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Garvey Revisited:

The Legitimacy and Consistency of Marcus Garvey as Demonstrated by his Latter Movement

by

Bridget Wiede

Honors Thesis

in

*Leadership Studies
University of Richmond
Richmond, VA*

April 27, 2012

Advisor: Dr. T. Wren

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Abstract

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Movement**

Bridget Wiede

Committee members: *Dr. Thomas Wren, Dr. Douglas Hicks, Dr. Andrea Simpson*

The following analysis examines Marcus Garvey in his entirety, during his life pre- and post-deportation, as well as his life in the United States and abroad. Although historians have debated the significance and character of Garvey this paper will definitively argue that conclusions can be drawn about this complex character. Such a broad examination of Garvey's life will prove that Garvey remained consistently devoted to his aims – the fostering of racial pride and consciousness, the advancement of the Back to Africa movement and the development of a black economy. Despite his ultimate failure Garvey advanced this aims throughout the world because he believed the achievement of his goals would lead to the uplift of his people.

Signature Page for Leadership Studies Honors Thesis

Garvey Revisited:

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Thesis presented


by

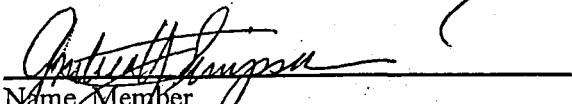
Bridget Wiede

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Methodology

Prior to beginning this analysis of Garvey it is necessary to address one methodological note. The principle source materials are the primary sources in Robert A. Hill's eleven-volumes of *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers*, edited in 1983. Much of the surrounding detail for this analysis is drawn from the few biographies of Garvey's life. Because a part of the ensuing analysis involves a critical interpretation of those same biographies, there is potential for concern as the narration and the underlying facts presented in those volumes might somehow be slanted – in a positive or negative light – depending upon whether the biographer was supportive or critical of Garvey. The number of sources consulted and the fact that their interpretive range is so vast lessens this potential for tautology. This should serve as a triangulation function, ensuring a balanced and accurate portrayal of his life.

Introduction:

In March 1916 a fiery Jamaican arrived in the United States and in only a few years took the country by storm. Marcus Garvey spoke of a new racial consciousness, preached the benefits of Pan Africanism and urged the black community to become economically independent. He brought the United Negro Improvement Association from Jamaica to the United States, and built an international following within only three years. Once in the United States, Garvey called on all people of African descent to move back to their homeland in his 'Africa for Africans' program. He also developed the Black Star Line, a completely black owned-and-operated steam line, to bolster black economic independence. In 1920, Garvey held the first international convention for Negroes, which brought together black peoples throughout the world for one common purpose.

Garvey built a strong following among the black masses because, unlike many of his contemporaries, he appealed to black men and women from all backgrounds, including the lower classes. His mass appeal incited fear within the United States government. Furthermore Garvey's popularity threatened not only the government, but also black leaders, who publically criticized Garvey and additionally took legal action against him. Many of Garvey's contemporaries, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph, attacked Garvey for his development of the Black Star Line and for advocating the return of all black peoples back to their ancestral homeland. While some of these charges were well warranted, others were a direct result of Garvey's increasing and intimidating popularity. Nonetheless due to the efforts of his enemies Garvey was eventually charged and convicted of mail fraud in

February of 1925 and sentenced to five years in prison. In 1927, pardoned by President Calvin Coolidge, he was released, immediately deported, and sent back to Jamaica.

Many historical analyses of this complex leader have traditionally centered on Garvey's life and movement in the United States and, consequently, Garvey's deportation has been depicted as his ultimate end. As these evaluations of Garvey have focused on such a short period of his life many have concluded that Garvey was merely an opportunist and a charlatan, who took advantage of the World War I environment into which he was thrust. Yet, a close analysis of Garvey's career, both in the United States and throughout the globe, sheds new light on his life and work. This re-evaluation of Garvey resurrects his reputation as a leader consistently devoted to the aims he advanced, not only in the United States, but also throughout the world. Garvey was continuously dedicated to the fostering of black consciousness, the "Back to Africa" movement and the development of an independent black economy, even after being forced from the United States.

Despite the failure of his movement and his deportation, Garvey continued to fight for the goals that brought him success in American society outside of the United States. Following 1927, he traveled throughout the world advocating racial pride, encouraging repatriation and developing new financial schemes, dedicated to raising the economic status of black men and women. The fallen Garvey established branches of the UNIA throughout Europe, consistently spoke of black consciousness, petitioned the League of Nations for increased land rights, and sought economic advances in Central America and the West Indies. These actions and others signal Garvey's perseverance in a time of great hardship.

While Garvey remained a consistent advocate of his goals, he was forced to adopt new strategies to promote his ultimate vision. As times changed Garvey was pushed to transform and

as a result, throughout the latter half of the 1930s, he transformed his rhetoric and adjusted his interactions with government. These changes can be attributed, in part, to context. As the memory of World War I faded so too did the call for radicalism. Garvey could no longer manipulate the energy of post World War I society and thus no longer relied on the enflamed rhetoric for which he had been previously known. His transformation also stemmed from his deportation from the United States, his decreasing popularity, and the deteriorating financial status of the UNIA. In a new environment and without a consistent following, Garvey was forced to alter his once successful strategies. Although Garvey's rhetoric adapted to suit the needs of a changing environment, his aims remained consistent throughout this time. For twenty-six years, from the creation of the UNIA in 1914 to his death in 1940, Garvey steadily maintained the goals of the Universal Negro Improvement Association: the construction of a new racial consciousness, the growth of Pan Africanism and the development of an international black economy.

The historical evaluation of Garvey's life and work has formerly resulted in mixed findings. In evaluating the Garvey movement many historians have ignored a critical thirteen-year period following his deportation, and have rather chosen to focus on his moment of influence in the United States. Because of this, many have drawn a wide variety of conclusions regarding both Garvey's character and the sincerity of his endeavors. Black poet and writer James Weldon Johnson wrote the first evaluation of Marcus Garvey in the 1930s.¹ In his book, *Black Manhattan*, Johnson, like many of his contemporaries, depicted Garvey in a very critical light, "stressing [his] shortcomings and failures, and lamenting that so little of enduring value

¹ Edmund David Cronon, "James Weldon Johnson: Glitter or Substance," in *Marcus Garvey* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 133

had resulted from his promising mass movement.”² Although Johnson’s initial feelings toward Garvey were those of respect and admiration, he ultimately concluded that Garvey failed black Americans by making promises he was unable to keep.

Twenty years later, E. David Cronon, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, offered his own interpretation of Garvey. Cronon acknowledged the traditionally ambiguous view of Garvey by posing the question was Garvey a “strident demagogue or dedicated prophet, martyred visionary or fabulous con man?”³ Ultimately Cronon defined Garvey as a sincere and honest man with an impractical solution to the race problem. Following Cronon’s evaluations, historian Tony Martin diverged from previous evaluations and depicted Garvey as a prophet and visionary. Most recently, historian Colin Grant published an appraisal of Marcus Garvey. His *Negro with a Hat* is a culmination of the various accounts of Garvey’s life. Grant presents the most ambiguous view of Garvey yet, acknowledging his accomplishments and his failures, reinforcing both his skeptics and his supporters.

The story of Marcus Garvey has been an evolution. Garvey has been depicted as a charlatan and opportunist, as well as a Christ like figure of the black community. Garvey is “often depicted hovering somewhere between a craved-for messiah and pathological clown.”⁴ While historians examining Garvey have formed drastically different assessments of the black leader throughout numerous generations, one common focus remains consistent. Their analyses have centered on the height of his popularity and consequently have neglected to explore a significant portion of Garvey’s life.

² Cronon, “James Weldon Johnson”, 123

³ Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses; the Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1962), 202

⁴ Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiv

Although most attention has been paid to his moment of influence, a deeper view of Garvey can be achieved through an evaluation of his later career. Based on an examination of his life post-deportation, I will argue that Garvey was fully devoted to the aims of the UNIA, as they remained consistent throughout his life despite Garvey's failure in and deportation from the United States. Though Garvey's fiery rhetoric waned and his tactics became less aggressive he continued to foster black pride, seek the creation of an independent black nation for the descendants of Africa and to further his call for black economic independence. By evaluating the time Garvey spent in South and Central America, as well as Europe throughout the 1930s, not only will Garvey's motives become clearer, but so too will the essential consistency of his life's work.

Part I:

The Story of Marcus Garvey

Chapter 1. Garvey Pre-Deportation

Garvey in Jamaica

On August 17, 1887 parents Marcus and Sarah Garvey gave birth to Marcus Moziah Garvey in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica. Although Marcus was the last of his parent's eleven children, he was one of only two to survive to maturity. The Garvey family was of "un-mixed stock" and Garvey later boasted that he was a "full-blooded black man without any taint of white blood in his veins."¹ Marcus Garvey Senior was a master stonemason who worked hard to educate himself. He was known to bury himself in books, and to often isolate himself from local townspeople. Garvey Sr. "directed the life of his family with a stern formality."² However, unlike her husband, Sarah Garvey was a kind and gentle woman, who attended church regularly and was well-known throughout the community for her deep faith.³ When asked of his parents Garvey noted their equally important impact on his life.

Early in his life, while living in St. Ann's Bay, the young Garvey was exposed to the realities of racial difference. Since Marcus Garvey Sr. worked as a mason he maintained a comfortable lifestyle for himself and his family. As a result of the family's finances the Garvey's home was situated between the houses of two white families. Recalling his early years of childhood, Garvey said, "to me, at home, in my early days there was no difference between black and white."⁴ The young Garvey consequently formed relationships with his white neighbors as a child. These interactions were extremely formative for the young Garvey, who

¹ Tony Martin, *Race First: the Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1976), 5

² Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses; the Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1962), 5

³ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 6

⁴ John Hope Franklin, "Marcus Garvey," in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press), 106

did not distinguish between racial differences. When he was fourteen years old, one of Garvey's friends, a white girl from his neighborhood, was sent away to boarding school in Scotland. Before departing from Jamaica she told young Marcus that she was not allowed to speak with or write to Garvey again because he was Black.⁵ For the first time in his life Garvey became aware of racial differences. Writing of the incident, he later remarked, "it was then that I found for the first time that there was some difference in humanity, and that there were different races, each having its own separate and distinct social life."⁶ The incident had a strong impact on Garvey's later philosophies and ultimately convinced him that it was necessary for black peoples to ban together if they wanted to fight white oppression. Garvey continued to be inspired by this lesson throughout his life, especially in the formation of the United Negro Improvement Association and as he developed his "Africa for Africans" program.

Garvey's experiences as an adolescent not only exposed him to racial difference, but also allowed him to develop necessary skills as a writer, an orator and a rhetorician. In 1901, the Garvey family finances deteriorated, and the young Garvey was forced to abandon his education in order to support his family. Although Garvey yearned to move to Kingston, he remained in St. Ann's Bay, where he worked for his godfather as an apprentice.⁷ Under his supervision Garvey learned the printing trade and soon developed skills as a journalist and editor. As Garvey's knowledge of the printing industry brought him new opportunities. At the age of seventeen, due to his talents Garvey was finally able to move to Kingston, where he was first

⁵ Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 13

⁶ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 8

⁷ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 13

exposed to city life.⁸ In Kingston, the young Garvey honed his oratorical abilities. He gained increasing confidence by speaking in churches and practicing at home.⁹

Not only did Garvey grow as a writer and orator, he also began to develop skills as a leader. Even at a young age, Garvey demonstrated his leadership abilities, especially through his loyalty and dedication to the advancement of workers' rights. Three years after he arrived in Kingston, Garvey became the foreman and master printer at the P.A. Benjamin Company, one of the largest printing firms in Jamaica. Working for the P.A. Benjamin Company Garvey confirmed his skills as a printer, but also more importantly, as a leader. According to historian Colin Grant, Garvey was known for his "deciveness of thought and action" as a foreman.¹⁰ Yet, he lost both his job and position of power when he joined the Printers Union in a strike for higher wages. "In spite of the promise by his employers of a personal salary increase if he would abandon the struggle" Garvey maintained his commitment to the struggle when refused to turn his back on his workers.¹¹ Garvey was consequently fired from the P.A. Benjamin Company. This incident was an early demonstration of Garvey's willingness to sacrifice himself for the causes to which he was dedicated.

After he was fired from the P.A Benjamin Company, Garvey used his printing talents to address social justice issues within Jamaica. Garvey was blacklisted from private printing companies throughout Kingston due to his participation in the Union Worker's strike and was as a result forced to work in government printing offices. Nonetheless, the strike provided Garvey with an opportunity to recognize and pursue his passion for social justice. In addition to his work for the government Garvey also founded and edited his own periodical, *Garvey's*

⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 11

⁹ Ibid, 12

¹⁰ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 16

¹¹ Ibid, 16

Watchman in 1909. Garvey's publication focused on the problems of poverty and discussed the tendency of government "to cast the unemployed as agents of their own misfortune."¹² *Garvey's Watchman* was short-lived, however, and suspended after only its third issue due to financial difficulties.

Garvey persisted nonetheless and developed a new interest in the cause of Black Nationalism. He became the assistant secretary of The Nightly Club, an organization devoted to the values of nationalism, which "sought to challenge the abuses of the Crown government and campaigned actively for ... an end to the 'coolie' immigration."¹³ The values of The Nightly Club were expressed through the organization's publication *Our Own*, for which Garvey also wrote and edited. With such experience in journalism "Garvey was well-qualified for his role as newspaper propagandist",¹⁴ and when he later developed the United Negro Improvement Association, he utilized his knowledge of journalism as a tool for activism. Garvey's experience in politics inspired him to develop his oratorical abilities. Thus he registered for elocution classes, entered debate competitions and studied under the radical Jamaican preacher, doctor, and journalist, Dr. Robert J. Love.¹⁵

As a member of the Nightly Club Garvey continued to combat issues of poverty and the economic inequalities in Jamaica. In the early 1900s the Jamaican economy was desperate and consequently many Jamaicans struggled to find employment. "During the days of plenty Jamaica's plantocracy had reaped fantastic rewards from the hundreds of sugar plantations...but by 1910 sugar production had been scaled down in favour of bananas ... their production was not

¹² *ibid*, 23

¹³ *ibid*, 21

¹⁴ Martin, *Race First*, 91

¹⁵ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 14

as labour intensive and required fewer workers.”¹⁶ Like his fellow countrymen Garvey too was unable to find employment and thus moved from Jamaica as well. He traveled to Costa Rica where he thought the banana trade was more profitable and would lead to better employment opportunities.

Thus economic hardships forced Garvey to change careers, exposing him to the harsh conditions of labor on the plantation fields of Costa Rica. His experiences abroad proved to him that economic injustice was not solely limited to Jamaica, but rather was a prevalent issue throughout Latin America and the West Indies. With the help of relatives, Garvey secured a position at the United Fruit Company, where he worked as a timekeeper. Garvey was exposed to the misfortunes of fieldworkers and laborers while working at the United Fruit Company. At the United Fruit Company “employment was competitive and irregular” and wages were paid “in the form of coupons that could only be exchanged for provisions at the United Fruit shops.”¹⁷ Garvey did not earn as much money as he had hoped working as a timekeeper; however, he gained tremendous knowledge about the exploitation of black laborers. According to E. David Cronon, “the plight of the Negro field workers, many of them his countrymen, only increased Garvey’s determination to improve the lot of Negroes everywhere.”¹⁸

Frustrated by his experiences, Garvey became determined to lead a movement on behalf of black Jamaican laborers working throughout Latin America. He soon left Costa Rica for Limon in an effort to improve working conditions for black Jamaicans in Peru. He used his knowledge of the printing profession to protest unfair working conditions. In 1911, Garvey created a bilingual paper, *The Nation* or *La Nacion*, to highlight the abuses of workers throughout Latin America. Garvey’s newspaper targeted “local West Indian leadership and its

¹⁶ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 24

¹⁷ Ibid, 26

¹⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 14

timid cap-in-hand response to the abuse of its compatriots.”¹⁹ His stance went too far, however, when he questioned the priorities of a fire brigade, which he accused of discrimination. Garvey declared that the home of a wealthy white family was saved in lieu of preserving smaller, black owned homes. As a result of his criticisms Garvey was forced to leave Peru.

Garvey increasingly understood the race issue as a global, rather than regional, problem as he continued to travel throughout South and Central America. From Limón Garvey traveled to Panama, Honduras, Ecuador, Columbia and Venezuela. Many of the countries to which he traveled, including his homeland of Jamaica, were colonies of the British Empire. In these colonies large corporations such as the United Fruit Company hired Englishman as foreman and only used black peoples as fieldworkers and laborers. His travels caused him to question the influence of imperialism and the exploitation of labor that occurred in British colonies as a result. In a pamphlet dated July-August 1914, Garvey later wrote of his experiences internationally: “For the last ten years I have given my time to the study of the condition of the Negro, here, there and everywhere, and I have come to realize that he is still the object of degradation and pity the world over.”²⁰ With each move, and each new experience Garvey became convinced that the suffering and exploitation of black peoples was not an isolated, Jamaican issue, but of international proportions.

Garvey in London

Having witnessed the treatment of black workers in British colonies in Central America and the West Indies, Garvey became interested in the British Empire. In this way he traveled to London in the spring of 1912 to study the position of black men and women in English society.

¹⁹ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 30

²⁰ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. I (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 55

Soon after his arrival, however, his attention turned to the experiences of Black peoples in Africa. Garvey became interested in Africa due to his acquaintance with Duse Mohammed Ali, the editor and publisher of *The Africa Times and Orient Review*. Ali, an African scholar, mentored Garvey. He taught Garvey the history of his African ancestors, as well as the history of slavery. According to historian E. David Cronon, “Garvey’s contacts with this African scholar stimulated a keen interest in Africa, its culture, and its administration under colonial rule.”²¹

It was due in large part to Garvey’s experiences with Ali in London that Garvey later developed a movement based on the ideals of Pan-African nationalism. Gradually Garvey’s focus expanded, encompassing not only the ideas of Ali, but of Blacks everywhere. He gained knowledge of the condition of black peoples throughout the world from students and scholars with whom he became acquainted. These interactions further inspired Garvey to unite Negroes throughout the world to combat universal abuses.

In England, Garvey continued to grow intellectually and, not only adopted Pan African beliefs, but developed an economic ideology. Garvey’s exposure to Booker T. Washington’s autobiography *Up From Slavery* was a formative experience, which further pushed him to consider the economic hardships faced by black men and women throughout the world. After reading *Up From Slavery* Garvey recalled thinking,

Where is the black man’s Government? Where is his King and his kingdom? Where is his President, his country, and his ambassador, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs? I could not find them, and then I declared, ‘I will help to make them’²²

He reflected on the conditions of black peoples internationally and concluded that black economic independence was the solution to problems of oppression and exploitation. He felt

²¹ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 15

²² *Ibid*, 16

that black men and women throughout the world could rise above white oppression if they united to form an independent black economy. Since Garvey believed “white men did not regard the lives of black men as equal to those of white men, and had no intention of trying to protect blacks,”²³ he concluded that the only way to develop the black economy was to sever ties – both geographically and economically - with the white community.

The Birth of the UNIA

Inspired by what he learned in London, Garvey returned to Jamaica and established his own organization. Although he hoped that this new organization would unite the interests of African descendants throughout the world, due to economic constraints he was confined to Jamaica for the time being. Nevertheless by fostering racial unity through mass organization Garvey believed he could establish a new love of and pride in the black race even if only by concentrating his efforts in Jamaica. On August 1, 1914, only two weeks after returning from London, Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League (later renamed the Universal Negro Improvement Association) to advance his initial aims. Although Garvey stressed the importance of universal brotherhood, the initial aims of what would later be the United Negro Improvement Association, were focused locally.²⁴ Much like Booker T. Washington in the United States, Garvey hoped to provide an education to Negroes in Jamaica by building educational and industrial colleges for black Jamaicans. To further encourage educational development, the United Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League sponsored

²³ Raymond Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, 2002), 145

²⁴ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 56

musical and literary events, as well as a bi-annual elocution contest.²⁵ Although in 1914 it seemed that Garvey's new organization would remain in Jamaica, with a focus on the plight of black workers, there was much more to come for both Garvey and the UNIA.

In the fall of 1914 Garvey sent a letter to Booker T. Washington that would change both the course of his life and the evolution of his movement. On September 18, Garvey wrote to Washington in the United States, seeking his advice on the formation of an industrial and agricultural black school for black Jamaicans similar to Washington's Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.²⁶ Long after reading *Up From Slavery*, Washington's words had continued to linger in Garvey's mind, and consequently he said he "began to see himself as the person who would lead blacks to nationhood."²⁷ He thus aimed to champion the goal of economic independence, melding Washington's beliefs with his own. Washington urged black Americans to work in industrial fields and to "remember that 'no race can prosper until it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as writing a poem.'"²⁸ He believed that only through economic advancement that black men and women could achieve social and political gains. Regarding education, Washington felt industrial rather than intellectual knowledge was more powerful for black advancement and in this way placed great importance on the development of the Tuskegee Industrial School. Inspired by what he read of Washington, Garvey communicated with the controversial American leader. Although Washington responded positively to Garvey's correspondence in 1915 with an invitation to visit the Tuskegee Institute, the two never met. Washington passed away before he and Garvey could ever speak in person.

²⁵ "American Experience: Marcus Garvey," *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service*, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_convention.html.

²⁶ "American Experience: Marcus Garvey," *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service*

²⁷ Mary G. Rollinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina, 2007), 42

²⁸ Stephen Tuck, "Great War and Great Migration," in *We Ain't What We Ought to Be: the Black Freedom Struggle, from Emancipation to Obama* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2010), 103

Garvey in the United States

Although Garvey never intended to settle in the United States, he visited in the spring of 1916, despite Washington's death, in the hope of securing funding for his organization and to advance his mission. Garvey's success and the longevity of his movement was due, in part, to the death of the leader he so admired. The death of Booker T. Washington, coupled with the increasingly hostile climate of the United States, "leaped [Garvey] into the ocean of black unhappiness in the United States at a most timely moment for a savior."²⁹ According to Mary Gambrel Rollinson, after Washington's death, his followers "looked for someone ... who believed that blacks could succeed economically through their own thrift and diligence" and thus Garvey quickly filled a much-needed role for black Americans.³⁰ In this way, Garvey built on the teachings and following of Washington to further develop the United Negro Improvement Association in the United States. Although Garvey only originally planned to the Tuskegee Institute briefly he remained in the US for the next eleven years.

Upon his arrival in New York, Garvey lived with a Jamaican family in Harlem and quickly established himself in the community by speaking on street corners, in churches and in libraries throughout the neighborhood. He spoke of race redemption and the importance of racial pride, hoping to raise awareness and funds for his 'Industrial Farm' initiative in Jamaica. Despite some successful speaking engagements in New York, Garvey yearned to see more of the United States. He embarked on a six-month speaking tour throughout thirty-eight states to gain a better understanding of the nation. Garvey was especially interested in the Jim Crow South, where black men were most likely to be tenant farmers who did not own or control their own land. Exploitation in this region closely resembled the oppression of black laborers Garvey had

²⁹ Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York: Collier Books, 1970), x

³⁰ Rollinson, *Grassroots Garveyism*, 41

witnessed in South America and the West Indies. Garvey was anxious to understand the connections between black workers in Latin America and the United States.³¹

While traveling in the South Garvey was exposed to such things as the vibrancy and faith of black Baptist churches, the straightening of Negro hair (in an attempt to appear white) and the atrocities of lynching. These experiences informed Garvey's philosophy as he grew to better understand the unique culture and struggle of black Americans. Interactions with the Baptist church exposed Garvey to the influence of religion in the United States. As a result "Garvey [later] fashioned the UNIA into a black civil religion" and "adopted ... rituals and activities that gave Garveyism spiritual resonance."³² The lightening and hair straightening practices of black women also influenced Garvey, pushing him to further pursue the development of racial pride and love. Garvey saw such practices as an example of racial shame; he believed that black women could not love themselves or their race if they continued to alter their appearances in such a way. Garvey later urged black women to cease these practices. According to historian Raymond Wolters, the tour also revealed bitterness within the black community in regard to their service in WWI, signaling an underlying radicalism throughout black America. Finally, exposure to lynching in the South confirmed what Garvey had always believed – black people throughout the world could be united through a common suffering. Garvey was exposed to the same exploitation and abuse in the United States as he had seen in Latin America. He thus grew increasingly devoted to the unification of black men and women throughout the world.

After his journey through the South, Garvey returned to Harlem, where he expanded the objectives of the United Negro Improvement Association. In May of 1917, he formed the New York branch of the UNIA. The New York branch originally had only thirteen members.

³¹ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 82

³² Rollinson, *Grassroots Garveyism*, 11

However, soon its presence could be felt throughout Harlem. As a result of this, Garvey was invited to speak with the “father of Harlem radicalism”, Hubert Harrison. Harrison requested that Garvey speak at the Liberty League of Negro-Americans, an organization devoted to securing the rights of democracy for all black Americans.³³

The Liberty League appearance was Garvey’s formal introduction to the social and political reformers of Harlem. He spoke to the organization on June 12, 1917, wooing the audience and many of Harrison’s own followers. According to James Weldon Johnson, Garvey’s “magnetic personality, torrential eloquence, and intuitive knowledge of psychology were well brought into play.”³⁴ After his speech at the Liberty League Garvey quickly became known as one of the greatest black orators in Harlem and throughout the country. According to Virginia Collins, a Garveyite during this time, Garvey’s “words were compassionate...he spoke from his soul, and you had this feeling that you were there, that you [were] he, too, that you felt the same thing he was speaking about.”³⁵ This magnetism would continue to attract followers to the Garvey movement in the early 1920s as well.

A Turbulent and Radical Time

With Garvey’s star on the rise, changes in American politics offered him an opportunity to become even more influential. In December 1917, the United States entered World War I when the US government declared war on Austria-Hungary. While the war consumed Europe, black Americans saw an opportunity to establish themselves in American society.³⁶ When the

³³ Hubert Henry Harrison, *A Hubert Harrison Reader*, edited by Jeffrey B. Perry (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 86

³⁴ James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan*, (New York, New York: Arno Press, 1968), 253

³⁵ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 93

³⁶ Jami Bryan, "Fighting for Respect: African-Americans Soldiers in WWI" last modified 2003, <http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwi/articles/fightingforrespect.aspx>

United States government passed the Selective Service Act, requiring all men ages 21 to 31 to enlist, black men eagerly joined the armed forces. Serving their country they hoped to demonstrate their dedication to the nation and consequently believed that their sacrifices would secure them equal rights. Since the United States was fighting for democracy abroad, black Americans believed that the government would be forced to advance the aims of democracy at home by extending new rights to black men and women. In response to the government's declaration of war an article in the *Baltimore Afro-American* read: "Let us have a real democracy for the United States and then we can advise a house cleaning over on the other side of the water."³⁷ This article expressed the popularly held opinion that the United States should be a true democracy first before attempting to advance democratic principles abroad.

The demand for soldiers, both black and white, also created new opportunities for black Americans in the workforce. Wartime industry created new jobs in cities in the urban North; between 1914 and 1920, 500,000 black men and women migrated from the rural South, seeking employment. In the North former tenant farmers and sharecroppers, sought improved working conditions and higher wages. Employment opportunities and a new sense of social mobility empowered black Americans to seek increased social and political rights. Writing about World War I, James Weldon Johnson commented: "at no time since the days following the Civil War, had the Negro been in a position to make greater gain or sustain greater loss in status."³⁸

However, life in the North was not completely unlike that in the South. Black Americans living in the North were still subjected to discrimination, segregation and substandard housing. But now they were willing to actively combat these practices. In late June 1917, race riots in East St. Louis, Illinois resulted in at least one hundred deaths and the destruction of two hundred

³⁷ "African Americans and World War I," <<http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-world-war-i.html>>.

