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Garvey or Garveyism?

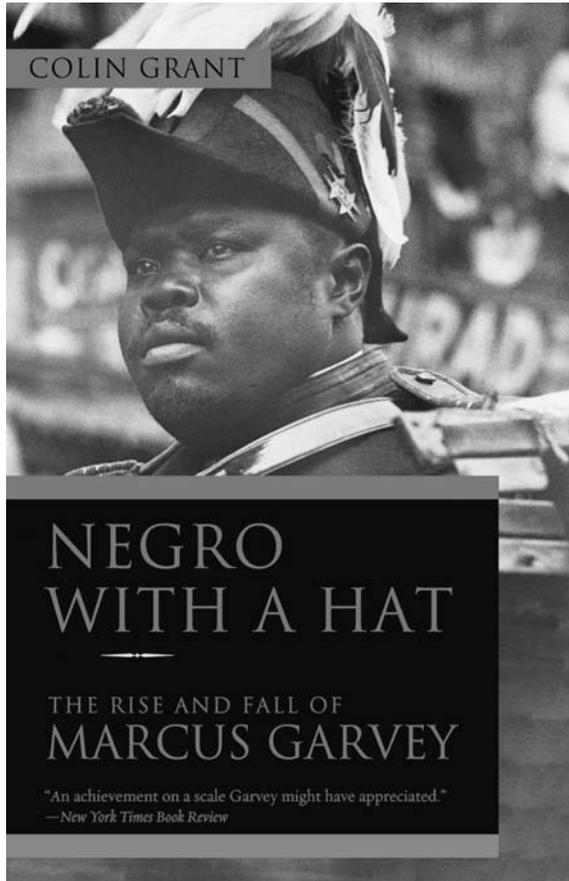
Colin Grant's *Negro with a Hat* (2008) and the search for a new synthesis in UNIA scholarship

Adam Ewing

DOCKED IN KINGSTON, Jamaica in 1920, the crew of the S. S. *Yarmouth* secured an unexpected freight of coconuts, to be shipped promptly to New York. Soon to be named the S. S. *Frederick Douglass*, the *Yarmouth* was the first vessel purchased by the Black Star Line Steamship Company, the trans-oceanic shipping venture and flagship enterprise of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the brainchild of the organization's fiery president-general, Marcus Garvey. The *Yarmouth* had been launched to tremendous fanfare and excitement, and hailed by ecstatic crowds of African Americans and West Indians as it sailed into ports along the eastern seaboard and throughout the Caribbean. In Garvey's vision, the vessel was of inestimable value as a mobilizing device, serving as a tangible manifestation of Negro industrial accomplishment, providing safe passage for Negroes otherwise harassed and degraded on white-operated fleets, and demonstrating the fruits of diasporic unity, connecting shareholders spread across the Atlantic world in a new triangular trade that would provide the economic foundation for a reborn, reconnected, and resolute race.

Yet Garvey's brilliance as a propagandist was not matched by an acuity for business management; for this, the *Yarmouth's* second voyage, Black Star Line operators had quickly and naïvely accrued massive financial deficits. The shipment of seven hundred tons of coconuts would provide crucial aid on this front. But even in a moment of crisis, the need to conduct efficient business collided with the imperative to parade the *Yarmouth* as a sort of sailing trophy. Rather than proceeding directly to New York, the ship's captain, Joshua Cockburn, was instructed to stop in Philadelphia for a meeting with stockholders, then to sail past New York to Boston, where a tremendous rally was hosted by the local UNIA division. The next day, the *Yarmouth* sped home to New York, but the delays had come at a cost: "the coconuts," remembered Cockburn, "were rotten."

It is fitting that this story appears almost exactly half-way through Colin Grant's engaging new biography of Marcus Garvey, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey*, for it contains much of the core tension that briskly propels the work. Grant writes in the tradition that has coalesced our historical memory around the most spectacular, bombastic, and ulti-



mately fleeting elements of the UNIA's brief heyday. Garvey, in this reading, emerged from obscurity and captured the zeitgeist of the post-World War I era, building an all-black organization of unprecedented reach and membership. But Garvey's talents as a promoter soon ran against his inexperience as a businessman; his ability to attract followers was nearly matched by his tendency to generate antagonisms and enemies; and his enlivening vision of African liberation and diasporic cooperation was ensnared in a web of government repression, elite African American opposition, and the enervating structural barriers of racial inequality. Like the *Yarmouth*, Grant's UNIA is cast in the mold of Greek tragedy, its dazzling rise obscuring for a glorious moment the fissures and contradictions that foretold its fall.

