

**Inner Wars: The Intra-Racial and Class Conflicts that Crippled the Garvey
Movement in Jamaica and the United States**

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The Golden Age of Black Nationalism reached its peak in America in the 1920s.¹ During this period, the two leading figures of the movement were Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois. They shared visions of racial uplift and tried to implement programs they both felt would be most effective in advancing the lives of blacks and subsequently earning African-Americans equal rights within society. Their visions and ambitions were greatly influenced by their polar opposite-like backgrounds and upbringings eventually leading to a competing school of thought between them. Their rivalry that had become very personal and quite public by late 1920 was played out in the printed press. The men used their respective newspapers to launch personal attacks aimed at invalidating each other's influence in the black community. Du Bois through the *Crisis*, the official newspaper of the NAACP, called on his readers to carefully scrutinize Garvey because he felt "his methods are bombastic, wasteful, illogical and ineffective and almost illegal."² Garvey used the official organ of the UNIA, the *Negro World*, to fire his own attacks at Du Bois dismissing him as an elitist who was out of touch with the black masses: "We find that he [Du Bois] only appreciates one type of men, and that is the cultured, refined type who lingers around universities and attends pink tea affairs."³ The well-documented Du Bois-Garvey feud became legendary and stands next to another notable Du Bois dispute involving Booker T. Washington as one of the most prominent black intellectual conflicts in history.⁴

¹ Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) Moses in his book contends that the Golden Age of Black Nationalism began with the Compromise of

² Du Bois, Jan 1921, editorial in *Crisis* newspaper. Taken from the website, BlackPressUSA.com. An online article by Todd Steven Burroughs, 'A LUNATIC OR A TRAITOR': *Du Bois vs. Garvey in the Op-Ed Pages* http://www.blackpressusa.com/History/Timeline_Essay.asp?NewsID=119

³ Garvey, Jan 1, 1921, editorial in the *Negro World* newspaper. Taken from the website, BlackPressUSA.com. An online article by Todd Steven Burroughs, 'A LUNATIC OR A TRAITOR': *Du Bois vs. Garvey in the Op-Ed Pages* http://www.blackpressusa.com/History/Timeline_Essay.asp?NewsID=119

⁴ Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1972) 58-59

The Du Bois-Garvey feud was not unfamiliar territory for Garvey who had been involved in several highly publicized battles with members of the black intelligentsia that began during his earlier years in Jamaica. In fact, the dispute helps to illuminate a key source of weakness that would follow Garvey throughout his career and even contribute to the downfall of his movement. Garvey was unable to form a strong enough alliance with the black elite and often found himself entangled in controversy and conflict with those who yielded significant power within the black community. He publicly endorsed the British crown and praised European colonization. At the same time, he sought to bring about more rights for the West Indies and ensure adequate representation of the islands among the colonies of the British Isles by calling for a West Indies Federation that would create a united Caribbean self-governing body. Garvey also adopted a Washingtonian philosophy by promoting the ethic of success and he encouraged poor Jamaicans to become more self-reliant by working to improve themselves through education and industry. Garvey's abrasive style often infuriated the black power structure in Jamaica and consequently, he was frequently involved in public disputes with some of its prominent members. In the United States, the focus of the Garvey movement became a push for equality and black identity. His movement became defined by his famous capitalistic pursuits as he encouraged enterprise and economic prosperity as the way toward racial uplift. In this new arena, Garvey again found himself pitted against members of the black intelligentsia who took issue with not only his rhetoric but also his methods. At each turn, Garvey's movement failed largely because of his inability to fully capture the support of the black elite.

Most scholarly work about Marcus Garvey has focused mainly on his work in the United States with a mere mention of his early life in Jamaica. Leading Garvey scholars have

centered their research primarily on the failures of the Black Star Line, Garvey's unsuccessful back-to-Africa campaign, and Garveyism's influence on future black nationalists organizations. These historians have concluded that Garvey left Jamaica in 1916 simply because he wanted to raise money for his struggling program, The Universal Negro Improvement Association. They all seem to agree that his intentions were to embark on a speaking tour and then return to the island to resume his work with the UNIA. However, as has been well documented, Garvey's arrival to the United States drastically changed his course and the future of the Jamaican branch of the UNIA.

For more than a half century, historian Edmund David Cronon's research on Garvey has stood out as being the premier work of Marcus Garvey. To date, Cronon's book, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* ranks as one of the most extensive examinations of Garvey and his movement some fifty-four years after its publication.⁵ Cronon's book was first published in 1955 ahead of wide-scale African decolonization and independence. This could help to explain his less than flattering portrayal of Garvey who he felt was an incompetent leader from the onset and attributes the failures of the movement largely to the fact that from the start Garvey was impractical in his ambitions. Cronon asserts that Garvey was unrealistic to believe that he would be able to lead a mass exodus of blacks back to Africa especially in the face of post World War I European colonization. The secondary sources used in Cronon's book come largely from rival newspapers of Garvey and this could add to why Cronon adopted a stern tone. While much of his tone is critical, Cronon does credit Garvey's dream of wanting to restore pride and dignity

⁵ Edmund D. Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1955)

and to empower his people with a sense of appreciation for their culture as sewing the seeds for future Black Nationalist movements.

Cronon's book however, lacked a thorough examination of the issues that led to Garvey's failure in his attempts in Jamaica. Beyond simply attributing his failures to his inability to raise funds to support his program on the island, there is minimal discussion and interviews with some of the UNIA members in Jamaica and Cronon condenses Garvey's upbringing and early work in his country to a very short chapter. On the other hand, Cronon does provide a very thorough background of the social climate existing in Jamaica allowing the reader to understand the world in which Garvey then lived. Cronon's detailed analysis into the unique and complex racial and social hierarchy of the people of the British West Indies allows the reader to remove to understand racial relations in a British West Indies- Caribbean context.

Where Cronon is critical of Garvey, another noted scholar, Theodore Vincent is far more sympathetic. Vincent's work, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement*, praises the efforts of the Jamaican leader and directly blames European colonization for the failures of Garveyism.⁶ Vincent's book refutes earlier assertions by Cronon that charge that Garvey was trying to escape the harsh realities of racial oppression in the United States choosing rather to focus on African colonization and race redemption.⁷ It should be noted that Vincent's work was published in 1972 in the post civil rights movement and in a climate where political and social protest were favored, if not encouraged. Vincent contends, that the Garvey movement remained committed to a domestic racial equality program noting that once Africa had become free of colonization, they would be better able to aid blacks in the US in their fight for

⁶ Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement*, (Berkeley: The Ramparts Press, 1972)

⁷ *Ibid*

equal rights. Vincent's study of Garveyism looked at the UNIA and the members of the organization and established how diverse in objectives the various chapters were.⁸ Like Cronon however, Vincent's work primarily focuses on Garvey's life in the US and there again is very little discussion or engagement in Garvey's work and rise in Jamaica.

