

then, I should say this: Theoretically speaking, there is no ground to believe that the Negro cannot or may not develop into a full fledged member of American civilization and society. Practically speaking, on the other hand, there is the question of prejudice to consider; a prejudice which cannot prevent the intellectual development of the Negro, but can refuse him the usual social returns of such development; a prejudice which cannot and does not prevent blood mixture, but that refuses the Negro the social status that would entitle him to the economic, social and political rights of the country; a prejudice which is often powerless to prevent the official granting of such rights, but is operative in bringing into being innumerable subterfuges successfully utilized to prevent the Negro from profiting to the full extent by his rights. This is not an easy problem to handle. Prejudice cannot usually be combatted by a direct attack. It is therefore necessary to wait for its gradual and ultimate abatement as a result of an educational propaganda intent upon furthering the mutual understanding and sympathy between the races, the elevation of the Negro groups to a level wholly comparable in educational status with the whites, the stimulation of Negro talent in all directions in which it may manifest itself, and last but by no means least, the discouragement of any narrowly race-conscious propaganda. This is present among the whites as well as the Negroes and inevitably stimulates antagonism, develops excessive vanity and prevents mutual sympathy and confidence from taking root.

The South and the Negro

The attitude of the South toward the Negro is not in any way peculiar nor in itself incomprehensible. The fact that the Negro as a group is held in contempt while individual Negroes are treated as friends, that children are given into the care of Negroes who are,

nevertheless, refused political and economic equality, this fact I repeat, is not in itself incomprehensible. The South is in general aristocratic and snobbish, also with reference to other groups than the Negroes. The South is that part of the country where the psychology of Negro slavery has struck root most deeply. The South, again, harbors that part of the population of this country which has mixed most freely with Negro blood and, unless prejudice completely disappears, the presence of such a factor always heightens the degree of resentment against a race or group which in this way asserts itself even biologically. In other words, the kernel of the prejudice in the South does not lie in any specific characteristics of the Negro, but in the traditional background of that prejudice which the Southerner holds on to the more firmly the less he feels himself able to keep the Negro "where he belongs." This is not fatal to the situation but certainly makes any advance more difficult.

I should like to add in conclusion that the so-called evidence for the undesirable qualities of the Negro, such as inefficiency, shiftiness, absence of truthfulness, lack of honesty, etc., is most conspicuous in the South, where owing to the very disabilities of the Negro resulting from our socio-economic discrimination against him, we find a large Negro population, characterized at least in part by those very traits. It is therefore clear that these traits, insofar as they are characteristic, are the result, not the cause of the prejudice.

**For example, throughout the extent of Northern Africa, the native Negro populations have become transformed culturally by the Arabs. While this process here also has been accompanied by blood mixture, the native population being vastly more numerous have not been physically affected by the admixture of Arab blood, while they were completely submerged by Arab civilization.*

After Garvey—What?

By Charles S. Johnson

I

A man who in five years could attach to himself the confidence and loyalty of four million persons, however gullible they might be, who could make his views, even tho absurd, the keystone of a philosophy worthy of elevation to the dignity of a "wing of Negro thot", who could call an international convention and actually get delegates from over forty foreign countries, however futile their deliberations might have been, who could lead a German society to send a petition to him to use his influence against the use of black troops on the Rhine, whether he could do anything about it or not—such a man can scarcely be treated as a joke. Marcus Garvey, picturesquely labeled by himself the "Provisional President

of Africa", and by others, variously, as the "Black Moses", the "Emperor Jones of Finance", the "Savior of the Black Race", "Black Ponzi", the "West Indian Wallingford", and in more intimate persiflage as "liar", "martyr", "dreamer", and "thief", has been halted in a most spectacular career by the government of the United States.

He was convicted on one count of six named in the indictment for using the mails to defraud, while—others indicted with him were released. He was given the limit of the law—five years imprisonment and a fine of One Thousand Dollars.

Pending trial he was at liberty on \$2,500 bail. After conviction he was denied bail at any figure. All this is most significant. Obvi-

ously his financial exploits were ridiculously unsound, his plans for the redemption of Africa absurdly visionary and impossible, his methods injudicious and bunglesome, and the grand result, a fleecing of hundreds of thousands of poor and ignorant Negroes.