³⁸ Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought to Be*, 138

homes. The massacre resulted from racial tensions that had built over the previous year, however, specifically; the riot was triggered by the alleged murder of two white policemen. Black Americans throughout the country were outraged by the events in East St. Louis and many black leaders advocated the use of violence. Contrarily, the NAACP called for a silent demonstration, which was both a symbol of public mourning and a sign of support for the new anti-lynching bill. In New York ten thousand black Americans marched down 5th Avenue and through Central Park in the largest protest march since Reconstruction. This mass demonstration signaled the empowerment of black Americans, who were now willing to fight for new social and political rights as a result of the new economic opportunities they had been afforded.

Involvement in World War I, as well as increased job opportunities created hope in the black community. Better jobs, higher wages and successful, peaceful demonstrations seemed to indicate that the situation was finally improving. Yet, as soldiers returned from the war and employment opportunities dwindled, black Americans soon realized that change would come at a slower pace and a more demanding price. In the summer of 1919, only nine months after American soldiers returned from Europe, race riots once again engulfed the country. According to Dr. Stephen Tuck, “on account of the blood that flowed, Johnson called the summer of 1919 the ‘Red Summer.’”³⁹ From May to October there were twenty-five race riots and eighty-three lynchings in cities throughout the country. Such racial violence typically occurred in cities that had previously been a part of the Great Migration of black Americans from the rural South to the urban North. Thus in *We Ain't What we Ought to Be* Tuck writes: “Red summer was the deadly expression of wider repression to stop African Americans – especially black veterans – ... from

³⁹ Ibid, 151

invading white residential space in big cities up North.”⁴⁰ The Red Summer riots and lynchings were a direct response to the economic rights gained by black Americans during World War I.

Although racial violence in the United States was not a new phenomenon, what was new was the response of black leaders. The post World War I environment was assertive and aggressive; “Negroes were faced with a choice between radicalism and radicalism.”⁴¹ Protest groups sprang up throughout the country and existing civil rights organizations grew in number. For instance, the NAACP more than tripled in size between 1918 and 1919.⁴² According to historian Stephen Tuck, the perpetuation of violence within the United States created “the new Negro [who] was symbolized by overt expressions of self-defense and a deep frustration with the status quo.”⁴³ No longer content to wait for change black Americans now demanded it through more aggressive forms of protest. World War I cultivated “a racial consciousness and racial strength that could not have been gained in a century living in America” and Garvey capitalized on it.⁴⁴

The Expansion of the UNIA

In only two years Garvey built a strong movement in the United States; however, the pinnacle of his success was still yet to come. In July of 1918, Garvey published the UNIA constitution, which stated

The Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League is a social, friendly, humanitarian, charitable, educational, institutional, constructive and expansive society, and

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 151

⁴¹ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, xi

⁴² Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought to Be*, 152

⁴³ Ula Y. Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: the Life & times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina, 2002), 40

⁴⁴ Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought to Be*, 142

is founded by persons desiring to the utmost to work for the general uplift of the people of African ancestry of the world⁴⁵

Moreover, during this time Garvey began to develop his 'Africa for Africans' program by advocating the return of African descendants to their ancestral homeland. By forming a new black government and black army in Africa Garvey believed black peoples throughout the world could escape the oppression of white society. Since Garvey felt that white and black people could not live together and should not live in segregation he urged black peoples throughout the world to repatriate to Africa as a solution to the race problem.

Utilizing his previous experiences in the printing industry, Garvey additionally published the first issue of *The Negro World* in 1918. *The Negro World* was a weekly newspaper that acted as the official organ of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and featured a front-page editorial from Garvey himself. The newspaper reported on the status of black people throughout the United States and abroad, on relevant current events issues, and on the activities of UNIA divisions throughout the country. Garvey refused to endorse advertisements for skin lighteners and hair straighteners (such as he had seen in the South) in his publication because he believed that such products lowered, rather than advanced confidence in the black community. Claude McKay, a well-respected black poet and eventual critic of Garvey, remarked that *The Negro World* was "the best edited colored weekly in New York."⁴⁶

While *The Negro World* increased racial pride, it did little to promote black economic independence – another aim of the Garvey movement. Garvey had formed the UNIA, heavily inspired by the convictions of Booker T. Washington, in order to develop the black economy and initially came to the United States to advance this goal. Although he originally intended to develop the black economy in Jamaica through the foundation of educational and technical

⁴⁵ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. I, 256

⁴⁶ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 45

schools, Garvey transformed his strategies upon arriving in the United States and focused on establishing black-owned industry rather than by creating a black industrial school. As the UNIA grew in size and influence Garvey grew increasingly anxious to develop a business that would feed the black economy.

On April 27, 1919, in an effort to promote this goal, Garvey announced his newest venture, the Black Star Line; the first black-owned-and-operated steam line in the world. According to E. David Cronon, ideas for the BSL were “drawn from Booker T. Washington’s philosophy that Negroes [should] become independent of white capital and operate their own business activities.”⁴⁷ Much like his idol Garvey also believed “that self-progress brings its own reward” and thus believed that the Black Star Line would bring all descendants of Africa financial success.⁴⁸ Additionally Garvey envisioned the BSL as a crucial link for trade between Africa, Latin America and the United States. West African seamen, who were frustrated by their reliance on white companies to transport their produce to America, appealed to Garvey to pursue this economic venture. Thus Garvey hoped that his black-owned new steam line would break white trade agencies’ monopoly over the sea.

Although the United Negro Improvement Association owned the Black Star Line, such a financial endeavor would not have been feasible without the financial support of black Americans. In order to gain support for the BSL Garvey promoted stock sale to black Americans only at Carnegie Hall in New York City three months after he announced the incorporation of the Black Star Line. The creation of the Black Star Line and the promotion of BSL stock “gave even the poorest black the chance to become a stockholder in a big business enterprise.”⁴⁹ Additionally, the creation of the Black Star Line aligned with Garvey’s aims for increased racial

⁴⁷ Ibid, 51

⁴⁸ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 21

⁴⁹ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 51

consciousness and pride. Garvey suggested that investment in the BSL was not only a matter of individual interest, but also in the interest of the race, for investing in the Black Star Line would bolster the black economy. Only members of the black community were allowed to invest in the BSL. Garvey believed that any black economic venture should be wholly independent from white capital. Many critics were skeptical of Garvey's business plan because they doubted that such an endeavor could be financed by the black masses. However, in mid-September, Garvey announced that the Black Star Line would acquire its first ship, the *S. S. Yarmouth* - which would later be renamed the *S. S. Fredrick Douglas*.

Although the acquisition of the *S.S. Fredrick Douglas* created excitement within the black community, Garvey soon encountered many problems with his new purchase. The *S. S. Fredrick Douglas* was scheduled to make its first voyage in late November, but the ship encountered major difficulties before departing from New York. After hundreds cheered the ship's departure, Garvey was informed that the *S. S. Fredrick Douglas* could not sail because the insurance transfer had not been made properly. Although an agreement was reached and the trip continued as planned, only miles into the journey the ship was forced to return to shore when the ship's vendor grew anxious about insurance matters.

Garvey's followers, however, were never informed of the ship's reversal and continued to pour money into the BSL. The UNIA sold thousands of shares of Black Star Line stock between 1919 and 1920, financing additional journeys for the *S. S. Fredrick Douglas*. Yet, many of the ship's journeys were unsuccessful. For example, in January the following year the *S.S. Fredrick Douglas* was commissioned to deliver a whiskey shipment to Cuba, but never left New York. Unfortunately, the cargo was never delivered because eighty miles from shore the *S. S. Fredrick Douglas* was caught in a violent storm and forced to issue an SOS call for help. As a result of

the storm the crew threw 500 cases of the whiskey cargo overboard and returned to shore. Yet, the company's failures went unnoted and BSL stock sales paid for additional BSL purchases in the spring of 1920. At this time Garvey bought two more ships the *Kanawha* and the *Shadyside*. In total the UNIA paid \$328,190.38 for the three acquisitions.⁵⁰

An Opponent at Home and Abroad

As the Black Star Line grew and the Garvey Movement increased in size and popularity, Garvey began to elicit unwanted attention from local, national and international governments. Not only were government officials concerned that Garvey was influencing the masses, but they were also threatened by his aggressive and, at times, violent, rhetoric. Starting in 1918, J. Edgar Hoover grew cautious of Garvey, especially his appeal to black immigrants. Between 1899 and 1937 the United States experienced a large influx in black immigration: approximately 150,000 black immigrants were legally admitted to the United States.⁵¹ This marked the largest wave of black immigration in United States history and consequently increased the black population throughout the country. Such an increase elevated governmental concern regarding the consequences of popular black movements and thus led Hoover to view Garvey and his movement with increased caution.

Garvey's growing popularity in the United States not only coincided with the rise of black immigration but also with mounting governmental concerns over the Red Scare. Due to increased threats of communism the government began to question the loyalties of its citizens and in this way "any organization that did not pledge loyalty to the United States was allegedly

⁵⁰ Ibid, 51

⁵¹ Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 19

allied with the Communist Party.”⁵² The FBI viewed Garvey as an enemy of the government because his effort ‘to build a tradition of liberation in the African cultural roots of the masses’ was a subversive activity.”⁵³ Equating his actions of disloyalty to communism Hoover closely monitored Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, as well as the Black Star Line.

In July of 1919 the New York branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigation began forwarding all information regarding Garvey to national headquarters. The following September further steps were taken to investigate Garvey. FBI national headquarters requested that the New York branch compile evidence which could be used against Garvey in potential deportation hearings. Hoover even suggested that the FBI investigate Garvey “for fraud in connection with his Black Star Line propaganda.”⁵⁴ Consequently the FBI placed informants in the UNIA to “make a complete record of everything he says and does and everywhere he goes.”⁵⁵

In addition to Garvey’s mass appeal and the movement’s communist undertones, his violent rhetoric also concerned government officials. For example, in an editorial letter written by Garvey in October 1919, he wrote, “the best thing the Negro of all countries can do is to prepare to match fire with hell fire.”⁵⁶ Speaking in Philadelphia the same month Garvey remarked, “the best way of opening up communication will be through the Black Star Line, because four hundred million of us have declared that we are going to float it even if we have to float it in an ocean of human blood.”⁵⁷ As early as February 1919, international governments also grew concerned over Garvey’s radical rhetoric. Garvey’s publication *The Negro World* was “banned by the governor of Belize, called seditious by the governor of Trinidad, and seized by

⁵² Ibid, 33

⁵³ ibid, 33

⁵⁴ “American Experience: Marcus Garvey, People & Events,”

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_convention.html.

⁵⁵ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 56

⁵⁶ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. II (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 42

⁵⁷ Ibid, 87

the government of British Guiana.”⁵⁸ In the West Indies legislation was proposed by the British Colonial Secretary, which prohibited the sale of *The Negro World* to Garvey’s followers abroad.

Success Despite Adversity

As government intervention increased, so too did Garvey’s following, and his vision. Part of this vision was the development and expansion of the UNIA. Perhaps Garvey’s most remarkable feat during the early 1920s was the first International Negro Convention of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. The International Convention of Negroes hosted representatives from twenty-five different countries and all of the American states, as well as black peoples from many different socio-economic backgrounds. The International Convention not only united black peoples throughout the world, but also aimed to create a new African nation, free from oppression. The Convention “collapsed class, color, religious and geographic distinctions and then encouraged black people to view themselves as part of a Pan-African family.”⁵⁹ On August 1, the convention began “with three religious services and a silent march of all members and delegates through the streets of Harlem” and continued in this fashion throughout much of the month.⁶⁰ The International Convention of Negroes took Harlem by storm. Throughout August the UNIA hosted parades, marching bands and fiery speakers, which grabbed the attention of black Americans. Delegates wore colorful uniforms proudly as onlookers lined the streets to catch a glimpse of the festivities.

However, the parades were only the beginning; much more impressive than the UNIA pageantry was what was accomplished during the following month. Throughout August

⁵⁸ “American Experience: Marcus Garvey, People & Events,” http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_convention.html.

⁵⁹ Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 39

⁶⁰ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 63

members of the UNIA designed a flag for the Garvey movement, assigned titles to UNIA delegates and wrote the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World. The UNIA adopted red, black and green as the official colors of the new African flag to represent blood, pride and a new and better life in Africa. This UNIA symbol perfectly supported Garvey's aim to create a new racial pride and consciousness, as it was a tangible sign of the new mass movement. In addition to a new flag, members of the UNIA also received impressive titles throughout the month. Garvey himself was named Provisional President of the new African nation, while others received titles such as "Supreme Potentate", "Deputy Potentate" and "the Leader of American Negroes".

Finally, the UNIA also produced a comprehensive human rights bill. The Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World was adopted by the first International Convention of Negroes on August 13, 1920. The Declaration was a list of grievances put forth by black delegates from around the world. It was composed of fifty-four articles that outlined the wrongs suffered by all black peoples, and demanded that basic human rights be granted to all peoples of African descent. Additionally, the Declaration outlined the creation of a free African nation, which would be governed and protected by the descendants of Africa. Much like Garvey and the UNIA the Declaration of the Negro Peoples of the World emphasized the need for a new racial identity and increased racial pride. For instance, resolution 11 boldly stated, "we deprecate the use of the term 'nigger' as applied to Negroes and demand that the word 'Negro' be written with a capital N."⁶¹ Although members of the UNIA enthusiastically accepted the Declaration and 100 delegates signed the document, there were a few notable exceptions: Hubert Harrison, a black writer and chairman of the Liberty League and William Ferris, a black scholar and author of *The African Abroad*, both declined to sign the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro. While

⁶¹ Hill, *The Garvey Papers*, Vol. II, 573

Harris believed the language of the document should be stronger, Ferris felt the Declaration was too weak. Nonetheless few of Garvey's contemporary critics or historians of Garveyism have denied the magnitude of this document.

“Africa for Africans”

After a successful UNIA Convention, Garvey turned his attention to the realization of his “Africa for Africans” program. Garvey believed that the only way for African descendants to gain independence was to physically separate themselves from white rule. Thus he proposed that all African descendants move back to Africa, begin their own nation, develop their own government and prepare their own army.

Garvey was not the first black leader to propose such a solution to racial oppression and segregation. In fact, many leaders before him advocated repatriation. Among these leaders were Henry McNeal Turner and Edward Blyden, who proved to be inspirations for the Garvey movement. Beginning in 1880, Turner advocated a return to Africa and even “accepted the vice-presidency of the American Colonisation Society.”⁶² From this time to his death in 1915 Turner traveled to Africa on four different occasions to advance his own vision of repatriation. On a trip to Liberia Turner remarked that the country was “one of the most paradisiacal portions of earth my eyes ever beheld.”⁶³ Like Turner, Blyden also saw the merits of a mass return to Africa and also spent much time in Liberia, where he worked as a Professor and as the Secretary of State. Garvey first discovered the work of Blyden in 1913, while living in London; however, he applied Blyden's ideas to his own philosophy in the beginning of the 1920s, when he propelled both Turner and Blyden's visions into a new century.

⁶² Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 274

⁶³ *Ibid*, 274

In 1921, Garvey began land negotiations with the Liberian government, using the desperate financial situation in Liberia as a bargaining chip for UNIA involvement in the country. The UNIA offered the Liberian government 5 million dollars in exchange for the use of Liberian land, which was fertile and rich in minerals, but struggling financially.⁶⁴ Although a formal agreement was never finalized, the UNIA started the Liberian Construction Loan following negotiations between Garvey and the Liberian government. In addition to the loan scheme, the UNIA also sent 16 members to Liberia in February 1921; “the party included a surveyor, a pharmacist, an agriculturalist, and a builder.”⁶⁵ The party of sixteen was instructed to cultivate farmland and construct new buildings.⁶⁶ The UNIA legation was intended to lay a firm foundation in Liberia so that other members of the organization could follow in their footsteps. After one month in Liberia the group met with Secretary of State Edwin J. Barclay, who agreed to allow UNIA members to settle in allotted lands. However, Barclay cautioned the UNIA against publicizing the settlement plan in light of British and French criticisms of the developing relationship between Liberia and the UNIA.⁶⁷ Yet settlement plans were a distant dream for the United Negro Improvement Association. As one representative wrote, “we are entirely out of money.”⁶⁸

The Beginning of the End

Garvey not only struggled to create alliances in Africa, but also continued to encounter problems with governments in Central America. In 1921 Garvey planned to travel on a speaking and fundraising tour throughout the West Indies between February and July, which he hoped

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 280

⁶⁵ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 125

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 125

⁶⁷ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 282

⁶⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 126

would enable him to purchase a fourth ship for the Black Star Line, *the Phyllis Wheatley*, which would be used to transport black men and women to Liberia. However, he experienced great difficulty because of his reputation as a radical black leader.⁶⁹ Despite protestations from his closest advisors, Garvey left for Bermuda, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and Panama that spring.⁷⁰ The prophecies of his advisors were realized when Garvey finally reached Jamaica, where he was detained by US immigration authorities. Hoover, still concerned about the black leader, instructed the American consul in Jamaica to refuse Garvey a visa to the United States and the American controlled zone of Panama. Additionally, "American ports were instructed to keep an eye out for Garvey amongst immigrants."⁷¹ Despite frustrating setbacks, Garvey was eventually allowed to travel on from Jamaica, and arrived in Costa Rica to a large following. The Garvey papers describe:

miles of cars stretched on the railroad track...the people came down from all sections; they hung outside of the coaches at the doors and windows, and they sat on top of the coaches; they did not have enough coaches to bring them down from different parts of the line⁷²

Garvey's experience in Costa Rica was not only a morale boost, but also a financial success as he took away 50,000 dollars in cash for the UNIA. Garvey was even well received by the United Fruit Company, his former employer, who believed it was better to appease the UNIA leader than to oppose him. The United Fruit Company arranged their worker's schedules around Garvey's speeches and offered Garvey transportation throughout the country. Although Garvey's travels abroad were at times frustrating, they proved to be both a personal and

⁶⁹ "American Experience: Marcus Garvey, People & Events,"
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_convention.html

⁷⁰ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 287

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 292

⁷² Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. III (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 536

financial triumph overall.⁷³ Garvey's trip to Latin America demonstrated two things: that his popularity was continuing to grow and that the United States government was becoming increasingly fearful of his power.

Following this successful tour abroad, Garvey returned to the United States, encouraged by his followers, but worried by increasing government interventions. Seized by a growing paranoia, Garvey grew hostile towards his followers. He was concerned government workers had infiltrated the UNIA and began to purge the organization. Officers, who had exploited their power in Garvey's absence, were put on trial for embezzlement.⁷⁴ While some of the allegations were justified, others were simply evidence of Garvey's paranoia. He held the second UNIA conference only one month after returning from his fundraising tour and consequently, his mistrust led to a volatile meeting. "Delegates to the forthcoming UNIA meeting were encouraged to identify and renounce the traitors in their midst."⁷⁵

During the second convention of the Universal Negro Improvement Association the situation grew worse for Garvey. Numerous complaints against him, concerns about the Black Star Line, and mainly, the mishandling of UNIA finances were voiced throughout the convention. Many delegates of the UNIA were critical of the Black Star Line operations. They felt that the corporation was being mismanaged as was evidenced by the numerous accidents and unfinished journeys throughout 1919 and 1920. Additionally, they criticized Garvey for failing to fulfill his promises and purchase another ship. Delegate Noah D. Thompson from Los Angeles left the UNIA stating, "none of the boasted ships were shown to the delegates, who were daily promised that on 'tomorrow' the ships would be shown."⁷⁶ A further criticism of the

⁷³ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 88

⁷⁴ Grant, *Negro With a Hat*, 308

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 308

⁷⁶ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. III, 36

Garvey movement concerned the wage decreases that resulted from the second convention. During this time Garvey cut wages in half.⁷⁷ As a result of the convention, not only were delegates purged from the organization, but they also began to leave the UNIA on their own accord. Noah D. Thompson was one such member of the UNIA, who left the Garvey movement and formed his own organization, the Pacific Coast Improvement Association.⁷⁸ Garvey's paranoia resulted in isolation from his followers.

Despite the UNIA purge Garvey continued to advance the aims of the UNIA. For instance, Garvey remained consistent with his goal of increased racial consciousness; he often pushed the envelope too far. Following the turbulent UNIA meeting, Garvey further enraged members and delegates when he met with the Ku Klux Klan. He arranged to meet with the Imperial Wizard Edward Young Clarke because he believed that the KKK and the UNIA could agree on one crucial aim: "racial purity".⁷⁹ Many white supremacist groups supported Garvey because they agreed with his separatist views. Not only the KKK, but also organizations such as the Anglo-Saxon clubs of America and men like Earnest Sevier Cox, author of *White America*, endorsed Garvey's ideology of racial separation. Likewise, Garvey was extremely receptive to white racial supremacists because he respected "'their honesty and lack of hypocrisy' in openly working to maintain the power of the white races."⁸⁰ Thus in early 1922 Garvey went to Georgia and met with the Imperial Wizard of the Klan to bolster support for his "Back to Africa" program. Garvey's public negotiations with the KKK outraged many members of the black community, who could not believe that a respectable black leader would endorse the racism and hatred embodied by the Ku Klux Klan.

⁷⁷ Grant, *Negro With a Hat*, 309

⁷⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 97

⁷⁹ Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought to Be*, 163

⁸⁰ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 188

The criticisms of his contemporaries, and the negative reactions of government, coupled with Garvey's own paranoia, eventually led to the deterioration of the UNIA. Garvey's message of racial pride and unity, his doctrine of separation and his call of "Africa for Africans" alienated him from not only white Americans, but also leaders within his own race. His ability to unite and organize the black masses threatened the United States government, while his pompous ceremonies and radical ideas outraged black leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois and Cyril Briggs. Fearful of Garvey's objectives and popularity within the black community, the United States government increasingly monitored the leader's actions, while black leaders among the opposition openly published their attacks. On January 12, 1922 Garvey was charged with defrauding members of the UNIA through the use of "'deceptive artifices' in the sale of stock."⁸¹ Critical black leaders manipulated this moment for their own gain, intensifying their calls for Garvey's deportation by soliciting government support.

Garvey Must Go

The Garvey Must Go Campaign formally began in 1920 with the founding of the Friends of Negro Freedom, an organization created by A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, "intended to unmask Garvey as a fraud before his black supporters."⁸² The movement intensified following Garvey's meeting with the Ku Klux Klan. Consequently, Owen, Randolph and Du Bois worked towards the incarceration and deportation of Garvey. The declaration of an all out war against Garvey was issued in the *Messenger*. It proclaimed, "'here's notice that the MESSENGER is firing the opening gun in a campaign to drive Garvey

⁸¹ *ibid*, 100

⁸² "American Experience: People and Events, The Garvey Must Go Campaign," http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_mustgo.html

and Garveyism in all its sinister viciousness from the American soil.”⁸³ Many notable members of the black community joined the campaign against Garvey, including editor of the Baltimore *Afro-American*, Carl Murphy and editor of the *Public Journal*, William Pickens.⁸⁴

Although the “Garvey Must Go Campaign” damaged Garvey’s reputation, criticisms alone were not enough to eliminate the power of the UNIA. The attacks on Garvey were mainly published in newspapers or shouted at public events. However, the Friends of Negro Freedom went one step further when early in January of 1923 they wrote to the U.S Attorney General, demanding Garvey’s deportation. The letter was an all out attack on Garvey, and demonstrated the polarizing nature of his programs. It described “Marcus Garvey, as an unscrupulous demagogue, who has ceaselessly and assiduously sought to spread among Negroes distrust and hatred of all white people.”⁸⁵ The Friends of Negro Freedom also criticized and attacked followers of the Garvey movement, by highlighting their foreign backgrounds and inability to vote. Additionally, the letter encouraged the United States government to expedite the case against Garvey,⁸⁶ thus calling for the imprisonment and possible deportation of the black leader. In response to the very public and very vicious attacks Garvey responded, “it is said that there is honor even among thieves, but it is apparent that there is no honor and self-respect among certain Negroes.”⁸⁷

As resistance to Garveyism grew in strength and number it began to take an increasing toll on Garvey. Fearing disloyalty among even the most trusted members of the United Negro Improvement Association, Garvey once again purged high officials from the Parent Body. Many

⁸³ Martin, *Race First*, 321

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 322

⁸⁵ “American Experience: People and Events, The Garvey Must Go Campaign,” http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_mustgo.html

⁸⁶ “American Experience: People and Events, The Garvey Must Go Campaign”

⁸⁷ Martin, *Race First*, 325

former members of the UNIA went on to create their own movements and eventually joined the ranks of DuBois, offering their critiques of Garvey from first hand experience.

Through their vocal attacks, the Garvey opposition initially hoped to deter Garveyites from the movement. However, their actions ironically led Garvey to manufacture his own demise. In her book, *Garvey and Garveyism*, Amy Jacques Garvey recalls that as a result of the charges against her husband, Garvey felt that members of the UNIA “were being egged on and promised ‘protection’ if they became government witnesses.”⁸⁸ Consequently, following Garvey’s indictment, “no convention in the history of the UNIA was more tumultuous than the 1922 gathering.”⁸⁹ Two weeks into the convention Garvey publically accused high-ranking officer Reverend Eason of a conspiracy to undermine his influence within the organization. Additionally Garvey impeached Adrian Johnson and J.D. Gibson, two ministers within the association. He began to exhibit a more authoritarian style of leadership and “lashed out at the ‘incompetent, disloyal, dishonest, and characterless individuals’ who constituted the majority of his executive council.”⁹⁰ After the convention Reverend Eason left New York for New Orleans and founded an opposition group to Garvey’s UNIA, called the Universal Negro Alliance. Subsequently, the New Orleans division of the Universal Negro Improvement Association lost 1,000 members; “his former Associates now became the nucleus of an opposition who plotted against him.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 83

⁸⁹ Claudrena N. Harold, *The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South, 1918-1942* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 38

⁹⁰ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 343

⁹¹ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 25

Deportation

As leaders within the black community became increasingly vocal and hostile, so too did the United States government, which finally tried Garvey in May 1923 on charges of mail fraud. Garvey and three of his steam line associates were charged with knowingly utilizing “‘fraudulent representations’ and ‘deceptive artifices’ in the sale of stock through the mails and [advertising] and [selling] space on a mythical vessel.”⁹² The night before his proceedings were scheduled to begin Garvey fired his attorney Cornelius McDougald because he believed McDougald “was being used innocently to trap him [Garvey].”⁹³ This paranoia, which could most certainly be attributed to the blatant opposition against him, pushed Garvey to defend his own case. There is no doubt that Garvey’s lack of humility also played a hand in his decision, as he believed he possessed the oratorical powers to persuade the judge and the jury of his innocence.

