

Sophia Kamps
Berlin Conference
United States
Albany High School

The United States of America, and I as its representative, has a very unique perspective on what is about to take place in Berlin. This is a gathering of representatives of many European nations, each with a unique vision for this new dark continent, and each with distinct claims on these lands and resources, in hopes of aligning them and avoiding future conflict. However, the United States has no such claims. In fact, we strongly believe, as a country once under a cruel colonial rule, that dividing up these lands and peoples among European powers as colonies would be wrong. That being said, it is clear that we cannot leave these countries to ruin themselves. I have ventured into the dark continent and seen the barbarities of the peoples within it and I insist that to let it persist would be an insult not merely to western civilization, but to the people themselves who we would be forcing to live without our guidance. In a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, I described a violent experience I had with the natives of this continent in my exploration of the Congo. It was a:

murderous cannibalistic world in which we found ourselves. The enemy, in full confidence of victory, was on us, and the big monster as it shot past us launched a spear – the first.¹

It is clear that these barbarians may never reach our levels of European sophistication, and western education and influence is greatly needed for any civilization of American standards to come about. America has never claimed any territory of Africa as its own, however, we still have a great investment in the development of this continent, both economically and idealistically.

The United States is at a turning point politically, as our president Chester A. Arthur, a republican, has recently been replaced by Grover Cleveland who will take office this coming January. America is reaching the end of an economic depression and recovering from a large economic panic.² Despite this, we are an important player in world politics and economics. I myself fought in this war.³ As a result of this war, American government and people now firmly believe that the enslavement of African peoples by a western nation is wrong, and this will heavily influence our participation in the Berlin Conference. One of the main influences our shift in government will have is on our foreign policy. While the republican party did not focus on trade, the democratic party promises to focus on improving trade relation with our neighbors in Central and Southern America. Currently, eighty percent of our annual exports go to Europe, and only five percent to our neighbors, despite the convenience of a nearby markets in the

¹“Henry Morton Stanley in the Congo.” *The Telegraph*. Last modified: January 8, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/activityandadventure/10558470/Henry-Morton-Stanley-in-the-Congo.html>.

² Skrabec, Quentin R., Jr. *The 100 Most Important American Financial Crises*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, n.d.

³ “Stanley, Sir Henry Morton.” *Columbia Encyclopedia*. Last modified 2012. Accessed November 6, 2015. http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Sir_Henry_Morton_St Stanley.aspx.

Spanish-American Republics. The Democratic party, and the party of Grover Cleveland, strongly supports expansion of trade in the Americas ⁴Because of America's focus on trade and politics with countries closer to home, Africa is relatively low priority to our government. However, our focus on free trade with our neighbors translates to free trade with all African nations, something of great priority to our government.

America's ultimate goal as a nation represented in this conference is to ensure that the various conflicts around land and trade in Africa are settled with an emphasis on helping and educating the people of Africa, creating free trade. The United States would support any efforts to create self governing nations that emphasise the importance of democracy. I fully support these goals and believe that they are equally important to His Majesty King Leopold of Belgium. For the past six years, since 1878, I have been working with His Majesty as an envoy exploring the African territory of the Congo. ⁵ I have been deeply impressed by the civilizing efforts of the International African Society, as well as the International Congo Society. I cannot help take note of the selflessness of His Majesty, as he puts aside the political goals of his country for the good of these less civilized peoples. I fully endorse His Majesty's International Association of the Congo and its aim to legalize trade and create a free Congo state. In fact, I believe that this plan could perfectly compliment the needs of my own nation. The United States has made great leaps forward as a nation since the civil war, but one issue remains. Hundreds of emancipated slaves live within this white nation, and they clearly cannot remain. As the late President of our nation, Abraham Lincoln described, "There is a natural disgust in the minds of nearly all white people to the idea of indiscriminate amalgamation of the white and black races"⁶ Clearly, these colored people cannot remain within our nation. Lincoln himself advocated for the removal of colored slaves to their home nation, saying "Let us be brought to believe it is morally right, and, at the same time, favorable to, or, at least, not against, our interest, to transfer the African to his native clime, and we shall find a way to do it, however great the task may be."⁷ It is indeed a great task, but removal efforts, which began at the start of this century, may finally come to fruition with the help of our great ally His Majesty King Leopold of Belgium. In Lincoln's time, the obstacles, including lack of funds, opposition from the black people, and the inhospitality of Liberia, were too great. But it is a new era of African colonization, and King Leopold provides us with a great new opportunity: an opportunity to return the Africans of the United States to their home, the King's proposed free Congo state. ⁸ This plan presents America with the opportunity to fully utilize the potential of this African continent by creating a civilized nation wherein our own Africans can finally return home and American influence can better the African continent.

