

## **THIRD INSTALLMENT**

### **A PRIMER: New Afrikan History of Struggle and Perspective**

“Where is the Black man’s Government?  
Where is his King and Kingdom?  
Where is his President,  
his country, and his ambassador,  
his army, navy, his men  
of big affairs? I could not find  
them, and then I declare, ‘I  
will help make them.’”

—Marcus Mosiah Garvey

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the Second Installment, we learned that the U.S. Supreme Court and the law in general has always supported the philosophy and ideals of white supremacy. It maintains the ideal of white dominance in every vestige of governing in this country. Its adherence to Manifest Destiny on the domestic front, and the Monroe Doctrine in the expansion of imperialism, American (i.e. white) exceptionalism establishes a no holds barred praxis of racial discrimination in America’s philosophy of superiority over all of humanity. In essence, America did not have a single personality espousing this ideal, like Adolph Hitler, rather America as a government represented these ideals in form and substance as Manifest Destiny. When considering the number of deaths around the world committed to “Make America Great”, under the disguise of a democratic process, establishing U.S. hegemony, one can envision the historical detriment of America on humanity. Empire building is deadly business, and this certainly is the business of America.

Hence, in *Dred Scott*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Afrikan people in America were “a subordinate and inferior class of beings.” In *Plessy*, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that Afrikans in America did not have the property rights of a white man, even if you were only one-eighth Black. Rather, to some degree, New Afrikans were still considered property. The Hayes / Tilden Compromise informs how white political power trumps the human rights of New Afrikans. This blatant denial of the right to determine one’s destiny, and the general unleashing of KKK terror, served to preserve white supremacy in its most virulent manifestation. By the 1920’s, after the Great Migration, white riots further exacerbated the violence that had been endemic in the South; it had now traveled North and West. This socio-economic and political condition created the environment for new thinking and aspirations to emerge in the New Afrikan communities, especially during a period that has been identified as the Harlem Renaissance. In fact, Harlem became known as the “the Negro capital of the world”, as Harlem became the headquarters of the NAACP, National Urban League, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Third Installment  
**The Red, Black and Green**

**The Harlem Renaissance**

**1919-1940.** During the period of white riots and violence in the North, efforts to deny Black folks access to work, housing, and various services for survival also found as a result of the Great Migration the emergence of a cultural convergence between the Black southern tradition and northern Black deliverance. This convergence in the heat of the battle to survive forged new expressions of Black life, where aspects of new fortunes were manifested in poetry, drama, essays, music, dance, fiction, sculpture and painting. These cultural expressions of new freedoms burst into a period of Black identity, beyond that of being a slave, sharecropper or “nigger”. Some of the notables of the Harlem Renaissance are Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, Charlie Parker, the incomparable Billie Holiday; the list is far too many to recount here, and certainly demands further research by the reader of this installment. However, this “awakening” in Black life, countering white suppression of Black life, established the aesthetics of a “fight-back” spirit, burgeoning an undeniable identity of self beyond the confines of white containment.

**Marcus Mosiah Garvey**

**1916-1925.** Euphemistically called the “Black Moses”, Marcus Mosiah Garvey arrived in Harlem in 1916 via a circuitous route, having traveled from St. Ann’s Bay, Jamaica, where he was born on August 17, 1887. An ambitious, bookish child, he knew nothing of racial prejudice until he was fourteen. In 1901, he was a printer’s apprentice, and left school around 1903, moving to Kingston in 1906 to work as a printer, becoming active in the printers union. He started his first newspaper at twenty-one. He left Jamaica in 1911 for Costa Rica and Panama, where he edited a newspaper before returning to Jamaica. He sailed to England in 1912 to further his education, taking classes at the Birkbeck College in England. After traveling through Western England, he returned to Jamaica in 1914. Having read Booker T. Washington’s “Up From Slavery”, and inspired by Washington’s seminal work on Afrikans in America’s drive to be successful out of the bowels of slavery, upon arrival to Kingston, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Afrikan Communities Imperial League. His primary objective was to build a Pan-Afrikanist organization to establish a government and a country of their own.

To raise money for these organizations, he moved to the U.S. with the intention of meeting Booker T. Washington, but learned he had passed away in 1915. Settling in Harlem, Garvey found the socioeconomic and political conditions ripe for his message of Black unity and pride. His experience traveling throughout the Caribbean and England informed him of the devastating subservient condition of Afrikan people, and his U.N.I.A. sought to address these concerns. In speeches in churches and on street corners, Garvey built a substantial following who believed in Black self-determination. On July 28, 1917, Marcus Garvey witnessed 10,000 New Afrikans—women, men and children—participate in a silent march down Fifth Avenue from 57th Street to 23rd Street in Manhattan protesting against racist violence, lynchings and general racial injustices. It should be noted that, during the period between 1877-1950, 4,000 Black men, women and children are reported to have been lynched. In 1919, the U.N.I.A. newspaper, “The Negro World”, founded in 1918, was reaching approximately 250,000 readers across the U.S.

and around the world. Garvey's speaking tours called Black people to unite and build a Pan-Afrikanist movement to return back to Afrika. In 1920, Garvey's U.N.I.A. organized the first annual international Black convention in Harlem, with all of the pageantry of a ceremonial inauguration. It was attended by 25,000 delegates, and Garvey called for redeeming Afrika with him as the provisional President, established a Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World, and introduced the liberation flag of the Red, Black and Green, being the official colors of Black nationhood.

