 1833 sent thirty dollars to the New England Anti-Slavery Society as a payment for life membership for Messrs. Garrison and Knapp.²²

Numerous meetings of free Negroes were held between 1832 and 1834 and anti-slavery organizations were started by them. These meetings adopted resolutions against slavery and African colonization. Resolutions were reported from meetings in New York City, Rochester, Boston, Nantucket, New Bedford, Salem, Baltimore, Washington, D. C., Brooklyn, Middletown, New Haven, Lynn, Philadelphia, Columbia, Lewistown, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Wilmington, Providence, Trenton and other cities.²³

While these organizations among Negroes were beginning their work, a New York committee, with Arthur Tappan as the leading spirit, was planning the formation of a national anti-slavery society. They launched a weekly paper, *The Emancipator*, which began publication in May, 1833. Negroes were interested in its publication and gave it their support. Negro agents were selected for it. These agents were David Ruggles of New York City, who was the general agent; John D. Closson, Newark, New Jersey; Thomas Van Rensslear, Princeton, New Jersey; Abraham D.

¹⁹*The Liberator*, Vol. III, No. 22, June 1, 1833, p. 86. The largest amounts reported were received from Negroes. Negroes in Philadelphia through Joseph Cassey sent \$100; from New York they sent \$124; from Providence, \$30 and from Boston \$25. *The Abolitionist*, Vol. I, No. 6, June, 1833, p. 96.

²⁰*The Liberator*, Vol. III, No. 10, March 9, 1833, p. 39. In the Boston Public Library there is a silver medal presented to Garrison on his departure for England by the Juvenile Garrison Independent Society, an organization of Negro children. Tappan Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

²¹*Garrison to Lewis Tappan*, Brooklyn, December 17, 1835; February 29, 1836 (mss); Austin Steward, *Twenty-two Years a Slave—Forty Years a Freeman*. Rochester, 1861, p. 341, quoting a letter of Garrison denying the loan, dated Boston, June, 1865.

²²*The Abolitionist*, Vol. I, No. 12, December, 1833, p. 192.

²³*First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New England Anti-Slavery Society*. Presented January 9, 1833, Boston, 1833, pp. 36-40; *The Liberator*, Vol. II, III and IV, *passim*; *The Emancipator and Journal of Public Morals*, Vol. II, No. 21, May 27, 1834.

Shadd and John Carlisle of Pennsylvania.²⁴ David Ruggles, who was a bookseller and publisher, advertised for additional agents to distribute anti-slavery papers.²⁵

Meetings were held for the purpose of arousing interest in anti-slavery papers. One of these meetings was held in New York City, July 17, 1831. It was resolved to increase subscribers for *The Liberator* and *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*.²⁶ Another assembled in Philadelphia in June, 1833. It was held for the purpose "of encouraging and extending the patronage of *The Emancipator*". David Ruggles and others addressed this meeting. Resolutions were adopted expressing approval of the paper and subscriptions were received for both *The Emancipator* and *The Liberator*.²⁷

The result of subscriptions to these papers was an increased interest by Negroes in the approaching convention to form a national anti-slavery society. The meeting of the proposed society, the American Anti-Slavery Society, was held in Adelphi Hall, Philadelphia, December 4, 5 and 6, 1833. The following Negroes were among the delegates from the anti-slavery societies: James G. Barbadoes, of Massachusetts; James McCrummell, Robert Purvis, James Forten, John B. Vashon and Abraham D. Shadd, of Pennsylvania; and Peter Williams of New York. Among the sixty-two signers of the Declaration of Sentiments were the three Negro delegates, James G. Barbadoes, Robert Purvis and James McCrummell and the Declaration was prepared at the home of McCrummell.²⁸ The Board of Managers included James G. Barbadoes, Peter Williams, Robert Purvis, James McCrummell, John B. Vashon and Abraham Shadd. These men were capable persons and possessed talents readily discernible. For instance, Robert Purvis who was placed on a committee to nominate officers for the Society, was said to be a man of some means, of rare gifts as a speaker and of public spirit. He once served as a presiding officer of the American Anti-Slavery Society.²⁹

²⁴*The Emancipator*, Vol. I, No. 6, June 8, 1833, p. 21.