It is a gripping story, but one that has begun to seem incomplete in the light of emerging new work on Garveyism. Grant's work in the medium of traditional biography brings this disjuncture into especially sharp relief. To be sure, there are few historical figures better suited to biographical treatment than Marcus Garvey. The man demanded a spotlight and knew how to use it. But the biographer naturally faces the temptation to be drawn, as have been past chroniclers of both Garvey and his movement, to the drama of Garvey's

oversized schemes and conflagrations while giving short shrift to the quiet and often mundane work that propelled his organization, and in which Garvey ultimately invested the bulk of his vision. The paradox for biographers is that Garvey's legacy was defined not by flashy business ventures like the Black Star Line but by the work of UNIA and Garveyist organizers far from the epicenter of the movement. It is a problem that Grant does not very successfully navigate. If *Negro with a Hat* provides a thoughtful and compelling psychological portrait of Garvey the man, it does a poor job of accounting for the magnitude of his accomplishments. Garvey may have fancied himself a prophet or a liberator, but he was first of all an organizer. And a far richer portrait emerges if one shifts the spotlight away from Garvey and towards those communities, spread across the United States, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Africa, that recognized in Garveyism a rich forum for the projection of local politics and aspirations, a device with which to weather the storm of the intolerant interwar years and prepare for a more felicitous era of black political activism.

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MARCUS MOSIAH GARVEY was born in 1887 in the seaside parish of St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica. As a boy, Marcus enjoyed a life of modest privilege, thanks

As a boy, Marcus enjoyed a life of modest privilege, thanks to the hard work of his father, Malcus, a self-made artisan and precious book collector, one generation removed from slavery, and his mother, who grew crops on the family plot and worked as a domestic servant for the local Methodist minister.

to the hard work of his father, Malcus, a self-made artisan and precious book collector, one generation removed from slavery, and his mother, who grew crops on the family plot and worked as a domestic servant for the local Methodist minister. When he could, Marcus would sneak into his father's library to absorb its contents. He also demonstrated an early talent as an orator. His future

wife, Amy Ashwood, recalled that "Marcus was barely seven years old when he began to play the role of priest, guiding his flock composed of his village playmates . . . preparing his own 'divine service,' his own hymns and prayers and [would] close the meeting with a rousing sermon."

By the time he had reached adolescence, Garvey's fortunes had rather dramatically turned. Malcus became recklessly embroiled in a series of petty disputes and legal actions that left the family in penury, and then abandoned his wife and children. "My father was a man of brilliant intellect and dashing courage," recalled Garvey later in his life. "He was unafraid of consequences. He took human chances in the course of life, as most bold



Globe, The Veld.
Metal, Wire, Plastic,
Artist's Nails, Wood,
Objects, Text by
Peter Orner; 17 x 14
x 14 inches. ©2004
Arthur Simms.

men do, and failed at the close of his career.” This gloss covered a deep sense of pain and betrayal from which Garvey never fully recovered. Marcus had been a cruel and intolerant father, and ultimately an absent one. He died in an almshouse, among the poor and the destitute, as his son’s career was taking off in the United States; Marcus paid for the funeral, but refused to honor his father’s debts.

At fourteen years old, financially unable to continue his formal education, Garvey launched himself into a series of dynamic apprenticeships. Grant’s account of Garvey’s youthful adventures and tribulations is especially deft, and it leaves little doubt that Garvey’s meteoric rise after the war was presaged by years of careful training and preparation. In Jamaica, Garvey learned the



Ark. Rope,
Wood, Glue,
Paint, Wheels,
Metal, Objects,
80 x 72 x 46
inches. ©2006
Arthur Simms.

printing trade, fought for better wages and working conditions as a unionist, and joined the island's first nationalist political organization. As a migrant worker charting his way through Central and South America, Garvey championed the cause of the black working man, establishing two newspapers, the *Nation* in Limón and *La Prensa* in Colón, devoted to charting living conditions in United Fruit Company labor compounds and attacking what he viewed as a timid and obsequious West Indian leadership. In London, where Garvey traveled in 1912 to "complete his informal education," he fine-tuned his oratorical style at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park and secured menial employ-

ment at the offices of the *African Times and Orient Review*, the path-breaking journal devoted to fostering cooperation and critical dialogue among activists in the colonial world. In October, 1913, Garvey published an essay in the journal, “The British West Indies in the Mirror of Civilisation,” in which he prophesied that “the people of [the West Indies] will be the instruments of uniting a scattered race who, before the close of many centuries, will found an Empire on which the sun shall shine as ceaselessly as it shines on the Empire of the North today.”