Judith Stein's book, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*, takes a more balanced look at Garvey and the UNIA.⁹ Stein accepts Garvey's sympathy toward the black masses particularly the working class but she contends that his failure stemmed from the fact that he too was out of touch with the people whom he wanted to lead.¹⁰ Like his contemporaries, Stein felt that Garvey had also become victim of the elitism that separated black leaders from the masses. Stein also insists that the UNIA and other Pan-African movements failed in the 1930s because they refused to adopt working-class modes of organization from boycotts to demonstrations. Stein is less damning of Garvey's failures instead she assigns many of his shortcomings to failures in the history of racial progress.¹¹

The most groundbreaking work done on Garvey and the UNIA is perhaps the ten-volume collection of the *Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, edited by Robert A. Hill.¹² The volumes contain a chronologically detailed account of Garvey and the UNIA. Hill has compiled thousands of primary documents ranging from articles written by Garvey, speeches he delivered, charges levied against him by some of his critics as well as formerly classified F.B.I. Files about Garvey and the organization. The work

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus of Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1986)

¹⁰ Stein,

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers Vol. I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) edited by Robert A. Hill

allows the modern historian to dive into Garvey's life from the very beginning straight through to his death in 1940 and draw their own conclusions about him.

This collection uncovered new and vital information unknown to earlier historians. *The Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Papers* are perhaps the most important resource available to the modern historian and its groundbreaking work has made it the premier work on the Garvey movement. Through these papers, the modern historian is able to track the transformation of Garvey from an ambitious street orator in Jamaica to his rise to worldwide fame and his ultimate fall from grace.

Garvey's legacy has been varied and inconclusive. While some scholars have regarded him as a "quixotic" promoter of a flawed back-to-Africa campaign, others have simply dismissed him as an over zealous radical with ambitious ideas. His questionable tactics and outlandish behavior made him his own worst enemy at times and his business choices were often less than prudent. But Garvey's commitment to improving the lives of blacks across the globe and uniting the people of the African Diaspora was constantly at the forefront of his pursuits from the founding years of the UNIA in Jamaica through his time in America and his failed attempt at a Black steam line. Through an examination of the early Garvey movement in his home country, it can be recognized that he faced a lot of the same opposition there that he would later meet during his time in the United States. The problem for the movement had consistently been the inability of its leader to capture the support of the black intelligentsia. In Jamaica, Garvey attempted to create a black self-governing body that could exist within an imperial context. Though the social and political framework in America altered his course and the circumstances he found there differed substantially, Garvey faced the same uphill battle being taken seriously by the black intelligentsia. This recurring opposition greatly impeded

the efforts of the movement and significantly contributed to Garvey's failure in Jamaica and his ultimate repatriation from America.

Much of Garvey's worldview was influenced by his childhood and early upbringing. He was born in the small northern coastal settlement of St. Ann's Parish on August 17, 1887.¹³ Garvey's father, Marcus Sr., was a self-educated man who had gained success as a stonemason but later because of bad debts found himself poverty stricken and as Garvey would describe: "He once had a fortune; he died poor."¹⁴ The Garvey family bore eleven children, but only Marcus Jr., and his sister, Indiana, would live to adulthood. The family built their home on land occupied by whites and as a child Garvey studied and played with white boys and girls. As Garvey would later attest, he was never made to feel any different from his white peers as a child, "I was never whipped by any, but made them all respect the strength of my arms."¹⁵ He later recalled an event from his teen years that made him aware of the divisive nature of race and color: "At fourteen my little playmate and I parted. Her parents thought the time had come to separate us and draw the color line." According to Garvey, his white friend was instructed by her parents to not write or attempt any contact with him because he was a "nigger."¹⁶ The experience he recounted, opened his eyes to the harsh reality of life and he came to realize that, "there was some difference in humanity, and that there were different races, each having its own separate and distinct social life."¹⁷ This chapter in his life contributed to Garvey's desire to rebuild the racial self-respect and pride in the black heritage.

¹³Marcus Garvey, an article entitled, "The Negroes Greatest Enemy by Marcus Garvey." Printed in *Current History*, 18:6 (September 1923), pp. 951-957. In *Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 3

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 4

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

Subsequently, the demographic composition of Jamaica also helps to understand Garvey's outlook on racial and intra-racial relations in the West Indies. At the time of his birth, the population of Jamaica was 600,000 and was comprised of roughly two percent Anglo-Saxons, seventy-eight percent black or Negro and eighteen percent mulatto, or colored.¹⁸ The mulatto group often referred to as a buffer between the two unmixed races, played a significant role in the social landscape of Jamaican and West Indian life. This group saw a steady increase in its size over the years, while the white population steadily declined. The racial situation in Jamaica differed from that of the U.S. in that there was a separate status designated to the "mixed blood" or mulatto group. Cronon summarized the breakdown of the racial demographic as follows: the small white population comprised the social aristocracy of the island, the mulattoes formed the middle-class, and the blacks comprised the laborer force. Cronon noted, "The lightest of the mixed bloods, often called "Jamaican whites" because they consider themselves white, generally possess most racial prejudice."¹⁹ This group Cronon added also acted to protect their status as "almost white" and as a result they often looked down on "their more Negroid brothers."²⁰ While there was no fixed color line (i.e. blacks were able to move into this colored group), Cronon noted that the issue of color was ever-present in island thinking. As a result, "would be" leaders in the black community were often drawn into the mulatto group through marriage or through economic and social advancement.²¹ This group presented a challenge for Garvey and throughout the early years of the UNIA in Jamaica he was often engulfed in feuds with some of its members who he described as "colored-black-white men who did not want to be classified as negroes but as

¹⁸ Cronon, 9

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 10

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Cronon, 10

white.”²² Garvey declared, “They hated me worse than poison. They opposed me at every step,”²³ But Garvey would not be deterred because as he described, “I had a large number of white friends, who encouraged and helped me.”²⁴

Through a relative Garvey became an apprentice at a print shop, and was quickly elevated to the rank of printer. By the age of twenty he became a master printer and eventually he was promoted to a foreman at one of Jamaica’s largest printing firms.²⁵ In 1907, much of Kingston was destroyed by a fire and earthquake. Jamaica’s economy was devastated and workers saw their wages fall considerably, while a scarcity of commodities led to a rise in prices and a decline in the purchasing power of workers. The Printer’s Union was one of the most powerful labor organizations in the country and quickly led a strike demanding higher wages for its workers. Garvey, unaware of the planned strike, was taken by surprise when his men walked off their jobs. In a show of support, he followed suit and joined his workers who eventually elected him to lead the strike.²⁶

This was Garvey’s first attempt at being a union organizer, and as the chief representative of the striking workers, he was successful in negotiating a compromise that led to the end of the revolt. While most of the workers returned to their jobs, Garvey, as the only foreman to join the strike, found himself blacklisted.²⁷ Unable to find work in Jamaica, Garvey left his home and headed to Central America. His involvement with the labor union during the strike in Jamaica made him aware of the challenges that plagued the black working population and he saw first-hand how despite blacks being the overwhelming majority; their

²² Garvey, “The Negro’s Greatest Enemy,” in *Marcus Garvey Papers, vol.1, 6*

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Cronon, 13

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

lives were less than equal to the mulatto and small white, mainly privileged groups. He recognized that European colonization of Jamaica and other Caribbean nations had rendered the native black populations to an almost second-class status with very little chance of ever achieving equal economic power.