However, critics of the "Black Moses" were unrelenting, including W.E.B. Dubois, who was critical of many Black Leaders of the era. Dubois' own brilliance would eventually assist in the founding, in 1919, of the First Pan-Afrikan Congress; Dubois lambasted Garvey for his Back to Afrika programs. Garvey's U.N.I.A. program had established correspondence with the government of Liberia to purchase land and develop trade as part of the Back to Afrika initiative. However, the Liberian government aborted the project when Firestone Rubber Company obtained a 99 year lease on a million acres of land for its rubber plantation.

During this period, on June 1, 1921, Tulsa, Oklahoma suffered horrendous racist violence when 3,000 Black people were massacred as a result of false allegations of a Black man raping a white woman. The Greenwood district of Tulsa was a 36 square block community of 15,000 New Afrikans, whose business community was heralded as the Black Wall Street. In a 12 hour racist orgy of murder, the rampagers destroyed 1,500 homes, 400 successful businesses, 21 churches, 21 restaurants, 30 grocery stores, two movie theaters, a bank, post office, schools, hospital, law offices, a half dozen private planes and a bus system, leaving 6,000 New Afrikans homeless. This was one of America's Black holocausts, as the Ku Klux Klan and the racist white community destroyed the equivalent of what might be considered a mini-Beverly Hills of what was known as "Little Africa". (Read: [Black Wallstreet: A Lost Dream](#), or see video [Black Wallstreet: A Black Holocaust in America!](#)). In 1925, the Ku Klux Klan had rallied its forces to conduct a 40,000 man march in the streets of Washington, D.C. (Sound familiar?) Given this history, it is no wonder that today the U.S. Government offers tacit acquiescence toward the resurgent KKK and neo-Nazi demonstrations.

Also, during this time Attorney General Palmer conducted raids against radicals, in fear of a Communist revolution. The "Red Scare" brought thousands of arrests, and several hundred immigrant radicals were deported. Two Italian Americans—Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti—were charged with committing a murder during a robbery to fund anarchist organizing; after being found guilty, they were executed in 1927. Each of these occurrences gave rise to nativism and racism, not unlike what is being confronted today under the Trump administration.

Therefore, it was only a matter of time before government forces, particularly J. Edgar Hoover, would direct attention to Marcus Garvey's U.N.I.A., infiltrating Garvey's organization with provocateurs. Funds for the organization began to be mishandled, leading to a mail order fund-raising effort for one of the major projects of U.N.I.A., the Black Star Line shipping initiative. The Black Star Line was one of several business initiatives of U.N.I.A. to develop economic independence for the Back to Afrika movement. Being unable to charge Garvey with any other "crime", he was given trumped-up charges of "mail fraud", allegedly for selling shares in the mail. He was convicted of a single count and sent to federal prison in 1923. On July 24, 1923, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals denied Garvey's appeal for bail, he having been denied bail by the trial judge after his conviction (See *Garvey v. U.S.*, 292 F. 591 (1923)). The

Second Circuit held that the issues to be raised on appeal were not sufficient to believe Garvey's conviction would be reversed. The Court held that the weight of evidence against Garvey, subject to informants' testimony, and he representing himself during trial, was not persuasive enough to grant release on bail pending appeal. It must be understood Garvey's trial was filled with errors, as there was no proof he knew of the fundraising (scheme) operations for the Black Star Line, nor the selling of shares for \$5 per share. In his appeal, the Court, on February 2, 1925 (see *Garvey v. U.S.*, 4 F.2d 974 (1925)), acknowledged that, of the 11 count charges against Garvey, he was found guilty of a single count, and all other defendants were acquitted. It is more than obvious the U.S. government wanted to get rid of Marcus Garvey because he galvanized the New Afrikan population into a worldwide, six million strong movement. (This gives substance to J. Edgar Hoover's FBI Cointelpro goal to prevent "(2) the rise of a messiah who could unify and electrify the masses). On reading the Court's decision in denying Garvey's appeal, it is indisputable that he was targeted, no differently than many of the Cointelpro convictions of today's political prisoners. Marcus Garvey was sentenced to 5 years, and served approximately three years before being deported to Jamaica in 1927.