Garvey was not an especially original thinker, and Grant does a superb job of graphing his subject’s intellectual bricolage. From his elocution tutor in Jamaica, the radical journalist and reformer J. Robert Love (here misidentified as Robert J. Love), Garvey was given early lessons in racial consciousness and Pan-African idealism. Working for Duse Mohamed Ali at the *African Times*

and Orient Review, he absorbed important lessons from the “master propagandist,” not the least of which was his advocacy of both transnational black capitalism and cooperation among the so-called

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black, brown, and yellow peoples of the world. Garvey imbibed the work of the great Caribbean scholar, Edward Wilmot Blyden, who had emigrated to West Africa as a young man and, in Garvey’s words, “done so much to retrieve the lost prestige of the race”; Booker T. Washington, whose *Up from Slavery* both offered a template for racial uplift and self-help and convinced Garvey of his destiny as a race leader; and J. E. Casely Hayford, the Gold Coast lawyer and activist, whose recently published *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation* proposed a thrilling vision of African redemption premised not on provincial solutions but on a world-wide racial awakening, consciousness, and pride.

Garvey sailed home in 1914, prepared to formally launch his career. But his political vision was not fully formed—Grant describes the early iteration of the Universal Negro Improvement Association as “a charitable club built around the nucleus of a literary, music-appreciation and debating society” that jockeyed for position among several such organizations—and he found in Jamaica a rather inhospitable field for his ambitions, in large part because of opposition from the light-skinned “respectable middle-class,” with whom Garvey shared a mutual enmity. A different fortune awaited in America. Docking in New York in March, 1916, Garvey joined the massive stream of West Indian and southern blacks arriving in northern cities in search of war-time opportunity. After a tour of the southern states, during which he absorbed lessons about African American social mores and was confronted with the

full force of American racial prejudice, Garvey returned to Harlem and threw himself into the arena of stepladder oration and the politics of anti-war, anti-racist, and anti-colonial activism. The war had both radicalized black politics and intensified white racial fears. African Americans had patriotically enlisted for service, and many black intellectuals, most famously W. E. B. Du Bois, suggested that by closing ranks and saving the world from German militarism African Americans might strike a blow for democratic reform at home. Instead, uniformed blacks on the homefront were visited by lynchings, threats of violence, and daily indignities in and around their army camps. Black workers, invited north by industrial employers desperate to fill wartime shortages, were met by recriminations and suspicions by the white workforce, sparking riots that left hundreds of African Americans dead. As the war came to an end and the peace negotiations commenced, it became increasingly clear to Du Bois and the Harlem intelligentsia that the War had been fought by the Great Powers not to save democracy but to jockey for the spoils of global white supremacy.

In inaugurating the *African Times and Orient Review*, Duse Mohamed Ali had proposed an intellectual and political alliance of peoples of color. After the war, with Europe lying in ruins and anticolonial struggles erupting throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean, the specter of a “rising tide of color” both haunted the dreams of colonial agents and fired the imagination of black activists. Hubert H. Harrison, the founding father of postwar “race first” politics, argued that the cause of radicalism for an “awakening” Negro race was international, the key relationship not the “exploitation of laborers by capitalists” but the “economic subjection of colored peoples by white”; not a class line, but a color line that skirted the globe. Garvey, who was invited to share the stage by Harrison at the inaugural meeting of his Liberty League, soon adapted much of Harrison’s program for his own purposes, and quickly shifted the center of political gravity towards himself. It was a felicitous convergence of training and opportunity. The New Negro, Garvey thundered, would rise on a crest of racial pride, racial unity, and racial preparedness. Only by liberating their homeland, by building nations, governments, and armies of their own, might Negroes hope to receive respect and fair treatment in a world inexorably speeding towards racial competition and conflict. Amidst the ferment, Garvey had found a stepladder large enough to project his aspirations.