Garvey's travels through Latin America brought him to encounter similar conditions in that region. In Panama he saw black workers on the Panama Canal working in inferior status and he made similar observations across much of Central and South America including Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Colombia and Venezuela where again he witnessed black workers being exploited in the mines and tobacco fields.²⁸ Eventually, Garvey's discontent at the state of his people landed him in Europe. While in London, he came into contact with several African scholars including Duse Mohamed who helped to spark a keen interest in him to learn more about European Imperialism of Africa and the culture of the people from that region. His time there also him introduced the Pan-Africanism movement.²⁹

By the end of Garvey's travels in 1914, he concluded that the state of black people was the same everywhere. Garvey wrote, "I went traveling to South and Central America and parts of the West Indies to find out if it was so elsewhere, and I found the same situation. I set sail for Europe to find out if it was different there, and again I found the stumbling block — "You are black."³⁰ Now awakened to the realities of his existence, Garvey became determined to find a way that he could form unity within the Diaspora and create a way to uplift his people and move them forward. When he returned to Jamaica in 1914, Garvey established the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA).

²⁸ Cronon, 15

²⁹ Cronon, 15-16. Duse Mohamed was a French Egyptian born editor working in London. He was the editor of the *African Times and Orient Review* journal and later became an editor for the *Negro World*. He was an early influence on Garvey and a supporter of Pan-Africanism

³⁰ MG and UNIA Papers, article titled, "The Negro's Greatest Enemy," vol. 1, 5

Among its core objectives, the association sought to promote the Spirit of Race Pride and Love; to establish Commissionaries in the Principal Countries of the World, “for the Protection of all Negroes, Irrespective of Nationality;” and to Establish universities, colleges, and secondary schools.³¹ Garvey’s ideas were well received and he was quickly able to earn support for his program especially from the white elite and among many poor black Jamaicans.

What made Garvey’s message somewhat appealing to the white population was that he often painted European colonization in a positive light. It is hard to determine Garvey’s true intentions in this regard, but it is important to note that often his recollections of European colonization were inconsistent and at times exaggerated. In some of his writings, Garvey injected images of the relationship between the white Europeans on the island and the black population as being benevolent and amicable. In an article that first appeared in the London newspaper, *The Tourist*, titled “The Evolution of the Latter-Day Slaves Jamaica, A Country of Black and White,” Garvey even charged that Jamaica afforded equal rights to all her citizens regardless of class and color.³² He asserted that the fight to abolish slavery in the colonies was an effort spearheaded by white men who recognized the brutality and injustices that it created. Garvey wrote to his readers describing how whites answered the cries against slavery thus leading to the emancipation of slaves in the colonies, “The outcry reached the ears and hearts of all noble-minded Englishmen. Buxton, Clarkson, Wilberforce, and dozens of other zealots, fought the negroes battle, and on August 1st. 1838, the slaves of Jamaica were declared

³¹ *MG and UNIA Papers*, a pamphlet entitled, *A Talk with Afro-West Indians. The Negro Race and its Problems*, vol.1, 62. There were a total of nine aims and objectives listed in the pamphlet

³² Garvey, article titled, “The Evolution of Latter-Day Slaves Jamaica, A Country of Black and White.” Originally printed in the *Tourist*, London (19 June 1914): 61-63. Reprinted in Jamaica in the *Gleaner*, Monday, 13 July 1914. In *Garvey and UNIA Papers*, vol. 1, 42

free.”³³ Garvey also added that the black population in Jamaica’s ability to evolve into such productive citizens was owed largely to “the benign influence of English justice, liberality and philanthropy.”³⁴

In that same article Garvey compared the peaceful and tranquil circumstances of blacks in the West Indies to the turbulent and hostile situation that existed for blacks in America. In expanding further on the difference in circumstances between Jamaican blacks and African-Americans, Garvey wrote, “Unlike the American negro, the Jamaican lives in an atmosphere of equality and comradeship, hence the outrages that are characteristic of America are quite unheard of in the island.”³⁵ Garvey seemed to inject an attitude of superiority of Jamaican blacks over black Americans by insisting that even white Americans, both Northerners and Southerners, were impressed to learn when they visited the island that “all negroes are not pugnacious and vicious.”³⁶

The article from the *Tourist* was reprinted in the Jamaican newspaper, the *Gleaner* on 13 July 1914, just five days after Garvey’s return to Jamaica. He quickly found himself at odds with several in the black community who deemed his depiction of life in Jamaica misleading and regressive. Among Garvey’s earliest critics were W.G. Hinchcliffe³⁷ and

³³ Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845) was a Member of Parliament from 1818-1837, where he advocated the abolition of slavery in British dominions. Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), English abolitionist, led the crusade against the African slave trade. William Wilberforce (1759-1833) led the agitation in the House of Commons against the slave trade, which was abolished in 1807. He was a founder of the Anti-Slavery Society, which urged the abolition of slavery itself. For more discussion, see Bernard Semmel, *Democracy Versus Empire: The Jamaica Riots of 1865 and the Governor Eyre Controversy* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1969)

³⁴ Garvey, “The Evolution of Latter-Day Slaves,” *Garvey and the UNIA Papers*, vol. 1, 43

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 43

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 43

³⁷ Rev. Charles Samuel Shirley (1878-ca. 1968), born in Jamaica and attended the Southern Christian Institute, Edwards, Miss. He was a member of the Jamaica Christian Council and the Kingston Ministers Fraternal. (See, *Garvey Papers*, vol.1, 48)

Charles S. Shirley.³⁸ The men, both influential black leaders, chastised Garvey's downplaying of the dismal circumstances that burdened the poor black masses. Shirley, who had returned to Jamaica after briefly studying in the U.S., challenged Garvey's assertion that life for the black population was prosperous enough to allow blacks to decline work if they were simply unhappy with their wages. Regarding the state of blacks in Jamaica, Shirley quipped, "Not only is his bread not buttered on any side, but he hasn't any bread to be buttered."³⁹ Shirley seemed to grapple with what was leading Garvey to make such a claim as he explained: "No fair-minded man who knows the actual condition of the black man in Jamaica—and the brown and colored people too as far as that's concerned—can conscientiously say that the black man's lot in Jamaica is anything desirable."⁴⁰ He further challenged Garvey's suggestion of Jamaican blacks living in better conditions than American blacks by stating, "The average American Negro is more intelligent, better housed, better clothed, better fed, has greater opportunities for education than his poor unfortunate brother in Jamaica."⁴¹ Shirley blasted Garvey in the article for ignorantly wrapping himself in a false sense of British pride. According to Shirley, "He [Garvey] never stops to think that doesn't put any food in his stomach, clothes on his back, money in his pocket, or ambition in his make-up."⁴² Shirley warned how misguided Garvey was and dismissed his assertions by writing, "He is not like his American brother who has Booker T. Washington and other men of their race who have

³⁸ W.G. Hinchcliffe was one of the founders and officials of the early Carpenters' Bricklayers', and Painters' Union (otherwise known as the Artisans' Union) 1899. He also headed the Jamaica Traders and Labour Union, which was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. (See *Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 46)

³⁹ Shirley, "Letter to the Editor of the *Gleaner*," (18 July 1914). In *Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol.1, 47-48

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 47

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 48

attained affluence, and influence, and who can plead their cause at the bar of public opinion.”⁴³

Hinchcliffe even went as far as to question Garvey’s state of mind at the time the article was written. In an open letter also written to *The Gleaner*, Hinchcliffe wrote, “As a black man like Mr. Garvey, and a struggling Jamaican like himself too, I am of the opinion that he could not in his sane moments have written to the English papers some of what he has written.”⁴⁴ This was one of the earliest feuds that would burden Garvey and began what would become a trademark in his public life; frequent public disputes with the black elite that would play out in the printed press.