Unfortunately Garvey may have had too much faith in his own abilities as he struggled to call valuable witnesses, “was distracted by insignificant facts and inadmissible evidence,”⁹⁴ and stretched out the hearing over the course of a month. Prosecutor Maxwell S. Mattuck called thirty witnesses against Garvey and the Black Star Line, many of whom were former employees of the BSL, as well as members of the UNIA. Even still, however, Mattuck struggled to prove without a doubt that Garvey and his associates knowingly exploited UNIA members. Ultimately, although Garvey’s associates were dismissed of all charges, on June 21, 1923 Garvey alone was found guilty of defrauding the mail and sentenced to five years in prison. From prison Garvey continued to exert his influence, although he was certainly not as powerful as he had been in the early 1920s. With Garvey imprisoned his wife worked to continue the message of her husband. However, “though the force of his personality radiated out from behind the bars of

⁹² Cronon, *Black Moses*, 100

⁹³ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 368

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 369

his cell, President-General Garvey's ability to exert his authority was inevitably retarded."⁹⁵

In response to Garvey's imprisonment his followers formed the Marcus Garvey Committee on Justice and petitioned the government to release their leader. As a result Garvey served only three months of his five-year sentence and was released from the Tombs Penitentiary in early September.⁹⁶ Although authorities agreed to release Garvey, they continued to mount a case against him and prepared for his eventual deportation.

After his release Garvey continued to prove his devotion to the aims of the UNIA. For instance, despite having been imprisoned for the mismanagements of the Black Star Line, Garvey incorporated the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company in 1924. Once again his followers supported their leader's attempts to foster black economic independence and "three thousand Garveyites braced a down-pour and paid 50c a head to look at [his newly purchased] ship."⁹⁷ The promotion of yet another steam line and additionally the purchase of a new ship not only demonstrated Garvey's confidence, but also his dedication to the goals of his mission. Yet,

Garvey not only looked to promote his economic aims, he also continued working to establish a black nation after he was released from jail. According to C. Boyd James, although Garvey continued to negotiate for land in Liberia, he altered his approach in order to appeal to the Liberian government. According to Boyd, "the winter of 1923-1924, represented [Garvey's] shift from black imperialism to black diasporism" because during this time Garvey softened his demands on the Liberian government. While between 1920 and 1921, Garvey wanted to secure UNIA control in Liberia; by 1924 he understood that the UNIA-Liberia relationship would need

⁹⁵ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 394

⁹⁶ "American Experience: Peoples and Events, The United Negro Improvement Association," http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_unia.html

⁹⁷ Edmund David Cronon, "Ben F. Rogers: Dubois and Garvey", in *Marcus Garvey* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 133

to be mutual.⁹⁸ In this way UNIA representative modified their previous proposals and restrained from radical rhetoric.

Although Garvey altered his approach, in June 1924 the Liberian government officially severed ties with the Garvey movement in order to appease international governments. Liberian Secretary of State, Edwin Barclay, issued the following statement, “the government of Liberia has decided that no member of the movement known as the Garvey Movement will be permitted to enter the Republic.”⁹⁹ Nonetheless the continued negotiations with the Liberian government proving that in the face of adversity Garvey was completely committed to advancing the UNIA.

As Garvey worked to progress his organization, he also continued to appeal the mail fraud charges, that had been brought against him in 1923. However, his efforts were ill received and consequently, he was once again arrested in New York in the beginning of 1925. Garvey’s devoted wife and followers worked tirelessly in hopes that their leader would be released, but to no avail. Although President Calvin Coolidge eventually pardoned Garvey, he was subsequently deported from the United States in 1927 following his release from the Tombs penitentiary. At the time of his imprisonment Garvey warned, “the world is crazy and foolish if they think that they can destroy the principles, the ideals of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.”¹⁰⁰ Although Garvey’s influence waned following his imprisonment and deportation, he was correct in stating that his principles would remain intact.

⁹⁸ James, *Garvey, Garveyism*, 219

⁹⁹ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. I (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 362

¹⁰⁰ Hill, *Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association*, Vol. V, 362

Chapter 2. The Decline of Garveyism: Garvey Post Deportation

The Movement Continues

During his time in the United States Marcus Garvey gained an impressive following of devout Americans as well as international admirers. However, after his deportation, the controversial leader never replicated his earlier success. In 1927 Garvey was deported and moved back to Jamaica, where he hoped to strengthen the UNIA once again. However, in the following thirteen years Garvey continued to search restlessly for a place in the black movement. Although he attempted to tailor the direction of his organization to suit his followers abroad, he seemed unable to re-establish the UNIA outside of the United States. Whether speaking in Hyde Park or to the impoverished of Jamaica, Garvey was unable to stir the masses as he once had in Harlem. Yet, Garvey held true to the aims of the UNIA and consistently fought to advance racial pride, promote the repatriation of all black peoples back to Africa and develop black economic independence. Marcus Garvey died in June of 1940 without ever having traveled to Africa, isolated from not only his family, but also from the position of power to which he had once been so accustomed.

Having been deported from the United States, Garvey hoped to travel throughout Latin America in order to increase the international membership of the United Negro Improvement Association. Garvey's plans to travel throughout the West Indies inspired him to take "a greater interest in Pan-Caribbean issues on [his] return to Jamaica."¹ This meant a greater focus on the economic problems of black Pan-Caribbean citizens, who lived and worked in an immobile society. Black peoples living in colonized countries such as Trinidad, Jamaica and Dominica

¹ Ula Y. Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: the Life & times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina, 2002), 91

suffered from discrimination and harsh labor conditions. Additionally black citizens also “lacked access to postsecondary schooling; this magnified the probability that they would have to work for low wages as adults.”² These conditions pushed Garvey to work for laborers throughout the region, especially in his homeland of Jamaica.

International travel continued to be difficult for the controversial Garvey. His plans were drastically altered when he was refused a visa to travel throughout Latin America because he was still seen as a threat to imperial governments. The United States and other imperial powers held colonies throughout South and Central America, which they feared would be negatively influenced by Garvey’s presence. Travel was thus difficult for Garvey, who was often detained and in some cases even arrested for crossing international borders.

For example, in 1927, before arriving in Jamaica, Garvey planned to visit members of the UNIA in Panama; however, he soon discovered he was prohibited from entering the country. Garvey was denied entrance as a direct result of the special relationship between Panama and the United States. On December 9th, 1927, prior to Garvey’s arrival, Meriweather Walker, the United States governor of Panama, sent a letter to Dwight Davies, the United States Secretary of War, asking for protection against Garvey. Preparing for Garvey’s anticipated arrival in Panama, Walker wrote, “my inclination is to refuse to allow him to land and proceed to Panaman territory on the ground that his presence would be disorganizing to our West Indian employees.”³ Davis agreed with Walker’s fears and as a result Garvey was prohibited from entering Panama. Instead, a crowd of his followers waited for him at the Cristobal Pier in Panama and only “a committee of six UNIA officials were permitted on board” to see their leader.⁴

² Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 91

³ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. VII (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 10

⁴ Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 413

When Garvey landed in Jamaica, however, he received a much warmer welcome. He was “no chastened prodigal son but a returning hero, still nominally the head Negro of the World.”⁵ The social hierarchy in Jamaica was still very much defined by the lightness of one’s skin and thus Jamaicans of the lower classes were especially excited by the arrival of the President-General, who embraced his blackness.⁶ Garvey’s presence in Jamaica resulted in an increase in UNIA membership, as well as the formation of new branches throughout the country.⁷ However, Garvey did not remain in Jamaica for long. He wanted to extend the UNIA even further and realized that to achieve this goal he would need to create an even larger international following. Upon leaving Jamaica he explained, “I know no national boundary where the Negro is concerned. The whole world is my province until Africa is free.”⁸ Thus he planned a new trip across the Atlantic to grow his movement.

Garvey in Europe

Denied the right to travel throughout the Americas, Garvey decided to further his international aims by establishing branches of the UNIA throughout Europe. He clearly hoped that he would receive a greater reception in Europe than he had on the other side of the Atlantic. Thus in the spring of 1928 Garvey took his wife and two secretaries to London. He chose England because he wanted to draw attention to unrest within British colonies in Africa and Latin America. Upon arriving in England, according to his second wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, Garvey “organized colored people living in London, spoke in Hyde Park, and sent circular letters

⁵ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 414

⁶ Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 91

⁷ Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses; the Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1962), 144

⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 145

to members of Parliament..." in an attempt to gain recognition in the new city.⁹

For his first formal public appearance in London, Garvey rented out the Royal Albert Hall, where he planned to speak to a room full of followers and the curious masses. Yet, much to his surprise he was "confronted by row upon row of empty seats."¹⁰ Although some members of the London branch of the UNIA were in attendance, for the most part the hall was bare. According to E. David Cronon, Garvey failed to attract a large audience in London because he "seriously misjudged both the appeal of his bombastic oratory for serious British audiences and their interest in his Africa program."¹¹

The disappointing turnout did not deter Garvey, however, and he continued to speak of his tribulations in the United States, the economic aims of the UNIA and his 'Africa for Africans' program. Yet, even when speaking to this small crowd, however, he was careful to alter his rhetoric to appease the people of England. For example, "instead of demanding a completely free Africa, he merely requested that the various colonial governments agree to relinquish certain areas under their control to Negro rule."¹² Garvey knew that he could not attack British imperialism in its entirety without alienating himself from his British followers. Thus tailored his speeches to appeal to the audience to whom he was speaking. Undeterred by the poor showing, Garvey established the organization's European headquarters in London.

Early in the fall Garvey left England to explore the rest of the continent. He traveled to Paris, Geneva, Belgium, Berlin and Hamburg to acquaint himself with the problems facing black Europeans. The Garveys were well received in Paris, where there was already a black

⁹ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 191

¹⁰ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 423

¹¹ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 146

¹² *Ibid*, 147

representative in the senate, and welcomed by the Comité de Défense. This warm prompted Garvey to form the nation's first branch of the United Negro Improvement Association in Paris.

From Paris, Garvey left his wife to travel to Geneva. In Switzerland, he drafted a petition to the League of Nations, which outlined black grievances and demanded a "fairer deal" for black people throughout the world. The petition was a renewal of his 1922 petition, which had previously been ignored. Garvey understood that the League of Nations "would take no more action on this petition than it had on the earlier one", but he continued to advance this aim nonetheless.¹³ He thus used the petition as a way to re-establish the strategies of the UNIA (particularly pertaining to the repatriation of African descendants), writing: "the entire region of West Africa could be brought together as one United Commonwealth of Black Nations, and placed under the government of black men."¹⁴ Clearly, Garvey had not yet relinquished his dream to create an independent black nation.

Traveling throughout Europe was thus not nearly as difficult for Garvey as his travels in the Americas had been or would continue to be. From Geneva Garvey went to Germany, visiting both Berlin and Hamburg. Nevertheless Garvey was continuously frustrated by "British colonial bureaucracy, whose end result, whether official policy or not, was to confine the UNIA leader."¹⁵ This was evident when Garvey attempted to travel within Canada following his tour of Europe. Upon arriving in Montreal, Garvey was surprisingly allowed to enter the country, although matters were soon complicated. Later that night he was arrested in his hotel room and charged for entering the country illegally. Although Canadian authorities released Garvey the next morning, admitting that he had been arrested by mistake, Garvey was only permitted to remain in

¹³ *ibid*, 149

¹⁴ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. X (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 10

¹⁵ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 417

the city for a week and was barred from speaking publically while in Canada. In *The Veiled Garvey*, Ula Taylor speculates that such actions were the response of Canadian officials to American diplomats' fear that Garvey could influence the upcoming presidential election between Herbert Hoover and Al Smith.¹⁶ Garvey was outspoken in his support for the Democrat Smith and consequently officials worried that he would sway members of the UNIA to vote for the Democratic candidate. As a result, Garvey was also denied entrance to Toronto and Hamilton. Even after deportation, Garvey was still seen as a threat to the United States government, and as such was prevented from strengthening his movement in whatever way possible.

Garvey Returns Home

Because Garvey was prevented from remaining in Canada he returned to Jamaica, where he remained until 1935, attempting to refuel his movement. Having been warmly received in the past, he hoped to attract a strong following in the West Indies upon which he could rebuild the UNIA. In order to prove the continued strength of his movement, in 1929 Garvey arranged the sixth International UNIA Convention to be held in Kingston throughout the month of August.¹⁷ Much like in the past, extravagant clothing, marching bands and impressive parades marked the convention as a distinctly Garvey affair. Also similar to the past was Garvey's emphasis on African redemption; during his keynote address Garvey urged black peoples throughout the world to move back to Africa. In his speech he called on his followers to "dedicate their lives, souls and bodies to the great cause of Africa's glory, the cause of emancipation of the

¹⁶ Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 105

¹⁷ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 150

downtrodden race.”¹⁸ The convention’s keynote address proved that Garvey remained dedicated to the aims of the UNIA despite his deportation from the United States.

Additionally, during the convention, Garvey signaled his intent to remain in and devoted to Jamaica when he announced the formation of the People’s Political Party. The People’s Political Party was established by Garvey to fight for economic and educational reforms.¹⁹ The manifesto of Garvey’s new party “made Jamaican history by establishing a modern political party, whose platform defended the interests of the masses.”²⁰ Once again Garvey’s aims remained consistent as he traveled outside of the United States as he continued to champion economic improvement for the black community.

The creation of the People’s Political Party was a pivotal moment in Jamaican history; however, it was ultimately unsuccessful for two reasons. First, the party primarily attracted Jamaican men and women from the lower classes, who were unable to vote for Garvey or the party’s other candidates during the 1929 election. Garvey appealed to 100,000 tenant farmers in Jamaica by promising land reform and economic improvement.²¹ Yet, in order to vote in Jamaica citizens were required to pay income taxes or own acreage, which many of his supporters did not. Of the one million people living in Jamaica only 80,000 were registered to vote and those who could were unaffected by Garvey’s appeals.²²

Furthermore, Garvey’s political party failed to achieve a significant following because shortly after publishing the party’s aims Garvey was arrested for contempt of court. Garvey’s political platform promised to impeach and imprison judges who entered ““into illicit agreement with lawyers and other prominent businessmen to deprive other subjects of the realm of their

¹⁸ Ibid, 151

¹⁹ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 207

²⁰ Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 108

²¹ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 429

²² Ibid, 429

rights.”²³ Garvey’s charges of illegality outraged the Jamaican judiciary. Consequently, he was arrested for his remarks and found guilty of “demeaning the judiciary and undermining public confidence in them.”²⁴ Garvey was sentenced to three-months in prison. Once again Garvey alienated himself from the governing powers and was viewed as a threat to governmental stability.

Although Garvey did not serve his full three-month sentence, he missed a critical campaign period. Nevertheless he was elected to seats on the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation while serving his sentence. Unfortunately, Garvey’s seat was declared vacant and he lost his position.²⁵ After he was released from prison, he won his seat back during a by-election. However, due to the ineligibility of his following, as well as the criminal charges brought against him, Garvey was defeated in an attempt to win a seat in the Jamaican legislature. Only three of the fourteen representatives of the People’s Political Party were elected to high legislative positions, signaling minimal support for the party and its aims.²⁶ It is, in part, due to this political failure that Garvey did not remain in Jamaica permanently.

The Movement Splinters

The sixth International Convention of the UNIA produced more than just the People’s Political Party, it also saw the rise of two independent UNIA organizations. By re-locating the UNIA Convention to Kingston Garvey initially hoped to unite Garveyites from the United States and the West Indies. He also expected to re-establish the official headquarters of the UNIA by moving the Parent Body of the organization from Harlem, New York to Kingston, Jamaica. As

²³ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 155

²⁴ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 428

²⁵ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 156

²⁶ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 431

President-General of the United Negro Improvement Association, Garvey believed that the official headquarters of the organization could only exist where he was located. On August 5, 1929, Garvey spoke to the UNIA masses assembled at the sixth International Convention about the importance of re-locating UNIA headquarters. He explained, “when I found out that the divisions were complaining about the reports being sent to American headquarters ... I decided that, and with their consent, to have all divisions report to Jamaica.”²⁷ American Garveyites were outraged by the Provisional President’s proposed move of the Parent Body of the UNIA. The sixth International Convention resulted in a schism within the Garvey movement. American Garveyites withdrew from both the convention and the organization. Consequently, Garvey established a new organization legally known as the Parent Body of the United Negro Improvement Association.²⁸ Although some branches of the United States UNIA chose to align themselves with Garvey, a majority of UNIA branches continued to operate under the original incorporation of 1918. Not only did the schism negatively affect UNIA membership, but it also diminished the funds of the United Negro Improvement Association. According to E. David Cronon, “the 1929 schism was to deprive Garvey’s organization of a \$300,000 legacy.”²⁹

Heated conflict during the sixth International Convention demonstrated the continuation of Garvey’s downfall. Yet, even still Garvey persisted in re-building his organization. Although Garvey consistently fought to develop black economic independence, from 1930-1935 he primarily worked to address the sufferings of black laborers in Latin America. In the early 1930s, Jamaica suffered from the effects of the Great Depression. Garvey was horrified by both the working and living conditions he witnessed in his homeland. As a result, while living in Jamaica, Garvey formed a delegation to investigate the socioeconomic problems plaguing the

²⁷ Hill, *Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association*, Vol. III, 315

²⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 154

²⁹ *Ibid*, 154

nation and lobbied the Governor to publish his findings on the economic condition of the country.³⁰

In addition to petitioning the Governor, Garvey also wrote to the British government, seeking aid for his people in Jamaica. Garvey's concern for the economic development of Jamaicans was consistent with UNIA aims. However, in 1934 his strategy was different. Garvey no longer seemed interested in creating industry himself. Rather he drastically changed his economic strategy by appealing to the British government for financial aid, especially for the impoverished of Jamaica. In 1934 Garvey wrote to the British government, asking the Secretary of State of the Colonies to loan ten million pounds to Jamaica in order to re-develop the economy. Although the British government ignored Garvey's scheme, it was an important symbol because it denoted both a continuation of Garvey's objectives, as well as a change his approach. Garvey's letter indicates that he still emphasized the need for economic development in black communities. However, it also demonstrates that in the mid 1930s Garvey believed that white governments could help black men and women.

As he continued to advance the economic aims of the UNIA platform, Garvey also worked to expand the UNIA. He did so through the annual UNIA conventions and, additionally, by utilizing his skills as a newspaperman. Garvey held two conventions while living in Kingston, in addition to the convention of 1929. Furthermore he began a new publication, *The Blackman*, which was formatted much like *The Negro World*. Although *The Negro World* listed Garvey as the editor until 1932, *The Blackman* acted as the new organ of the UNIA in 1929.³¹ The publication always included a personal poem written by Garvey, important

³⁰ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 432

³¹ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 157

current events, and finally, a letter to black peoples throughout the world.³² Garvey used this letter to continuously outline the aims of the UNIA, as well as to defend his past failures. *The Blackman* was discontinued in 1931, when Garvey could no longer afford the financial strain of the publication. In *Black Moses*, Cronon explains the financial deterioration of the UNIA, writing,

There were now two rival Universal Negro Improvement Associations appealing for members and financial support at a time when world-wide depression had seriously impaired both the willingness and the ability of most Negroes to look beyond the pressing needs of immediate personal survival³³

Nevertheless Garvey began another publication, as known as *The Blackman*, which ran from 1933 to 1939.

Jamaica did not fulfill the promises Garvey at one time thought it might. Thus, with failure looming, Garvey looked once again to Europe, where he believed he might find a more sympathetic audience. Garvey remained in Jamaica until 1935, before departing once again for London. As he left his homeland he remarked, "I left Jamaica a broken man, broken in spirit, broken in health and broken in pocket...and I will never, never, never go back."³⁴

A Final Resting Place

Circumstances did not improve for Garvey upon his move to London, instead he watched as his organization, his marriage, and his family finally deteriorated. Once in England, Garvey returned to his familiar stepladder at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, where he enjoyed a large

³² Ibid, 158

³³ ibid, 166

³⁴ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 435

following.³⁵ Garvey was well received by students, tourists and park strollers and continued to operate the Parent Body of the UNIA with a small staff (including a white stenographer). However, letters back to his wife in Jamaica indicate that the organization was continuing to experience financial difficulty. He “described a UNIA office that was fraught with tension and ... of his inability to hire capable clerks and trustworthy housekeepers.”³⁶ Writing after his death, Garvey’s wife reaffirmed the UNIA’s financial problems; “by July 1934, the depression in America of the last two years had fully affected him, as Garveyites had been unable to support the organization.”³⁷ Garvey traveled to London in hopes of finding funds; however, he continued to struggle across the Atlantic.

Financial troubles were not the only issues that plagued Garvey and the UNIA in Europe. First, there were simply too many race-oriented organizations in London, competing for a limited number of followers, in 1935. According to historian Colin Grant, Garvey was working against already established organizations such as “the LCP, League of Coloured People; WASU, the West African Students’ Union; and IAFA, the International African Friends of Abyssinia.”³⁸ Additionally, Marcus Garvey isolated himself, not only from his British followers, but from UNIA members throughout the world, due to his attacks on Ethiopian leader Haile Selassie. On November 2, 1930 Haile Selassie was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia, much to the initial delight of Marcus Garvey. However, around the same time, in the 1930s, fascist Italy grew increasingly interested in Selassie’s Abyssinia. Benito Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935 in an effort to avenge Italian military losses during the first Italo-Abyssinian War.

³⁵ Ibid, 436

³⁶ Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 129

³⁷ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 229

³⁸ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 437

While Garvey originally praised the Ethiopian leader his outlook towards Selassie soon soured. Initially, Garvey, much like black peoples throughout the world, supported the Emperor in his fight against Mussolini, often speaking out against Italian aggression at Speaker's Corner. He even "started a fund to assist in providing Red Cross equipments for the soldiers of Abyssinia."³⁹ Yet, when Emperor Selassie left his country in exile in 1936 Marcus Garvey changed his opinion of the African leader. Watching in horror as Ethiopia was invaded by Italian troops Garvey gained a different perspective on the war, shifting blame from Mussolini to the Ethiopian Emperor himself. Garvey began to believe that Selassie's trust of white government was to blame for the attack on his nation.⁴⁰ Additionally, he chided Selassie for depending on the aid of white advisors.⁴¹ Garvey's contempt for Selassie also stemmed, in part, from the Emperor's visit to London, during which time he "discreetly let it be known that he did not desire contacts with Negroes."⁴² During the same trip, Selassie also refused to acknowledge Garvey, himself. Responding to Selassie's exile and consequent behavior, Garvey wrote many attacks on the leader in his publication *The Blackman*.

Garvey's stance on the conflict in Ethiopia was extremely unpopular. All over the world black men and women were protesting against the Italo-Abyssinia war; "tens of thousands of black Americans rallied in support."⁴³ From the United States, Garvey was informed that members of his own organization were deserting the UNIA in favor of Selassie. Black peoples throughout the world were once again excited by the ideals of Black Nationalism, due in large

³⁹ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 232

⁴⁰ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, 440

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 441

⁴² Cronon, *Black Moses*, 162

⁴³ Stephen Tuck, "Great War and Great Migration," in *We Ain't What We Ought to Be: the Black Freedom Struggle, from Emancipation to Obama* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2010), , 194

part to Italian aggressions. In this way Garvey's followers support Selassie in his fight against Mussolini. Yet, Garvey continued to criticize the popular leader.

Despite the decline in his popularity, Garvey continued to travel throughout Canada, and Central and South America. In 1937, Garvey conducted speaking tours throughout Canada. He also formed the School of African Philosophy, where he conducted courses on both African leadership and diplomacy.⁴⁴ After spending time in Toronto, Garvey left Canada for the Caribbean, where he hoped to find support for the UNIA.

However, while in Trinidad Garvey continued to upset his followers. Garvey arrived in Trinidad at the end of a tumultuous worker's revolution. Due to Garvey's consistent support of laborers, striking oilfield workers believed Garvey would support their cause. However, Garvey condemned the workers and refused to align himself with the strike, which had become extremely violent.⁴⁵ Garvey was hesitant to align himself with the chaos because he felt that the strike was both disorganized and destructive. Although his decision may have been warranted, protesting workers felt betrayed by the UNIA leader. Consequently, by the late 1930s Garvey had placed a large distance between himself and his followers.

As UNIA membership decreased, so too did UNIA funding. By 1937 the financial standing of the organization was so poor that the British government no longer felt threatened by Garvey. A letter written by parliamentary officials, Mr. White and Mr. Jones, in July 1937, stated, "he is very short of money and has to run the Universal Negro Improvement Association on a very small scale in order to keep it going at all."⁴⁶ Two years later, James Stewart, an American UNIA representative, summarized the financial state of the UNIA; "in the town of Campbell, Stewart's share of the proceeds of the divisional meeting was \$1.50 with a cost of

⁴⁴ Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought to Be*, 442

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 443

⁴⁶ MARCUS GARVEY: Universal Negro Improvement Association No. 7081 (1937)

\$3.00 for making the trip.”⁴⁷

Much like the financial status of the UNIA Garvey’s marriage also deteriorated. In 1937, Garvey arranged for his wife and two sons, Junior and Julius, to come to London. Garvey rented a new home for his family, as well as for his secretary. While Garvey occupied the bottom floor his wife, children and secretary were relegated to the second floor as not to distract him.⁴⁸ Only a year after arriving in London, Junior was diagnosed with the measles and rheumatic fever. That summer, when Garvey left for yet another international tour, Junior’s condition worsened and without consulting her husband Amy Jacques Garvey returned to Jamaica, where the climate was better suited for her ailing son.⁴⁹ Garvey only saw his sons once more after this, in a photograph that Jacques had sent to him in 1940. Although he sent letters and small sums of money to the children, Garvey provided little financial support to his estranged wife, who was forced to borrow money from relatives in order to pay for the family’s living expenses.

By 1940 Garvey lost all hope of re-establishing himself; the UNIA continued to flounder. Furthermore, in the beginning of the year, Garvey suffered from a stroke, which paralyzed the right side of his body and left him unable to speak. Garvey’s insignificance by the summer of 1940 was morbidly demonstrated when his death was reported prematurely in May. For the next month Garvey was forced to read his own obituaries, many of which were unkind.⁵⁰ Marcus Garvey died in June of the same year, having never recovered from his stroke or the humiliation of failure. Although Garvey’s rise to power was sudden his downfall was painfully slow. For thirteen years Garvey attempted to re-establish himself within the black community and continuously he failed to gain the support he once had in Harlem.

⁴⁷ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 447

⁴⁸ Ibid, 444

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 445

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 1

Although Garvey's popularity had greatly decreased by the time of his death, memorials were held in his honor in London, Kingston, and Harlem. Prior to his death the Garvey movement was strongest in New Orleans and Kingston, yet, his memorial in Harlem proved that Garveyism still had a profound impact on the black community there.⁵¹ Due to World War II Garvey's body was prevented from being transported back to Jamaica and thus ensued a long battle between his former wives.⁵² However, Garvey was finally buried in west London.

Eventually, on November 10, 1964 Marcus Garvey's body was returned to Kingston, Jamaica. Over two decades after his death, Garvey was named the first national hero of Jamaica. In her book, *Garvey and Garveyism*, Amy Jacques Garvey writes, "that afternoon they would unveil the memorial in bronze which would stand for all times, as a testimony of his love for his people, and which would bear historic witness to the great part he played in liberating the spirit and minds of his people."⁵³

Garvey's movement continued to have a lasting impact even after he was gone. Although the Provisional President of Africa was seldom thought of in the immediate decades following his death, his legacy was re-evaluated following the Black Power Movement. In 1925, from the Atlanta Penitentiary, Garvey wrote

In death I shall be a terror to the foes of Negro liberty
Look for me in the whirlwind or the song of the storm
Look for me all around you⁵⁴

In the mid 1960s Garvey could be seen through his predecessors, men such as Malcolm X, who were inspired by his radical rhetoric and larger than life ideals. He was in the whirlwind.