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GARVEY’S CONTEMPORARIES in the black intelligentsia hardly knew what to make of him. John Edward Bruce, who later became a fervent convert to Garveyism, doubted that Garvey’s colorful and boorish tactics would have much traction. “We like to listen to the music of his mouth,” he conceded,

“[but] Mr. Garvey will find that the Negro race is not so easily organised as he imagines . . . wise statesmen always conceal more than they reveal You won’t do Mr. Garvey too *muchee talkee*.” Garvey’s great antagonist, W. E. B. Du Bois, observing his rival’s penchant for flamboyant costumes and spectacular parades, dismissed him as a “Negro with a hat.” When Garvey proved unexpectedly—unprecedentedly—successful at mobilizing African American support, his detractors dismissed his program of African redemption as whimsical and unrealistic, and disparaged his followers as unlettered and unsophisticated dupes. Du Bois smirked that “anybody with common sense” realized his program was “impossible,” and chalked it up to Garvey’s “childish ignorance of the stern facts of the world.” E. Franklin Frazier described Garvey’s followers as “poor, ignorant, and weak,” and argued that “the evidence seems to place him among those so-called cranks who refuse to deal realistically with life.”

Garvey has fared little better with scholars. Including Grant’s book, there have been a meager three full-length biographies of Garvey published by mainstream academic presses. In *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (1955), E. David Cronon argues that Garvey sold “an unrealistic escapist program of racial chavinism” to “the ignorant black masses.” In *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (1986), Judith Stein dismissively views the “methods and visions” of the UNIA to have been “simultaneously shaped by the fatalism of the powerless, the utopias of hustlers and charlatans, the promises of mass movements, and the ideologies generated by the new social transformations of World War I and the 1920s.” Historians have tended to be drawn to the brilliant Du Bois, and have found Garvey lacking by comparison. In *Afro-Orientalism*, Bill V. Mullen, celebrates Du Bois’s efforts to develop a Pan-Africanism that struggled “to wed antiracist politics to a materialist internationalism,” while dismissing Garvey’s Pan-Africanism as “cultural fundamentalism,” the delineation of a “nativist politics of return.” David Levering Lewis, in his magisterial, Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Du Bois, describes Garveyism as “calamitous,” and Garvey as a conservative, megalomaniacal, and naïve purveyor of “racial exclusivism.” If Du Bois offered a “prudent program for the gradual empowerment of the darker world,” Garvey “threatened the continuity of these efforts with an opera bouffe act that amounted to little more, really, than pageantry and incantation—‘Africa for the Africans,’ a heady slogan in place of a sober program.” Garvey scholar Tony Martin’s nearly thirty-five-year-old observation in his opus, *Race First*—that “no one could have organized and built up the largest black mass movement in Afro-American history, in the face of continuous onslaughts from communists on the left, black reactionaries on all sides, and the most powerful governments in the world, and yet be a buffoon or a clown, or even an overwhelmingly impractical visionary”—has rarely been heeded.

