

Attention of Melissa Chastang  
Akin Gump Strauss Haurer and Feld, LLP  
Robert S. Strauss Building, 1333 New Hampshire Avenue,  
N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1564; to the

August 17, 2016

### Statement in Support of Posthumous Presidential Pardon of Marcus Mosiah Garvey

In recognition of his lifelong and substantial contributions to society, his efforts to uplift peoples of African descent the world over, and his work to promote economic independence as a means of social progress, **I, Wale Idris Ajibade, Executive Director of African Views Organization** stands in support of the descendants of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, who now seek a posthumous presidential pardon on Garvey's behalf.

Marcus Garvey lives in history as one of the first leaders of the American civil rights movement. In the early twentieth century, he was an advocate for the social, political, and economic independence of those of African descent across the world, and Garvey staked his name and his movement on the development of economic opportunity as a source of black empowerment. To unite his followers toward the common goal of social progress, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), which at its height boasted nearly 6 million members in 40 countries. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "He was the first man on a mass scale and level to give millions of Negroes a sense of dignity and destiny. And make the Negro feel that he was somebody."

We live in a world where authority has not always represented justice; a world where time heals all wounds and cures all form of ignorance. A world where Galileo Galilei was tried by the Inquisition, found "vehemently suspect of heresy", and forced to recant scientific facts and then sentenced to spend the rest of his life under house arrest. Today, he is the father of observational astronomy", the "father of modern physics", and the "father of science". It is also the same world, where Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) was arrested, tried and sentenced to die by the brutal crucifixion after protesting the excess of the authority for which he was charged with blasphemy. Today, no one dare pronounce his name in vain. He is the light of the Christian world. As you would agree, there is a long list of these examples. Marcus Mosiah Garvey too may a victim of time; but for us, his legacy is the lighthouse of the consciousness, solidarity, strength and hope of African peoples worldwide. He insisted that the future of Africans is not only of failures, weaknesses, and limitations but that it contains also successes, strengths and possibilities. If only we would better understand of Africa; Support to Africa's causes and concerns in a tangible way; build closer links between Africa, the Diaspora African community and their country of residence; develop Social and humanitarian causes in Africa or abroad; engage in self-development and actively work to improve the Welfare of the Africa because it is inextricable tied to stability of African communities everywhere.

These are noble causes in an era when the re-humanization of the African people was eminently critical. However, if he remains criminalized, his legacy remains tainted and his influence will remain ineffective as tool of human development. Yet he had done a great service not only to the African peoples but for humanity as a whole.

Africans, African Americans, Afro-Latin, and Afro-Caribbean people do not only share a common

A framework for information, communication, and collaboration on African affairs worldwide.



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ancestry, they also share similar experiences in slavery, colonialism, as well as in their struggles against racism and poverty. In the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, important historical figures from the Africa, Caribbean, and America emerged courageous in challenging the status quo, and made bold strides towards creating sustainable dialogue, forging partnerships and strengthening solidarity for struggling people of African descent. Many of these people were labeled Pan-Africanists, and I would agree that some of them were Afro centrist in their defense, but most of them were simply humanists -- advocating a better condition of living for Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora.

According to the following FBI Memo as Primary Source, as well as according to other multiple sources we know that J. Edgar Hoover wanted to disrupt and destroy Garvey's civil rights movement in principle:

J. Edgar Hoover to Special Agent Ridgely  
Washington, D.C., October 11, 1919

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. RIDGELY.

"I am transmitting herewith a communication which has come to my attention from the Panama Canal, Washington office, relative to the activities of Marcus Garvey. Garvey is a West-Indian negro and in addition to his activities in endeavoring to establish the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation he has also been particularly active among the radical elements in New York City in agitating the negro movement. Unfortunately, however, he has not as yet violated any federal law whereby he could be proceeded against on the grounds of being an undesirable alien, from the point of view of deportation. It occurs to me, however, from the attached clipping that there might be some proceeding against him for fraud in connection with his Black Star Line propaganda and for this reason I am transmitting the communication to you for your appropriate attention."

The following is a brief statement of Marcus Garvey and his activities:

Subject a native of the West Indies and one of the most prominent negro agitators in New York;  
He is a founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League;  
He is the promulgator of the Black Star Line and is the managing editor of the Negro World;  
He is an exceptionally fine orator, creating much excitement among the negroes through his steamship proposition;  
In his paper the "Negro World" the Soviet Russian Rule is upheld and there is open advocacy of Bolshevism.  
Respectfully,  
J. E. Hoover"

[Typewritten reference] JEH-GPO  
DNA, RG 60, file 198940. TMS, recipient's copy.

Excerpt from Robert A. Hill, ed. The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume II, 27 August 1919 - 31 August 1920. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.

In 1923, based on intelligence gathered from undercover agents posing as Garvey supporters and aided by judicial proceedings that have largely been condemned as factually unsound and politically and racially motivated, Garvey was convicted of mail fraud and sentenced to five years in federal prison. In partial recognition of the unsettling facts underlying the prosecution of the case, President Calvin Coolidge commuted the sentence in November 1927, but deported Garvey from the

country.

The posthumous pardon petition now filed on Garvey's behalf seeks to exonerate him from the stigma of this conviction. Following the commutation of his sentence, efforts to fully clear Garvey's name have been ongoing and concerted on the part of the U.S. Congress, civil society organizations, cities, states, and international groups. More than 90 years after the imposition of this injustice, it is time to exonerate Marcus Mosiah Garvey and let history reflect the true nature of his legacy.

Sincerely



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Wale Idris Ajibade

Executive Director, African Views Organization

African Views Organization, is a 501 C3 nonprofit Organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which focuses on 'harmonizing African Role, Responsibility, and Merits by generating new ideas, providing analysis and reviews from observations and research on relevant issues.