⁵¹ *ibid*, 451

⁵² *ibid*, 452

⁵³ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 293

⁵⁴ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 1

Part II: Evaluations and Criticisms of Garveyism

Chapter 3. Contemporary Criticisms of Marcus Garvey

The Significance of the Anti-Garvey Movement:

In 1927, Garvey was deported from the United States and for the following thirteen years, his popularity, as well as his movement, steadily declined. Yet, Garvey's fall from power was not as unexpected as it may seem; in fact it was calculated. There were two parties who contributed to and benefitted from Garvey's downfall. The first was the United States government, which felt threatened by the mass movement that Garvey had created among black Americans. Beginning in 1919, J. Edgar Hoover had Garvey followed and even placed FBI informants in the UNIA in order to collect information, which would later be used in his arrest, imprisonment and deportation. However, even more responsible than the FBI for Garvey's demise were Garvey's contemporaries, who did everything in their power to ensure that Garvey's movement would be short-lived. This chapter will focus on the latter, for although the United States government was partially responsible for Garvey's demise, Garvey's critics played a pivotal role in molding Garvey's image after his deportation.

Garvey's contemporary critics were not only successful in eliminating the UNIA leader in the late 1920s, but also in painting a narrative of Garvey that would persist until the publication of E. David Cronon's *Black Moses*. From Garvey's death until 1955, Garvey was regarded only as a reflection of his harshest critics. Due to the depictions of his rivals he was seen as a "fabulous con-man" and "hardly more than a strident demagogue, with inflated ambitions and a swaggering attitude."¹ The condemning writings of his rivals were important, not only because they contributed to Garvey's immediate failure, but also because they dictated

¹ Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses; the Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1962), 207

his place in history, consequently immortalizing Garvey as a swindler, lunatic, traitor and charlatan for years after his death.

Opposing Ideologies:

The greatest divide between Garvey and his contemporaries was an ideological one. Garvey differed from many of his contemporary critics because he embraced a separatist philosophy and his critics were vocal supporters of integration. Having witnessed the abuses of black peoples throughout Latin America, Europe and the United States, Garvey came to believe that the only way to elevate peoples of African descent was to separate them – geographically and otherwise - from their white oppressors. Consequently, Garvey developed his “Africa for Africans” program, condemned interracial relationships and prohibited white people from joining the UNIA. Garvey’s philosophy of separation dictated that black and white men and women could never live in harmony with one another. Thus he spoke out against the intermingling of the races. In one of his speeches and then in a pamphlet entitled, “An Appeal to the Soul of White America”, Garvey criticized integration, saying “let foolish Negro agitators and so-called reformers...stop preaching and advocating the doctrine of ‘social equality’, meaning thereby the social intermingling of both races, intermarriage and general social co-relationship.”²

While the black masses embraced Garvey’s separatist philosophies, his beliefs were often in conflict with black leaders, such as W. E. B Du Bois, then Director of Publicity and Research for the NAACP and the editor of the organization’s publication *Crisis*. As the NAACP was an integrationist organization, which stressed the importance of interracial cooperation, Du Bois condemned the separationist Garvey. Unlike Garvey, Du Bois believed that black and white

² Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York: Collier Books, 1970),18

Americans could and should work together to solve the race problem. Du Bois fought for social, political and economic equality for black Americans through interracial cooperation.

As a member of the NAACP Du Bois worked directly with and even accepted financial support from white Americans. Contrarily, Garvey renounced philanthropic donations from white Americans because he believed that such donations were politically motivated. Garvey worried that by accepting monetary aid from white Americans he would be subjected to the manipulations of divisive white politics. On the matter Garvey wrote, “The Negro who lives on the patronage of philanthropists is the most dangerous member of our society, because he is willing to turn back the clock of progress when his benefactors ask him so to do.”³ Garvey was disgusted by Du Bois' reliance on white Americans. He often criticized Du Bois for employing a staff which was almost entirely white.⁴ Garvey felt that Du Bois' policy of interracial cooperation was at direct odds with his own program of self-reliance, as well as his aim to foster racial pride. Consequently, Garvey described “Du Bois as the ‘white man Negro.’”⁵

A. Philip Randolph was yet another black leader who disagreed with Garvey and his tactics. While Du Bois, a member of the integrationist NAACP, criticized Garvey's separationist philosophy, A. Philip Randolph attacked Garvey for different reasons. Randolph was the leader of the Brotherhood for Sleeping Car Porters, and an advocate of black laborers. He saw the necessity of interracial toleration in achieving worker's rights. In September 1921, Randolph spoke out against Garvey's advocacy of separation, writing: “Garveyism broadens the chasm between the black and white workers, and only results in the creation of more race hatred which will periodically flare up into race riots.”⁶

³ Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions*, 10; Ottley, “New World A-Coming”, 74

⁴ Raymond Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2002), 157

⁵ Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals*, 155

⁶ A. Philip Randolph, Garveyism, *The Messenger* (ed. Sept. 1921), 251

Garvey's meeting with the Imperial Wizard of the KKK in 1922 reinforced Randolph's fears and eventually pushed many integrationists to criticize Garvey's controversial strategies. Undoubtedly one of Garvey's most troubling and controversial programs was his cooperation with white supremacists. On June 25, 1922 Garvey further outraged black leaders when he met with Edward Young Clarke, the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, to discuss their shared separationist philosophies. Garvey believed that the UNIA and KKK shared many commonalities and further regarded the Klan as a better friend of black Americans "than all other groups of hypocritical whites put together."⁷ Additionally, Garvey believed that an alliance between the United Negro Improvement Association and the Ku Klux Klan would make it safe for southern branches of the UNIA to meet publically, without fear of harassment. Thus Garvey hoped that the meeting between himself and the Imperial Wizard would allow for the growth of the UNIA in the South.⁸ He made no apologies for the meeting and further defended his actions against the criticisms of his contemporaries.

Following Garvey's meeting with Edward Young Clarke, W.E.B. Du Bois published his attacks on Garvey in the *Crisis*. He wrote,

Not even Tom Dixon or Ben Tillman or the hatefulest enemies of the Negro have ever stooped to a more vicious campaign than Marcus Garvey, sane or insane, is carrying on. He is not attacking white prejudice, he is groveling before it and applauding it, his only attack is on men of his own race who are striving for freedom; his only contempt is for Negroes; his only threats are for black blood⁹

Du Bois was not the only black leader to publish an attack on Garvey following his public meeting with the KKK. Distinguished men, such as William Pickens, a former member of the UNIA, were horrified by Garvey's new alliance. George Harris, editor of the *New York News*, a

⁷ Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions*, II, 71; Ottley, "New World A-Coming", 74

⁸ Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals*, 164

⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, *Marcus Garvey and the NAACP*, 344

black news publication, wrote, “when Garvey agrees with the Klan’s theory that this is a white man’s country he sadly misrepresents our people.”¹⁰ In the *Messenger*, Randolph and Owens published their own article entitled ‘*Garvey, Black Eagle, Becomes Messenger Boy of Clarke, Ku Klux Keagle*’.¹¹ In the same publication they announce their first formal attack on Garvey and the UNIA.

More damaging than the critiques of Garvey’s rivals were the responses of his followers to news of the meeting. While Garvey anticipated that his meeting with Edward Young Clarke would prove both his courage and dedication to the movement, it had quite the opposite effect. For the first time Garveyites throughout the country questioned their leader’s strategies. Garvey’s followers took the meeting as a sobering sign of the power of white supremacists. When Garvey returned to Liberty Hall following his trip to Georgia, he was met with the disbelief and dissent of his followers. Only a few weeks later, when the ‘Garvey Must Go Campaign’ held their first of three public forums, over half of the audience was packed with former Garvey supporters, who questioned the strategies of their leader.¹²

Evaluating Economic Strategies:

One of the three tenets of the United Negro Improvement Association was the development of an independent black economy. Garvey highlighted the importance of economic self-reliance because he believed that black men and women would never be treated fairly if they could not contribute financially to society. Although Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute inspired Garvey’s economic program, Garvey’s picture of a black economy differed from

¹⁰ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 190

¹¹ Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 336

¹² *Ibid*, 336

Washington's as Garvey stressed the development of black-owned-and-operated industry rather than the necessity of industrial and agricultural education. In 1919, the Black Star Line, the first black-owned steam line, was founded as the stepping-stone of Marcus Garvey's vision. Unlike many of Garvey's programs, most black leaders embraced the *idea* of the Black Star Line. Even Du Bois admitted,

the main lines of the Garvey plan are perfectly feasible...what he is trying to say and do is this: American Negroes can, by accumulating their own capital, organize industry, join the black centers of the South Atlantic by commercial enterprise and in this way ultimately redeem Africa¹³

While black leaders supported Garvey's vision, they openly attacked the mismanagement of Black Star Line funds.

Du Bois attacked Garvey's "Back to Africa" program and separatist philosophies, however, the venture he most heavily criticized was Garvey's launch of the Black Star Line. Even prior to the incorporation of the BSL, Du Bois warned black Americans against investing in Garvey's new financial scheme. He worried that black investors were guaranteed to be disappointed in the performance of the Black Star Line.¹⁴ Such concerns were based on the financial schemes of previous swindlers, which caused critics to approach Garvey's steam line with even greater caution. Yet, Garvey was undeterred by their criticisms and rather continued his pursuits because of them. According to Amy Jacques Garvey, "in the Fall ... Garvey's enemies goaded him on to acquire a ship" by means of their harsh criticisms and very public doubts.¹⁵

Garvey's opponents not only believed that his vision was fanciful, but they were also critical of the Black Star Line in practice. In 1921, writing in *Crisis*, Du Bois warned his readers

¹³ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 209

¹⁴ Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 260

¹⁵ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 80

that Garvey's "financial methods [were] so essentially unsound that unless he revises them investors will certainly get no dividends and worse may happen."¹⁶ Du Bois' initial prophecies came to fruition in the years that followed. Even from the start, the BSL was flawed and proved to be a gross financial drain on the UNIA.

In its first year of operation alone "reports trickled back to Harlem of alleged mismanagement of the Black Star fleet, of unbusiness like methods of running the company and even sabotage and dishonesty on the part of BSL personnel".¹⁷ All three ships of the Black Star Line suffered from disastrous voyages to Latin America due to frequent mishaps, ranging from lost goods to deteriorating vessels. *The S.S. Fredrick Douglas* (also known as *The Yarmouth*) was delayed and eventually reversed during the first Black Star Line venture. Weeks after the initial journey, Garvey planned to send *The S.S. Fredrick Douglas* back to Cuba. Although the crew finally made it to their destination the second time around, only a portion of the entire whiskey cargo was delivered to Cuba at the end of the voyage.¹⁸ Returning from Cuba the ship once again encountered problems when it was run aground off the coast of Boston by its captain. After two years of service *The S.S. Fredrick Douglas* was retired and another two ships - *The Kanawha* and *The Shadyside* - were purchased for the Black Star Line.

Despite such losses Garvey continued to seek investments in the Black Star Line and additionally, used UNIA money to pay for this economic venture. Yet, Garvey learned little from his previous failures and both *The Kanawha* and *The Shadyside* proved to be costly mistakes. Garvey originally intended for *The Shadyside* to be an excursion boat. However, the ship did not attract enough passengers to cover fuel expenses and was retired after five months of

¹⁶ Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals*, 155

¹⁷ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 78

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 83

operation.¹⁹ *The Kanawha*, much like *The S.S. Fredrick Douglas* and *The Shadyside*, also suffered a humiliating fate. After several disasters, Garvey was anxious to prove that his dream of a successful black owned steam line could become a reality. He rushed repairs on the newly purchased *Kanawha* and neglected to acquire the proper government certifications on the vessel. On its first day out of the dock, a manhole on the ship blew out and one of the ship's crewmembers was scalded to death. Still determined, Garvey scheduled *The Kanawha* another departure date a month later. However, once again the ship suffered from a faulty boiler and had to be towed from the Delaware River.²⁰ *The Kanawha* suffered similar problems throughout the following summer, prompting Garvey to charge the ship's captains with 'destructive mismanagement'. Individually *The Yarmouth* cost the UNIA \$194,803.08, *The Shadyside* \$31,000 and *The Kanawha* \$44,811.02.²¹

Du Bois was outraged by the continuous disasters of the Black Star Line. He acknowledged that the ships' individual failing had little to with Garvey; however, Du Bois charged Garvey with managerial ignorance and neglect. According to Du Bois, Garvey was indirectly responsible for the embarrassing steam line because he continued to invest money into the failed venture. Additionally, Du Bois argued that Garvey remained loyal to associates who were clearly liabilities rather than assets. Du Bois felt that the consistent accidents and interrupted voyages made the black community look incompetent and foolish. Consequently he believed that the Black Star Line only reinforced popularly held stereotypes of black men and women. More importantly, the Black Star Line failed to live up to the expectations of Garveyites, thereby dashing the hopes of black Americans and tarnishing their lively spirit.

Not only did Du Bois feel that the BSL was humiliating, however, he also renounced the

¹⁹ *ibid*, 85

²⁰ *ibid*, 86

²¹ *ibid*, 84, 85

financial scheme as a wasteful use of UNIA funds. Upon analyzing the financial reports of the Black Star Line Du Bois published a severe indictment against Garvey in an article entitled *The Collapse of the Only Thing in the Garvey Movement Which Was Original or Promising*, he wrote,

The three first boats of the Garvey fleet disappeared and if the Black Star's own figures and Mr. Garvey's statements of losses are true, this involves a total disappearance of at least \$630,000 of the hard-earned savings of colored folk...here then is the collapse of the only thing in the Garvey movement which was original or promising²²

Although Du Bois acknowledged the brilliance of a financial scheme aimed at uniting black peoples throughout the world, he recognized the catastrophic consequences of Garvey's incompetence, not only for the black community, but also for individual investors. Thus Du Bois concluded that Garvey "dreams of Negro industry, commerce ... are feasible; but his methods are bombastic, wasteful, illogical and ineffective."²³

An Embarrassment to the Black Community:

Garvey's rivals were critical of his economic and political programs; yet, they were equally frustrated by his pageantry and flamboyant style. Often Garvey's rivals referred to him as a "clown" and a "monkey" due to his elaborate costumes. They criticized his pompous ceremonies, his ornate attire and his use of royal titles for high-ranking officials within the UNIA. They resented the way in which Garvey depicted black Americans. Thus Garvey's critics believed such spectacles were an embarrassment to the black community.

²² Dubois, *The Collapse of the Only Thing in the Garvey Movement Which Was Original or Promising*, <http://www.oercommons.org/libraries/the-collapse-of-the-only-thing-in-the-garvey-movement-which-was-original-or-promising-du-bois-on-garvey>

²³ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 87

Garvey was well known for his distinct costumes and flamboyant ceremonies; often he could be seen in academic gowns or military attire. He also always donned elaborate hats. For example, during the first international convention of the UNIA he was “clad in a richly colored academic cap.”²⁴ In fact, Colin Grant entitled his biography of Garvey, *Negro With a Hat*, due to the significance of Garvey’s style. While Garvey’s uniforms helped him to attract a large mass following, they also alienated him from his contemporaries. In the preface to his biography, Grant writes, Garvey “was depicted as gauche and bombastic with an embarrassing penchant for dressing up in out-dated Victorian military costumes, complete with epaulettes, ceremonial sword and plumed bicornate helmet.”²⁵

Additionally, one of the distinguishing characteristics of Garvey’s United Negro Improvement Association was the colorful International Convention held every August in Harlem, New York. The first International Convention of the UNIA was held in 1920. The convention began at Madison Square Garden and was attended by between 22,000 to 25,000 black peoples throughout the world.²⁶ Much like the conventions that followed, the first International Convention of the UNIA was marked by pageantry. According to E. David Cronon, members of the African legion were “smartly dressed in dark blue uniforms with narrow red trouser stripes”, while the Black Cross Nurses wore gleaming white costumes, walking just steps behind them.²⁷ Delegates of the convention wore flamboyant uniforms, and were given elaborate titles as to symbolize the ideals of nationhood Garvey held so dearly.²⁸ The pageantry of the first International Convention would continue to identify both Garvey and his movement.

²⁴ Ibid, 64

²⁵ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, xi

²⁶ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 53

²⁷ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 63

²⁸ Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 42

Black leaders aggressively attacked the pomp and ceremony of both Garvey and the UNIA. Men, such as Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph, felt that Garvey's ornate style and elaborate parades made a mockery of the black community, further devaluing black Americans in the eyes of their white neighbors. Reflecting on Garveyism in an editorial published in September 1921, Randolph wrote: "the whites in America don't take Garvey seriously" and thus the UNIA "serves the purpose of engaging the Negroes' brains, energy and funds in a highly nebulous, futile and doubtful movement so far as beneficial results to Negroes are concerned."²⁹ Furthermore, many of Garvey's critics believed he used flamboyant costumes and elaborate parades to manipulate black Americans. According to Reverend Robert Bagnall, an influential preacher within the black community Garvey was "squat, stocky, fat, and sleek, with protruding jaws, and heavy jowls, small bright pig-like eyes and rather bull-dog like face ... a lover of pomp and tawdry finery and garnish display...a sheer opportunist and demagogic charlatan."³⁰ Black leaders worried that Garvey had little more to offer than fancy uniforms and a decorative hat.

Jealousy or Warranted Concern?:

Black leaders had many, varying reasons to oppose the radical Garvey. Some were merely jealous of what seemed to be Garvey's overnight success. According to Raymond Wolters, black middle class intellectuals feared that Garvey's popularity would overshadow their own movements. For instance, Garvey's Black Star Line and other economic ventures often detracted funding from other black organizations.³¹ Chandler Owen, a leading figure in the anti-Garvey movement, once "remarked in frustration that no other black social movement could

²⁹ Randolph, "Garvey", in *The Messenger*, 251

³⁰ Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, 156

³¹ *Ibid*, 161

prosper as long as Garvey's popularity continued."³² According to Andrew E. Kersten, "Randolph was more colorful, calling Garvey's cause an "erratic rampage" spurred on by a "groundless braggadocio" who gathered his followers by beating the air and "waving his big, fat hands furiously" while yapping senseless plans."³³ Randolph, like many black leaders of his time, worried that Garvey's extravagance would detract followers from his own movement, while failing to accomplish anything for black Americans. Finally, not only did Garvey's popularity threaten black organizations, but Garvey also refused to cooperate with other black groups.³⁴ His repudiation of black organizations signaled a denial of the black community as a whole and insulted many black leaders.

Contrarily Du Bois offered this explanation; "American Negro leaders are not jealous of Garvey – they are not envious of his success; they are simply afraid of his failure, for his failure would be theirs."³⁵ Du Bois believed that Garvey sold his followers a message of defeat, which would compromise the entire movement. In an article published in *Century Magazine*, he wrote, "Garvey tells his supporters 'Give up! Surrender! The struggle is useless; back to Africa and fight the white world.'"³⁶ Du Bois, and other middle class black leaders argued that instead of encouraging black Americans to fight racial discrimination, Garvey taught his followers to flee the situation all together. Thereby switching the focus from problems within the United States to the fantastical solutions in Africa.³⁷ Du Bois argued that Garvey offered black Americans an implausible dream and in doing so distracted them from tenable solutions. He worried that Garvey's failure would not only disappoint his followers, but also detract from the efforts of his

³² Mary G. Rollinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina, 2007), 16

³³ Andrew E. Kersten, *A. Philip Randolph: A Life in the Vanguard*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 22

³⁴ Taylor, *The Unveiled Garvey*, 36

³⁵ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 88

³⁶ *Ibid*, 170

³⁷ *ibid*, 161

contemporaries.

Despite their ideological differences, however, Garvey and Du Bois initially had an amicable relationship and were often indifferent of one another. In both 1920 and 1921 Du Bois published rather neutral articles about Garvey. He wrote Garvey is “essentially an honest and sincere man with a tremendous vision, great dynamic force, stubborn determination and desire to serve.”³⁸ However, as Garvey grew increasingly popular and boisterous, Du Bois became progressively more critical – especially of Garvey’s economic plans. Not only did Garvey’s ideals conflict with Du Bois’s, but also additionally, both the NAACP headquarters and Du Bois were based in New York and thus provided direct competition for Garvey’s United Negro Improvement Association.³⁹ By 1924, after Garvey’s mail fraud conviction, in a *Crisis* article, Du Bois commented, “Garvey is, without doubt, the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and in the world.”⁴⁰ Thus, while Du Bois had legitimate concerns about Garvey and his movement he was also threatened by the radical black leader.

Collective criticism of Garvey finally culminated in the formation of the “Garvey Must Go Campaign”. Black leaders such as A. Philip Randolph, Chandler Own and W. E. B. Du Bois published constant criticisms of Garvey in *the Chicago Defender*, *Messenger* and *Crisis* from 1922 onwards. Garvey’s critics additionally provoked the United States government into an investigation of the UNIA President, which led to his consequent trial, imprisonment and eventual deportation.

³⁸ *ibid*, 155

³⁹ *Ibid*, 156

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 168

In the Wake of Death:

Garvey's critics showed more kindness towards the controversial black leader in the wake of his death than they had throughout his life. In fact, the *Chicago Defender*, a once harsh critic of Garvey, wrote rather sympathetically of Garvey after his death. The article read: "endowed with a dynamic personality, with unmatched oratorical gift, Garvey was easily the most colorful figure to have appeared in America since Frederick Douglas and Booker T. Washington".⁴¹ Black leaders, who had once been fierce rivals of Garvey, finally appreciated Garvey's mass popular appeal. Additionally, they recognized the importance of Garvey's emphasis on racial pride. The UNIA had been a mass popular movement, which spread throughout countries and continents. It was thus hard for leaders of the black community to ignore Garvey's impact after his death. Referring to his passing in 1940, Du Bois wrote, "it was a grandiose and bombastic scheme, utterly impracticable as a whole...but it was sincere and had some practical features; and Garvey proved not only an astonishing popular leader, but a master of propaganda."⁴²

The Resulting Portrait of Marcus Garvey:

Criticisms of Garvey varied from valid assessments of his political and economic programs to vicious attacks on his appearance and personality. Although Garvey's contemporary critics took various issues with his movement, their criticisms culminated in an aggressive campaign against him, which resulted in Garvey's arrest, imprisonment and eventual deportation. Understanding the critiques of Garvey's rivals is essential to understanding the Garvey movement in the context of the early twentieth century, as well as to understanding

⁴¹ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 2

⁴² Cronon, *Black Moses*, 204

Garvey's ultimate downfall. Yet, the contemporary critiques of Garvey do more than tell a story of the 1920s and '30s, they also help to explain Garvey's initial placement in history. Until the 1950s, with the publication of E. David Cronon's biography, Garvey was perceived through the lens of his rivals.

Chapter 4. Garvey Through a Historical Lens

Garvey in History:

After the processions had ended and Garvey was buried in west London, little attention was paid to the once threatening the UNIA leader. Garvey's legacy was surrounded by a cloud of controversy and as the years passed few remembered the name, which once stirred the masses. It seemed that Garvey, his movement and his impact would be forgotten forever.

That is, until the mid 1950s, when E. David Cronon published *Black Moses*, the first biography of Marcus Garvey and examination of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Following the publication of Cronon's biography, historians began to revisit the once popular Garvey movement. Following Cronon's depiction of Garvey, historians such as Tony Martin, author of *Race First*, painted their own portraits of the UNIA leader.

There is no doubt that such newfound interest in Garvey and Garveyism was a result of the time. The rise of the Black Panther Party and the Black Power movement enticed historians to re-evaluate the radical Garvey, whose aims were brought back to life by men such as Malcolm X and Huey Newton. Earl Little, Malcolm X's father, had been a Garveyite before his death in 1931 and thus Garveyism had a profound impact on the future radical leader.¹ Garvey's influence on the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and 1970s was powerful enough to inspire a new investigation into both the man and his movement.

What historians have determined, however, is inconclusive. Although many historians agree that Garvey was responsible for creating a new race pride and racial consciousness within the black community, they are still conflicted over the placement of such a complex and

¹ Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, (New York, New York: One World/Ballantine Books, 1992), 3

controversial figure. According to Colin Grant, Garvey's reputation as the outstanding father of Negro nationalism has grown in the years since his death, however, little else has been determined and agreed upon. While historians such as Tony Martin praise Garvey as the one true savior of the black movement, others are still skeptical. Both E. David Cronon and Colin Grant pose the question: was Garvey a "craved-for messiah or pathological clown?"² Their answers are ambiguous, often leaving much to be desired from those of us who yearn to know who Marcus Garvey truly was.

A First Look: The Writings of E. David Cronon:

Little historical attention was paid to Marcus Garvey, until the young Ph. D candidate E. David Cronon, began his dissertation project on the controversial black leader. Cronon's project began in the United States, but soon dragged him to London, as he tried to understand Garvey and his movement. His dissertation culminated in the publication of *Black Moses* in February 1955, a biographical account of both Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association. Although Cronon was not the first to write about Garvey, he was the first to offer a full account of his life. Yet, even still, he presented only an ambiguous view of the complex leader, asking in the final chapter of *Black Moses*: was Garvey a "strident demagogue or dedicated prophet, martyred visionary or fabulous conman?"³ Cronon saw both positive contributions and catastrophic failings in Garvey, which inevitably led him to a conflicted evaluation of his life and movement.

Despite Garvey's ultimate deportation and consequent decline in popularity, Cronon credits Garvey with creating a mass movement, unlike any that came before it. In his concluding

² Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiv

³ Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses; the Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1962), , 202

chapter, Cronon writes, “it is precisely this aspect of Garveyism – its strong appeal for the unsophisticated and unlettered masses – that is worthy of careful attention.”⁴ Garvey’s success was, in part, a result of his mastery of rhetoric and propaganda. According to Cronon, “Marcus Garvey was an instrument through which the restless Negro could express its discontent” and therefore was successful in creating a mass black movement, unlike any before its time.

Cronon argues that Garvey’s ability to stir the masses, regardless of socio-economic background, was extremely influential to future black leaders and thus was especially important in latter decades of the black movement. Garvey’s “flaming words struck a spark that inspired others to take up the torch of leadership on behalf of the race.”⁵ Although Garvey’s contemporaries may not have agreed with his methods, future leaders recognized his successes and consequently replicated his leadership style.

While Cronon finds the popularity of Garvey’s movement astounding, he is clearly more impressed by Garvey’s ability to foster a new racial pride and to create a new racial consciousness for black peoples throughout the world. Garvey understood the appeal of African nationalism and aggressive rhetoric. He subsequently utilized these strategies to foster pride in the black community. According to Cronon, Garvey’s “movement served as a focal point for a new appreciation by Negroes of their own racial heritage and a growing sense of pride in their potentialities.”⁶ Yet Cronon is not the only, nor the first, individual to comment on Garvey’s success in stimulating a race consciousness. On the contrary, Cronon acknowledges that Garvey’s contemporaries and the masses alike believed Garvey’s greatest accomplishment to be his ability to rehabilitate black self-esteem.

⁴ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 203

⁵ *Ibid*, 210

⁶ *ibid*, 211

However, Cronon's ultimate evaluation of Garvey is not wholly positive. In *Black Moses* Cronon does highlight the failings of Garvey and his movement. His main criticism of Garvey is his inability to accomplish his own personal goals, as well as those of the UNIA. In the conclusion of *Black Moses*, Cronon writes, "Marcus Garvey remains a tragic, even pathetic figure, who is today remembered more for the size of his dreams than for the practical accomplishments of his once imposing race movement."⁷ Although Cronon praises Garvey for his impact on the movement, he simultaneously condemns him for failing to make tenable contributions to the lives of black men and women.