Completing his sentence, Garvey was sent to Jamaica, and soon thereafter traveled to England in an effort to resurrect U.N.I.A., but the times had changed in his absence, and his Back to Afrika appeal fell on deaf ears. He then traveled to Canada and the Caribbean to lecture, write and edit newspapers and journals. Having returned to London, in 1937 he began his School of Afrikan philosophy, training several young men through classes and correspondence courses to disseminate his teachings. His sons and wife joined him, but returned to Jamaica within a year. In January 1940, Marcus Garvey suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, resulting in partial paralysis. On June 10, 1940, at 53 years old, Marcus Garvey joined the ancestors and was buried in London. In 1964, Marcus Garvey's body was repatriated to Jamaica and reburied as a hero.

Marcus Garvey and U.N.I.A. were unparalleled at reaching the heart of New Afrikans' aspirations for freedom from white supremacy and violence. However, the narrow nationalism of Garvey's movement was hamstrung in its pragmatic application of manifesting a liberation determination. Because of narrow nationalism Garvey made serious errors, one being meeting with the Ku Klux Klan, an error similarly made by Elijah Muhammad, another "race man" who, like Garvey, possessed a narrow nationalist philosophy in building his Nation of Islam movement. But what is undeniable is that Marcus Garvey captured the imagination of oppressed New Afrikans. By recognizing the debilitating socio-economic and political conditions that New Afrikans were suffering from, he created an opportunity for his brand of Pan-Afrikanist philosophy to take root. Marcus Garvey became the inspiration of many revolutionary nationalists, including Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah, who said reading "The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey" "fired" his "enthusiasm", very similar to how Marcus Garvey was inspired by Booker T. Washington's "Up From Slavery". El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X), is reported to have said, "Every time you see another nation on the Afrikan continent become independent, you know Marcus Garvey is alive." Earl Little, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz' father, was a stern adherent and supporter of Marcus Garvey, resulting in his death at the hands of the KKK; and El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz was born in 1925, the year Marcus Garvey was deported. Marcus Garvey's contribution to Afrikan identity came at a time when the Harlem Renaissance was establishing a Black cultural identity divorced of white supremacist influence. The liberatory determination of Marcus Garvey and U.N.I.A. is indeed universal under the flag of the Red, Black and Green, the flag of revolutionary nationalism of New Afrikans. In the end, Marcus Garvey conveyed the idea that Black people were men and women who are able to

create, originate and improve, and thus make an independent racial contribution to the world and civilization.

### **Epilogue**

This Third Installment offers insight into the indomitable spirit of Black people who, despite over 400 years of dehumanization, brutality and murder, enduring pernicious hatred for their very existence, create cultural dynamics that strengthen their capacity to more than survive, but to strive and prosper. Obviously, today's gentrification of Harlem is more than the destruction of a Black community, it is a whitewashing of history and the displacement of a people, something not new when it comes to Black monumental contributions in America. (Remember Tulsa!) The Harlem Renaissance was more than an era, it was the collective expression of a struggle to spiritually and culturally defeat white oppression. Like the origin of Rap emerged out of the burning ravages of the Bronx, Jazz emerged out the Harlem Renaissance, bridging the Southern blues with the anguish of Northern survival, challenging the co-opting of Rhythm & Blues merging with Rock & Roll. The improvisation of Jazz screamed from a place that was transitional and transforming, as the writers of the Harlem Renaissance explored the depth of Black aspirations for freedom and truth.

These socio-cultural, economic and political (r)evolutions were born out of the Southern migrations, finding the same fights in the North, thus creating an environment and the fertile ground for Marcus Garvey to plant his seed of nationalism, espousing and propagating a Back to Afrika aspiration. His philosophy and belief in One God, One Nation, One Destiny resonated and captured the imaginations of Black people who wanted to believe returning to Afrika would be their salvation. Six million Afrikan people heard and joined the U.N.I.A. movement, the greatest organization of a Pan-Afrikanist determination ever. In fact, W.E.B. Dubois eventually had to admit he was too critical of Marcus Garvey, especially in terms of forging a Pan-Afrikanist movement. Needless to say, the ideal of building a Pan-Afrikan philosophy, cultural aspiration and movement continues to be a prominent political projection for New Afrikans. However, the future of a Pan-Afrikan determination is more likely to forge initiatives toward developing dual citizenship between New Afrikans and an Afrikan nation-state (perhaps Ghana), similar to some Jews' dual citizenship with Israel. W.E.B. Dubois, having been critical of Marcus Garvey, is now known as a major progenitor of Pan-Afrikan Congresses, and he elected to be buried in Ghana. But not even he was able to inspire Black/Afrikan consciousness as did the indomitable Marcus Mosiah Garvey!!!

For Black folks, these were the Real Roaring 20's!!!

Remember: We Are Our Own Liberators!

Rev. Love & Unity

Jalil Abdul Muntaqim

Sullivan Correctional Facility

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