

MARCUS MOSIAH GARVEY - THE MAN. (1887-1940)

by Amy Jacques Garvey (Author of "Garvey et Garveyism" Editor. "The Philosophy et Opinions of Marcus Garvey").

Many persons have wondered what were the characteristics that made Marcus Garvey a personality to be reckoned with. How is it that this little black man, born in a small island could conceive the idea of redeeming the continent of Africa, and uniting a scattered race.

Heredity in the first instance played an important part in his life. He had a sympathetic heart, and an expansive mind. He was gentle and soft-spoken just like his mother ; but when provoked, or on a platform, the Maroon blood of his father would boil within him, and he would roar like a lion, projecting to the world the oppressions, fears, hopes and ambitions of his people.

Into this dynamic personality came ideas, and those ideas repeatedly projected themselves in his mind, until they developed into ideals-something that must be achieved, must be accomplished, then the driving urge from within forced action.

Black people must be fully free.

The appalling conditions of his people everywhere cried aloud for a change ; as he said in a speech-

"Everywhere I go, I see the poverty, misery and suffering of my people ; I ask where is the blackman's government ? I ask where is the Where is his flag ? Where are his Statesmen ? protect him from oppressions and planes to himself, there is NONE. And vowed to help him to free himself, and determine his own destiny ; for NATIONHOOD is the highest ideal of all peoples".

Thus he found his purpose in life and pursued it to the bitter end, without sparing himself and those who were loyal to him.

Serving his race became an obsession with him, and everything else had to fit into his work-life, children, and relatives must be expendable in this great Cause -embodied in his slogan- "Africa for the Africans, those at home and those abroad". His Motto- "One God ! One Aim ! One destiny !

Unequal Integration humiliates Negroes

As a solution to "The Negro problem" in America, Garvey was vigorously opposed to MISCEGENATION-race suicide- as a way out of the political, social and economic thralldom of the black minority.

He protested against the plea of Inter-racial organizations for INTEGRATION as a final goal. For, argued he, the Negro is not now equal to the whites who are in the majority, and in power- in all material phases of life ; so that integration, if achieved on an national scale, would be UNEQUAL INTEGRATION, and therefore humiliating to Black Americans during the process and they would be absorbed into the white society, and thereby lose their identity, and any distinct contribution they make to the greatness of the nation.

The Mission of the Garvey Organization.

The following are some excerpts from his Philosophy and Opinions, which disclose the workings of the mind of this man-

"The mission of the Universal Negro Improvement Association" is to arouse the sleeping consciousness of Negroes everywhere to the point where he will, as one concerted body, act for our own preservation. By laying the foundation for such we will be able to work toward the glorious realization of an emancipated race and a constructed nation.

"Nationhood is the only means by which civilization can completely proteed itself.... It is the highest ideal of any people- to govern themselves. While others are raising the cry for a white America, a white Canada, a white Australia, we, without reservation, raise the cry, and loudly too- for Africa's freedom

"To fight for African redemption" does not mean that we must give up our domestic rights for political justice and industrial rights. It does not mean that we must become disloyal to any government, or to any country wherein we were born. Each and every race outside of its domestic national loyalty has a loyalty to itself ; therefore it is foolish for the Negro to talk about not being interested in his own racial, political, social and industrial destiny. We can be loyal American citizens, or British subjects as the Irishman or the Jew, and yet fight for the redemption of Africa, and complete emancipation of the race.

Prophesy of Free Africa

"Out of the unsettled state and condition of the world" will come such revolutions that will give each every race that is oppressed the opportunity to march forward. The last world war brought the gain their freedom. The next world war will give Africa the opportunity for which we are preparing. We are going to have wars and rumours of wars. In another twenty or thirty years we will have a changed world- politically, and Africa will not be one of the most backward nations, but Africa shall be, I feel sure, one of the greatest commonwealths that will once more hold up the torchlight of civilization, and bestow the blessings of freedom, liberty and democracy upon all mankind.

The Urgency of Black Power

"POWER is the only argument that satisfies man. Except the individual, the race or the nation

has power that is exclusive, it means that, that individual race or nation will be bound by the will of the other who possess this great qualification.

"It is the physical and pugilistic power of Harry Wills that makes white men afraid to fight him".

"It was the industrial and scientific power of the Teutonic race that kept it for years as dictator of the economic and scientific policies of Europe.

"It is the naval and political power of Great Britain that keeps her mistress of the seas".

"It is the commercial and financial power of the United States of America that makes her the greatest banker in the world". Hence it is advisable for the Negro to get power of every kind. POWER in education, science, industry, politics and higher government. That kind of power that will stand out signally, so that other races and nations can see, and if they will not see, then FEEL. Man is not satisfied or moved by prayers of petitions, but every man is moved by that power of authority which forces him to do, even against his will". Thus spoke Garvey in the 1920's.

Did not harbour Hate.

It is remarkable that he did not harbour hate and bitterness in his heart against those who doubted him, turned Government informers, and others who used the press to make vicious, lying statements against him ; especially in the "Garvey must go" campaign in America, launched by his rivals, and which ended in his trial, imprisonment, and deportation. Said he, "If I kept piling up hate in my heart against those who daily seek my destruction, my spirit would be poisoned by it ; how then could I love and serve my people ? They can destroy my body, but they will never be able to break my will, or suppress my fighting spirit ; I have breathed it into the minds of millions of my

people the world over. No human agency can stop us. It is the will of God that this race of mine shall determine its own destiny, and take its rightful place as EQUALS among God's children".

Predictions for the West Indies.

The million dollar question asked by white Reporters from News Agencies and influential newspapers was- "Mr. Garvey how are you going to redeem Africa ?" Said he, in the year 1919 ; -

"Africa will be redeemed- regardless of the armaments of the Imperial Powers- by emancipating the MINDS of subjected peoples to realize and know that FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND ACTION are the inherent right of all people ; after that free thought will devise ways and means to battle its way to freedom.

"The small European Imperial nations will fight the Big Powers for more expansion in Africa and Asia ; when this happens the peoples of these continents will get the big opportunity to free themselves, as things will be too hot for Europe to hold what she has".

As far back as 1913 Garvey predicted the independence of the West Indies in an article in the "African Times and Orient Review, London, he stated ;

"As one who knows the people well, I make no apology for prophesying that there will soon be a turning point in the history of the West Indies, and that the people who inhabit that portion of the Western Hemisphere will be the instruments of many centuries will found an Empire on which the sun shall shine as ceaselessly as it shines on the Empire of the North today".

Human Rights Year- 1968.

Time rolls on, and in the year 1968- Human Rights Year, we find nearly all of the territories of Africa and the West Indies independent, and represented at the United Nations.

"The Negro problem" in America has become the whiteman's problem- how to stem the tide of BLACK POWER- which is generated by Black Unity- The basic power a small minority of oppressed people can achieve, in a majority white nation, that is to take action in their best interests.

THE NEW NEGRO is THINKING for himself, and by himself, and not in terms of being an appendage of a white society ; but with the backing of independent nations of his race and kindred spirit.

NUCLEAR POWER is misused to decimate people and destroy countries ; but BLACK POWER is generated to protect people from injustices and wrongs. White Supremists cannot tap its source. Although they can destroy some of its Exponents ; but it is in every black man, woman and child's heart to get his Human Rights, and to keep it, to maintain it, against all odds. It is the spirit of GARVEYISM, it is an IDEAL, a GOAL, A WORKING PHILOSOPHY, it MOTIVATES peoples to great achievements. It is ETERNAL in the breasts of peoples of African descent everywhere.

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