Cronon, much like Garvey's contemporaries, discusses a variety of problems, which caused Garvey's downfall. The first of which is Garvey's personality. Cronon cites Garvey's inability to delegate, his mismanagement of key projects and his egocentric and arrogant disposition all as reasons for his ultimate failure. Secondly, Cronon heavily criticizes Garvey's "Back to Africa" program as a fantastical escape rather than a plausible solution for the race problem. In the final chapter of *Black Moses*, "Echoes and Reverberations," Cronon speaks of the "Back to Africa" program, writing, "Garvey's lush descriptions of the past and future greatness of the race in its African motherland were chiefly an emotional escape for U.N.I.A audiences".⁸ Again he concludes *Black Moses* with a similar sentiment "the Back to Africa program provided an easy escape for Negroes hard pressed and weary of a life of oppression and frustration, but it was no real answer to the problems that beset the Negro world."⁹ Cronon's evaluation is much like Du Bois's assessment. Garvey's movement ultimately failed because he was unable to offer feasible solutions to the race problem in the United States.

⁷ *ibid*, 220-21

⁸ *ibid*, 211

⁹ *ibid*, 222

Black Moses offers a conflicting view of Garvey, one, which both acknowledges Garvey's strengths and weaknesses, as well as his successes and failures. Cronon praises Garvey for creating a popular mass movement, which fostered black pride and created a new racial consciousness throughout the world. Contrarily, he also criticizes the UNIA leader for his larger than life personality and equally massive (in many cases unreachable) dreams. Cronon ends *Black Moses* with this statement: "by undercutting most of the existing Negro leadership, even those elements worthy of support, and by rejecting all but the most extreme white backing...Garvey nullified much of the potential value of his movement."¹⁰ Ultimately Cronon defines Garvey as a disappointment, who failed to live up to his potential for success.

Garvey as Christ: The Writings of Tony Martin:

Following Cronon's *Black Moses* subsequent biographies and writings on Garvey were published throughout the 1970s. Unlike Cronon, however, Tony Martin expressed rather clear views on Marcus Garvey. According to historian Raymond Wolters, "Tony Martin defended Garvey on almost every point."¹¹ *Race First* advocates for the Garvey movement and sings the praises of its namesake. In his book Martin describes Garvey as a savior of the black race, whose personality and movement were not ambiguous, but rather extremely successful.

In 1976, Tony Martin published *Race First* with one goal in mind: to redefine the name Marcus Garvey. Martin felt that Garvey had been unfairly judged by his contemporaries and equally condemned by historians like Cronon. Martin was inspired to write *Race First* due to because he believed that "for two decades or so after his death Garvey was all but relegated to

¹⁰ *ibid*, 224

¹¹ Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals*, 169

the position of an unperson.”¹² His feelings are exemplified in the preface to *Race First*. He writes,

this book is based on the simple premise that no one could have organized and built up the largest black movement in Afro-American history, in the face of continuous onslaughts from communists on the left, black reactionaries on all sides, and the most powerful governments in the world, and yet be a buffoon or a clown, or even an overwhelmingly impractical visionary¹³

Martin wrote a much more favorable account of Garvey and his movement than had previously been written.

In *Race First* Martin highlights not only Garvey’s ideology, but also the many obstacles that presented themselves to Garvey throughout his movement. In the introduction Martin writes, “one would be hard put to find a major black figure who has suffered more at the hands of historians and commentators.”¹⁴ *Race First* strives to illustrate all that Garvey accomplished, despite the high odds and powerful enemies that were working against him.

Martin so strongly advocated for Garvey and against his strongest critics because he believed that Garvey was the father of racial consciousness. Martin points to many examples of Garvey’s devotion to the fostering of racial pride and consciousness to prove the impact that the black leader had on his and future generations. However, perhaps his sentiments are best summarized in his concluding remarks. Writing of the impact and influence of both Garvey and Garveyism Martin declares,

It took the Black Power movement of the 1960s with its revival of Garvey’s red, black, and green, his race pride, his self-reliance, his separatism, his anti-imperialism and his revolutionary nationalism,

¹² Tony Martin, *Race First: the Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1976), 360

¹³ Martin, *Race First*, i

¹⁴ *Ibid*, ix

to belatedly return to Garvey the recognition he deserves as a major, if not *the* major black figure of the century¹⁵

Unlike Garvey's contemporaries and some historians, Martin had neither negative nor ambiguous views of Garvey and his movement. Rather he was infatuated with the black leader, who told his followers to be proud of their heritage, history and race.

Garvey Re-Written – Grant:

Both the publication of *Black Moses* in 1955 and the spread of the Black Panther Movement in the mid to late 1960s helped to inspire and intensify interest in Garvey. Since that time many articles, and books have been written on Marcus Garvey, the Garvey Movement and the UNIA. Perhaps, the most extensive of these writings is also the most recent. In 2008, historian Colin Grant published his work, *Negro with a Hat*, a detailed biographical account of Garvey. Grant's new book not only examines Garvey's time in the United States, but also devotes some discussion to Garvey's life post deportation. Thus unlike other works on Garvey, Grant paints a portrait of Garvey's life outside of the United States. Such details are in great thanks to Robert Hill's *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, eleven volumes of Garvey's letters, newspaper articles and speeches, published in 1989.

Similar to Cronon's first attempts to understand Garvey, Grant also struggled to truly characterize the complicated and controversial leader while writing *Negro with a Hat*. Throughout his book Grant points to the criticisms of Garvey's contemporaries as a source of his confusion about his own perceptions of Garvey. Of this struggle, in the introduction to *Negro with a Hat*, Grant writes: "Marcus Garvey: a proud Negro who was revered and reviled in equal

¹⁵ *ibid*, 360

measure.”¹⁶ Even on the last pages of *Negro with a Hat* Grant comments on his efforts to define the man behind the movement. Grant remarks, “writing on Garvey has lately been a polemical tussle between two camps: one that wants to skewer him as a charlatan and the other that seems to want to elevate him to the status of a saint”.¹⁷ In this way Grant acknowledges the many rivals and followers of Garvey, whose depictions have made capturing Garvey so difficult. Ultimately, although *Negro with a Hat* contributes to the understanding of Garvey’s latter years, Grant’s evaluations of Garvey continue to perpetuate the ambiguity of this figure. Garvey, Grant writes, “is a little difficult to characterize.”¹⁸

Conclusion:

Little was written about Garvey and his movement until Cronon’s first biography in 1955. Since then the Black Power movement and Black Panther Party have brought increased attention to this radical and controversial black figure, who preached the benefits of black pride and Pan-Africanism. From the publication of *Black Moses* to the latest investigation of Garvey in *Negro with a Hat* the assessment of Garvey has evolved to encompass a broader understanding of this leader in light of the historical context into which he was placed. However, these accounts still emphasize the ambiguity of his character, if not individually, then in conjunction with one another. While Cronon and Grant’s views of Garvey are ambiguous in and of themselves, Martin’s glowing account of Garvey’s character is quite contradictory in comparison to the work of his fellow historians. In this way Garvey remains a complex character of history. Any study of Garvey cannot reduce his complexities. However, by focusing more attention on the links between his early efforts and his continuing activities during

¹⁶ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, iix

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 454

¹⁸ *ibid*, 454

the years of his “decline,” it is possible to see the disjointed elements of Garvey’s life work as a unified whole.

The historical picture of Garvey is currently incomplete. Both Garvey’s contemporaries and historians alike have centered their analyses of the black leader on a snapshot of his life, depicting only the brief time he spent in the United States. By placing such extraordinary emphasis on this period, evaluations of Garvey have neglected his actions post-deportation. Narrowing the focus on Garvey to this ten-year period thus lessens our understanding of the UNIA leader in his entirety.

This paper proposes that much can be learned from a study of Garvey’s whole life, especially his life after deportation. A detailed examination of Garvey post-1927 offers the opportunity to re-evaluate the controversial black leader. In particular, by comparing the aims of Garvey’s movement in its early stages to his ambitions after his deportation this paper will demonstrate that Garvey’s goals remained consistent throughout his life, and will reinforce the depth of his commitment to his cause. Additionally, by examining Garvey’s objectives it can be argued that Garvey was not only consistent with, but also justified in his actions.

The following section will closely examine the three main tenets of Garveyism – the creation of racial pride and consciousness, the repatriation of all peoples of African descent and the development of an independent black economy. An examination of each tenet, especially of the development of each object, will prove that Garvey never faltered in the pursuit of his main objectives. Furthermore, as a result such an analysis will demonstrate that many of the things for which Garvey was criticized were in fact justified, as they were a logical means to his desired ends. Although Garvey adopted new strategies and subdued his once fiery rhetoric after being

deported from the United States, he remained consistent with and true to the three main aims of his organization and movement.

Part III:

Garvey as Legitimate and Consistent

Chapter 5. Developing Racial Pride and Consciousness

The Message: Racial Pride and Consciousness

Marcus Garvey is most well known for his contributions to the creation of a new racial pride and consciousness within the black community. Despite their attacks on Garvey and his movement, even Garvey's rivals acknowledged this contribution as his legacy. From 1914 to his death in 1940 Garvey consistently worked to instill a sense of pride within his race. Although the means he chose to achieve this goal were heavily criticized, Garvey's actions were direct reflections of his commitment to this aim.

Many influences pushed Garvey to develop the fostering of black pride as an aim of both his movement and his organization. Garvey was compelled to encourage racial pride and consciousness from an early age due to his upbringing in a stratified society. Thus his first influence was his upbringing in Jamaica, where blackness was separated by a hierarchical system based not only on one's skin color, but also on the shade of one's coloring. In this society, Garvey was honored due to his undiluted racial heritage. Since his father was a descendent of the Maroons - escaped African slaves - who developed their own respected niche in Jamaican history, the Garveys were admired. This ancestry brought prestige to the Garvey family because it signified a successful struggle against slavery.¹ As a result, his family's heritage taught the young Garvey to appreciate his full-blooded black lineage and to be proud of his race.

Garvey's heritage was not the only influence that Jamaican society had on Garvey. In Jamaica, race was further complicated by the way in which the dominant white class used the lightness of one's skin to cement their hegemony. The status of mulattos - those with lighter skin

¹ Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses; the Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1962), , 5

– was elevated in Jamaica.² The mulatto group was economically elevated above black Jamaicans and made up the middle class. This class stratification benefitted white Jamaicans, who sought a buffer between themselves and those of “unmixed stock” and consequently created a “third race”. Known as “Jamaican Whites” the mulatto group was, perhaps, even more racist towards black Jamaicans, because it was to their advantage to appear dissimilar to Jamaicans of unmixed black lineage.³ As he grew older, Garvey soon realized³ that the hierarchical separation of his race was a mechanism used by white people and their governments to oppress black people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. This led Garvey to become distrustful of lighter skinned Blacks. This society also inspired Garvey to elevate the status of dark-skinned Jamaicans by rebuilding their self-esteem and self-respect through the creation of black pride.⁴ Early experiences in Jamaica taught to Garvey how crucial the fostering of racial pride and consciousness truly was for black peoples throughout the world.

Garvey’s desire to elevate the place of African descendents through the creation of racial consciousness and pride was further inspired by his trip to London in 1912. In London, Garvey was first informed of the impressive history of his people and motivated him to learn more about African culture throughout the world. Studying under Duse Mohammad Ali, Garvey learned, for the first time, about his African heritage. An African scholar, Ali educated Garvey about the history of his ancestral homeland, as well as the activities of African nationalists around the globe.⁵

Learning about the history of his people ignited a fire in Garvey, propelling him to form the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities

² Cronon, *Black Moses*, 9

³ *Ibid*, 10

⁴ *ibid*, 11

⁵ *ibid*, 15

League when he returned to Jamaica in 1914. Within the first lines of the association's manifesto, Garvey established what would become one of the main tenets of his movement. Listing the main objects of his new organization Garvey wrote: "to establish a Universal Confraternity among the race; to promote the spirit of race pride and love; to reclaim the fallen of the race."⁶ Thus, having been inspired by his upbringing in Jamaica, as well as his travels abroad, Garvey formally introduced the first goal of the Garvey movement: the re-establishment of racial pride and consciousness.

From 1914 onwards Garvey made both consistent and legitimate decisions on the basis on this aim. A comparison of Garvey's speeches and publications from his pre- and post-deportation era will prove that Garvey's aim to encourage racial pride and create racial consciousness remained consistent. Additionally, not only did Garvey remain consistent in advancing this aim, but he also employed legitimate strategies to achieve this goal. Although some of Garvey's behavior was controversial, it was calculated to achieve one of the main tenets of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

The Method: Strategies to Create Racial Pride and Consciousness

Embracing Blackness

The development of racial pride and consciousness was the first object of the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League in 1914 and later the primary aim of the UNIA in 1916 because Garvey felt that peoples of African descent could not rise above oppression unless they embraced their own heritage. Before leaving Jamaica for the United States in 1916 Garvey expressed this aim as the initial foundation of his

⁶ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. I (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 62

movement. Frustrated with the lack of interest in the UNIA in Jamaica, Garvey wrote: “For God’s sake, you men and women who have been keeping yourselves away from the people of your own African race ... unite your hand and hearts with the people of Africa... Sons and daughters of Africa, I say to you arise, take on the toga of race pride.”⁷ Arriving in the United States Garvey continued to preach the benefits of racial pride. In a report of a UNIA meeting from March 1920, four years later, Garvey repeated this sentiment when speaking about the aims of his movement, “the first object is to get the Negroes who are not in Africa, who in the islands of the sea, in America and everywhere else, have education, civilization, Christianity and life, to discover themselves.”⁸ It is evident that Garvey believed that black Americans, as well as black peoples throughout the world, needed to adjust their cultural practices in order to overcome white superiority. In order to do this Garvey felt that black Americans should stop attempting to assimilate to white culture.

Garvey attacked many areas of American culture that he felt only elevated the statues of white Americans, while maintaining the inferiority of their black neighbors. Arriving in the United States Garvey was shocked and outraged to witness black women straightening their hair and dying their skin to appear more like white American women. Garvey believed that ads for products such as skin bleaching kits and hair straightening solutions taught black American women to be embarrassed of their heritage. Consequently, he urged magazines and newspapers to remove such ads from their publications. He also spoke such practices, saying, “God made us in His perfect creation. He made no mistake when he made us black with kinky hair.”⁹ Thus he

⁷ John Hope Franklin, “Marcus Garvey” in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press), 111

⁸ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. II (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 247

⁹ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 193

encouraged black people throughout the world to embrace their identity as beautiful.¹⁰

Additionally, because black women were prone to purchasing such products in an effort to emulate white culture, Garvey also appealed to black men to change their behavior. He said, “take down the pictures of white women from your walls. Elevate your own women to that place of honor.”¹¹ Finally, Garvey also told women to teach their children to embrace their blackness, preaching “Mothers! Give your children dolls that look like them to cuddle and play with.”¹²

Garvey worried that the black community was forced to look to white idols for admiration. This frustrated him as he had studied the rich history of Africa and knew of the many black men and women, who could inspire the people of his race. Thus Garvey urged black men and women to stop emulating white heroes.¹³ In 1925 in an editorial in the *Negro World* entitled “African Fundamentalism” Garvey wrote,

The time has come for the Negro to forget and cast behind him his hero worship and adoration of other races, and to start out immediately, to create and emulate heroes of his own.

We must canonize our own saints, create our own martyrs, and elevate to positions of fame and honor black men and women who have made their distinct contributions to our racial history. Sojourner Truth is worthy of the place of sainthood alongside of Joan of Arc; Crispus Attucks and George William Gordon are entitled to the halo of martyrdom with no less glory than that of the martyrs of any other race. Toussaint L'Ouverture's brilliancy as a soldier and statesman outshone that of a Cromwell, Napoleon and Washington; hence, he is entitled to the highest place as a hero among men. Africa has produced countless numbers of men and women, in war and in peace, whose lustre and bravery outshine that of any other people. Then why not see good and perfection in ourselves?¹⁴

Garvey utilized lessons of history to instill a sense of racial pride within the black community.

¹⁰Franklin, “*Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*,” 114

¹¹Franklin, *Black Leaders*, 114

¹²Ibid, 114

¹³ibid, 114

¹⁴Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. VI (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 161

Garvey's dedication to the development of racial pride was not only evident during his time in the United States, but rather continued his commitment to this aim throughout his life. Despite being deported from the United States in 1927, Garvey carried his message of race pride and renewed racial consciousness throughout the world. From the United States Garvey first returned to his homeland of Jamaica, where race was hierarchically divided. Due to this divide Garvey recognized that developing racial pride was equally important in Jamaica. Speaking in Liberty Hall in St. Andrew, Jamaica in January 1928, Garvey inspired his followers by speaking on the rich heritage of their race and the importance of racial pride. He said: "The greatest thing to be in the world today is to be a Negro."¹⁵

Years later, Garvey continued to emphasize the necessity of racial pride through his writings in *The Blackman*. In the first issue of Garvey's new periodical he once again discussed the aims of the UNIA. In 1933 he explained: "This great Organization is founded for the purpose of helping the Negro to find himself, through which he would be able to restore himself to that ancient position and prestige that became the envy of the ancient world."¹⁶ Two years later, in an editorial entitled "Make Yourself", Garvey urged his followers to re-create the image of the black race, much like one would revitalize their own self-image. In July 1935 he wrote: The man makes himself out of his mind, so likewise the race makes itself out of its own consciousness ... the only stumbling-block of man is man. The only handicapper of man is man, and there is no other stumbling-block than the individual himself."¹⁷ In his 'Appeal to Racial Pride,' in one of the final issues of *The Blackman*, Garvey closed with words that echoed the same sentiments he had expressed twenty-four years earlier. In 1938, with the financial standing

¹⁵ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. VII (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 97

¹⁶ Marcus Garvey, *The Blackman: A Monthly Magazine of Negro Thought and Opinion*, Compiled by Robert A. Hill, (Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1975), 6

¹⁷ Marcus Garvey, *The Blackman*, 651

of the UNIA deteriorating and *The Blackman* on the edge of extinction, Garvey continued to emphasize the main tenet of Garveyism, writing:

The end is not in our day but in our time we can make certain contribution toward it...Let us not turn back, let us hold on, so that when the final history of man is to be written, there will not only be glory for others but there will be glory for us¹⁸

Garvey continuously encouraged his followers to be proud of and to embrace their race from the formation of the UNIA until the end of his life.

Utilizing the Image of God and the Doctrine of Christianity

One of the strategies Garvey pursued to evoke a sense of pride and racial consciousness within the black community was to embrace African history and to encourage black men and women to develop their own self-confidence. However, Garvey employed other rhetorical strategies as well. One such strategy was the utilization of religion, Christianity and the image of God. Garvey chose to evoke the images and writings of religious texts in an effort to increase pride for two distinct reasons. First, religious arguments pointed to the hypocrisy of white Christians, who were told to “love thy neighbor”, but refused to accept their black brethren. Secondly, Garvey’s followers, particularly black Americans, were strongly tied to the religious organizations to which they belonged and thus he appealed to their spirituality. An examination of Garvey’s own words will reveal that he evoked religious arguments and imagery throughout the entirety of his movement because he believed that such rhetoric was crucial for fostering black pride.

Not only did Garvey believe that black men and women could find mortal inspiration

¹⁸ Franklin, *Black Leaders*, 137

from individuals of their own race, but he also felt that the face of God could and should be representative of black people. Thus Garvey emphasized that the image of God was similar to that of his own followers. Additionally, he went one step further, and advocated that God had no color.¹⁹ In 1921 Garvey gave a speech to his followers in Cincinnati. Speaking on the subject of race and religion he said,

God is not white or black, angels have no color, and they are not white peaches from Georgia. But if [whites] say that God is white, this organization says that God is black; if they are going to make the angels beautiful we are going to make them beautiful black peaches from Africa²⁰

Mirroring this message, three years later, Garvey again addressed the issue of God and race while welcoming his followers to the opening of the 1924 UNIA convention.

Speaking under the heading “Why is God White?” Garvey said

Why should we permit Caucasians to constantly and indelibly impress upon their youthful minds that God is white? Why should not this race, which bore the Cross of the Man of Sorrows up Mount Calvary and has borne it ever since, not claim Him as their own...If the Man of Sorrows lived today in Dixie with his pedigree known as it is, the color line would be drawn against Him²¹

Garvey’s evocation of religious doctrine and imagery was consistent from the beginning of his movement until the end of his life. Not even deportation affected Garvey’s depiction of God; instead, Garvey remained consistent in his belief that God accepted and loved all peoples, including black men and women. Speaking in Kingston in 1928 Garvey once again highlighted the contradicting images of God depicted by white and black cultures. Garvey said, “the God that the white man gives you is that imaginary God he made for you – but not the God who made the land and sea, the rivers, mountains, plains and hills – all for you...He created all men of one

¹⁹ Ibid, 124

²⁰ Ibid, 124

²¹ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. V (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 625

mould.”²² Later in the year, petitioning the League of Nations, Garvey again spoke on the importance of religious rhetoric and imagery. In 1928, from Europe, Garvey wrote,

We, your petitioners, believe that you are serious in the practice of your religions, and that your adoration of a God Head is not farce nor a mockery but a substantial truth upon which you place your hope of spiritual salvation. We further believe that you have not given the blood of your fathers in crusades, and in sacrifice, for the worship of a God of Stone, but the evangelizing of the world to the acceptance of the truth that there is but one God, who is the Father of all mankind and that He looks with like favor upon all races and nations, whether they be white, yellow, brown or black²³

Even in 1937, as UNIA funds deteriorated and followership decreased, Garvey continued to advance the creation of racial pride through the utilization of religious rhetoric. From Ontario, Canada, Garvey again spoke of the connections between God and the black race. “If God had wanted you to be white,” Garvey said “he would have made you white.”²⁴ Garvey consistently employed such rhetoric because he believed that God was intrinsically tied to the development of racial pride. If he could convince his followers that God was not only representative of, but also accepting of all races, Garvey believed that he could uplift his race. By helping them find beauty and strength within themselves, Garvey believed he could instill pride in black men and women. Thus from 1914 to his death in 1940 Garvey aimed to advance racial pride and consciousness by utilizing religious texts and the image of God.

The Utilization of Pageantry

One of the most heavily criticized of Garvey’s strategies was his utilization of pageantry. Garvey was well known for his flamboyant costumes, such as academic caps and gowns, as well as his lavish parades that constantly swept the streets of Harlem. His rivals felt that such

²² Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. VII, 111

²³ *Ibid*, 249

²⁴ *ibid*, 786

flamboyant behavior was an embarrassment to black Americas, as well as black people throughout the world. Garvey contrarily believed that such pageantry could be used to foster racial pride and to create a new sense of consciousness. Thus Garvey intentionally held extravagant parades, gave outlandish names to delegates of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and used extravagant means to inspire the black community throughout the lifetime of his movement.

Although Garvey's extravagant behavior seemed foolish to some, there was indeed a method behind his madness, which can be better understood in the context of the first tenet of Garveyism. In this way Garvey's use of pageantry was not only consistent with the aims of the UNIA, but also legitimate. For example, the UNIA was well known throughout the black community for its over-the-top parades. Garvey established this precedent beginning in 1920 when he held the first International Convention of the UNIA. In a report of the "Opening of the UNIA Convention" the opening procession of the UNIA convention is described as follows:

Promptly at ten o'clock, the combined bands of the UNIA and the Black Star Line ... played the Star Spangled Banner. This concluded, a procession took place, while the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers" was sung by the audience, with the accompaniment of the two bands. The procession comprised a choir of 200 female singers, all robed alike in white dresses, with black mortar board hats led by two special officers ... garbed in their multi-colored silken robes ... the delegates wore buttons of the association, and bands on the arm, in the associations colors²⁵

Garvey hoped that extravagant programs, parades, and ceremonies would not only excite his followers, but also instill a sense of belonging within them. The first UNIA convention marked the beginning of Garvey's extravagant efforts to inspire black pride. By distinguishing the choir, officers and delegates in their own uniforms Garvey characterized each member's importance and emphasized the necessity of each follower's role. Parades and costumes Garvey gave

²⁵ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. II, 476-77

members of the UNIA something of which to be proud. According to Garveyite Virginia Collins

The flamboyance of the Marcus Garvey Movement was important to black people because it made a statement...the plumage, brass buttons, the, ah, tassels, all of these things that the uniform said was a statement that black people made that "We are together." That was a physical statement that these uniforms and plumage made to the rest of the world that "We are Garveyites and proud of it." It also gave you that proudness²⁶

Thus rather than embarrass the black community, Garvey was attempting to empower black men and women through confident images of plumage and tassels. Garvey believed so much in the power of this imagery that he "employ[ed] James Van Der Zee, the unofficial photographer of the Harlem Renaissance, to capture the spectacular parades that he presided over during his heyday in Harlem."²⁷ In this way Garvey's followers did not have to be present at UNIA meetings and conventions to be exposed to the images of the United Negro Improvement Association.

Furthermore, Garvey believed that his flamboyant behavior was not an embarrassment to the black community, but rather a direct reflection of the customs of white nations. Garvey argued that he was merely replicating the traditions and ceremonies of his white counterparts and that through such reproduction he could establish equality between Blacks and Whites. Explaining both the costumes utilized by the movement and the honorary titles given to UNIA delegates Garvey said, "a white king has no more right to drive in a golden coach than your king and sovereign. Their pope has no more right of putting on sacred robes than your pope."²⁸ Thus Garvey believed that the titles given to Kings and Presidents of white nations were no different

²⁶ American Experience, Interview Clips, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/sfeature/sf_interviews.html

²⁷ Grant, *Negro in a Hat*, xiii

²⁸ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. I, liii

than the titles he granted his delegates. Likewise the robes worn by Marcus Garvey and his subordinate officers were no different than the robes worn by white dignitaries.

Much like UNIA pageantry, the creation of the African flag was also a strategy utilized by Garvey to inspire racial pride. Thus, similar to the flags of white nations, Garvey saw the African flag as a mechanism by which he could unite all African descendants. Although the red, black and green UNIA flag was formerly adopted at the first UNIA convention in 1920, Garvey employed rhetoric regarding the flag much earlier than this. Speaking in 1919 Garvey expressed the importance of the UNIA colors while delivering a speech in Newport News, Virginia. He said: “We have been able to force entry into every civilized country where Negroes live, and tonight the colors that you and I are wearing in Newport News are being worn by Negroes all over the world.”²⁹ Garvey hoped that allegiance to the UNIA flag would pervade the connection that black men and women felt to their respective nations.