²⁵*Ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 32, August 12, 1834; Vol. 2, No. 19, May 13, 1834. For experiences of an agent see Amos Dresser, *The Narrative of Amos Dresser*. New York, 1836; *Human Rights*, Vol. I, No. 4, October, 1835; *The Emancipator and Journal of Public Morals*, Vol. II, No. 21, May 17, 1834.

²⁶*The Liberator*, Vol. I, No. 34, August 20, 1831, p. 133. Subscriptions by Negroes were noted for other publications of the American Anti-Slavery Society and among these were *Human Rights*, *The Anti-Slavery Record*, *The Slave's Friend*, and *The Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine*.

²⁷*The Emancipator*, Vol. I, No. 11, July 13, 1833, p. 43; Vol. I, No. 19, September 7, 1833, p. 75; *The Abolitionist*, Vol. I, No. 6, June, 1833, p. 96.

²⁸*The Abolitionist*, Vol. I, No. 12, December, 1833, pp. 177-184; *Declaration of Sentiments and the Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. Philadelphia, 1833; *The Liberator*, Vol. III, No. 50, December 14, 1833, p. 198; *The Emancipator*, Vol. I, No. 33, December 14, 1833, p. 130.

²⁹*The Abolitionist* states in a footnote to the report of the convention that Mr. Purvis was "a colored gentleman of Philadelphia, whose talents and gentlemanly deportment have won the esteem of all who know him." Vol. I, No.

Following the first meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society the formation of anti-slavery societies by Negroes continued. One at Rochester, New York, was organized in January 1834,³⁰ and another at Newark, New Jersey, the Colored Anti-Slavery Society, was established in May, 1834.³¹ Still another society, organized in this year, was the Colored Female Anti-Slavery Society of Middletown, Connecticut. It was organized on April 2, 1834, both as an anti-slavery society and for "mutual improvement and increased intellectual and moral happiness".³²

This, however, was not the first colored female society. One of the earliest was organized in November, 1831, in Philadelphia, and between this date and 1834, others were organized in Providence, Rhode Island, Nantucket and Salem, Massachusetts, and Rochester, New York.³³

It is evident that Negro women as well as men joined with the movement for the organization of abolition. Susan Paul of Boston became a life member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1835 and was counsellor of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. Sarah Douglass was one of the central committee of the Anti-Slavery Women of New York, assembled in convention at New York in May, 1837. The published appeal of this committee contained a poem by Sarah Forten.³⁴

There was anti-slavery sentiment among the Negroes of Western Pennsylvania and Ohio. The racial situation in Ohio, resulting from the presence of pro-slavery sympathizers and its location near the scene of slavery, did not favor the active participation of Negroes in these organized efforts.³⁵ There was also opposition which expressed itself in riots

12, December, 1833, p. 183n. He was said to have been well educated and an owner of considerable property; William Wells Brown, *Rising Son*, Boston, 1874, p. 469; W. C. Nell, *Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons*. Boston, 1855, p. 347; Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of our Anti-Slavery Conflict*. Boston, 1869, pp. 288-289.

³⁰*The Liberator*, Vol. IV, No. 2, January 11, 1839, p. 6. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

³¹*The Emancipator and Journal of Public Morals*. Vol. II, No. 21, May 27, 1834.

³²*The Emancipator and Journal of Public Morals*. Vol. II, No. 15, April 15, 1834.

³³James Forten to William Lloyd Garrison, July 28, 1832 (mss); *The Liberator*, Vol. II, No. 46, November 17, 1832, p. 183; Vol. IV, No. 10, March 8, 1834, pp. 37, 38.

³⁴W. C. Nell, *Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with sketches of Distinguished*

Colored People. Boston, 1855, pp. 346-347, 351; *Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society*, 1836, p. 84; *Third Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New England Anti-Slavery Society presented January 21, 1835*. Boston, 1835, p. 22.