Shirley and Hinchcliffe provide an interesting observation into the opposition the Garvey movement faced early on in Jamaica. Garvey’s most enduring gift, his journalistic skills, was often the source of much of the controversy that engulfed him. In the case of this article, both Shirley and Hinchcliffe focused their critique on a rather small portion of Garvey’s essay without giving any credence to his thorough examination of the history of slavery on the island and the subsequent atrocities it spurred. Their critique of Garvey’s article also seems to miss the larger question as to what drove Garvey to this admiration of the British crown and affinity to European colonization.

Shirley was a minister with a predominantly all black congregation. Hinchcliffe, a carpenter and bricklayer by trade, was also a founding member of the early Artisans Union and therefore represented countless of black laborers. It is only fair to assume that their frustration and subsequent retort at Garvey’s comments was an effort on their part to defend

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Hinchcliffe, “Postscript by W. G. Hinchcliffe to the *Gleaner*, “For Civic Honours.” Originally printed in the *Gleaner* (14 July 1914). In *Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 45-46

the poor blacks in Jamaica or as such, their respective flocks. Undoubtedly, the men felt it dangerous for Garvey to project an image of the Jamaican worker living in a land of luxury, free of worry and hardships. They perhaps took issue with this depiction because they saw first-hand the struggles the people they led endured. Because any attempts at suggesting they were satisfied with the present condition might have greatly retarded progress, the men felt it was imprudent of Garvey to make such bold assertions. Through Shirley and Hinchcliffe's concerns, we can better understand how English class traditions, modified by race considerations significantly impacted Jamaica.⁴⁵ As Cronon noted, "The Negroes far outnumber the other two classes combined, but despite their numerical superiority they are relegated to an inferior economic and social position."⁴⁶ As for Garvey, at the time the article was written, it should be noted that he was in London writing for an English publication with a largely European audience. Therefore, we can narrow his motives for his appraisal of the British to at least two possible reasons; maybe Garvey understood all too well, how his "bread was buttered." Or he simply wanted to promote his country's progress and highlight its rich history. It can be assumed that he believed by portraying his country as being beyond racial animosity largely because of the fairness and kindness of the British, it would have earned him considerable acceptance among his largely English audience. Garvey, however, claimed he was trying to show a contrast to the savage depiction of blacks that often dominated the headlines of European papers. Garvey justified his article by stating, "The majority of people abroad really think that we have some savages here, as they are not well acquainted with little

⁴⁵ Cronon, 10

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

places like Jamaica.”⁴⁷ Garvey added, “Much of the dark picture has gone abroad that I did not realize that I was doing wrongly to write favourably of the Jamaican Negro.”⁴⁸

By all historical accounts the Jamaica that Garvey described in his article was non-existent. Kingston, the capital city, had never fully recovered from the devastation of the 1907 earthquake that wreaked immeasurable loss and damage. Furthermore, since the emancipation of slaves some seventy-six years earlier, Jamaica had suffered greatly because of a decline in its export economy.⁴⁹ The condition of the black population as described by Garvey seems somewhat inflated as well. As most historical data suggests, while blacks accounted for the vast majority of the population, they were nonetheless economically and socially deprived. Garvey’s own words from an article written a year earlier for the *African Times and Orient Review*, offers an even stronger rebuttal to his claims of an existing benevolent kinship. In that article titled, “The British West Indies in the Mirror of Civilization,” Garvey rebuked whites and directly blamed them for the ills that plagued the black population. In comparing past atrocities at the hands of the white masters to the actions of present day whites, Garvey wrote: “The latter day whites, much to their regret, have not the opportunity of compelling black girls to become their mistresses, but they use other means of bewitching these unprotected women whom they keep as concubines; thus perpetuating the evil of which their fathers were guilty.”⁵⁰ Garvey concluded the article by prophesying to his readers that a coming evolution of the “Negro” would lead him to building up an empire of his own.⁵¹ These two contrasting voices of Garvey could also be attributed to the fact that the articles were written for two

⁴⁷ *MG Papers*, 49

⁴⁸ Garvey, “Letter to the Editor,” Printed in the *Gleaner* 17 July 1914. In *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 46

⁴⁹ Cronon, 13

⁵⁰ Garvey, article titled, “The British West Indies in the Mirror of Civilization,” Printed in the *African Times and Orient Review* (Mid-October 1913) In the *Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 31

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

completely different publications. This article from 1913 was written for the *African Times and Orient Review*, a paper edited by Duse Mohamed, who became an early influence on Garvey and greatly shaped his understanding of Africa and Pan-Africanism. The later article as earlier discussed was originally written for the *Tourist*, a publication with a largely white European and American readership.

The blatant call for a federation among the islands of the British West Indies also contradicts Garvey's favorable representation of British colonization. In articulating the history to form a federation he declared, "There have been several movements to federate the British West Indian Islands, but owing to parochial feelings nothing definite has been achieved." He remained optimistic about its realization and he even suggested that it was inevitable because of the binding ties between the West Indian people. "Ere long this change is sure to come about because the people of these islands are all one." Garvey boasted, "They live under the same conditions, are of the same race and mind, and have the same feelings and sentiments regarding the things of the world."⁵²

Many in the British West Indies often viewed European colonization as a far better institution than the racism faced by blacks in America. These views were often well publicized in the late nineteenth century and even early in the twentieth century when there had been frequent whispers of a possible U.S. annexation of the British Caribbean Islands. Therefore, Garvey's claims and sentiments about British colonization were not entirely unfounded. In 1912, Dr. Louis S. Meikle, a contemporary of Garvey's and one of the leading advocates of a West Indies Federation wrote critically of America, "With the Americans you must be White! White!! White!!! You must be white to be truthful and honest. You must be white to hold any position of trust outside of the political realm...and so it is wherever the

⁵² *Ibid.*

Stars and Stripes float as the controlling power.”⁵³ Meikle and Garvey supported West Indian federation, a move that would create a united body among the islands and allow them to have colonial self-government and adequate representation in the British Isles. The issue of federation had long been raised in the colonies but it was never quite able to materialize mainly because of internal issues within the various islands. From as early as the 1880s there had been several attempts throughout the British Caribbean to form a federation. It is unknown why this effort on Garvey and Meikle’s part failed, but it is most likely that the attempts were greatly impaired as the Empire’s energies and attention became focused in 1914 on the Great War.