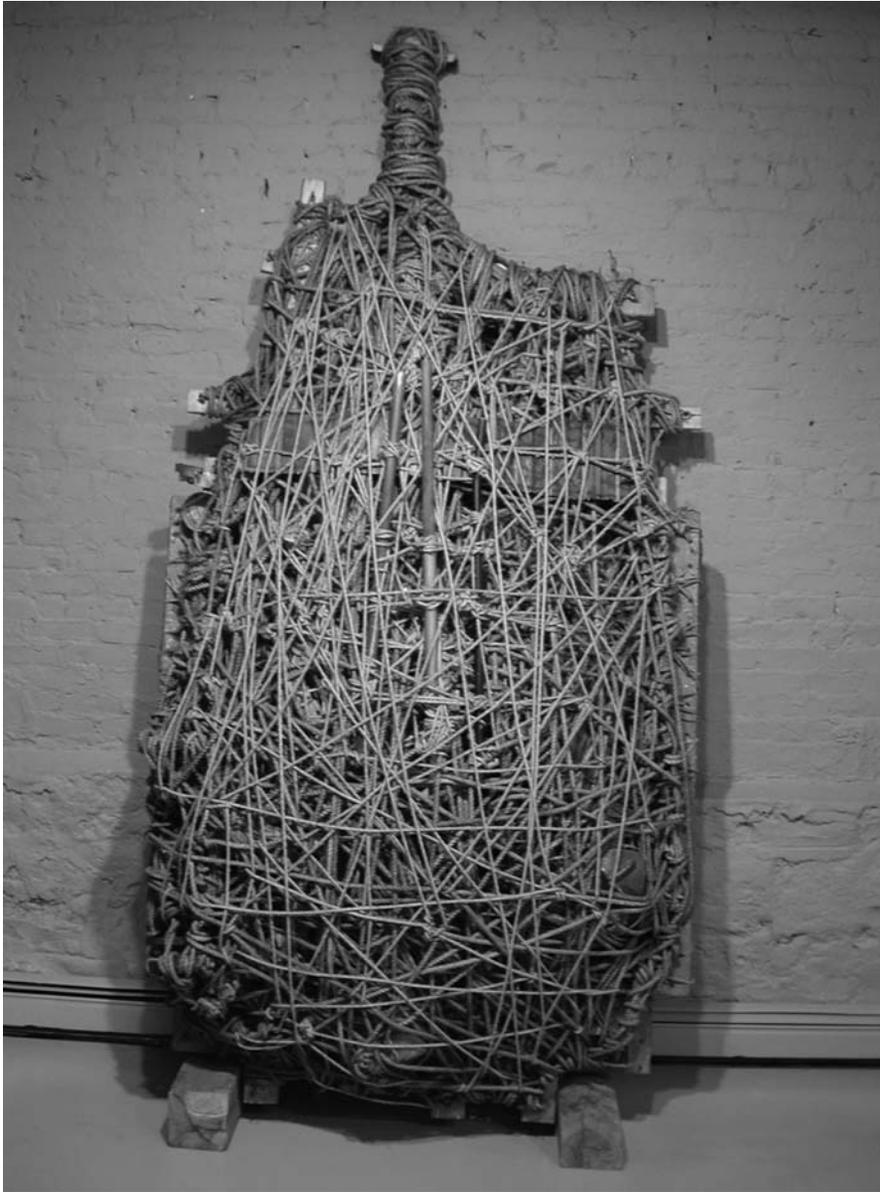
In Grant, Garvey is blessed with a sympathetic—albeit consistently and impressively judicious—biographer. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that *Negro with a Hat* will do much to sway the opinions of Garvey’s critics. Part of the reason is the spectacular and somewhat predictable nature of Garvey’s personal and professional collapse in the 1920s. Grant tells this story well. In the span of a few years, the UNIA launched the Black Star Line, along with a series of small businesses, entered into serious negotiations with the Liberian government to establish an organizational beachhead in West Africa, and hosted a series of spectacular international conventions that brought delegates to Harlem from all over the diaspora. Money flowed in from all corners of the globe and UNIA branches proliferated. But very

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quickly cracks began to emerge in the edifice of Garvey’s empire. Liberian colonization proved to be a fool’s errand—twice—as the UNIA’s plans ran against the pragmatic political calculations of a Liberian elite wary of their imperial neighbors and jealous of their own power. The Black Star Line, undone by incompetent and

inexperienced management, slid into bankruptcy, as did a second steamship line, the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company. Garvey’s leadership became increasingly erratic, paranoiac, and authoritarian, and he had a series of “spectacular fallouts” with his allies, including his first wife, Amy Ashwood. He engaged in a series of acrimonious and personal feuds with his rivals in the African American intelligentsia, especially after his infamous meeting with the Acting Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan in June, 1922, a move that Grant describes as one of “colossal arrogance.” Garvey was stalked by federal agents, who infiltrated his organization and finally indicted him on the flimsy charge of mail fraud in January, 1922. The subsequent trial revealed both the extent to which Garvey’s enemies, black and white, were eager to silence him, and—in airing details about the management of the Black Star Line—the shaky edifice of the UNIA’s central bureaucracy. Garvey spent several months in Tombs prison in 1923, and nearly three years in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta. Pardoned in late 1927, he was immediately deported to Jamaica, never to return. He left behind an organization fractured, impoverished, and rudderless.

Confronted with this set of personal and organizational failures, it is hard to acquire a clear sense of exactly what Marcus Garvey and the UNIA accomplished. We are left instead with a series of painful vignettes. Josie Gatlin and her family escape from Okmulgee, Oklahoma right before the brutal Tulsa riots of 1921 and head to New York intending to book passage on the Black



Lucy Fradkin Meets John Delapa Or Gregor. Rope, Wood, Glue, Paint, Metal, Objects, 112 x 55 x 24 inches. ©2005 Arthur Simms.