⁴ *The Political Reformation*. (New York, NY, USA: National Democratic Committee, 1884.)

⁵ "Henry Morton Stanley." *The Atlantic Online*. Last modified 1996. Accessed November 6, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/96sep/congo/hmsbio.htm>.

⁶ Morgan, Robert. "The 'Great Emancipator' and the Issue of Race." *Institute for Historical Review*. Accessed November 6, 2015. http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v13/v13n5p-4_Morgan.html.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wiley, Sarah Elizabeth. "Commerce, Race, and Diplomacy: Henry Shelton Sanford and the American Recognition of the International Association of the Congo." *University of Montana Scholar Works*. Last modified 1989. Accessed November 6, 2015. <http://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2849&context=etd>.

Bibliography

- Atlantic Monthly Company. "Henry Morton Stanley." The Atlantic Online. Last modified 1996. Accessed November 6, 2015.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/96sep/congo/hmsbio.htm>.
- Baumeister, Roy F., and John Tierney. "Henry Morton Stanley's Unbreakable Will." Smithsonian.com. Last modified December 2011. Accessed November 6, 2015.
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/henry-morton-stanleys-unbreakable-will-99405/?no-ist>.
- Columbia University Press. "Stanley, Sir Henry Morton." Columbia Encyclopedia. Last modified 2012. Accessed November 6, 2015.
http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Sir_Henry_Morton_Stanley.aspx.
- Harding, Jeremy. "Into Africa." Books. Last modified September 20, 1998. Accessed November 6, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/09/20/reviews/980920.20hardint.html>.
- Meyer, Leysle E. "Henry S. Sanford and the Congo: A Reassessment." WebAfriqa.net. Accessed January 6, 2005. http://webafriqa.net/colonial/pdf/sanford_congo_216266.pdf.
- Middleton, Dorothy. "Henry Morton Stanley." Encyclopaedia Britannica. Last modified April 9, 2015. Accessed November 6, 2015.
<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Morton-Stanley>.
- Morgan, Robert. "The 'Great Emancipator' and the Issue of Race." Institute for Historical Review. Accessed November 6, 2015.
http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v13/v13n5p-4_Morgan.html.
- The Political Reformation*. New York, NY, USA: National Democratic Committee, 1884.
- Skrabec, Quentin R., Jr. *The 100 Most Important American Financial Crises*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, n.d.
- Stanley, Henry Morton. *The Congo and the Founding of Its Free State*. Vol. II. London, England: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1885.
- *Through the Dark Continent*. Vol. II. New York, NY, USA: Harper and Brothers, 1878.
- Telegraph. "Henry Morton Stanley in the Congo." The Telegraph. Last modified January 8, 2104. Accessed November 6, 2015.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/activityandadventure/10558470/Henry-Morton-Stanley-in-the-Congo.html>.

Wiley, Sarah Elizabeth. "Commerce, Race, and Diplomacy: Henry Shelton Sanford and the American Recognition of the International Association of the Congo." University of Montana Scholar Works. Last modified 1989. Accessed November 6, 2015. <http://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2849&context=etd>.