Just as Garvey gave titles to UNIA delegates and instructed members of the UNIA to dress in flamboyant uniforms in replication of white society, he also created the African flag for a similar reason. Garvey justified the creation of an African flag by explaining that black peoples throughout the world were entitled to their own flag much like white governments were entitled to wave their own flags. During a UNIA meeting in May, 1920 Garvey discussed his rationale for the creation of an African flag. He explained: “since other races have established empires; since they have produced republics; since they have flags, we are determined that this shall be our sign and because of that let us love it as we love our lives.”³⁰ Only months later the UNIA flag was officially adopted by all members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. During the first meeting of the UNIA convention, Liberty Hall “was tastefully

²⁹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. II, 115

³⁰ *Ibid*, 316

decorated with bunting, American flags intertwined with the flags of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Red, Black and Green).”³¹

Many of Garvey’s harshest critics often attacked the flamboyancy of his program, siting the extravagant parades and over-the-top costumes as an embarrassment to the black community. However, Garvey presented himself in an intentional manner in order to foster pride in black men and women throughout the world. Although Garvey’s contemporaries disagreed with this strategy of Garveyism, UNIA buttons, flags and parades inspired many of Garvey’s followers to make large demands on white society. As Garveyite John Rousseau explained in the documentary *Marcus Garvey: Look For Me in the Whirlwind*,

The Garvey Movement made me feel ... that I was something. It made me feel that I was a human being. I was not, ah, something to be trod underfoot, but... Marcus Garvey awakened a pride in myself and made me feel that, ah, some day we would enjoy all of the benefits that the other races were enjoying³²

Alliance with Nationalism

Garvey utilized many strategies in order to foster black pride; one such strategy that Garvey used to increase racial-awareness in the black community was allying the UNIA with groups that shared a similar vision with his organization. Garvey was drawn to nationalist organizations throughout the world because they exemplified racial and/or ethnic pride. Early in his career Garvey aligned himself with nationalist organizations in Ireland and India, as well as with the Zionist movement because he believed that the aims of these organizations were closely tied to the goals of his own movement. Recalling his early years in the United States Garvey said,

³¹ *ibid*, 476

³² http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/sfeature/sf_interviews.html

Just at that time other races were engaged in seeing their cause through---the Jews through their Zionist movement and the Irish through their Irish movement---and I decided that, cost what it might, I would make this a favorable time to see the Negro's interest through³³

The first nationalist movement Garvey allied himself and his movement with was the Irish nationalist movement; he was extremely vocal in his support of Eamon de Valera. He found commonality between himself and de Valera as both men represented minority groups oppressed by the majority. Additionally, just as de Valera demanded a free Ireland for his people, Garvey demanded a free Africa for descendants of the continent. In August 1920, during the first International Convention, Garvey wrote about the interconnectedness of both movements: “we believe Ireland should be free even as Africa shall be free for the Negroes of the World. Keep up the fight for a free Ireland.”³⁴ Yet again in the winter of 1921 Garvey reached out to Eamon de Valera, this time to congratulate the Irish nationalist for achieving partial independence in Ireland. The declaration of partial independence in Ireland on December 6, 1921 gave Garvey hope that his nationalist movement could also succeed. He looked to Ireland with hope for the future, writing, “six thousand of us assembled in Liberty Hall, New York, representing the four hundred million Negroes of the world, send you congratulations on your masterly achievement of partial independence for Ireland.”³⁵

Not only did Garvey find inspiration in the Irish nationalist movement, but the Jewish Zionist movement also inspired his black nationalist movement. In fact, those closest to the Garvey movement often described Garveyism as “Black Zionism”. Writing about Garvey and his movement in 1922, Claude McKay stated that the Garvey “movement has all the

³³ "Marcus Garvey: Life & Lessons Introduction," The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers Project, UCLA, <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/mgpp/lifeintr.asp>

³⁴ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. II, lxxiv

³⁵ *Ibid*, lxxiv

characteristic features of the Jewish Zionists.”³⁶ The Zionist movement was a powerful example of nationalist achievement for Garvey as it succeeded in securing the support of imperialist governments such as Great Britain. On November 2, 1917 the British government signed the Balfour Agreement, which supported the restoration of the Jewish homeland. In this way the British government demonstrated their support for the Zionist movement and according to Garvey also signaled their support of other nationalist organizations. The signing of the Balfour Agreement, only a year after Garvey arrived in the United States, provided ample motivation for the black leader. In 1920 Garvey spoke to his followers about the influence of the Zionist movement at a Liberty Hall meeting. He was reminded of his initial inspiration for his black nationalist movement saying, “It came to us at the same time it came to the Jew. When the Jew said, ‘We shall have Palestine! The same sentiment came to us when we said ‘We shall have Africa!’”³⁷

The influence of nationalist movements on Garvey was not fleeting. Rather Garvey continued to speak of other nationalist organizations throughout his life in order to inspire a similar pride within his own race. Even after Garvey left the United States in 1927 he persisted in emphasizing the achievements of nationalists throughout the world. In 1928, speaking at the Ward Theater in Kingston, Jamaica Garvey emphasized the success of other nationalist movements. He explained,

The time is fast approaching when there must be a settlement of these great racial and interracial questions. Japan has settled hers; China is settling hers; India is settling hers; Russia has settled hers; Poland is settling hers; the Jews are settling theirs – and we, the 400,000,000 black men and women of the United Negro Improvement Association, are about to settle ours now³⁸

³⁶ "Marcus Garvey: Life & Lessons Introduction", <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/mgpp/lifeintr.asp>

³⁷ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. XI (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), lxxxiii

³⁸ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. VII, 158

Garvey hoped that providing examples of successful nationalist movements would inspire black men and women to take pride in their heritage, and to fight for their own nation as well. Thus Garvey continued to employ his alliance strategy even after the height of his movement.

While in England Garvey aroused his followers with inspiring tales of the efforts of nationalist movements throughout the world. Writing an editorial in 1936 Garvey utilized the civil war between Arabs and Jews in Palestine as a moral analogy for his own people.

Connecting both the Zionist and Garvey movement, he commented,

Let the Negro couple the urge for money with that of nationalism, so that in another hundred years when he arrives he will not have the difficulty the Jew is now having in Palestine, but he will have a formidable and well-established nation to protect him anywhere he happens to find himself with his wealth.

Throughout 1937, as his movement deteriorated, Garvey continued to write and speak of the struggle in Ireland, the struggle in Palestine, and the struggles faced by nationalists around the globe in order to inspire black men and women to achieve their own goals. Giving a speech in Nova Scotia in October, Garvey explained, “Our obsession is like that of the Jews. They are working for Palestine. We are working for Africa, like the Irishman, he is working for Ireland, and the Canadian is working for a grand and noble Canada.”³⁹ By highlighting nationalist movements throughout the world Garvey demonstrated to his followers that they were not alone. Three months later in December 1937 Garvey referred once again to the strength of the Zionist movement. In an issue of *The Blackman* Garvey once again urged his followers to find inspiration in the Jewish nationalist movement. Garvey asserted, “The Jew has something the Negro hasn't got, he has racial stamina. We want to work out a plan like the Zionist so as to

³⁹ Ibid, 794

recover ourselves.”⁴⁰ Thus he continually pointed to the achievements of other racial and ethnic groups in order to motivate his own followers.

Garvey’s admiration of other nationalist organizations was not only temporally consistent, but it was also unflinching in his commitment to the aims of the UNIA. One of the foremost tenets of the Universal Negro Improvement Association was the fostering of racial pride and consciousness. By mirroring, highlighting and supporting movements such as the Irish independence movement and the Zionist movement, Garvey hoped to inspire an increase in black pride. Garvey thus viewed the achievements of Irish and Jewish people, as his own successes because he believed that one day such victories lead to a similar triumph for his people. If the Irish could achieve independence, Garvey believed that the descendants of Africa could also be free.

The Separatist Philosophy

One of the most important mechanisms Garvey employed to foster racial pride was the adoption of his separatist philosophy. Much like the use of pageantry, Garvey’s separatist philosophies were challenged and attacked by his contemporaries. Yet, in light of Garvey’s ambitions, embracing separatism as a policy of the UNIA was well founded and legitimate. The separatist philosophy was integral to the UNIA. Thus he remained consistently devoted to this strategy throughout his lifetime. Although he adopted a less extreme posture in the latter half of his life, Garvey strongly believed that white and black people throughout the world could only live happily if they lived separately from one another.

Garvey’s adherence to the philosophy of separatism was conceived out of his experiences living in Latin America and in the West Indies as a young man. Having witnessed the

⁴⁰ <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/mgpp/lifeintr.asp>

manipulation and abuse of black laborers throughout this area of the world, Garvey was convinced that black men and women could only escape the oppression of their white neighbors if the two races were separated. In the early 1920s, Garvey wrote

The attitude of the white race is to subjugate, to exploit, and if necessary to exterminate the weaker peoples with whom they come in contact. They subjugate first, if the weaker peoples stand for it; then exploit, and if they will not stand for SUBJUGATION nor EXPLOITATION, the other recourse is EXTERMINATION⁴¹

He believed that white people could not function without exploiting the black race and thus concluded that the two races must be physically and geographically separated if both races were to be successful. If white and black people were finally separated from one another, Garvey felt, black men and women would have the opportunity to achieve for themselves. According to Garvey, contributing to society would foster pride within the black community. Garvey wrote of the condition of black men and women throughout the world:

Prejudice of the white race against the black race is not so much because of color as of condition; because as a race, to them, we have accomplished nothing; we have built no nation, no government; because we are dependent on our economic and political existence⁴²

Separation of the races, he concluded, would solve this problem. Thus Garvey adopted a philosophy of separatism, which he consistently maintained throughout his life and movement.

Garvey's separatist philosophy was not solely focused on the separation of all races, but also centered on the assimilation of all black men and women into one united race. Garvey believed that one of the obstacles preventing black peoples throughout the world from rising above white oppression was the division that existed between black men and women of different

⁴¹ Marcus Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Or, Africa for the Africans*, (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1986), 13

⁴² Garvey, *The Philosophy and Opinions*, 18

backgrounds and nations. Speaking on this matter as early as 1914 in a speech entitled 'The Negro Race and Its Problems', Garvey urged all black people to come together, saying,

Representative and educated negroes have made the mistake of drawing and keeping themselves away from the race, thinking that it is degrading and ignominious to identify themselves with the masses of the people who are still ignorant and backward; but who are crying out for true and conscientious leadership... The prejudices of the educated and positioned Negro towards his own people has done much to create a marked indifference to the race among those of other races who would have been glad and willing to help the Negro to a brighter destiny⁴³

One year later, speaking on black self-perception, Garvey reiterated the necessities of interracial separatism and intra-racial unification. He said, "For the present I am imploring the Negro to cease hating himself. Let him be more loyal to his own, and methinks that the next century will find him a man worthy of true companionship."⁴⁴ In this way Garvey preached the benefits of interracial separatism while urging the unification of all black peoples.

Garvey maintained his dedication to the separatist ideology even after he moved the United Negro Improvement Association to the United States. Speaking on the issue of black military service, Garvey continued to outline the problems of racial assimilation. Outlining his fear of an integrated state, Garvey wrote in 1919: "all white people are cowards anyhow, and the greatest coward of them is the American white man. America is the only nation outside of the Turks where the superior numbers take advantage of the inferior numbers by lynching and burning them."⁴⁵ While Garvey did not directly explain his separatist ideology, his assumptions regarding integration were clearly demonstrated. Illustrated in this rhetoric was the belief that white men and women could not live with their black neighbors without taking advantage of or

⁴³ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. XI (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 58

⁴⁴ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. XI, 109

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 377

abusing them. It was for this reason that Garvey originally adopted the ideology of separatism and for this reason that he continued to reinforce this belief years after the formation of the UNIA.

Garvey was heavily criticized for his separatist stance. Black leaders such as W.E.B Du Bois felt that Garvey's philosophy of separatism isolated black people from the true race problem. His contemporaries thought that Garvey taught his followers to run away from the race problem, instead of addressing it directly. But, Garvey had legitimate reasons for adopting his separatist philosophy, which revolved around his desire to foster racial pride and consciousness. Speaking in 1922 Garvey succinctly outlined his justification for maintaining a separatist philosophy. He responded to his contemporaries' criticism, writing,

Some Negro leaders have advanced the belief that in another 10 years the white people will make up their minds to assimilate their black populations; thereby sinking in all racial prejudice in the welcoming of the black race into the social companionship of the white... This belief is preposterous... The white man of America will not, to any organized extent, assimilate the Negro, because in so doing, he feels that he will be committing racial suicide. This he is not prepared to do... So long as Negroes occupy an inferior position among the races and nations of the world, just so long will others be prejudiced against them, because it will be profitable for them to keep up their system of superiority⁴⁶

In many ways Garvey's adherence to the philosophy of separatism led to his downfall, as it was this aspect of Garveyism which prompted him to make two of his most controversial decisions. Both Garvey's meeting with the Ku Klux Klan and his denouncement of Haile Selassie were highly criticized; however, both of these decisions were consistent with the aims of the UNIA, as well as Garvey's separatist philosophy. Garvey ultimately met with the Ku Klux Klan and spoke out against the former leader of Ethiopia out of loyalty to the philosophy of separatism because he believed that by adhering to the separatist ideology he could inspire racial

⁴⁶ Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions*, 26

pride. Although his contemporary rivals and, later, historians condemned Garvey for his decision to meet with the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, Garvey's decision can be legitimized by placing it in the context of both his desire to foster black pride and his support of separatism. In this lens it is clear that Garvey's decision to meet with Edward Young Clarke was consistent with the aims of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. On June 25, 1922 Garvey traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, where he met with Clarke, then Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. That same day Garvey cabled Liberty Hall writing, "He [Edward Young Clarke] expresses sympathy for the aims and objects of the United Negro Improvement Association. He believes America to be a white man's country, and also states that the Negro should have a country of his own in Africa."⁴⁷ Garvey identified with Clarke because he thought that their goals complemented one another's.

Garvey spoke in detail of his meeting with the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan on July 9, 1922 to his followers in Liberty Hall. Garvey first outlined the aims of the KKK, stating

the Ku Klux Klan is a mighty white organization in the United States of America, organized for the purpose of the upholding of white supremacy in the country, organized for the purpose of making America a white man's country pure and simple...the Ku Klux Klan represents the spirit, the feeling, the attitude of every white man in the United States of America

Following a description of the Klan's aims and objects, Garvey explained how black Americans should view such an organization. He began by discussing the main concerns of the KKK, saying,

The Klan is not organized for the absolute purpose of interfering with the Negroes – for the purpose of protecting the interests of the white race in America. Now anything that does not spell the interests of the white race in America does not come within the

⁴⁷ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. VI (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 679

scope of the Ku Klux Klan. I found out, therefore, that the Ku Klux Klan was purely a racial organization standing up in the interests of white folks exclusive of the rights of others⁴⁸

Garvey then proceeded to illuminate the connections between the Klan and the UNIA, explaining,

The attitude of the Ku Klux Klan is that America shall be a white man's country at all hazards, at all costs. The attitude of the Universal Negro Improvement Association is in a way similar to the Ku Klux Klan. Whilst the Ku Klux Klan desires to make America absolutely a white man's country, the Universal Negro Improvement Association wants to make Africa absolutely a black man's country⁴⁹

He concluded by once again highlighting the similarity of the aims and objects of the Ku Klux Klan with the goals of his own movement. He said, "So you realize that the Universal Negro Improvement Association is carrying out just what the Ku Klux Klan is carrying out – the purity of the white race down South – and we are going to carry out the purity of the black race not only down South, but all through the world."⁵⁰

Through Garvey's own words and explanations it becomes clear that, although his meeting with Clarke was controversial, it was consistent with the aims of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Garvey met with the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan because he saw a commonality between Clarke's goals and his own. Both men hoped to secure racial purity by advancing the doctrine of separatism. In meeting with the Ku Klux Klan Garvey adhered to the philosophy of separatism, while simultaneously attempting to foster black pride and racial consciousness.

⁴⁸ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. IV (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 709

⁴⁹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. IV 709

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 714

Garvey's direct criticism of Haile Selassie from 1936 onwards was similarly inspired by his separatist philosophy. Garvey's attacks on Selassie were not only legitimate in the context of his movement, but also consistent with his past actions. Haile Selassie was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930 much to the delight of Garvey, who praised the Ethiopian leader for inspiring black men and women around the globe. Garvey's opinions of Selassie remained positive until the Ethiopian leader was forced to flee from his country in 1936 due to the Italo-Abyssinian War. At which time Garvey began to vehemently attack the former leader of Ethiopia. Although Garvey's attacks on Selassie appear inconsistent with his initial commentary, his criticisms were both legitimate and consistent when viewed in light of his separatist ideology and fixation on the fostering of racial pride.

Garvey's criticisms of Selassie were based on the belief that the Ethiopian Emperor had betrayed his people by negotiating with white governments - an action that went against both Garvey's beliefs and the aims of the UNIA. In July 1936 Garvey published an editorial in *The Blackman*, which summarized his criticisms of the former Ethiopian leader. Writing only two months after Selassie's exile, Garvey explained his condemnation of the former Emperor. He wrote, "The Emperor of Abyssinia allowed himself to be conquered by playing white, by trusting to white advisers and by relying on white Governments, including the white League of Nations."⁵¹ Selassie's actions did not conform to Garvey's separatist philosophies. Additionally Garvey believed that cooperation between black and white governments was detrimental to the new racial pride that Garvey had been working to construct. Thus Garvey continued, writing,

Abyssinia or Ethiopia offered a chance for the Negro to show himself, and if Haile Selassie had only the vision, inspired with Negro integrity he would have still been the resident Emperor in Addis Ababa, with not only a country of twelve million Abyssinian

⁵¹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. VII, 687

citizens, but with an admiring world of hundreds of millions of Negroes⁵²

Garvey showed no sympathy for the fallen leader because he had disobeyed the doctrine of separatism and in doing so had harmed his followers. One year later, writing again in *The Blackman*, Garvey once again condemned Haile Selassie, remaining consistent with his prior reasoning Garvey wrote,

When the facts of history are written Haile Selassie of Abyssinia will go down as a great coward who ... left the millions of his countrymen to struggle through a terrible war that he brought upon them because of his political ignorance and racial disloyalty⁵³

Despite harsh criticisms, the withdrawal of UNIA membership, and a loss of funding, Garvey persisted with his criticisms. Beginning in 1936 reports suggested that Garvey's attacks on Selassie negatively affected his movement. Reporting to fellow members of the UNIA, representative Samuel Haynes concluded that Garvey's lack of support for Selassie "has put Mr. Garvey's leadership and organization on a hot spot."⁵⁴ A year later, following Garvey's persistent attacks, in an article published by *The New York Age*, critics continued to question Garvey's stance, writing, "how Mr. Garvey can reconcile his dream of an African empire with his present advice to American Negroes to refuse to help Ethiopia preserve her ancient homeland is more than we can see."⁵⁵ Yet, Garvey was undeterred and continuously criticized Selassie from 1936 to 1937 because he believed that the Ethiopian Emperor had betrayed his people in pursuit of a relationship with white governments. Despite a failing reputation Garvey adhered to both his philosophy and the one of the foremost aims of the UNIA.

⁵² Ibid, 690

⁵³ ibid, 739

⁵⁴ ibid, 663

⁵⁵ ibid, 723

Conclusion:

The primary of focus of the Garvey movement was the development of black pride and racial consciousness. To foster the creation of black pride and to re-establish racial awareness Marcus Garvey employed many different strategies – some of which were embraced and others, which were criticized. However, whether praised or condemned Garvey persisted in re-creating racial identity. From the formation of the UNIA to the deterioration of the Garvey movement he pursued this tenet of Garveyism. An evaluation of Garvey's own explanations from 1914 to his death in 1940 proves that the black leader remained in harmony with the aims and objects of his organization. In the context of his movement one can see that Garvey was both temporally consistent and justified in his actions as he attempted to develop race pride and consciousness.

Chapter 6. The “Back to Africa” Movement

The Message: “Africa for Africans”

While Garvey is best known for his development of black pride and racial consciousness, he is probably equally criticized for his “Back to Africa” movement. Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914 in order to foster racial pride and create a new racial consciousness. However, Garvey soon expanded his goals. Arriving in the United States in 1916, as Garvey’s movement gained momentum and his popularity increased his dreams for the UNIA also blossomed. Thus he adopted additional aims for the Universal Negro Improvement Association, including his “Africa for Africans” program.

The “Africa for Africans” program called for the creation, in the ancestral continent, of a new nation, government and army to represent the descendents of Africa. Garvey hoped that this movement would aid in the development of racial pride and also foster unity amongst the black community – both at home and abroad. Therefore Garvey adopted the “Back to Africa” movement as a legitimate means to advance the status of black peoples. From his arrival in the United States until his death in 1940 Garvey encouraged the development of a new nation in Africa and further urged his followers to repatriate to their homeland.

However, as times changed, so too did Garvey’s strategies and rhetoric. When Garvey first spoke of his “Back to Africa” movement his vocabulary was fiery and his message violent, yet after he was deported from the United States his extreme posture waned. While in Europe Garvey’s language became subtler and his demands lessened. Additionally, Garvey began to negotiate with white governments in order to achieve his goal of an independent African nation rather than threaten the re-seizure of lands from imperialist nations. Although Garvey’s tactics

evolved over time, he still remained consistent in his desire to develop a nation, army and government for all black peoples because he believed that black nationalism would lead to increased racial pride.

Garvey's exposure to the abuses of black labor throughout Latin America pushed him to pursue a program of unity for people of African descent. However, it was not until Garvey traveled to London in 1912 that he began to develop the "Africa for Africans" idea. During this time Garvey came under the tutelage of Duse Mohammed Ali, a scholar of African studies. Garvey's relationship with Ali had a profound impact on both himself and his movement because it exposed Garvey to the plight of black peoples, not only in Latin America, but also throughout the world. Ali introduced Garvey to other young African scholars who taught him about the history of his African homeland and of the injustices experienced by black men and women around the globe. These discussions planted a seed in Garvey's head that would bloom when he finally arrived in the United States. His experiences in London proved to Garvey the necessity of black unity. He thus believed African descendants needed to come together, not only spiritually, but also geographically in order to rise above white oppression.

Although Garvey only intended to remain in the United States for a short period of time to gain support for his then Jamaican movement, he soon decided to grow the Universal Negro Improvement Association and its aims in the US. In 1918, two years after he first arrived in the United States, Garvey developed the "Back to Africa" program. Speaking at Liberty Hall during this time Garvey explained the root of the race problem and in doing so additionally offered his own solution. He said, "Prejudice of the white race against the black race is not so much because of color as of condition; because as a race ... we have built no nation, no government."¹ Garvey

¹ Marcus Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Or, Africa for the Africans*, (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1986), 18

believed that the poor socio-economic and political condition of black people contributed to the prejudices against them and in turn worked in a cyclical fashion. Black men and women were discriminated against in the work force and thus could not find work. Because of this they were seen as lazy and incompetent and therefore were not employed. Garvey thought that the only way to abolish such misconceptions was for black men and women to create something tangible of their own. By establishing one African nation, one African government and one African army for black men and women around the globe Garvey thought black people could gain the respect and the rights they deserved.

In the context of Garvey's initial aim - the fostering of black pride - the "Back to Africa" program was a logical progression for the Garvey movement. First, the "Africa for Africans" movement pursued a program of geographical unity for all peoples of African descent and thus encouraged increased racial awareness and connectedness. By encouraging all black peoples to repatriate to Africa Garvey urged black men and women around the world to join together in the pursuit of a common goal. Furthermore, the "Back to Africa" movement not only encouraged all peoples of African descent to unite, but it also reinforced Garvey's separatist philosophy. Garvey saw the development of a black nation as the pinnacle of separation; by creating their own nation black people would finally be able to accomplish their social and economic goals. Thus Garvey believed if they were truly separated – geographically, politically and economically - from their white oppressors black men and women would finally achieve success. In this way he campaigned tirelessly throughout his life to establish a free and independent Africa for all of his people.

While Garvey remained consistently devoted to the "Africa for Africans" program he was forced to readjust his strategies when he was deported from the United States. Initially Garvey's

“Back to Africa” movement was based on the re-conquest of Africa from European nations. Garvey arrived in the United States on a wave of radicalism, inspired by the post World War I climate. As a result the radical protests of this time inspired his rhetoric. During the early years of his movement, Garvey prophesized brutal racial wars and evoked imagery of bloody battles in order to emphasize the importance of an independent black nation. He called on all African Americans to arm themselves and for black peoples throughout the world to prepare for the re-seizure of Africa. However, as post World War I protests waned and the fiery language of radicalism lost its appeal, Garvey was forced to transform his approach.

Additionally, Garvey’s move from the United States to Europe also had a large impact on Garvey’s rhetorical tactics. In Europe Garvey was forced to subdue his aggressive language as a result of the culture into which he entered. While Garvey remained consistently dedicated to the second tenet of his movement – the repatriation back to Africa - he adjusted his strategies in order to fit a new context into which he was thrust. This chapter will demonstrate the legitimacy and consistency of Garvey’s “Back to Africa” movement, while simultaneously illustrating the evolution of Garvey’s approach.

The Method: Establishing a New Nation

A Call to Arms

When Garvey first introduced the “Back to Africa” movement he utilized threatening, vehement language to excite his followers into action. Garvey was heavily influenced by the tumultuous period of American history into which he was thrown. He thus felt that the use of extreme rhetoric legitimized his cause. Arriving home from World War I black soldiers had hoped to receive equal rights and fair treatment in exchange for serving and sacrificing for their

country. When they finally returned home, however, this was not their experience. Instead, in 1919 black men and women throughout the United States suffered through the Red Summer, the rise in popularity of the Ku Klux Klan, and a period of increased lynching. The environment that Garvey entered in the early 1920s was heavily charged and as a result Garvey adopted a radical posture to promote his aims – especially the “Back to Africa” movement. Garvey did not suggest that his people reclaim their land peacefully; rather he espoused violent rhetoric to encourage repatriation.

Garvey responded to this climate of radicalization with a fierce message. Speaking to his followers in Philadelphia in October 1919 Garvey evoked language that he would continue to mirror throughout his time in the United States. He threatened: “You have to spill blood in Africa before you get what is belonging to you.”² During the UNIA convention of 1920 Garvey continued to sculpt his ‘Africa for Africans’ program, declaring: “We of the U.N.I.A believe that the best thing for the Negro to do is to consolidate his racial force in building his own motherland, Africa.”³

During his time in the United States Garvey delivered many impassioned and enraged speeches to his followers. Numerous examples can be found in which Garvey threatened mass uprisings, prophesized bloody wars, and urged black Americans to defend themselves. For instance, in an editorial in October of 1919, Garvey wrote: “the best thing the Negro of all countries can do is prepare to match fire with hell fire.”⁴ Garvey’s discourse continued in this manner as he spoke of “war clouds...on the horizon” and the “ocean of human blood” that would

² Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. II (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 94

³ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, 478

⁴ *Ibid*, 42

spill in the re-conquest of his people's homeland.⁵ A report published by the Bureau of Investigation in the same month dedicated government fear of Garvey and his aggressive message. Garvey solicited government attention when he said: "The negro is prepared to give him trouble and if he does not want trouble he better give the negro everything that belongs to him and if he wants to retain the friendship of the negro let the negro have all his rights all over the world."⁶

This pattern of violent rhetoric would continue throughout Garvey's time in the United States. Five years later Garvey maintained his vehement rhetoric when speaking to his followers at Liberty Hall. In the summer of 1924 Garvey continued to emphasize the necessity of violence and self-defense among his followers. He said:

Races and peoples are only safeguarded when they are strong enough to protect themselves, and that is why we appeal to the four hundred million Negroes of the world to come together for self-protection and self-preservation. We do not want what belongs to the great white race, or the yellow race. We want only those things that belong to the black race. Africa is ours.⁷

Garvey knew that white governments would not easily relinquish control of their African colonies and so he told his followers to forcefully reclaim their land. When speaking of the development of a new black nation in the early 1920s Garvey did not ask white governments to return Africa to its descendents, but rather demanded that they give up control of their African colonies. At a meeting in Liberty Hall on August 3, 1920 Garvey spoke of recapturing Africa. He declared:

We shall not seek to ask England 'why are you here?' We shall not seek to ask France, 'Why are you here?' We shall not seek to ask

⁵ *ibid*, 87

⁶ *ibid*, 46

⁷ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. V (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 636-7

Portugal 'Why are you here' The only thing that we will ask-the only command we will give, will be: 'Get out of here!'⁸

Only a month later Garvey re-iterated the necessity of force when discussing the redemption of Africa. He said: "we desire the conquest of Africa; that land that is ours, the land that no one can dispute as being the heritage of the Negro, and for that land I live; for that land I will bleed; for that land I will die."⁹ Speaking in 1924 Washington D.C Garvey again advocated for the re-capture of African lands from European powers. He demanded: "If Asia is good for the Asiatics, if Europe is good for the Europeans, and America is good for the Americans, we are going to have ours in Africa and we are going to fight and die for it."¹⁰ Garvey hoped that such rhetoric would encourage black peoples throughout the world to make large demands in the struggle ahead and also that such a vehement message would gain the attention of international powers.