Yet not one of those who saw their earnings swallowed up in this gigantic swindle raised a single effective protest. The spectators who crowded the courts were sympathizers with the accused. Ten days after his conviction a petition of 20,000 names was on its way to the White House, a Garvey Defense Fund created, and the articulate public split between sympathy and condemnation. It is a situation interesting in its contradictions and scarcely intelligible to one who does not, at the same time, reflect that the American psychology—the psychology of the white world—is itself a mixture of contradictions and paradoxes.

II

Garvey is a symbol—a symptom. The “Garvey Movement” is just another name for the new psychology of the American Negro peasantry—for the surge of race consciousness felt by Negroes thruout the world, the intelligent as well as the ignorant. It is a black version of that same 100 per cent mania that now afflicts white America, that emboldens the prophets of a “Nordic blood renaissance”, that picked up and carried the cry of “self-determination for all people”, “India for the Indians”, “A Free Ireland”. The personal characteristics that make him obnoxious to his critics are precisely those that made him a strong leader. His extravagant self-esteem could have been taken for dignity, his hard-headedness as self-reliance, his ignorance of law as transcendancy, his blunders as persecution, his stupidity as silent deliberation, his churlishness and irascibility as the eccentricity of genius.

The English in the West Indies have a rather effective way of breaking the prestige of the native Obia man. A part of his punishment is a public lashing. Five years in prison may do the same for Garvey himself. But the movement, aside from Garvey, will scarcely be affected. It is like trying to cure a disease by magic, or perhaps more pointedly, like trying to change the direction of primitive religious energy by confiscating the fetich.

Judge Mack was in a situation. Obviously there were evidences of even greater guilt than could be established by witnesses. The specific count on which he was convicted was that of selling stock in the Black Star Line after it had become and was known to him to be insolvent. Actually about \$800,000 has been squandered on ancient vessels, two of which dropped to pieces from old age and the third was seized in Cuba for claims. There was a Negro Factories Corporation capitalized at \$1,000,000 whose material goods consisted of a few rather negligible grocery stores in Harlem. The gigantic phantom of a Universal Negro Improvement Association, stretching a protective arm around the 400,000,000 dark peoples of the world was floated by the dues,

assessments and contributions of hundreds of thousands of Negroes—vainly? To have succeeded would have been as great a catastrophe to the interest of the white world as failure could have been to the Negroes.

But against this testy element there was at stake unquestionably the hopes and aspirations of a million Negroes. They may have been fleeced, but they were not resentful—nor even shaken in their loyalty.

It is this phase of psychology that is most interesting—that outshadows the personal traits and vicissitudes of Marcus Garvey. For the “Back to Africa Movement”, tho visionary and perhaps utterly impossible of accomplishment, afforded a mental relaxation for the long submerged Negro peasantry. It was a dream—but the new psychology has taught us the utility, the compensatory value, of dreams. These might be expected to increase in intensity in direct proportion to the impossibility of conscious realization. Assuming, as we now must, the increased desires and aspirations of Negroes and the correspondingly increased racial consciousness among white groups, what other mode of escape is possible? Balked desires, repressed longings, must have an outlet. This was an outlet.

III

Essentially this is a movement of pure blood Negroes. It is their revanche. Mixed bloods—mulattoes—have received a shade more consideration at the hands of white America. This is partly a question of kinship, partly the caprice of scientific theory, partly physical similarity, partly traditional advantage in wage opportunities.

The full blood Negroes are at more serious disadvantage against the culture of this country, with its standard of beauty based on angularity and absence of color. They are the children of the soil—the descendants of plantation hands, without voice, without leadership, and with little basis for self pride.

Bad as it is in the United States, it is worst in the West Indies. There the relatively small number of whites has made it necessary to create a distinct middle-color class—the mulattoes, those whose white blood exceeds the black. This hierarchy amounts almost to caste,—the whites superior to the mulattoes but in association with them; the mulattoes superior to the blacks and aggressively so; the blacks at the bottom,—smoldering, resentful.

Out of this last class came Garvey, hating intensely things white and more intensely things near white.