Garvey grew to favor the idea of federation during his time in England from 1912-1914. In London he became aware of the weak representation the West Indies received in the British Isles. Garvey came to see how countries with large representative agencies in Britain allowed these Dominions, mainly, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa to obtain a large amount of capital and trade.⁵⁴ He recognized that the size and resources of each individual country in the region made it impossible for them to establish independent agencies in England and that through federation, the colonies could be represented in much the same way that commissioners served the larger colonies. Garvey also found that federation was an important step in the way forward for the colonies proclaiming: “If the people of the West Indies are to reach out to a higher destiny they must all move together.”⁵⁵

The summer of 1914 found Jamaica, like the rest of the crown colonies, feeling the economic hardship of the pending war since the empire’s resources were being directed

⁵³ Louis S. Meikle, *Confederation of the British West Indies versus Annexation to the United States of America: A Political Discourse on the West Indies* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969.) 38-39

⁵⁴ Garvey, article titled, “West Indian Federation,” printed in the *Gleaner*, Wednesday, 16 August 1914. In *Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 50

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

toward that effort. In this context it becomes easier to understand Garvey's praise and support of the British Empire as he perhaps hoped that those who supported the Great Britain in its trying times would be rewarded in the future. If this was indeed Garvey's intention, his gamble came to a minimal fruition. In the early years of its inception, the UNIA received financial contributions from many high-ranking officials of the empire and local crown colony representatives on the island. Many of the white elite often patronized UNIA concerts, lectures and other endeavors. But still this support was not enough to guarantee the survival of the UNIA, and without the support of the black intelligentsia the future of the movement seemed more uncertain.

The British had earned the support of those within the colonies mainly through years of indoctrination. The support for Britain during the war years from the West Indian population was therefore, considerable and generous. Gifts valuing in the thousands of pounds were contributed by the colonies and included sugar, rum, oil, lime, cotton, rice, clothing and logwood.⁵⁶ The colonies' generosity for the empire was steadfast in spite of the severe economic hardships caused by major increases in the cost of living further accelerated by the proclamation of war. The UNIA throughout the war years invested much of its time conducting fundraising efforts across Jamaica and adopting resolutions as a goodwill gesture to show its support for Britain and her allies in the war effort. Garvey made it a priority of the association to relay its heartfelt support to the British crown and throughout the course of the war, messages of this theme were sent to London as well as other European allies. In one of a series of resolutions passed by the UNIA to publicly show its support for the British, the association issued a press release, which stated: "Mr. Marcus Garvey, the president, in

⁵⁶ Glenford D. Howe, *A White Man's War? World War One and the West Indies*. See BBC website, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/west_indies_01.shtml

forwarding it says it is a genuine expression of the people's loyalty to the King and the British people..."⁵⁷ In another press release dated 13 November 1915, that reported on a meeting held to bid farewell to the Jamaican War Contingent, it recounted, "The President, Mr. Garvey, and Mr. A Dayly, impressed on the men the good wishes of the meeting, and duty of every true son of the Empire to rally to the cause of the Motherland."⁵⁸ These measures on the part of Garvey were also a means to give stature to his organization. Garvey felt that by concerning his organization in international affairs in a non-political, non-activism manner, it would serve to legitimize the UNIA as a social, charitable humanitarian body much like the Salvation Army.

Although the outbreak of war in Europe slowed the momentum of the program, Garvey's movement managed to persevere and the UNIA continued its recruiting of new members and fund-raising efforts. From its founding in August 1914 through most of the next year, the organization spent most of its time conducting lectures and hosting concerts as a means to promote the organization's agenda and raise funds. Already known for his journalistic abilities, Garvey had become a skilled orator, as a result his popularity helped to raise the profile of the organization. The guest list at UNIA events often read like a "who's who" in Jamaica with some of the island's most prominent figures, both black and white, in attendance.

The scope of the UNIA was wide-reaching and Garvey believed that the best way to accomplish one of his key objectives of unifying the African race all over the world was to awaken the racial consciousness of the black masses. To accomplish this, Garvey did two things: first he appealed to blacks to take charge of their own improvement. Second he

⁵⁷ Printed in *The Times* (London), Tuesday, 27 October 1914. In *Garvey Papers*, titled "Negro's Loyal Message," vol. 1, 86

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 163

constantly attacked the black elite by agitating a divide between them and the poor masses. Garvey's message of self-determination was rooted in a belief that the black descendants of Africa were to succeed in spite of white opposition and that the answer to their problems was rooted in their ability to improve themselves. In an article titled, "The Destiny of the Negro," Garvey declared, "No one in the wide world is handicapping the Negro, the sleeping Negro has handicapped and is still handicapping himself." Garvey added, "Until he realizes the danger of this self-inflicted burden shall he find the way to the post that marks the path to success."⁵⁹

This article shows how Garvey adopted some of the philosophies of Booker T. Washington. The Tuskegee principal had been an early influence on Garvey and both believed that self-determination was the vehicle to racial uplift. The two men also agreed that it was beneficial to blacks to gain a sound education in farming and industry. Washington in his letters to Garvey seemed receptive and encouraging of the work the UNIA was trying to do. Undoubtedly, Washington, being the most influential black figure of the era was bombarded with letters and appeals for support from other aspiring organizations. Nevertheless, he still managed to send a letter to Garvey applauding the efforts of his Jamaican organization. In a letter dated 17 September 1914, Washington wrote Garvey, "I have read what you say with reference to the advance being made in educational facilities for the Negroes of that section. I hope that when you come to America you will come to Tuskegee and see for yourself what we are striving to do for the colored young men and women of the South."⁶⁰ This letter was one in a series of correspondences between the two, which Garvey would use to update Washington on the progress of the UNIA. Garvey also

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

⁶⁰ Booker T. Washington, "Letter to Marcus Garvey," 17 September 1914. In *The Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 71

wrote to Washington describing how he was being “unfairly” attacked in the press. In a letter dated 11 September 1915, Garvey told Washington, “No one can understand more quickly than you the sacrifices and heart aches that accompany men who endeavour from the purest motives to do something in the interest of the people.”⁶¹ In further condemning his “cultured-coloured” critics, Garvey told Washington, “My task at this end is a hard one in that we have firstly to dislodge the prejudice existing among the people themselves before we can achieve the success that efforts of this kind demands.”⁶²

The UNIA adopted the model of the Tuskegee Institute when it proposed establishing a similar farm and institute in Jamaica. Garvey embraced Washington’s laissez faire economic philosophy for black advancement through “individual commitment by individual blacks to the gospel of work and wealth.”⁶³ In making the case for the Jamaica institute, Garvey applied the notion that an economically secure black labor force would elevate the country to a status comparable with the rest of the world. He charged that any one who opposed that view was simply a “traitor” to his race. In an address made by Garvey on 24 August 1915 to gain support for the proposed institute, Garvey insisted, “There is nothing to begrudge in the scheme, for if we are rendered able to achieve these things our country would become the better for our efforts.”⁶⁴