Star Line's maiden voyage to Liberia, only to find that the ship is not ready—and will never be ready—to sail. Garvey, after nearly being barred reentry to the United States after a fundraising trip through the Caribbean and Central America, exhibits a “new-found deference to authority” that manifests itself in his “retreat from radicalism” and his increasing embrace of a doctrine of racial purity that leads him into awkward alliances with white antiscegenationists and virulent racists. With opposition to the movement gaining steam, Garveyites increasingly turn to violent methods of intimidation, culminating in the murders of expelled Garveyites James W. H. Eason and Laura Adoker Kofey by UNIA members. Grant tempers this slide somewhat by projecting Garvey's legacy forward, noting the realization and rediscovery of his liberatory vision in the nationalist struggles in Africa and the Caribbean in the 1950s



Tricycle. Rope,
Wood, Glue,
Tricycle, Toy
Truck, Bottles,
Wire, 30 x 45 x
28 inches. ©2006
Arthur Simms.

and 1960s, and in the Black Power movement in the United States. His Garvey is a prophet and dreamer, a flawed and brilliant man, misunderstood and persecuted in his time, a “bleeding black Christ” for his adoring supporters. Yet it is hard to shake the feeling by the end of the book that Garvey’s impact was ephemeral; that ultimately, as Du Bois suggested, he was all hat.

It will be a shame if Grant’s readers are left with this impression. For a far richer portrait of Garvey’s importance can be glimpsed beyond the flashy parades, shipping lines, and colonization schemes emanating from Harlem, away from the contentious rivalries and bitter disputes that orbited Garvey, and in the vibrant political communities mobilized by Garvey and his organizers throughout the Americas. Recent research, especially in the United States, has demonstrated that the results of UNIA organizing were truly startling. In the urban centers of the Northeast and Midwest, Garveyism spread as an appealing political vessel for recent arrivals from the South and from the West Indies, men and women who found themselves alienated from class-based organizations dominated by whites and race-based organizations dominated by established black elites. In the port towns of Hampton Roads, Virginia, the UNIA pulled together a diverse coalition of labor activists, skilled and unskilled laborers, domestics and laundresses, theologians, and members of the black middle class. So, too, in the coastal hubs of Charleston, South Carolina,

Brunswick, Georgia, Mobile, Alabama, and New Orleans, Louisiana, where the UNIA attracted a solid working-class constituency that included recent migrants from the rural hinterland, port workers, washerwomen, and common laborers. Garveyism flourished among tobacco workers in and around Winston-Salem, lumber workers, cane cutters, and cotton pickers in Louisiana, coal workers in West Virginia, Bahamian communities in Miami and Key West, and entrepreneurs, preachers, and unskilled workers in California. In isolated rural communities, especially in the cotton-growing regions of Worth County, Georgia, the Arkansas and Yazoo-Mississippi Deltas, and the Missouri Bootheel, Garveyism enjoyed perhaps its greatest and most sustained success, attracting both local elites and sharecroppers, older farmers with deep regional ties and recent migrants searching for land and opportunity. By the end of 1922, the UNIA had blanketed the country, and Garvey stood abreast of the largest and most inclusive mass movement in African American history.

Grant suggests that Garvey offered African Americans something new, that he convinced his followers to abandon their “culture of stultifying caution” characterized by “bowed-head, hat-in-the-hand subservient strategies of survival.” Such a reading sidesteps a compelling and vibrant history of black political activism, dating back to slavery and manifest in, among other vehicles, postbellum third party politics, self-defense organizations, emigration movements, labor activism, progressive reformism, mutual aid societies, fraternal lodges, and the black church. It is perhaps more accurate to argue that Garveyism resonated because it offered something old as well as new: old because it so effectively evoked and built upon the work of the past; new because the winds of postwar anticolonial activism suggested thrilling international vistas. Garvey was able to capitalize on this felicitous convergence of local praxis and global vision. As the heady days of the immediate postwar period gave way to the storm of the reactionary twenties, and as the national UNIA began its decline, Garveyites sustained vibrant containers of political activism across the country by imagining their restricted and often mundane local politics against the backdrop of creeping anticolonial mobilization, nurturing alliances across the African diaspora, and projecting their demands for African liberation forward into an undefined future. During an era of ascendant white supremacy, they argued, the very acts of organization and preparation carried a subversive subtext. Victory would have to wait. But their work carried meaning, and it would hasten the prophecy of the well-known psalm, that princes would come out of Egypt, that Ethiopia would soon stretch out her hands unto God.