Additionally, he believed that such fervent language would prepare his people for the long journey ahead of them. Most critics often point to the implausibility of Garvey's dream for an independent African nation; however, Garvey understood that his aspirations would not be easily achieved. He was quite aware of the obstacles in front of him and spoke openly of the challenges his movement faced. Writing to BSL stockholders in February of 1920 he acknowledged that the "Back to Africa" program would not be attained overnight, but would instead be a much longer struggle. He explained,

We of the UNIA are not endeavoring to repatriate at the present moment-immediately-twelve million Negroes of America, or twelve or fifteen million from the West Indies. We are first trying to organize these twelve and fifteen million together with the twenty-five millions in South and Central America, with the one

⁸ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. V, 502

⁹ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. III (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 9

¹⁰Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. V, 531

object of a free and redeemed Africa, and we are saying all the millions organized in this Western Hemisphere can be organized until we are ready¹¹

In an article in the *Negro World* published three years later Garvey again emphasized the necessity of patience. He wrote: "Rome was not built in a day, neither will we get all the things that we are working and fighting for in that short period of time. But by a continued application to the program ... in time [we will] accomplish the realization of our great vision."¹²

Garvey's "Africa for Africans" program was both a lofty dream and a tangible goal in the eyes of the black leader. However, even Garvey agreed that such an impressive project would not be accomplished without a great struggle. In this way Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement was not an unachievable aim, but rather a legitimate strategy used to organize and unite the black masses.

Negotiations with Liberia

Garvey's "Back to Africa" program was not based on rhetoric alone, but rather was a tangible plan, which involved a complicated relationship with the Liberian government. At the end of 1920 Garvey began to transform his "Africa for Africans" message into a reality when he first forged a complex relationship with Liberia. During this year Garvey attempted to take advantage of the poor economic conditions of the African nation as a foundation of his "Back to Africa" movement. In December 1920 Garvey announced his intentions to work with the Liberian government. Garvey outlined his repatriation plan in the *Negro World*, writing: "Let each and every one start from now to prepare, because between January 1 and December 31,

¹¹ *ibid*, 255

¹² Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. X (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 13

1921, it is expected that ... [we] will have transported between five hundred thousand and one million civilized, industrious Negroes ... into the Great Republic of Liberia"¹³

In an attempt to encourage his followers to colonize new lands Garvey highlighted the opportunities that Liberia had to offer. Additionally he emphasized the large impact that black peoples could have on and in this new land. In the same publication he wrote:

Let us all unite to make 1921 a banner year in the history of the Negro peoples of the world. Let us concentrate on the building up of a great Liberia ... Let us help to build the railroads of Liberia; let us help to lay out the farm lands of Liberia ... Let the name of Liberia be written among the nations of the world and let hold her place as a power to be respected¹⁴

One of the foremost strategies used to develop a relationship between the UNIA and the Liberian government was the utilization of economic incentives. As early as October 1920 Garvey announced a two million dollar construction loan be issued from the Universal Negro Improvement Association to the Liberian government. Consequently Garvey appealed to members of the UNIA to fund this loan scheme. He told his followers that funds would be used in the development of primary schools, as well as college and universities, and for the agricultural development of the country. Additionally money would be used for the construction of railroads, and coal, iron and gold mines. Garvey believed that by contributing economically to the Liberian cause that he could develop a close relationship with the Liberian government and as a result earn rights to Liberian lands.

Garvey understood that his followers needed a direct incentive to contribute to his Liberian loan scheme. Therefore, he not only emphasized the necessity of funds for Liberia, but also for the black race as a whole. Writing in the *Negro World* Garvey highlighted the connection between the cause in Liberia and the elevation of black peoples throughout the world.

¹³ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. III, 114

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 115

He explained:

If you desire freedom...if you desire to stop lynching and burning...if you desire to stop jim crowism ... if you desire to stop segregation ... if you long to see the Negro respected ... if you desire to see the Negro boy or girl with a future, you will subscribe for a Loan. By subscribing ... you will raise the standard for the Negro commercially, industrially, politically and socially¹⁵

In the same publication he once again highlighted the universality of the black problem when he wrote: “the hour has struck for universal activity among the Negro peoples of the world.”¹⁶ Thus Garvey inspired members of the UNIA were inspired to contribute to the development, not only of Liberia, but also of an independent black nation. Almost a year later Garvey continued to urge his followers to donate to the African Redemption Fund. In a letter written to his followers in September 1921 he urged: “If you love human liberty, if you believe that all races should be free, if you believe that the Negro should have a country of his own ... then please write your name, address and amount of your contribution.”¹⁷

Garvey did more to develop the relationship between the UNIA and Liberia than offer financial support, however. He also formed a Liberian planning committee, which actively engaged in negotiations with the Liberian government. In April 1920 Garvey sent Elle Garcia, the UNIA Commissioner to Liberia, to Liberia to explore the opportunities for the Universal Negro Improvement Association in this African nation. Writing about his experiences four months later in a report to Garvey and the UNIA, Garcia presented his recommendations regarding the development of an independent African nation in Liberia. He advised: “As a fact and a true one, the people of Liberia welcome sincerely the UNIA and expect much from it ... with diplomacy and also modesty and discretion on the part of those who will represent the

¹⁵ *ibid*, 55

¹⁶ *ibid*, 55

¹⁷ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. IV (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 19

U.N.I.A in Liberia, our work is bound to be successful.”¹⁸ In August 1920, following Garcia’s report, Garvey appointed Gabriel M. Johnson, mayor of Liberia’s capital city, to serve as the Supreme Potentate in order to establish a clear relationship between Liberia and the UNIA.

With encouraging advice and newly founded relationships Garvey prepared to send a group of representatives to Liberia in February to begin the process of repatriation. Writing to Gabriel M. Johnson in February 1920 Garvey communicated his plans: “we have this date dispatched from New York a number of men for the purpose of starting our Construction Work in Liberia.”¹⁹ G. O. Mark and Cyril A. Crichlow guided the sixteen men dispatched to Liberia. Both men were leading members of the UNIA, who were responsible for furthering relationships in Liberia, as well as beginning construction work in the country. Garvey hoped that the UNIA delegates would be given or purchase cheap land on which they could begin to form a small settlement of their own. Garvey instructed Johnson “to help all the men start work immediately – putting up new buildings and starting farms, etc.”²⁰ In March UNIA delegates met with Liberian President Charles D. B. King and Secretary of State E. Barclay to discuss the possibility of land concessions.²¹ Although King and Barclay were cautious of their relationship with the UNIA, communication between the Liberian government and the Universal Negro Improvement Association was open and appeared positive.

However, the UNIA was not the only party with an interest in Liberian land; imperial interests would prove to be a major obstacle in negotiations between Garvey and the Liberian government. Just as Garvey utilized Liberian bankruptcy for his own gains, so too did the United States government hope to use Liberia’s economic crisis for its own means. In the early

¹⁸ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. II, 672

¹⁹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. III, 158

²⁰ Ibid, 159

²¹ “African Series Introduction”, <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/mgpp/intro08.asp>

1920s as a result of a budgetary crisis Liberia turned to the United States for a five million dollar loan. However, the Liberian government was hesitant in ratifying this agreement for fear of a formal relationship with the United States.²²

The United States was not the only nation interested in Liberia; both France and England were also invested in the African nation. The French and English were concerned by UNIA involvement in Liberia since they possessed neighboring colonies – Sierra Leon and the Ivory Cost, respectively – and did not want to see UNIA influence to disseminate across their borders. Thus Secretary of State Barclay warned the UNIA that, “it is not always advisable nor politic to openly expose our secret intentions ... our secret thoughts. We don’t tell them what we think; we only tell them what we like them to heed.”²³ Yet, Garvey was slow to heed this warning and continuously advertised his plans for Liberia in the *Negro World*. As a result President King warned in the *Chicago Defender*, “under no circumstances will Liberia allow her territory to be made a centre of aggression or conspiracy against other sovereign states’.”²⁴ Despite a continued relationship between the UNIA and the Liberian government over the next three years this message was a warning of the failure to come.

Garvey continued to pursue a program of re-colonization in Liberia from 1921 to 1924; however, the relationship between the United Negro Improvement Association and the Liberian government eventually soured and his efforts proved futile. In December 1923 Garvey sent yet another committee of Delegates to Liberia to impress upon the government the UNIA’s commitment to the economic and political growth of the nation. Meeting with President King in February 1924, the UNIA delegation was assured three colonies at Cavalla, Sino and Grand

²² Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 281

²³ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 282

²⁴ *ibid*, 297

Bassa, respectively, despite growing concerns from French and British governments regarding their vested interests in this African country. UNIA delegates returned from Liberia in April and presented an optimistic picture of the future. Following their homecoming Garvey sent a team of carpenters, mechanical engineers and builders back to Liberia to continue to establish a UNIA settlement.²⁵ Only a month after their grand send off, however, the “Back to Africa” movement was declared null and void after a damning issuance from the Liberian Consul General in the United States. Published in newspapers across the US was the obituary for Garvey’s re-colonization program.²⁶ It read:

No person or persons leaving the United States under the auspices of the Garvey movement in the US will be allowed to land in the republic of Liberia. All Liberian Consuls in the US are instructed and directed not to visa the passports of any persons leaving the US for Liberia under the direction of the movement²⁷

In spite of warnings from UNIA delegations, as well as from members of the Liberian government, Garvey was shocked and humiliated by the declaration from the Liberian consulate. Only weeks before the fourth International Convention one of the platforms of Garvey’s “Back to Africa” program had been compromised.²⁸ In response to the published declaration, UNIA Convention Delegates wrote to President C. D. B. King: “We, the convention, view with alarm and surprise the statement that is circulated by internal and other enemies of our race ... long may you live to do the right by our race. God save you and your beloved country is the prayer of our convention.”²⁹ The UNIA response was thus not anger, but rather desperate optimism.

Garvey did not blame the Liberian government for the declaration, but rather was outraged by the part played by European imperialism. In August the UNIA Delegation to

²⁵ *ibid*, 385

²⁶ *ibid*, 386

²⁷ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. X, 208

²⁸ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 386

²⁹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. X 224

Liberia discussed their experiences in Liberia at the fourth International Convention to convey to Garvey's followers the role of European intervention in the debacle. Delegates assured the crowd that they had made arrangements with President King for land in Liberia and blamed their ultimate failure on the interference of both French and English governments, saying: "So long as she remains undeveloped, Liberia supplies an argument for England and France and Italy and Spain that the Negro is incapable of self-government ... they must run the country until they have exploited all of its resources."³⁰ The UNIA spoke out against the French and British governments, rather than blame the Liberian government. By targeting French and British governments as the enemy of the black race Garvey deflected responsibility and blame. Additionally he created a universal opponent for the black community.

Failure in Liberia and increased legal trouble in the United States presented additional adversary for Garvey and forced the black leader to change his once-successful strategies. Despite public disappointment Garvey continued to advertise a one-way fare to Africa in the *Negro World* throughout 1924.³¹ Although Garvey eventually accepted the failure of his program, he consistently maintained that blame should be placed, not on Liberia, but rather on the governments of France and England. Speaking in Toronto in 1938 Garvey reflected on his experiences with the Liberian Program. As he had in the past, Garvey focused his discussion of Liberia on the interference of European governments. He explained:

The Liberian government was forced by the white man's propaganda, viz., France and England to repudiate the agreement entered upon as the result of this propaganda and so this plan was brought to an immediate close ... and from that time Liberia became a white man's country³²

³⁰ Ibid, 255

³¹ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 389

³² Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. X, 879

Although Garvey had hoped to create a Liberian settlement by the end of the year it was obvious that the UNIA would not be allowed to colonize Liberian lands. Garvey's imprisonment in 1925 prevented any further advancement in his "Africa for Africans" program. However, not even jail time could stop Garvey from promoting his aims. And thus, after failure in Liberia and his ultimate deportation from the United States Garvey altered his strategies and continued to endorse his "Back to Africa" movement.

Petitioning the League of Nations:

Garvey adjusted many of his strategies upon his deportation from the United States, but some of his tactics for securing an African homeland remained unchanged. One approach that Garvey consistently maintained was open communication with the League of Nations. Although Garvey's rhetoric was often demanding during the 1920s, he did employ negotiation strategies in order to advance his "Africa for Africans" program. One such way he did this was by appealing to the League of Nations. Garvey first wrote the League of Nations in 1921 and continued to petition the League of Nations after he was deported from the United States, while living abroad in Europe.

Garvey first petitioned the League of Nations in 1921, two years after the Treaty of Versailles. On June 28, 1919 the Treaty of Versailles was signed and as a result Germany lost her land holdings in Africa. The German colonies were consequently divided between the Allies – primarily Britain, France and Belgium. Garvey saw the loss of German colonies as an opportunity for the UNIA and thus petitioned the League of Nations following the second International Convention in August. He wrote:

Africa, by right of heritage, is the property of the African races,
and those at home and those abroad are now sufficiently civilized

to conduct the affairs of their own homeland ... we firmly believe that the League of Nations ought to turn over the entire portion of Africa to the representatives of the Negroes of the world that they have taken from Germany's possession³³

Garvey believed that black people should determine the division of their own nation and thus sought to intervene in Africa. Additionally, Garvey saw an opportunity to turn his "Africa for Africans" dream into a reality and thus petitioned the League of Nations for African land.

After his deportation in 1927 Garvey increased communication with international governments, however, he still communicated with the League of Nations. He petitioned this body again in 1928. From Geneva, Garvey wrote to the League of Nations with a set of fifty-seven demands of black men and women throughout the world. Many of these demands addressed questions of land, colonization and repatriation. In article 22 of the petition Garvey wrote:

Your petitioners are aware of the present existing state of affairs among their own kith and kin, in Africa, as regards the Land question, and its economic development, and aver that these their brethren in Africa do really and earnestly need the assistance of their own brethren abroad ... to assist in the proper development of their homeland³⁴

Garvey also highlighted the injustices experienced throughout African history, as well as the history of the slave trade in countries throughout the world in order to illustrate all that was owed to his people. In article 50 Garvey offered what he felt was a reasonable reparation to African descendents throughout the course of history. He wrote:

We also submit that the entire region of West Africa be brought together as one United Commonwealth of Black Nations, and placed under the government of black men, as the solution of the Negro problem, both in Africa and the Western World³⁵

³³ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. III, 739

³⁴ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. II (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 253

³⁵ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. VII, 266

In this way Garvey was consistent in his commitment to the “Back to Africa” movement, as well as his communication with the League of Nations. Rather than threaten the re-conquest of African land, Garvey looked once again to the League of Nations to develop an independent black nation. Petitioning this body in 1921 and again in 1928 Garvey hoped to actualize his repatriation plan.

Evolving Strategies: Restructuring Rhetoric and Improving Relations

For the most part, changed realities after his deportation caused Garvey to pursue new tactics in his effort to create a beachhead in Africa. After Garvey was deported from the United States he was once again able to espouse his ideas and pursue the aims of the UNIA, one of which was the success of the “Back to Africa” movement. Despite failure in the United States and Liberia, Garvey persisted in his pursuit of an independent black nation. However, upon his deportation and eventual move to Europe Garvey was forced to tailor his strategies to fit into a new context. Thus Garvey subdued his rhetoric and negotiated with foreign governments in order to achieve his goal of repatriation.

Traveling to England in 1928 Garvey continued to advance the “Africa for Africans” program. Garvey first spoke of his “Back to Africa” movement in the Royal Albert Hall, where he asked a small audience of his English followers: “do you think it is unreasonable, that we, the blacks of the world, should raise the cry of Africa for Africans?”³⁶ While Garvey’s demands remained the same, he altered his rhetoric after his deportation to encourage a constructive dialogue between the UNIA and European governments. Counter to past speeches, where he threatened violent action, Garvey continued by pointing to the responsibility of foreign

³⁶ Ibid, 194

governments. He declared it was the duty of imperialist nations “to decide what part of Africa they will place at the disposal of the natives.”³⁷ In this way, although Garvey continued to seek the creation of a black nation, he also tailored his strategies to his new European audiences. Garvey could not attack imperialism without alienating himself from British opinion and thus he appealed to the British government to make its own decisions regarding its African colonies.

Such changes in rhetoric and in strategy resulted from lessons Garvey learned in the United States, and were also a result of changes in time and context. While vehement rhetoric excited Garvey’s followers in post-war America, Garvey understood that it would not have the same effect in London during the Depression. Thus he no longer made overt threats nor demanded the entire continent of Africa. Instead his rhetoric was much more agreeable. During the latter 1920s and throughout the 1930s Garvey made little reference to violence. For example, in a letter announcing his speech at the Royal Albert Hall in 1928, he wrote, “if you are interested in the future of humanity; if you are interested in the future peace of the world; if you are interested in human justice ... you cannot fail to attend this meeting.”³⁸ Garvey’s emphasis was no longer on bloody battles, but rather on cooperation between the UNIA and international governments.

Similarly, Garvey no longer demanded that all African lands be taken from foreign nations, but rather insisted that it was the duty of imperialist governments to decide which lands they would release to the descendants of Africa. An article published in the *Pittsburgh Courier* in the same year described Garvey’s plan for the “Back to Africa” movement. It said: “Garvey began by outlining his aims, and insisting that he did not ask for all of Africa, but a part of it.”³⁹ Furthermore, in an interview with the *South African Outlook* in 1928, Garvey went so far as to

³⁷ *ibid*, 204

³⁸ Letter announcing Albert Hall Speech from the Office of the President General (May 1928)

³⁹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. X, 475

state, “We shall demand a part of Africa on which to settle. Where this will be, depends on what I hope will be friendly agreement with one of the European nations involved”.⁴⁰ Finally according to the *New York Times* Garvey “hope[d] to interview the colonial secretary with the view of acquiring part of the African continent.”⁴¹ Rather than seize African colonies from foreign governments, Garvey now hoped to obtain them through less aggressive means post-deportation. In this way although Garvey’s ideas remained consistent, he altered the terms and size of his demands.

By the mid-1930s Garvey realized the importance of cooperation. Thus the black leader persisted with his “Africa for Africans” program in a new manner. Yet, he never abandoned his claim for a black homeland. In a 1934 edition of *The Blackman* Garvey highlighted the benefits of colonization, writing: “Let the Negro take his stand and demand his share before it becomes too late ... all the Negroes of the Western Hemisphere should now think seriously about the proper scheme of colonization.”⁴² The following month Garvey repeated this sentiment. He wrote: “continents are yours, nations are yours, all civilization will be yours when you make up your mind to possess them.”⁴³ Nevertheless his tone was now conciliatory. Speaking in 1936 he said: “as leader of an important Negro movement I am not inclined to always be making enemies among Governments for my race rather than friends.”⁴⁴ He thus worked to negotiate with international governments, rather than alienate himself from them while pursuing his repatriation plan.

⁴⁰ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. V, 419

⁴¹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. VII, 187

⁴² Marcus Garvey, *The Blackman: A Monthly Magazine of Negro Thought and Opinion*, Compiled by Robert A.

⁴³ Garvey, *The Blackman*

⁴⁴ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, 702

“Africa for Africans” as a Nationalist Movement:

Much like Garvey used other nationalist movements to foster racial consciousness and black pride, he also used nationalist movements throughout the world to inspire his “Back to Africa” movement. Garvey employed this strategy heavily after his deportation from the United States because he believed that the success of other nationalist movements would encourage his followers to persist in their pursuit of an independent black nation. By highlighting the achievements of other nationalist movements Garvey hoped to instill the importance not only of racial pride, but of the “Africa for Africans” program within his followers.

Thus Garvey often highlighted the struggles and accomplishments of other nationalist organizations. For instance, Garvey maintained his dedication to the Zionist movement, not only to foster racial pride, but also to progress his “Back to Africa” movement. In 1937 Garvey wrote from London regarding the creation of a Jewish nation in connection to the development of an independent black nation and he wrote: “This recognition of the Jew may help the Negro force his argument for his free State. He has more right to a free State of his own in Africa than the Jew in Palestine, but the world is not prepared it seems to take the Negro seriously.”⁴⁵ Writing again from London in 1938 Garvey expressed his commitment to the Zionist movement. In an article published in *The Blackman* Garvey outlined the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine. He concluded: “we hope that whatever arrangements may be decided on, Zionism will not be destroyed, but that it will continue to grow until the Jew has really made a nation for himself.”⁴⁶ Garvey was invested in the success of the Zionist movement just as much as he was in the triumph of his own movement because he saw the formation of a Jewish state as a victory for black men and women as well.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 781

⁴⁶ Ibid, 898

Garvey was not only interested in the Zionist movement, but also emphasized the importance of other nationalist organizations as well. Speaking in Toronto in 1938 Garvey described the Indian independence movement. He said:

India says, we have been robbed, we have been outraged and we want to govern ourselves. It is a late cry but a cry that has come to the Indian within the last fifty years, because of the tremendous population of the Indians and because of the growth of the propaganda convincing the Indian that he should be free like the white man and yellow man. That propaganda has grown in such a way that they had to alter the constitution of India to give the Indian administration and governmental rights that he never had for the last two hundred years⁴⁷

Here Garvey referenced the Government of India Act, which mandated that India have a semi-autonomous provincial governments and one central Indian legislature.⁴⁸ As he did with the Zionist movement Garvey drew attention to the successes of Indian nationalism in order to inspire his followers to pursue the creation of *their* own nation.

Conclusion:

Garvey developed his “Africa for Africans” program as an extension of the first tenet of Garveyism. Upon coming to the United States in 1916 he took advantage of his large following in order to make his “Back to Africa” movement into a tangible reality. In the early 1920s Garvey evoked vehement rhetoric and negotiated with the Liberian government in order to advance his goal of repatriation.

The termination of Garvey’s negotiations with President King and Secretary of State Barclay and his ultimate imprisonment in 1925 drastically altered Garvey’s strategy for his “Africa for Africans” program. After his deportation from the United States Garvey re-evaluated

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 879-80

⁴⁸ *ibid*, 883

his approach, subdued his rhetoric and began increased negotiations with white governments. \ Garvey also continued to petition the League of the Nations and maintained his commitment to nationalist movements throughout the world. Although Garvey transformed some of his strategies post-deportation, others remained intact. Most importantly, however, Garvey consistently promoted his “Back to Africa” movement from his arrival in the United States throughout the deterioration of his movement, and indeed maintained his commitment to this objective until his death.

Chapter 7. The Pursuit of Economic Independence

The Message: The Importance of Economic Independence

Throughout his lifetime, Garvey stressed the necessity of fostering racial consciousness, as well as the importance of the “Back to Africa” movement. However, the Garvey movement also had a third aim - the development of an independent black economy – and in this Garvey was equally invested and consistent. Garvey believed that the development and growth of an independent black economy was essential for his movement because it would allow black men and women to rise above their white oppressors. Additionally financial success would force white peoples to respect their black neighbors and consequently encourage pride in the race. Garvey felt that black peoples throughout the world were discriminated against due to their lack of contributions to society and thus believed that the development of a black economy would eliminate prejudices, held not only by white people and their governments. Finally an independent black economy would also fund the “Back to Africa” movement. In this way the fostering of economic independence fit perfectly into the Garvey movement.

Many of Garvey’s goals for the UNIA were inspired by his travels. The development of a black economy was no different. In his youth Garvey first traveled throughout South and Central America, as well as to London. These different journeys exposed him to the economic suffering and oppression of black peoples throughout the world. While he was in Latin America – Costa Rica, Peru, Panama, Honduras, Ecuador, Columbia and Venezuela - Garvey was exposed to the exploitation and manipulations of black labor. Black men and women were paid very little, worked long hours and often had irregular opportunities. Furthermore, only white men held positions of power in the corporations for which black men and women worked.

Although Garvey traveled to various and diverse countries during his time in Latin America he continuously encountered the same abuses and ultimately the same problem. Having seen such things concurrently Garvey began to realize that black suffering was not an isolated, but rather an international, issue which could be alleviated if black people formed their own businesses, industries and eventually economy.

Garvey was not only influenced by his time in Latin America, but was also inspired to develop an independent black economy while living abroad in England. In London Garvey expanded his knowledge of universal black suffering while working with Duse Mohammad Ali. Ali not only taught Garvey about the rich history of Africa and its people, but also introduced Garvey to “the labor conditions of semi slavery and serfdom” which were still at work throughout the world.¹ Garvey was additionally exposed to the teachings of Booker T. Washington in London. Washington’s work had and would continue to have a strong impact on Garvey’s movement. Returning from London Garvey read Washington’s *Up From Slavery* and was instantly motivated to solve the race problem. After completing this influential book Garvey realized that black men and women had to become economically independent in order to be free. He thus began to develop strategies to build a black economy.

Although Garvey founded the UNIA in 1914, he did not officially develop an economic platform for his organization until moving to the United States. However, this does not mean that Garvey did not highlight the importance of economic development before this time. When Garvey finally returned to Jamaica in 1914, after his early travels, he formed the UNIA, which only initially aimed to “work for the general uplift of the Negro peoples throughout the world.”² By “general uplift” Garvey meant both the social and economic advancement of his people (at

¹ Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York: Collier Books, 1970), 9

² Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 11

the time Garvey had no interest in politics). In this way he emphasized the necessity of economic success; however, in the early years of his movement he adopted subtler strategies to do so. In the early stages of his movement Garvey emphasized the necessity of education and skills training in order to build the black economy. Writing in 1915, only one year after the formation of the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities' League, Garvey declared the following as an object of his organization. He wrote:

The following objects are now being carried out to establish educational college, for the further education and culture of our boys and girls and to train them to a higher state of application among the more advanced classes³

Garvey believed that education was the foundation upon which his financial program would be built. These infant stages of Garveyism were therefore the first hints of the economic program, which Garvey would later develop.

Garvey's desire to advance his economic program in Jamaica is what originally brought him to the United States. The writings and teachings of Booker T. Washington inspired Garvey to visit the United States as he was heavily influenced by Washington's *Up From Slavery* and sought guidance from the established black leader in starting an economic movement of his own. Garvey was especially interested in the Tuskegee Institute, the technical school formed by Washington as a means to bring black men and women into the American economy. In 1915 Garvey highlighted the necessity of technical and industrial skills training in Jamaica, writing, "the need for industrial training for intelligent productive labor, for increased usefulness in agriculture and the trades, for self-respect and for the purification of home life is apparent."⁴ He

³ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. I (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 104

⁴ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, 155

hoped to visit Tuskegee, learn from the great Washington, and build a similar school of his own in Jamaica in order to foster “self-respect”. Sadly, Washington died before Garvey ever had a chance to meet his idol in person. However, he still traveled to the United States to better develop his economic program.

Although Garvey did not intend to stay in the United States permanently, he remained for a little over a decade because he believed that the United States offered better opportunities for the economic uplift of his race. After moving to the United States Garvey expanded the objectives of the UNIA to incorporate the development of an independent black economy. In the UNIA Constitution and Book of Laws Garvey re-established the goals of his organization. Thus the aims of the United Negro Improvement Association evolved to include the establishment of “Universities, Colleges, Academics, and Schools for the racial education and culture of the people; to conduct a world-wide Commercial and Industrial Intercourse for the good of the people; to work for better conditions in all Negro communities.”⁵

Garvey adopted a variety of strategies in order to advance this aim of the UNIA. For instance, in the early years of his movement Garvey stressed the importance of education and sought to establish a technical school for black men and women in Jamaica. Settling in the United States, however, Garvey turned his attention to the growth of black ownership. During the early 1920s Garvey operated the Black Star Line, the first black-owned-and-operated steam line in world history. However, mismanagement of the BSL eventually led to his deportation. After being deported from the United States, Garvey yet again transformed his approach. Rather than the “up from the bootstraps” self-help approach of Washington, this time he appealed to international governments to provide financial assistance to black men and women.