The first considerable project in this country was the Black Star Line—a purely commercial proposition. In it he wanted no white capital. He distrusted it. But Negro capital was scattered, uninterested, and small. It was necessary to build up a sentiment to attract it. This is his monumental contribution. With an intensified background, the product of his upbringing in the West Indies, his blows were aimed at the gaping strictures in the American Negro's status. Negro domination? This

nightmare of southern whites and the excuse for denying the merest political privileges to Negroes was skirted by picturing a land where Negroes could rule themselves. Social equality? Yes, but not in the sense offensive to whites who feared inter-marriage. It would be nation with nation. In September 1921 he said in a letter to the TRIBUNE: "The Universal Negro Improvement Association, which I represent, seeks to prove to the world our ability as a race politically, socially, industrially, and religiously, and after this accomplishment we feel sure all races will be willing to accept us on an equal footing. Dr. DuBois, to the contrary, seeks to have the white race admit Negroes to the full enjoyment of all the privileges produced by the white race without any exertion or effort on the part of the Negro to do for himself."

Addressing his international congress in August 1921, he said: "We are willing to form an alliance with the white people, only we say, 'What is good for you is good for me.' Hand in hand the colored race and the white can accomplish much that is desirable, but there must be equality or the Negro will not join with his ancient master."

Or, again: "If I can interpret correctly the spirit of the Negro, it is for me to say that Negroes everywhere are determined to be free—determined to be liberated—liberated from mob rule, liberated from segregation, liberated from Jimcrowism, liberated from injustices of all kinds. Let the world understand that 400,000,000 Negroes are determined to die for their liberty and that if we must die, we shall die nobly, we shall die gallantly, fighting up the battle heights of Africa to plant there the standard which represents liberty."

He also adds: "Fellow men of the world, let us realize that it is now or never. This is our last chance for permanent organization; this is our last chance for saving ourselves, industrially and politically. Let no power on earth turn you against yourselves. Remember, we are living in an age of the survival of the fittest; the fittest in race and the fittest in government. Remember, that the various statesmen of the various governments of the world are pitted against each other in the great battle of intellect, where the one hopes to defeat the other only through his intellectual superiority and his greater foresight. The Negro cannot afford to sleep intellectually, the Negro cannot afford to ignore the signs of the times. It is for him now to awaken himself from his long slumber, the slumber of Rip Van Winkle, and see that it is time for him to be on his guard, and to keep in action in his own defence."

The side-show of Africa for Africans thus devoured the circus of a steamship line plying between this country and Africa. The innumerable branches of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, in which these submerged Negroes got their first taste of au-

thority and importance, were like so many little principalities. The shower of grandiose titles and ceremonial costumes gave added prestige. Supported by the naturally aggressive enthusiasm of West Indian compatriots and by a well paid staff of propagandists and writers, the American Negro peasantry was aroused to the point that "Garvey himself," as one enthusiast remarked, "could not stop the movement."

Around this developed a race philosophy original only in the sense that it was an inversion of white standards—a typical revolt. God is to be thot of as black; instead of Red Cross nurses, there are black cross nurses; the White Star Line becomes the Black Star Line. As the movement grew, other convenient arrangements were taken over. Just prior to the first international convention, DeValera was elected Provisional President of Ireland. Garvey then became Provisional President of Africa. There were Supreme Highnesses, Presidents General, Knight Commanders of the Order of the Nile, of the Distinguished Service Order of Ethiopia.

One of the great deficiencies of Negroes in America is the absence of any well established historical background of which they can be proud. This distinguishes them in their own esteem from the humblest Pole, for example. An emphasis then is placed by the Negroes of the movement upon early African civilization. Some of the banners in a recent parade in New York carried these inscriptions: "Africa, Mother of Civilization", "Prince: Shall Come Out Of Egypt". These were associated, at least in thot, with the hopes and dreams, some fantastic, some desperate, some mystical, which have inspired the movement from the beginning: "Free Africa", "By the Science of Perpetual Motion, the Negro Will Conquer", "The Negro Will Build Cruisers and Submarines", "African Scientists Will Win The War", "The New Negro Is Ready For the Ku Klux".

There has been more criticism of Garvey than of the movement. This is misleading. Everybody knows that the roots of the unrest so manifest in the behavior of these Negroes are utterly unaffected by the clamor for the leader's head. It is perhaps good that he has been put away. Certainly there will be less exploitation of the character described in the charges against him. But it must also be remembered that this restlessness will express itself in some way. Dreaming was, to say the least, a harmless substitute for adventure and the satisfaction of long cherished but repressed desires, altho the cost of such a pastime seemed an intolerable waste to practical men of affairs. The sources of this discontent must be remedied effectively and now, or this accumulating energy and unrest, blocked off from its dreams, will take another direction. Perhaps this also will be harmless. But who knows?