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TOWARDS THE END of 1924, with the fortunes of the UNIA lagging, Garvey delivered a seldom-noticed speech in Harlem entitled “The Silent Work That Must be Done.” Liberian colonization was dead. The Black Cross Navigation

and Trading Company was heading for bankruptcy. And the new political climate necessitated a rethinking of UNIA tactics, messaging, and orientation. “We have practically reached the [end of the] first period in our organization history, and we are now about to launch out into the activities of the second period,” Garvey announced. The war had occasioned the need, and provided the opportunity, to adopt “a policy of aggression” designed to awaken Negroes from their slumber and to a realization of the possibilities of the moment. But now that the “great world that rules weaker peoples and races” had returned “to their pre-war attitude of suppression, of exploitation, of rapine and of murder,” it was incumbent on the UNIA to pursue its program “through silence and proper organization.” Whereas during the first period of its his-

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tory the UNIA was known as a “great institution,” heretofore the influence of the movement would “be felt quietly and secretly,” in the United States and around the world. This would be an age of missionary work, an age of secret diplomacy, an age of education. The UNIA would

redouble its dedication to network building, especially in Africa, where Garveyists would pledge a commitment that was both firmer and, in its muted nature, less vulnerable to reprisal.

Colonial governments ensured that Garvey never set foot in Africa, and Grant does not extend his gaze far beyond the UNIA’s halting steps in Liberia. But Garveyism left a deep imprint on the continent, and charting its lines of influence again shifts the discussion away from the spectacle of the movement and towards the “silence and proper organization” that emerged as its legacy. From the sites of debarkation in West and South Africa, Garveyist organizers carried news of the movement deep into the hinterland, along vast migration networks connecting labor compounds to rural villages, quiet trading centers to bustling port towns. In a remote outpost in British-occupied Nigeria, colonial officer and future novelist Joyce Cary was perplexed to learn that village markets were flooded with rumors about the imminent arrival of a black king, preparing to set sail for Africa in a great iron ship full of black soldiers, determined to drive the Europeans from the continent. Traveling through the Belgian Congo, Hermann Norden was greeted at post after post by colonial officials worried about Marcus Garvey and his designs for the continent. Local UNIA divisions were established in Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana (Gold Coast), Namibia (South West Africa), Botswana (Bechuanaland), Lesotho (Basutoland), and South Africa, and secretly for a time in Senegal. Where UNIA organizing

was forbidden, such as in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), and Malawi (Nyasaland), proxy organizations were established, connected to Garveyist networks via mail, verbal information channels, and smuggled copies of the UNIA's weekly newspaper, *Negro World*.

Garveyist organizing in Africa had an impact that transcended the physical reach of the UNIA. West African intellectuals were generally careful to distance themselves from Garvey's more strident brand of anticolonialism, but they followed his movements closely, cheered his vision of racial uplift and international black capitalism, and broadcast the activities of the UNIA in several prominent African newspapers. In South Africa, where, as one unsympathetic observer noted in a local journal, "the mad dreams and literature of Marcus Garvey . . . were broadcast on the winds," Garveyism enjoyed an important intellectual resonance in the development of the early African National Congress, and was embraced by several Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union activists, especially as a device to inspire and organize rural South Africans. Garveyist rhetoric became imbricated in a series of millennial challenges to colonial authority, including the Israelite movement on the Transkei, the Kimbanguist movement in the Belgian Congo, and the Watchtower movement, which spread throughout central and southern Africa carrying news of the imminent arrival of African American liberators, the expulsion of the whites, and the inauguration of a peaceful era of black rule. Garveyism spread as far east as Kenya, where it influenced the politics of Harry Thuku and his pioneering East African Association. Jomo Kenyatta, the first President of independent Kenya, told C. L. R. James how "in 1921 Kenya nationalists, unable to read, would gather round a reader of Garvey's newspaper, the *Negro World*, and listen to an article two or three times. Then they would run various ways through the forest, carefully [sic] to repeat the whole, which they had memorized, to Africans hungry for some doctrine which lifted them from the servile consciousness in which Africans lived."

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NEGRO WITH A Hat ends on a series of somber notes. After returning to Jamaica to a hero's welcome, Garvey struggled to manage his organization from exile, and at the 1929 International Convention in Kingston, financial disputes rent the UNIA in two. Garvey was briefly reenergized by a daring foray into formal politics, running for a seat on the legislative council on a compelling and forward thinking platform, but intemperate criticisms of the Jamaican judiciary landed him briefly back in jail, and with the majority of his peasant base unable to vote, was soundly defeated. By 1935, Garvey had relocated to London, where he was joined for a time by his second wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, and their two young boys (Marcus Jr.'s fragile health prompted a return to Jamaica, without Marcus, in 1938). It was clear