³⁵When a colored man was invited to participate in an anti-slavery meeting in Ohio, some of the colored people told Theodore Weld that they thought that it was best for him not to sit in the convention as it might bring reprisals upon them. Weld was of the opinion, nevertheless, that "to make a distinction between a white man and a black man on account of their color in organization is the very principle of slavery." An effort was made by anti-abolitionists, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to show that Negroes were not sympathetic with the abolition program. It was reported that the Cincinnati Union Society of colored persons had adopted resolutions disclaiming all connection with the abolitionists and calling upon

and disturbances in New York, Philadelphia and other places in the East, but the Negroes there seemed undaunted by these and continued their activity in abolition.³⁶

Even some so-called friends of the cause seemed to oppose the participation by Negroes in abolition organizations in the East. Garrison criticized William Ellery Channing because he expressed the belief that "we ought never to have permitted our colored brethren to unite with us in our associations".³⁷ In reply to this type of criticism, a resolution was adopted by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society at its meeting on January 20, 1836, stating that the Anti-Slavery cause was "the cause of Philanthropy, with regard to which all human beings, white men and colored men, citizens and foreigners, men and women, have the same duties and the same rights".³⁸

In New England and the eastern middle states the active participation of Negroes in abolition was a regular part of the convention activities in these sections. The New England Anti-Slavery Society met in Boston, May 27-29, 1834. The committee of arrangements included James G. Barbadoes of Boston. Other colored members of the convention were Joshua Easton and John T. Hilton. Barbadoes seconded the motion that the interests of the anti-slavery cause "demand that special efforts be made to multiply the subscribers to *The Liberator*". Barbadoes also made a motion that "Messrs. Garrison and Knapp deserve the gratitude of the colored people and their friends, for their persevering exertions in pleading the cause of the oppressed". John T. Hilton moved that "having put our hands to the plow of liberty we give our sacred pledge never to look back, until every root and branch of the noxious principle of slavery shall

James G. Birney and his associates to cease their efforts in their behalf. It was declared that the publication of abolition papers tended to incite "angry feelings" and "personal violence." Thirty-five names were signed to these resolutions. A few days later a disclaimer, signed by twenty-eight of these persons, appeared in the *Cincinnati Gazette*. This statement declared that their names were used without their knowledge or consent. Advantage had been taken of the Negroes so that it might appear that they were opposed to the purposes of the abolitionists and were contented with their condition. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Drummond, *Letters of Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844*, Vol. I, p. 274; *Narrative of the Late Riotous Proceedings Against the Liberty of the Press in Cincinnati: Address to the People of Ohio by the Executive Committee of the Ohio*

Anti-Slavery Society. Cincinnati, 1836, pp. 44-45. Tappan Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

³⁶*The Liberator*, Vol. V, No. 33, August 15, 1835, p. 131; Samuel R. Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Slave*, London, 1855, p. 46.

³⁷*Garrison to Lewis Tappan*, December 17, 1835 (mss). Instances of such opposition are not difficult to find. See Elizabeth Buffum Chase, *Anti-Slavery Reminiscences*, Central Fall, R. I., 1891, pp. 16-17.

³⁸This resolution was sponsored by Professor Charles Follen of Harvard University. In reporting this resolution he said, "We have been advised if we really wished to benefit the slave and the colored race generally, not unnecessarily to shock the feelings, though they were but prejudices, of the white people by admitting colored persons to our anti-slavery meet-

be exterminated from the American soil".³⁹ The adjourned meeting of this society on October 9 of this year was addressed by John T. Hilton and Joshua Easton, among other speakers.⁴⁰

The meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society on May 6, 1834, placed several Negro delegates on its Board of Managers. They were James G. Barbadoes of Massachusetts; Theodore S. Wright, Christopher Rush, Peter Williams and Samuel E. Cornish of New York; Robert Purvis, Joseph Cassey, James McCrummel, John B. Vashon and Abraham D. Shadd of Pennsylvania. Cornish, Williams and Wright were elected to the Executive Committee of twelve members with Arthur Tappan as chairman. James Forten was named as one of the vice-presidents of the society. This society adopted a motion which attracted the support of Negroes. With its declarations against slavery, an invitation was also extended to Negroes "to a participation with us in all those happy and elevating institutions which are open to others".⁴¹