Exactly how much of an influence Washington had on Garvey is debatable. Garvey credited Washington as one of the influences to have awakened him to the dismal state of the black man and he declared that it was after reading the autobiography of Washington that he was summoned to his life’s work. In his autobiographical article, Garvey reflected on reading

⁶¹ Garvey, Garvey, “A Letter to Booker T. Washington,” 11 September 1915. In *The Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 141

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Wilson J. Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism 1850-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 96

⁶⁴ Garvey, address delivered at UNIA general meeting 24 August 1915. In *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 135

Washington's autobiography and recalled its profound effect, "I asked, "Where is the black man's Government?" "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."⁶⁵

Garvey was perhaps most attracted to Washington for more symbolic reasons than any actually claims he made. Their situations differed significantly as is evidenced by the context and settings of which they worked and lived. Washington was based in the American South amid a backdrop of white rural racism. Conversely, Garvey's efforts in Jamaica were challenged by intra-racial conflicts and feuds with the black elite. However, Garvey did admire Washington's personal story and found in it a deep connection to his own life.

Washington was born a slave and Garvey considered himself a true descendent of proud freed slaves and saw himself as a champion for the rights of the peasantry and most forgotten in the race. Throughout his life Garvey often celebrated himself as a "self-made" man and was often harsh in his examination of black men from more privileged backgrounds. He also reveled in the legacy of his slave ancestry and his linkage to the Maroons, an escaped group of African slaves whose courageous actions in defending their freedom are an important part of Jamaican history and folklore.⁶⁶ In celebrating his proud heritage and self-made success Garvey recounted in an interview with the *Toronto Daily Star*, on 26 August 1936, "I went to my father's books and I gathered inspiration, and what inspiration I gathered, changed my outlook from ambition of wanting to be a wharf-man or cow-boy, and made me look forward to being a personality in the world."⁶⁷ Garvey went on to add that his accomplishments were due to his own efforts and he stated, "I brought myself from the possibility of a cow-boy to a man who

⁶⁵ Garvey, "The Negro's Greatest Enemy," in the Garvey Papers, vol. 1, 5

⁶⁶ Cronon, 5

⁶⁷ Garvey, interview in *The Toronto Daily Star* (26 August 1916). In *Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, xl

is known in many continents.”⁶⁸ For whatever the reason Garvey felt such a connection to Washington, it is clear that the Tuskegee Institute had a profound impact on him as he hoped to establish a program similar to the Alabama institute in Jamaica.

The UNIA carried out its efforts in 1915, with the immediate objective of the organization being the proposed establishment of an Industrial Farm in Jamaica along the same plan as the Tuskegee Institute. The object of the farm and institute as stated by the organization was “to provide work 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.”⁶⁹ The UNIA envisioned that through the institute young black men and women would be able to learn a vocation and gain efficient moral, literary and industrial training to make them examples to help change and improve the moral and industrial condition of the country.⁷⁰

Garvey’s continued attack on the black intelligentsia in Jamaica made it difficult to get the institute off the ground. He agitated a divide between the black elite and the black labor force. Garvey’s own experiences as a child born into a peasant family made him aware of the tendency of some blacks to separate themselves from the masses because of their belief that their success put them in better standing with the white population. In “A Talk with Afro-West Indians: The Negro Race and its Problems,” Garvey condemned the “prejudices of the educated and positioned Negro,”⁷¹ who he charged were equally responsible for the “marked indifference to the race among those of other races.”⁷² Garvey scolded the black elite for

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *MG Papers*, 139

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Garvey, “A Talk with Afro-West Indians. The Negro Race and Its Problems.” A Pamphlet by Marcus Garvey, Kingston, ca. July-August 1914. In the *Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 55-56

⁷² *Ibid.*

separating themselves from the rest of the black population and charged, “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.” He called on the cultured class to reach out and help uplift those who lag behind, “so that they might be advance to higher state of enlightenment whence they could claim the appreciation and honest comradeship of the more advanced races who are to-day ignoring us simply because we are so lethargic and serfish.”⁷³ Garvey went on to state that these “cultured Negroes” are often still the outcasts of the element of society whose approval they seek. Garvey opined, “They are snubbed and laughed at just the same as the most menial of the race, and only because they are Negroes, belonging to the careless and characterless race that has been sleeping for so many centuries.”⁷⁴ Garvey repeatedly used this rhetoric, which only further strained his already tumultuous relationship with the black elite in Jamaica.

As the UNIA continued to promote its proposed farm institute, Garvey again found himself at the center of controversy for his blatant critique of the black population. This incident also shows Garvey publicly identifying himself as a member of the cultured class he often rebuked. On 26 August 1915, Garvey delivered an address at a general meeting of the UNIA. In the speech, he articulated the goals of the organization and the proposed farm institute. Garvey also sought to address the present state of the black population in Jamaica and made this chilling observation, “The bulk of our people are in darkness and are really unfit for good society.”⁷⁵ Garvey further revealed to the crowd, “To the cultured mind, the

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 56

⁷⁵ Garvey, address delivered at UNIA general meeting 24 August 1915. Printed in the *Daily Chronicle* 26 August 1915. In *The Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 134

bulk of our people are contemptible—that is to say, they are entirely outside the pale of cultured appreciation.”⁷⁶ He challenged his audience to go into the country parts of Jamaica where they would see “villainy and vice of the worst kind, immorality, obeah, all kinds of dirty things.” Garvey told his listeners, “We, the few of cultured tastes, can in no way save the race from the injury in a balanced comparison with other people, for the standard of races or of anything else is not arrived at by the few who are always the exceptions, but by the majority.”⁷⁷ The rest of the speech projected images of a race of people savage in their behavior and shameful in their attitudes. Garvey offered this scathing evaluation of the black Jamaican population, “My opinion is that we are too envious, malicious and superficial, and because of this we keep back ourselves and eventually keep back the country.”⁷⁸ While he chastised the black population in his address, Garvey praised the efforts of whites and the rich for doing their respective parts in helping to improve the condition of the Jamaican population. He told his crowd, “If it were not for the rich men of Jamaica the country would be no fit place to live in, for then villainy and vice and all kinds of evil would be more rampant.”⁷⁹ This speech set off a firestorm and very quickly Garvey’s critics from within the black power structure went on the attack.