by then that his moment had passed. A new generation had emerged on the scene, led by dashing young radicals like George Padmore and C. L. R. James, who disdained Garvey's anachronistic and "petit bourgeois" sensibilities. In the aftermath of the Italian-Ethiopian War, Garvey confounded his admirers by launching a series of attacks against the exiled Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie, at a moment when activists throughout the diaspora were thronging to the Ethiopian cause. Garvey similarly upset his supporters by blithely suggesting, during Trinidad's brutal island-wide strike in 1937, that the workers were being manipulated by foreign agitators, and should not needlessly risk their employment. One Sunday morning, towards the end of his life, Amy Ashwood had a chance encounter with Garvey as he prepared to address the crowd at Speakers' Corner. "He could no longer carry his listeners; even hecklers got the better of him," she recalled. "The Marcus I was listening to was no longer the 'Tiger', the 'Black Moses' Tears were running from my eyes and I could stay in that place no longer . . . the old fire had gone." Garvey died on June 10, 1940, alienated and alone, in an inauspicious rented home in West Kensington.

As Garvey passed from the scene, however, Garveyism remained, woven inextricably into the dense, multifaceted, and unbroken thread of black political culture. Even as Garvey disdained the efforts of the Trinidad strikers, their leader, T. Uriah Butler, led meetings with rousing renditions of "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," the anthem which had—and continued to—open UNIA gatherings. As many Garveyites gravitated away from the UNIA in the United States, they resurfaced during the Depression in organizations like the Communist Party, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. "Queen Mother" Audley Moore, a member of the UNIA in New Orleans in the early 1920s, mentored the Revolutionary Action Movement, which in turn provided the inspiration for the Black Panther Party. Elijah Muhammad was a Garveyite, as was Earl Little, who sometimes took his young son, Malcolm (X), to UNIA meetings. Septima Clark watched the first ship of the Black Star Line dock in Charleston; Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee organizer Ivanhoe Donaldson grew up in a UNIA household, as did pioneering scholar St. Clair Drake. The first Mrs. Garvey, Amy Ashwood, served as a member of the Council on African Affairs, and as an organizer of the Fifth Pan-African Congress, in Manchester, England, in 1945; the second, Amy Jacques, spoke alongside Kwame Nkrumah, in Ghana, and at the watershed Asian-African Conference, in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955.

In Africa, Garveyism nurtured a generation of young activists and dreamers into maturity. Garveyist agents continued to carry news of the movement to the continent well into the 1930s. Amy Jacques Garvey revealed in her memoir of the movement, *Garvey and Garveyism*, that Garvey maintained an African representative in London that kept in personal touch with Africans toiling patiently for freedom. Isa M. Lawrence, who had

acquired a measure of fame after being arrested in the 1920s trying to smuggle copies of the *Negro World* into Malawi, became the first Treasurer-General of the Nyasaland African Congress after World War II. Jomo Kenyatta met Garvey while he was a student in London, and considered himself a member of the UNIA. In his autobiography, Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first president of independent Nigeria, recalled that “Marcus Garvey’s motto”—One God! One Aim! One Destiny!—“gave me the ambitions to be of service for the redemption of Africa.” Kwame Nkrumah remembered that as a student in the United States “the book that did more than any other to fire my enthusiasm was *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*.” Like Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, president-general of the African National Congress of Northern Rhodesia, several African statesmen honored Garvey for “creat[ing] the nucleus for the freedom and independence of . . . Africa.”

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GARVEYISM CONTINUES TO be framed, in the main, as a catalog of Marcus Garvey’s triumphs and travails, and by the flashy institutional successes and failures of the UNIA. *Negro with a Hat* is a worthy addition to this canon. Garvey deserves a good biographer, and Grant is up for the challenge. Ultimately, however, scholars of Garveyism need to chart a different course. As Garvey’s personal fortunes and aspirations began to collapse, his movement continued as a global endeavor of network-building, consciousness-raising, and activism that extended beyond the operational parameters of the UNIA and became implicated in a diverse array of regionally-constituted political projects; a movement of cautious organization and mobilization that thrived after its brief period of radical assertion had passed. Garveyism has been held captive, to an extent, by its dazzling early years, and by the magnetic personality of its namesake. By tearing our eyes away from the spectacular and towards the mundane—away from the complexities of Marcus Garvey’s remarkable life and towards the shared discourse within which he was only the most significant participant—we might begin to develop better explanations for the appeal, the scope, and the durability of the most important mass organization in the history of the African diaspora. Grant’s success as a biographer has the ironic result of suggesting a fork in the road between Garvey and Garveyism. It is time that we foreground the latter.🌐