Negroes were now well represented in conventions. At the second annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York, May 12, 1835, Negroes were listed in the membership of the convention. Theodore S. Wright, Samuel Cornish, Christopher Rush and Peter Williams were from New York; Abraham Shadd, James Forten, Robert Purvis, John B. Vashon, James McCrummel were from Pennsylvania, and James G. Barbadoes was from Boston, Massachusetts. The address of the Executive Committee of ten delegates again included the names of Wright and Cornish and an address was issued signed by these members. Among the five names selected as delegates to the New England Anti-Slavery Convention was the name of Theodore S. Wright.⁴² David Rugles attended the meeting of the New York Anti-Slavery Convention at Utica, October 21, 1835.⁴³

ings and societies." In the following year, another evidence of this attitude was manifested when the Anti-Slavery Women of New York in their convention were reported to have declared that "Those societies that reject colored members, or seek to avoid them, have never been active or efficient." W. C. Nell, *op. cit.*, p. 350; *Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society*, January 20, 1836. Boston, 1836, p. 49; W. C. Nell, *op. cit.*, p. 351; *The Liberator*, Vol. VI, No. 4, January 23, 1836, p. 15.

³⁹*Proceedings of the New England Anti-Slavery Convention held in Boston on the 27th, 28th and 29th of May, 1834*. Boston, 1834. pp. 3, 5, 8, 13, 14, 18.

⁴⁰*The Liberator*, Vol. IV, No. 41, October 11, 1834, p. 163.

⁴¹*First Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society . . .*, May 6, 1834, New York, 1834. pp. 15, 34, 35, 36, 47, 61.

⁴²*Second Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with the Speeches Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting, held in the City of New York, on the 12th May, 1835, and the Minutes of the Meetings of the Society for Business*. New York, 1835. pp. 23, 25, 26, 27; *The Liberator*, Vol. V, No. 22, May 30, 1835, p. 87; *The Emancipator—Extra*, June 16th, 1835.

⁴³*Proceedings of the New York Anti-Slavery Convention held at Utica, October 21, 1835, etc., Utica, 1835*, p. 45.

When the Fourth Annual Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society was held in New York on May 9, 1837, Negro representatives were again present. Cornish and Wright were re-elected to places on the Executive Committee. An address was delivered at this meeting by Rev. Charles Gardner of Philadelphia, a Negro Presbyterian pastor. The sentiments of his speech revealed the attitude of the Negro abolitionist. He presented and supported the motion that "sufficient evidence had been given to the world to convince the enlightened public that the immediate emancipation of colored people is morally right and politically safe". He defended this statement by references to the achievements of the colored people. He said that in Philadelphia alone there were at least fourteen congregations of colored people owning several churches worth between twenty-five and fifty thousand dollars. He cited the fact that these Negroes were educating and elevating themselves morally and mentally and that there were several "pay schools" maintained by the colored people and at least sixty beneficial societies. He praised the activities of the colored people for their demonstrations against slavery and colonization, and declared that when Garrison was "a mere child," Negroes had assembled in different parts of the United States "to wage a combat against removal to another country". This address was declared by an observer to be "the most eloquent" of the convention.⁵⁶

The state and local anti-slavery conventions in this year had their Negro participants. The sessions of the Fourth New England Anti-Slavery Convention in Boston in 1837 were attended and addressed by several Negroes. The same activities by Negroes were manifested at the annual meetings in 1837 of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, the New England Anti-Slavery Society, the New York Anti-Slavery Society and the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. At the second annual meeting of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, M. M. Clark, a Negro, presented a report on the condition of the Negro in Ohio. This resulted in the adoption of resolutions concerning the improvement of the Negro's status in Ohio.⁵⁷

Assembled to organize a State Anti-Slavery Society at Harrisburg on the 31st of January and the 1st and 2nd of February. Philadelphia, 1837, p. 56.