The assault against Garvey was launched through a series of letters written to the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, Garvey’s comments and character were denounced by several prominent figures from Jamaica’s black elite. Dr. Leo S. Pink, a dental surgeon, led the charge against Garvey. He painted Garvey as living in a “fool’s paradise” for believing

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 135

himself any different from the contemptible people he had described in his address.⁸⁰ Pink also repudiated Garvey's likeness to Booker Washington and argued, "great men are born, not made."⁸¹ Pink refuted Garvey's relation with the cultured class and remarked, "The cultured-minded man having the interest and social uplifting of so many negroes at heart, should go about to right the wrong instead of mimicking the entire race for selfish, personal gain."⁸² He called on Garvey to produce documents to show how the money his organization raised was being put to use. Pink also challenged Garvey to prove to the public that his intentions were "square."⁸³

Another prominent member of the black community, Alexander Dixon, echoed these sentiments. Dixon, the first black Jamaican elected to the Legislative Council, took particular issue with Garvey's attack on the "cultured class" who Garvey accused of refusing to identify themselves with the black masses because they were ashamed. Dixon challenged Garvey's charges and called on him to produce evidence to support his claims. He further claimed that Garvey was only trying to make a name for himself since he was essentially an unknown in Jamaica.⁸⁴ Dixon denounced Garvey's statement and labeled him as a "self inflated President" who "tries in vain, to reach those of our people who tower head and shoulders above [him]."⁸⁵ It does seem rather disingenuous to simply dismiss Garvey as a nobody, considering, he had established himself as a charismatic leader who at times held the ear of high-ranking officials throughout Jamaica and as evidenced by his international correspondences in Europe. In

⁸⁰ Dr. Leo S. Pink, "Letter to the Editor," printed in the *Daily Chronicle*, 10 September 1915. In *The Marcus Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 138

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 146

⁸⁵ Alexander Dixon, "Letter to the Editor," Printed in the *Daily Chronicle* 20 September 1915. In *The Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, 147

addition, as earlier discussed, Garvey had even established a relationship with Booker T. Washington.

Garvey's struggles with the Jamaican black elite seem to embody much of the same issues that would later fuel his own conflict with Du Bois in America. Throughout his work in both Jamaica and the U.S., Garvey often attributed his missteps and failures as well as the subsequent doubts and criticism expressed by some blacks and mulattoes to sheer wickedness and racism. He would also often use in his defense a claim that the black elite and colored group hated him because he was on the side of the poor black masses. In America, Moses calls Garvey's portrayal of this intra-racial and class warfare a myth perpetuated by none other than Garvey and dismisses it as baseless in its claims. Moses uses members of Garvey's own inner circle to discredit Garvey's charge, including his relationship with such close advisers and friends as Duse Mohamed, Ida B. Wells and Garvey's own second wife, Amy Jacques Garvey.⁸⁶ While Moses is accurate in pointing out Garvey's relationship with these groups, his description of the problem as just a myth seems somewhat skewed. Firstly, by Garvey's own admission, he was influenced by a number of people from various backgrounds and racial groups including whites, mulattoes, and blacks. Because Moses' study of Garvey is primarily focused on his life in America, he seems to negate the intra-racial Caribbean context of which Garvey descended choosing instead to apply a more Americanized concept to the notion of race relations. Furthermore, in Jamaica, many of Garvey's rivals did represent the black elite and mulatto groups and as Cronon has suggested, the intra-racial divide in Jamaica was very real indeed. In fact notes Cronon, the mulatto group worked with the small white elite class to suppress the enlightenment of the black majority.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Moses, 248

⁸⁷ Cronon, 10

The critics of Garvey challenged his position as a leader and often they raised questions of his credentials. In their view, Garvey, a man of little formal education and from such modest beginnings, did not possess the talent or credibility to effect change. In much the same way as Du Bois' philosophy of the "Talented Tenth," asserts, Garvey's critics felt blacks, like all races, were going to be saved by its exceptional men, and Garvey was not one of those men.⁸⁸ His critics also shared Du Bois' belief that human history dictates that the process by which nations are civilized moves from the top downward and blacks would be "raised by the effort and example of this aristocracy of talent and character."⁸⁹ Pink was among a small group of blacks in attendance at a farewell luncheon in honor of Du Bois during his two-week stay in Jamaica. It was his view that Garvey lacked the credibility to lead. "Such a man," Pink said, "must firstly get the confidence of our officials, must have the influence, he must be a man above the ordinary. All of the above enumerated qualities Mr. Garvey does not possess."⁹⁰

The mulatto and black elite groups took offense not just at Garvey's use of rhetoric, but the message he was sending. His calls for an awakening to a racial consciousness threatened them, as they perceived this as a rallying cry for a radical change in the status quo. The history of race and class traditions in Jamaica and in many islands of the British West Indies demonstrates that the small white population accounted for the top of the social hierarchy. The mulatto or colored element made up the middle-class with the black population comprising the labor force. When the break down of the population in Jamaica is applied, it becomes identifiable why this mulatto and black elite group felt threatened by Garvey's message. The 1911 Jamaican census estimated the island's population at 831,383 with whites

⁸⁸Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," 33-38

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

⁹⁰*MG Papers*, 138

accounting for less than 2 per cent of the population, the colored segment representing almost 20 per cent, and blacks accounting for more than seventy-five percent of the population.⁹¹ Cronon observed that neither the whites nor the colored groups favored a change in the status quo and therefore he stated, “They act together to prevent any enlightenment of the black majority.”⁹² Garvey used a similar theory to refute his critics from the black bourgeoisie when he described them as, “Men and women as black as I, and even more so, had believed themselves white under the West Indian order of society.”⁹³ He went on to explain, “I was simply an impossible man to use openly the term “Negro;” yet every one beneath his breath was calling the black man a negro.”⁹⁴ To Garvey their uneasiness with his message was proof of his influence and validation of his philosophies.

The attacks on Marcus Garvey went beyond his leadership ability as accusations were made of his mishandling of monies and possible embezzlement. This time Pink and Dixon used the press to demand Garvey produce financial statements to show how those monetary contributions were being used. The organization’s efforts at fund raising had always proven less than successful as its early years were set in the backdrop of a world war that created a huge economic burden for the island. Garvey provided financial statements that showed just how grim the organizations financial prospects were. In statements released in the fall of 1915, the UNIA was shown to have been nearly bankrupt as most of the small contributions it received were used to cover expenses.⁹⁵ Garvey had always maintained that he personally funded most of the undertakings of the organization, a claim substantiated by Garvey’s first

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 30-31

⁹² Cronon, 10

⁹³ *MG Papers*, 6

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *MG Papers*, 144

wife whose house was used as the office of the UNIA in its founding years.⁹⁶ Critics remained unsatisfied with the information contained in the receipts and pointed to the fact that the statements were vague in their designation of expenses and completely neglected to report the salaries paid to the staff of the organization as well as the amount of people served at the UNIA's dinners and other "alleged" events. The ongoing battle Garvey encountered with his black opposition was undoubtedly taking its toll on the progress of the organization and the UNIA still lacked the financial relief it needed to draw momentum.

The future of the UNIA became less uncertain and as Garvey tried to put on a strong face he was fully aware that the organization was in both financially and in terms of morale. Without serious financial aid the UNIA was unable to even begin work on its most immediate project, the Industrial Farm and Institute. The public attacks against Garvey also made it even more crucial the organization have some concrete undertaking that would help to silence his critics and legitimize his organization. He launched massive appeals for funds from sympathizers of the movement both at home and abroad but this also proved unsuccessful.