⁵ Ibid, 257

From 1914 onward Garvey crafted a program aimed at working towards the economic uplift of black men and women. He utilized many strategies in order to develop a successful, independent black economy and was forced to adapt these approaches to changing times and various contexts. Despite variations in style, however, Garvey remained committed to the necessity of economic growth in the black community and continued to advance this aim until his death in 1940.

The Method: Gaining Economic (and other) Freedoms

Industrial and Agricultural Education

When Garvey first formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association and Conservation Association and African Communities League in Jamaica he stressed the importance of industrial and agricultural education in the development of a black economy. In the early years of the movement, inspired by the teachings of Booker T. Washington, Garvey believed that black Jamaicans needed to acquire tangible skills in order to elevate themselves from a position of oppression. One way in which Garvey hoped to instill such skills in black men and women was through his industrial farm initiative in Jamaica.

Garvey created the farm and industrial program to make black Jamaicans employable in the hope that they might elevate their economic and social status. In conjunction with the farm program Garvey hoped to open an industrial school, which would offer night classes to adults.⁶ Much like the Tuskegee Institute the farm initiative was intended to combine technical and agricultural education in order to give black men and women marketable skills. A newspaper article in the *Daily Chronicle* outlined Garvey's industrial farm initiative in 1915. Garvey's program was described as follows: "the object of the farm and institute will be to provide work

⁶ Tony Martin, *Marcus Garvey, Hero: A First Biography*, (Dover, Massachusetts: The Majority Press, 1983), 33

for the unemployed and to provide the opportunity of training young colored men and women for a better place in the moral, social, industrial and educational life of the country.”⁷ Thus Garvey believed that the economic uplift of black Jamaicans would come through an industrial and agricultural education and the acquirement of tangible skills.

A Shift to Industry and Economic Independence

Garvey’s focus on industrial and agricultural education shifted to a focus on entrepreneurship after he arrived in the United States. Although Garvey originally came to the US in order to gain experience in the development of a school like Washington’s Tuskegee, he remained because he believed that he could accomplish more in the United States. Specifically Garvey was convinced that more could be gained through the development of black owned and operated industry in the United States than could be gained from industrial and agricultural education in Jamaica. It was Garvey’s arrival and almost instant popularity in the United States that encouraged the black leader to begin the ultimately controversial Black Star Line.

Garvey altered his economic approach when arriving in the United States due to both the wartime and post-war environment, which defined the height of his success. Garvey entered the United States one year before the nation declared war on Germany; however, he remained long enough to reap the benefits of post-war society. Post-World War I America was not only categorized by its radical ideology and protests, but also by an economic boom. This boom in the economy inspired all Americans (both black and white) to hold large dreams for the financial future of the United States. W.P.G Harding, then Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, described this period of American economic history as “a time of fatuous optimism and of reckless extravagance, a period of expansion, speculation, extravagance, the like of which has

⁷ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. I, 128

never been seen in this country or perhaps in the world.”⁸ Garvey entered the United States at a prime time for economic development and remained as a direct result of the optimistic atmosphere the economy inspired.

This period of economic boom prompted Garvey to re-evaluate his own goals and consequently to expand his economic vision to encompass the foundation and growth of black industry, ownership and entrepreneurship. Although Garvey intended to advance the Jamaican farm initiative after returning from United States his aims were drastically altered upon exposure to the war-and post-war American economy. Garvey thus changed his focus from agricultural and industrial education to the ownership of independent black businesses. To Garvey this change in approach was completely justified in light of the new economic climate into which he entered. He reconciled his divergence from Washington by pointing to the sudden change in American society and the new economic opportunities offered by it. In this way he commented in the *Negro World* “if Washington had lived he would have had to change his program’ ... to offer ‘a correct interpretation of the new spirit of the new Negro.”⁹

Although Garvey’s approach to economic independence changed from a focus on education to increased ownership and entrepreneurial activity, his fundamental beliefs about the state of the black economy remained consistent. Garvey highlighted the necessity of education for the same reason that he urged black men and women to start, own, and operate their own businesses because he believed that black men and women could not demand social and political rights until they had contributed, financially, to society. Amy Jacques Garvey (Garvey’s second wife) wrote of Garvey’s economic aims in her book *Garvey and Garveyism*. She quoted her late husband, who said: “stop flattering the Negro about social equality, stop appealing to his vanity,

⁸ Ibid, xlvii

⁹ ibid, lxvii

and not to his good common sense; tell him to go to work and build for himself. Help him in the direction of doing for himself.”¹⁰ Regardless of approach Garvey continued to hold and share these beliefs with his followers throughout the course of his movement.

The Black Star Line was born from Garvey’s economic beliefs and additionally conceived from Americans’ optimism in the economy. Two years after arriving in the United States Garvey had established himself in the black movement. He spoke nightly on street corners in Harlem, appeared on the FBI’s radar and constructed a new constitution and book of laws for his organization. As Garvey’s popularity increased so too did his dreams for the UNIA and the larger movement. During this time Garvey began to seriously contemplate the acquisition of a ship for the BSL. In 1918, a year before Garvey officially announced the incorporation of the Black Star Line, he wrote to R. R. Morton, principal of the Tuskegee Institute, outlining his plans for the new economic venture. He declared: “I have plans by which means I will be able to raise a great deal of money from my race for shipping facilities ... I believe within a short period of time, I can raise money enough from my people for the purchasing of a steam ship for the usage of this Government and to the credit of my race.”¹¹ By 1918 Garvey saw his dream of black economic independence becoming a reality.

Garvey did not officially announce his plan for the incorporation of the Black Star Line until the end of World War I. On April 27th, 1919 Garvey held a convention at the Palace Casino in New York to announce the incorporation of the Black Star Line. Two months later Garvey wrote of this new black industry from his hotel room in Detroit. He declared: “Let us all unite

¹⁰ Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*, 21

¹¹ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. I, xlvii

and make 'The Black Star Line' a huge success, thereby demonstrating the ability of the Negro in this age of reconstruction to in some way take care of himself."¹²

Garvey's goals for the Black Star Line were broad and varied. Two months after the Black Star Line was officially incorporated Garvey outlined the objects of this black-owned-and-operated steam line. He wrote:

For the purpose of building for its own use, equipping, furnishing, fitting, purchasing, chartering, navigating, or owning steam, sail or other boats, ships, vessels, or other property, to be used in any lawful business, trade, commerce or navigation upon the ocean, or any seas, sounds, lakes, rivers, canals or other waterways and for the carriage, transportation or storing of lading, freight, mails, property or passengers thereon¹³

Garvey hoped to use the Black Star Line for a variety of different tasks, including, but not limited to freight carriers, luxury cruisers, and the like.

Garvey saw his new steam line working in two distinct ways towards the achievement of his overarching goals. First, he believed that the incorporation of a black-owned-and-operated industry would help to advance his economic goals and in so doing would encourage social and political progression. Of the growth (or lack thereof) of black industry Garvey wrote: "A race that is solely dependent on another for its economic existence sooner or later dies. As we have in the past been living upon the mercies shown us by others ... and have suffered therefrom, so will we in the future suffer if an effort is not made now to adjust our own affairs."¹⁴ Without its own industry Garvey worried that the black race would stagnate and that black people would be unable to elevate their status in society. Secondly, Garvey hoped that the new steam line would be used to transport black men and women to settlements in Africa and thus he wished to see the steam line used in conjunct with his "Back to Africa" movement. An article in the *New York*

¹² Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. I, 414

¹³ *Ibid*, 441

¹⁴ Garvey, *The Philosophy and Opinions*, 48

Call brought attention to this function of the Black Star Line. It read: “the Negroes are anxious to go back to Africa ... and create empire of their own as strong as that of the yellow and white man. To go back, they need ships.”¹⁵ Thus Garvey formed the Black Star Line with two goals in mind; one was the advancement of the black economy and the other was the repatriation of all black men and women back to Africa. Thus the Black Star Line worked in tangent with the other two tenets of Garveyism – the fostering of racial consciousness and the “Africa for Africans” program.

Garvey worked diligently to fundraise for the Black Star Line in the hopes that the BSL would be a joint economic venture between the UNIA and its members. Garvey wanted all black peoples to have a vested interest in the BSL and thus encouraged his followers to purchase stock in the new venture. Garvey needed two million dollars to finance the Black Star Line and thus appealed to black men and women to donate one dollar or more to fund the new business. Those who donated to the BSL were promised more than the satisfaction of participation, however; they were also assured of their ownership of the company. In an editorial letter written by Garvey in 1919 he declared that the Black Star Line would be “owned by the people ... not owned and controlled by any private corporation or individual.”¹⁶ Garvey hoped his followers would buy stock in the Black Star Line and consequently that the steam line would be “owned and operated in the interest of the people ... for the fuller economic and industrial development of the race.”¹⁷ By engaging black peoples in the development and ownership of the BSL Garvey stimulated a strong economic interest within his followers.

Although Garvey was committed to the development of an independent black economy, his lack of business sense and loyalty to unsound business advisors eventually made the Black

¹⁵ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. I, 411

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 413

¹⁷ *ibid*, 413

Star Line a failed endeavor. Between the purchase of the first BSL ship in 1919 and the ultimate dissolution of the Black Star Line in 1922, Garvey's business suffered numerous humiliations at the hands of deceptive captains and untrustworthy advisors. There is no doubt that Garvey lacked the necessary business skills and finances to make the Black Star Line a success and consequently it is no surprise the BSL ended in disaster. Yet Garvey believed that such failure should not detract from the intent of his aim. Reflecting on the BSL in August 1922 at a UNIA convention in New York, Garvey commented on the power of the Black star Line. He said:

We have not failed in the sense of failure. We have succeeded in the sense of our desire for success, as far as that success led us to launch the Black Star Line, which was based upon the desirability of bringing together the scattered millions of our race the world over ... It was the ideal that elevated the Negro from the stage of indifference and non-recognition to a position of recognition not only by the social world, but by the maritime world, the commercial world, by the industrial world¹⁸

In the context of post-war American society, as well as in light of Garvey's other aims, the Black Star Line was a justifiable economic venture. However, ultimately, the BSL had a much more symbolic significance than a tangible one.

Although the Black Star Line received the most attention and criticism from Garvey's contemporaries (as well as present day historians), the BSL was not the only industry founded and incorporated by Garvey. On January 23, 1920 Garvey also incorporated the Negro Factories Corporation. The Negro Factories Corporation was created in order to support black businesses such as black-owned factories, retailers, services, and the like. This corporation was intended to sustain the black economy. In June 1920 the Negro Factories Corporation opened the Universal Steam Laundry, three restaurants and two grocery stores (all in Harlem, New York). Since African Americans were restricted from applying for many of the same jobs as white Americans

¹⁸ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. IV (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 869

in the mainstream economy, the Negro Factories Corporation was a beacon of hope for the black community as it provided not only jobs, but also the possibility of ownership.¹⁹ Unfortunately, much like the Black Star Line, the Negro Factories Corporation also suffered from mismanagement and in 1921 declared bankruptcy. Although Garvey had large goals, he lacked the business skills necessary to make his dreams a reality.

Continued Commitment to Economic Independence:

Despite the ultimate failure of both the Black Star Line and Negro Factories Corporation, as well as Garvey's deportation from the United States, Garvey continued to advance his economic aims well into the 1930s. Garvey remained committed to this tenet of Garveyism because he believed that the development of racial consciousness, as well as the "Back to Africa" movement were contingent on the economic contributions of black men and women around the world. Thus he continued to speak and write of the importance of black industry and economic growth even as his movement deteriorated.

Garvey was arrested and eventually imprisoned for mail fraud charges in connection to the Black Star Line; however, his commitment to economic development did not wane after he was forced to leave the United States. Rather, Garvey's insistence on economic progress remained intense. In 1929 Garvey spoke to his followers about the necessity of economic independence. Such a need, he said, stemmed from the unwillingness of white businesses and governments to work with black peoples. He said: "Negro producers, Negro distributors, Negro consumers! The world of Negroes can be self-contained. We desire earnestly to deal with the rest of the world, but if the rest of the world desire not, we seek not." Garvey emphasized the

¹⁹ American Experience, People & Events: The Negro Factories Corporation [The Negro Factories Corporation, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_factoriescorp.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_factoriescorp.html)

importance of black ownership because he felt that the white world would not include black men and women in its economy.

Yet, Garvey also believed that unwillingness on the part of Whites could be blamed on black men and women themselves. This is a view that Garvey expressed early on in his movement and continued to communicate after his deportation as well. Garvey believed that the exclusion of black men and women from the “white economy” stemmed in part from the perpetuated self-perceptions of black peoples themselves. In 1933 Garvey wrote “Why I Hate the Negro”, an article in *The Blackman*, written from the perspective of a white man, to illustrate the necessity of black entrepreneurship. Writing on his race Garvey declared: “In industry, they have made no impression, in that there is nowhere, as far as I know, that there can be found any highly organized industrial system controlled by the Negro. To me, therefore, with an impartial mind, I see still a child, and that is why I hate him.”²⁰ Garvey believed that black men and women were responsible for this popularly held view. Thus he encouraged black peoples throughout the world to contribute financially to society in order to gain respect from white people and their governments.

Despite a decrease in followers and the continued weakening of the Garvey movement Garvey remained dedicated to his belief that economic power was the answer to the race problem. Again in the summer of 1935 Garvey highlighted the power of economic success. In an article entitled “Let the Negro Accumulate Wealth: It Will Bring Him Power”, he wrote:

Economic independence or wealth is the recommendation of a people to the full consideration of others. With all that may be said of the morals and ethics of our time, carrying with it the suggestion of rights, liberty and justice, the whole fabric is based upon economic wealth ... so it behooves the Negro to think in terms of economic expansion through which he may enforce the

²⁰ Garvey, *The Blackman*, December 1933

consideration that is necessary for his political, social and other betterment²¹

In Garvey's mind social and political rights were inherently tied to the development of industry, the accumulation of wealth and contribution to the general economy. If black people did not make economic advancements he did not believe black men and women would gain the respect necessary to obtain basic human rights. Garvey continued to express this belief until the day that he died.

The Great Depression and Garvey

After he was deported from the United States Garvey no longer attempted to form his own industry, but rather relied on the written and spoken word to achieve his aims. One of the topics on which Garvey wrote and spoke was the Great Depression. In his later years, Garvey utilized the economic depression of white governments as inspiration for black men and women to create for themselves, to develop their own industries and to contribute to their own economy. In an article entitled "Wake Up, Black Men!" published in *The Blackman* in February 1934 he wrote:

The Negro is on fertile ground, because he hasn't begun his work yet, so do not fall slave to the white man's depression, do not swallow the dose of medicine of unemployment. Get busy ... restore the Empire of the glorious Ethiopians. To do this would mean but very little unemployment but a continuous hustle and bustle, every man at his place²²

Garvey believed that the Great Depression could be used in the favor of black peoples throughout the world. He argued that this was the time for black men and women to come together to build their own economy and in so doing their own nation. He continued: "The

²¹ Ibid, July 1935

²² ibid, February 1934

workshop busy, the factory busy, the mart busy, the colleges and universities all busy – all leading to one ultimate end – that of a civilization, the highest product of man’s mind.”²³ Garvey once again called on his black brethren to seize this opportunity. One month later he wrote again of the Great Depression. He commented: “It is the function of man to seek what he wants and to possess himself of it; and so the advice is given out to every man of colour who thinks he is unemployed, to create, if necessary, his own employment. It is only a question of reliance and self-perception.”²⁴

Additionally, Garvey used the economic depression in the United States as an anecdote to highlight the danger of dependency. In August 1934 Garvey spoke in Jamaica. He first explained the economic problems facing black Americans and then warned, “Sad it is to-day to reveal the fact that there are millions of American Negroes, centless, dimeless, dollarless, with no hope of occupation so that they may be able to take care of their individual or their family needs ... they have had to depend upon other men for feeding them.”²⁵ Garvey believed that this dependency had severe psychological and cultural effects on the black race. Thus he continued his speech by pointing to the consequences of such a relationship. He said: “It deprives a man of his manhood, it deprives him of his character and his independence ... do you see how we are playing with our lives and have played with the destiny and integrity of our race?”²⁶ Garvey hoped that the Great Depression and its effect on black Americans would serve as a greater warning to black peoples throughout the world to avoid economic enslavement and instead foster economic independence.

²³ *ibid*, February 1934

²⁴ *ibid*, March-April 1934

²⁵ Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vol. VII (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), 594

²⁶ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. VII, 594

Economic Aid as a Partial Solution

As time wore on Garvey was forced to make concessions in his approach when he realized that black men and women were not achieving economic success on their own accord. Garvey continued to advance his aims for an independent black economy throughout the mid-to-late 1930s; however, he was no longer interested in creating black industry from black resources. Rather he changed his economic strategy.

Throughout the 1930s Garvey appealed to international and imperial governments in a campaign to solicit financial help for nations with suffering black populations. While Garvey maintained his commitment to the development of an independent black economy he realized that he needed the help of white governments in order to realize his dreams. Garvey's appeals for financial aid were primarily made in support of West Indian and African colonies. Garvey focused on colonies with high black populations because he felt that white governments would feel a stronger sense of responsibility to their colonies than they would to independent black nations. By appealing to white governments for financial aid Garvey believed he could stimulate the black economy. Thus economic aid would act as a partial solution to the financial problems faced by black men and women. Ultimately, however, the development of an independent black economy remained the final answer.

Garvey was especially vocal on behalf of Jamaica, his homeland and a colony of Great Britain. Returning to Jamaica in 1927, after his deportation from the United States Garvey re-focused his attention on his homeland and its economic plights. Speaking to a crowd in Kingston at the end of the year, Garvey commented on the economic status of black Jamaicans. He said: "when I look upon the people of this country, their naked condition – their dirty and

diseased condition – do you think that I, so long as there is a God, could keep my mouth shut?”²⁷

Garvey promised to help in the alleviation of black suffering by appealing to the British government, as well as his English friends. In the same speech he continued:

I am going to know the law of my country and constitutionally get what I want in my country; and since Jamaica is only a Dominion and has not the last word to say on anything affecting the interests of the people in the Dominion, I know where to go, beyond the little dominion to get the rights that are belonging to the people and I can speak to the English people²⁸

Thus having been deported from the United States Garvey pledged his full support to economic development in Jamaica.

One of the ways in which Garvey expressed his economic concerns was through his formation of and participation in the People’s Political Party. In 1929, after returning to Jamaica, Garvey formed the People’s Political Party, aimed at addressing the economic and educational problems within his country. The People’s Political Party was a novel political party in Jamaica because, for the first time in Jamaican history, it promised to defend the interests of the masses, rather than the elites. The aims of the People’s Political Party were to establish a larger modicum for self-government, protect native labor, determine a minimum wage, expand and improve urban areas, encourage the promotion of native industries, and the like.²⁹ These goals acted not only to alleviate the ills of Jamaican poverty in the black community, but also to increase communication and to solidify the relationship between the British government and Jamaican peoples. Garvey hoped that by establishing a mutual relationship with Great Britain the people (especially poor, black Jamaicans) could voice their concerns. Unfortunately, by

²⁷ Ibid, 22

²⁸ Ibid, 27

²⁹ Ibid, 329

appealing to the masses Garvey was alienated from the ruling class and thus destroyed his own political career. As a result the People's Political Party experienced little tangible success.

In addition to Garvey's political role he also made direct appeals to the British government on behalf of black Jamaicans. In the fall of 1930 these appeals paid off when the British government created and appointed "a Royal Commission to investigate the social, political and economic conditions of British West Indians."³⁰ Introducing the commission Garvey reiterated the major problem afflicting the Jamaican people. He "impressed upon the audience that the question in Jamaica was purely an economic one, and that an ordinary knowledge of economics would suggest that the various standards of living were not keeping with the best policy to be adopted in our civilization."³¹ Thus Garvey worked in conjunction with the British government in order to alleviate the economic problems of black men and women living in the West Indies.

However, Garvey hoped that the British government would do more for the people of Jamaica than establish an economic commission. Thus in addition to demanding political aid, he also asked for direct economic aid for black Jamaicans. In 1934 Garvey wrote to the British Secretary of State of the Colonies seeking financial aid for Jamaica. In this initial letter Garvey proposed a loan scheme by which Jamaicans would be able to re-build their economy. Garvey's plan was ill received; yet he remained dedicated to the economic tenet of Garveyism. In 1938, Garvey again wrote to the British Secretary of State of the Colonies,

I was instrumental in laying before your Department in November 1934 a scheme for Jamaica, involving the Government raising a loan of ten million pounds to assist in the development of the country and in finding work for its numerous unemployed³²

³⁰ *ibid*, 419

³¹ *ibid*, 421

³² Letter from Marcus Garvey to Rt. Hon. Malcolm McDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies (May 26, 1938)

Garvey ended his letter in warning, writing: “It cannot be said that it is the best policy of Government to hold down Colonial peoples by the full force of Imperial power.”³³

Although the British government ignored Garvey’s loan scheme his efforts were important because they denoted both a continuation in Garvey’s objectives and a change in his approach. The letter indicates that Garvey still emphasized the need for economic development in black communities. However, it also demonstrates that in the mid 1930s Garvey believed that white governments could and should help black men and women. This was a drastic change in Garvey’s thinking from the 1920s, when he criticized organizations such as the NACCP for accepting philanthropic donations from white Americans. Again on August 12, 1938 Garvey demonstrated that he was willing to accept aid from white governments. He drew attention to the economic conditions that existed in the West Indies and appealed to the British government for financial aid in this 1938 resolution, writing,

Be it resolved that a resolution be sent to the British Government drawing their attention that the Negroes of the West Indies, whilst they in the few have grown to be regarded as fit and responsible subjects of these parts, yet the great majority of Negroes are still under the most primitive form of civilization and economic conditions, bordering much on the slavery from which they were emancipated ... [we] beg to draw the attention of the British Government to such a condition, and further beg to solicit greater and better consideration of the rights of the said people³⁴

In this way, in the 1930s while Garvey still believed that black economic independence was necessary, he developed new strategies to achieve this goal, such as the solicitation of white governments.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Hill, *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, Vol. VII, 858

Conclusion:

From the early years of his movement to the time of his death Garvey was consistently dedicated to the development of an independent black economy. Having witnessed and heard of economic hardships throughout the world – in the West Indies, Latin America, the United States and Africa - Garvey was determined to uplift his people from their financial plight. Thus Garvey conceived of the third tenet of the United Negro Improvement Association: the growth of black industry, an increased in black ownership and the development of economic independence.

Although Garvey maintained his commitment to this aim throughout his life, he adopted new approaches to develop an independent black economy. In the beginning of his movement Garvey pursued a program much like Booker T. Washington's in the United States. He hoped to form an industrial and agricultural school for Jamaican blacks in order to develop marketable skills in black men and women. However, upon arriving in the United States, Garvey changed his focus from industrial and agricultural education to the growth of black owned-and-operated industry. In the United States Garvey formed the Black Star Line, the first black owned-and-operated steam line. After the failure of his business and his eventual deportation Garvey traveled abroad and once again altered his strategies to develop a black economy. In Latin America and Europe Garvey appealed to international governments to aid in the alleviation of black suffering. Although Garvey transformed his approach more than once throughout his life, he devoted himself to the development of an independent black economy because he believed that through financial success black people throughout the world would gain social and political rights.

The Conclusion:

Garvey as a Leader

History has painted a rather broad and ambiguous picture of both Marcus Garvey and his movement. While most of Garvey's contemporaries sculpted the black leader as a charlatan, historians have gone back and forth between labeling Garvey as a swindler and a savior. There is no doubt that Marcus Garvey was a complex and controversial figure of the early twentieth century. However, conclusions can be drawn from his movement. An evaluation of Garvey's life - including his life post-deportation - proves that Marcus Garvey remained committed to the three tenets of Garveyism until his death in 1940.

From 1919 to 1925 Marcus Garvey served as a pivotal leader of the black movement in the United States and also had a profound impact on black men and women throughout the world. Due to his arrest, imprisonment, and eventual deportation from the United States, however, he and his movement deteriorated. Although Garvey continued to devote himself to the UNIA outside of the United States both his organization and his movement struggled to survive.

However, this does not mean that Garvey did not attempt to revitalize the UNIA and its aims after being deported. On the contrary Garvey continued to devote himself to the three tenets of the Universal Negro Improvement Association – the fostering of racial consciousness, the “Back to Africa” movement and the development of an independent black economy – after being deported from the United States. Traveling throughout Latin America, the West Indies and Europe Garvey remained committed to advancing these aims; although his approach and his rhetoric altered, the main goals of Garveyism remained intact.

Little has been written on the consistency of Garvey because historians have focused much of their research and subsequent evaluations on the most climatic period of Garvey's movement, his time spent in the United States. In this way historians have often neglected the thirteen years of Garvey's life post-deportation in lieu of examining the decade he lived in the limelight. While Garvey's impact on United States history was great, his efforts outside of the United States should not be forgotten as they shed light on the Garvey movement as a whole.

Marcus Garvey has remained such an ambiguous and controversial figure in history because he has only been perceived through a ten-year lens. However, this is only a short frame of Garvey's life and should not solely be used to evaluate his actions. Rather speeches, letters and editorials written by Garvey from 1928 to his ultimate illness and death in 1940 should be examined in order to gain a true perspective on the consistency of Gavey's movement. These writings reveal that Garvey continuously pushed his followers to take pride in their race, repatriate to their ancestral homeland and adopt a program of economic independence. Though he pursued different means to achieve these goals throughout his life Garvey never strayed from the fundamental aims of his cause. Thus, although it is difficult to evaluate his character, it is easy to see that Marcus Garvey was a devoted servant and perpetuator of his movement and he remained so until his death.

Garvey was an impactful leader. He was a visionary with large dreams that attracted the black masses in a movement that has few comparisons. Unlike many leaders of his time, Garvey not only appealed to black intellectuals, but to the lower classes as well. He taught black men and women of all socioeconomic statuses to elevate themselves to a higher place in society. For the first time he made all black people feel that they were capable of making demands on white society. Prior to Garvey, the black movement was left to black intellectuals and white

sympathizers. Garvey opened the movement to all black peoples, allowing all members of society to be his followers.

Garvey was also a facilitator bent on the transformation of his race, including the self-perceptions, which damaged the black community. He believed that before black men and women could gain the respect of white society, they must first respect themselves. Thus Garvey inspired black men and women by utilizing the rich history and heritage of his people. Garvey spoke openly about the splendor of Africa, the accomplishments of its people and future success, which awaited all black people throughout the world. In this way Garvey was able to transform the ethos of black men and women, who for so long had been oppressed and manipulated.

Finally, Garvey was an inspiration to future leaders, such as Malcolm X, who would be unapologetic for their demands in the future. Although at times Garvey was aggressive, evoking violent rhetoric, he stirred future generations to be unafraid to advocate for themselves. Speaking of his father Malcolm X said: “The image of him that made me proudest was his crusading and militant campaigning with the words of Marcus Garvey.”¹ Garvey inspired future black leaders because he instilled within them a sense of confidence, unwavering dedication and strength.

¹ Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, (New York, New York: One World/Ballantine Books, 1992), 3

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