⁵⁶*The Liberator*, Vol. VII, No. 21, May 19, 1837, p. 82; June 2, 1837, p. 90; June 9, 1837, p. 95; *Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with the Speeches Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting held in the City of New York on the 9th May, 1837, and the Minutes of the Meetings of the Society for Business.* New York, 1837. pp. 17, 18, 21, 28, 131; *Zion's Watchman*, Vol. 2, No. 79, July 8, 1837.

⁵⁷*Proceedings of the Fourth New England Anti-Slavery Convention.* Boston, May 30, 31, and June 1 and 2, 1837. pp. 47, 48, 66-69; *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society at its Fifth Annual Meeting*, January 25, 1837, p. XXXIX; *Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Convention, assembled to organize a State Anti-Slavery Society at Harrisburg*, January 31, February 1-3, Philadelphia, 1837, p. 56; *Report of the Second Anniversary of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society held in Mount Pleasant, Jefferson County, Ohio, April 27, 1837.* Cincinnati, 1837; *The Liberator*, Vol. VII, No. 42, p. 165; *The Colored American*, Vol. I, October 4, 1837.

The United Anti-Slavery Society meeting in New York, with Thomas Van Rensselaer presiding, appointed five Negro delegates to the Fourth Anniversary meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society.⁵⁸

Free Negroes were thus associated with the organizers of immediate abolition. They had organized themselves both with and without the invitation or persuasion of white friends. Northern abolitionists have been characterized within recent periods as individuals who not only placed the South upon the defensive but also as those who aroused Negroes, who were satisfied with their condition.⁵⁹ This opinion has been due largely to the belief in the South that Northern whites, through their speeches and writings, were responsible for the insurrections and desires for freedom by Negroes.⁶⁰ This view has some historical truth in it. But it seems never to have occurred to persons of this opinion, so far as their writings reveal, that Negroes might desire and seek, as have other human beings, freedom for and of themselves.

The comprehensive and definitive treatment of the history of abolition requires attention to its origins and support by Negroes. The neglect of these facts will continue to produce a narrow and biased treatment of this important movement in our history. For historical records reveal that representative Negroes were active with other Americans, as organizers, supporters and participants, both on the local and national scenes where anti-slavery organization was being undertaken. Their efforts gathered momentum in the succeeding decades after 1837 and outstanding individuals among them, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Samuel R. Ward, Sojourner Truth and others, became well-known lecturers and agents in the rising tide of freedom.

⁵⁸*The Colored American*, Vol. I, April 29, 1837.

⁵⁹For support of this view, see Arthur Young Lloyd, *The Slavery Controversy*, Chapel Hill, 1939, particularly Chapter II, "The Extreme Abolitionist Attack" and Chapter IV, "Southern Defense"; and Avery Craven, *The Repres-sible Conflict*. Louisiana State University Press, 1939.

⁶⁰*The National Intelligencer*, September 15, 1831, quotes the *Tarborough Free Press* which stated that *The Liberator* was "published in Boston or Philadelphia by a white man, with the avowed purpose of inciting rebellion in the South." See also editorial in *The National Intelligencer*, September 30, 1831, entitled "Incendiary Publications." An example of this opinion in reference to other anti-slavery pa-

pers has been recently extracted from the files of the Clerk's Office at Norfolk, Virginia, by Dr. Luther P. Jackson of Virginia State College. This citation is as follows: "Incendiary Papers: *Human Rights* and *The Emancipator*, papers published in the northern states have been forwarded to the Post Office addressed to free persons of color. Believing that papers of this character are calculated to stir up a spirit of disobedience and dissatisfaction among the free Negroes and slaves—court asks mayor to call on the Post Master and ask, in so far as he is authorized, to withhold the delivery of such or similar papers addressed to free Negroes and other colored persons." July 28, 1835. *Corporation Court, Norfolk, Virginia, Order Book (MS)* 31, p. 30 (Clerk's Office).