Booker T. Washington encouraged Garvey to visit the United States and he even offered to host him at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. However, Washington died before the two could ever meet.⁹⁷ By the spring of 1916, Garvey concluded that he would be better able to raise funds for his organization by embarking on a speaking tour across the United States. On 6 March 1916, Garvey boarded the *S.S. Tallac* and set sail for America.⁹⁸

When Garvey arrived in the United States in 1916, he underwent a major transformation. Garvey found in the American North what he felt was lacking in Jamaica, an awakening to racial consciousness. He also found a black population longing for ideas of

⁹⁶ *MG Papers*, 53-54

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 166

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, cxiii

radicalism and to some degree, militancy. Joining the ranks of other radical leaders of the time Garvey involved himself in political and social activism and within a year of his arrival, he created a New York chapter of his UNIA program. Over the next few years Garvey's UNIA organization in the United States grew to become one the largest mass movements in history.

His time in America also continued his tradition of feuding with the black elite. As Garvey's popularity increased so did his ambitions and by 1920 Garvey's newest endeavor was the establishment of the Black Star Line. Through this undertaking, Garvey hoped to create black enterprise and connect the people of the African Diaspora through trade and capital. He encouraged blacks to invest in the steamship line with promises of profitable returns on their investments and by pleading for their participation in helping to create a united black enterprise.⁹⁹ At first even members within the black intelligentsia welcomed Garvey's ideas, but following a series of early missteps the Black Star Line quickly found itself under intense scrutiny. Du Bois' launched an ongoing expose into the affairs of the BSL igniting a period of mudslinging between the two scholars that would span over several years. Garvey retaliated against Du Bois through his newspaper, the *Negro World*, where he tried to represent himself as a champion for the black masses who was being opposed by a "light skinned" member of the cultured class. Garvey made several bold assertions in drawing a distinction between himself and Du Bois. First, he highlighted the twenty-one year difference in age between him and Du Bois. Garvey then admonished Du Bois for what he called "living on the patronage of good white people."¹⁰⁰ He then charged that he at least was able "to pass over the charity of white people and develop an independent program originally financed by

⁹⁹ Vincent, 13-18, 122

¹⁰⁰ Garvey, "W.E. Burghardt Du Bois as a Hater of Dark People," Printed in the *Negro World*, 13 February 1923. In *The Garvey Papers*, vol. 1, lvi

himself to the extent of thousands of dollars.”¹⁰¹ Garvey then measured himself against Du Bois: “Now which of the two is poorer in character and manhood?”¹⁰²

Garvey added to his assault on Du Bois by underscoring his self worth against “Du Bois who he contended had “made a success of nothing.”¹⁰³ Garvey raised the idea that if all he and Du Bois’s possessions were removed and both men were forced to start over with nothing then the better man would be revealed. He wrote, “Marcus Garvey is willing now because he is conceited enough to believe that in the space of two years he would make you look like a tramp in the competitive rivalry for a higher place in the social, economic world.”¹⁰⁴ Garvey even alleged that Du Bois’ motives and indifference to him was driven purely out of his hatred for blacks. According to Garvey, “It is no wonder that Du Bois seeks the company of white people, because he hates Black as being ugly... Yet this professor, who sees ugliness in being Black, essays to be a leader of the Negro people and has been trying for over fourteen years to deceive them in connection with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.”¹⁰⁵ Garvey warned his readers to be cautious of the likes of Du Bois who main goal was to lead them to “losing our Black identity and becoming, as nearly as possible, the lowest Whites by assimilation and miscegenation.”¹⁰⁶

Du Bois did not steer away from the personal attacks either when he criticized Garvey. In a May 1924 editorial in *Crisis*, Du Bois described Garvey as “a little, fat, black man; ugly but with intelligent eyes and a big head.”¹⁰⁷ In that same editorial Du Bois issued this fierce condemnation of Garvey, “Marcus Garvey is, without doubt, the most dangerous enemy of

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Du Bois, *Crisis*, May 1924

the Negro race in America and in the world. He is either a lunatic or a traitor... The American Negroes have endured this wretch too all too long with fine restraint and every effort at cooperation and understanding.”¹⁰⁸ He castigated sympathizers of Garvey and told them, “Every man who apologizes for or defends Marcus Garvey from this day forth writes himself down as unworthy of countenance of decent Americans.” Du Bois stated his view on Garvey’s fate and declared, “As for Garvey himself, this open ally of the Ku Klux Klan should be locked up or sent home.”¹⁰⁹ By 1927, Garvey’s fate had been sealed and as a result of his conviction on charges of mail fraud he was eventually extradited to Jamaica.¹¹⁰

Marcus Garvey’s movement once again failed in the United States like it did in Jamaica. Although the two circumstances presented different challenges to the Garvey, the one recurring theme that seemed to follow him was his inability to form a lasting alliance with the black intelligentsia. In Jamaica, the early years of the UNIA floundered largely because the black cultured class rallied against Garvey and challenged his credibility both privately and publicly. They were of the mindset that Garvey was way off base in chastising the masses and they took particular offense to his strong use of rhetoric in critiquing the black elite. To Garvey this group represented a class of blacks blinded to the ills of their race and disillusioned by thinking themselves of a superior standing in society. The divide between the elite Jamaicans and the black masses perpetuated a stigma long present in black identity and heightened feelings of inferiority among the masses. Years of European colonization also made the colored group view themselves as “Jamaican whites” a description that came to be used to infer superiority over the dark-skinned African population. Because this group acted in alliance with the small white elite and saw the threat an improved black labor force

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Cronon, 142

presented, it conspired to suppress the “enlightenment of the black majority.”¹¹¹ And since neither whites nor the mulattos favored a change in the status quo, the two became strong allies in this effort to prevent change and progress.

The United States provided Garvey with his largest stage and even earned him some significant success. But again he found himself embroiled in conflict with the black elite. Though Garvey would often incorporate the philosophies of Booker T. Washington into his own program and stressed the need for “competitive rivalry,” he could not escape the power and influence yielded by the black intelligentsia who grew to oppose him even more than they did his mentor. Du Bois’ legendary feud with Garvey although partly to blame for his downfall, is arguably equally responsible for Garvey’s acceptance as a leading scholar of black intellectual thought of the era. The fact that Garvey, a self-made man, had risen to the ranks of some of the era’s most prominent figures and was significant enough to be entangled in a feud with a man of Du Bois’ stature, is a testament to his contribution to the historiography of Pan-Africanism studies.

Had the UNIA’s proposed Industrial Farm and Institute in Jamaica materialized, it would have undoubtedly had a profound impact on the country and the movement. Garvey’s ambitious and aspirations for racial uplift through self-determination, unity and racial pride show the wide scope of his vision. He dreamed of extending a hand to Africa and restoring it to an empire and eventually making it a home for all its descendents. He believed that all of the African blood shared “One God! One Dream! One Destiny!”¹¹² And by achieving economic success not just individually but collectively that destiny could be reached.

Garvey’s efforts in Jamaica was early an attempt at a Black Nationalism movement. Though it

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10

¹¹² *MG Papers*, 62

proved and he went on to achieve his greatest success during his time in America, Marcus Garvey's enduring legacy became a model for future nationalists and religious organizations in the region and throughout the world who would use his philosophies and teachings to build future movements that exist to this present day.

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