

Why We Must Fight To Exonerate Marcus Garvey

The campaign to posthumously exonerate the Most Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey is a noble and constructive effort by his family, the UNIA and others to exculpate him from a wrongful conviction while mobilizing public sentiment in support of his life, legacy and the ideals for which he was falsely imprisoned. As an extension of Mr. Garvey's personal quest to repudiate this travesty of justice, we consider it our inherent right and moral obligation to hold the government accountable for correcting this shameful act of injustice. While we concede that we best vindicate his name by demonstrating the soundness of his ideas and the infallibility of his logic, we must never forsake any opportunity to unequivocally denounce this egregious injustice and demand its judicious redress.

Proper Propaganda

The overwhelming success of the Garvey Movement in organizing post WWI Black America invoked the ire of the insidious Deputy Director of the Bureau of Investigation, J Edgar Hoover. In an effort to discredit Mr. Garvey, decentralize the movement, extinguish his vision and dishonor his memory, Hoover recruited a host of informants and agents to infiltrate, disrupt and sabotage Mr. Garvey's plans. The malicious persecution and prosecution of Marcus Garvey in the court of public opinion as a "notorious Negro agitator" engaged in financial mismanagement and fraud frightened investors, caused dissension among the ranks, emboldened his rivals to join the frenzy and provided an ideal climate to file a trumped up criminal indictment. Ultimately, Mr. Garvey alone was convicted of the conspiracy to commit mail fraud by a coerced jury instructed by an adversarial judge, based upon horribly inadequate circumstantial evidence and the false testimony of an undisclosed government agent and informant, orchestrated by the shamefully desperate and criminally deceptive J Edgar Hoover.

Today, this wrongful conviction continues to mar the legal record and belies the valued reputation of our sainted leader. These unchallenged historic lies become accepted historic facts if they are not corrected. If the purpose of our history is to inspire confidence, fortify our bonds of heritage and offer the benefit of experience in charting our destiny, we must seize every opportunity to deconstruct this dangerous lie and reconstruct truth, for fear we abandon this worthy vision and discard the practicality of this time-honored program from our historic memory.

The Rt. Ex. Marcus Garvey once declared, "I believe that true justice is to be found in the conscience of the people, and when one is deprived of it by the machinations and designs of the corrupt, there can be no better tribunal of appeal than that of public opinion, which gives voice to conscience and that is why I now appeal to the conscience of the American people for justice." However, despite whatever success we enjoy in reversing this horribly inaccurate narrative, this judicial travesty demands a judicial correction. In fact, the government's refusal to admit and acquit Mr. Garvey of this miscarriage of justice only betrays their concealed interest in extending the harmful effects of this blatant fabrication. No political acknowledgement will suffice, nor veiled admission of misjudgment satisfy our unyielding insistence on full exoneration.

Was Justice Defeated?

In the case of the USA vs Marcus Garvey, the fair administration of justice was denied and irreparable damage rendered Mr. Garvey's enterprise and reputation. The contemptible, government sponsored traducement of Marcus Garvey and the disgraceful courtroom debacle mandates a full review and reversal of this regrettable chapter in US history, thereby settling any argument of guilt and according the family due relief in restoring dignity to their name. Failing to rectify this wrongdoing compounds the harm afflicted and sets a dangerous precedent of excusing malicious grievances committed by the government.

Mr. Garvey forcefully proclaimed his innocence during the trial and asked, not for mercy, "only justice, justice, justice." The prevailing impression of Mr. Garvey as a criminal demands we hold the institutional perpetrators and perpetrators of this travesty accountable for exonerating him of their treachery. Neither the duration of time nor the death of our Founder will mitigate or assuage our determination to have remedy granted for this gross injustice.

Why We Must Fight

We are not motivated by the assurance of victory, but obligated by gratitude and integrity to take advantage of every opportunity to defend the honor of our beloved Founder. Exoneration doesn't absolve the government of guilt, marginalize the merit of his martyrdom or invalidate the value of his valor. 'Mr. Garvey was convicted, not because anyone was defrauded, but because he represented a movement for the real emancipation of his race.' We, the beneficiaries of his service and sacrifice, are duty-bound to reciprocate the honor for the exaltation of his name and the dignity of our race.

The probability of success could not undermine our adamance for adjudication when he was incarcerated and it certainly doesn't concern us now. We consider it cowardly to forfeit a noble cause for fear of odds and deem ourselves unworthy of the blessings of true leadership if we allow others to crucify our leader with impunity. We cannot predict what will happen when we fight; we can predict what will happen if we don't. Not fighting unforgivably concedes defeat.

No amount of compensation could ever redeem the wrongdoers or diminish the extraordinary record of accomplishment despite enormous adversity unduly suffered by the Most Honorable Marcus Garvey. Rectification is not reconciliation and justice delayed is still justice denied.

Finally, while his wrongful conviction deserves a rightful exoneration, the best way to vindicate the man is by continuing his plan and materializing his vision of a unified, sovereign and independent race. Nothing demoralizes the opposition and earns respect like successfully mobilizing millions in support of someone whose legacy they fought to repudiate. Besides, if our campaign to garner greater appreciation and respect for the Rt. Ex. Marcus Garvey reaches the 2 billion Negroes of the world, not only will we have enough power to exact justice on his behalf, we'd exonerate his program by fulfilling its objectives.

Conclusion

The Exoneration Campaign is a fitting response to the century long campaign to denigrate and decimate the unimpeachable legacy of the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey. It is not an effort to solicit sympathy or mercy, rather a moral imperative to contest and a legal entitlement to challenge the malicious prosecution and wrongful conviction of our Founder. We invite all Africans at home and abroad to "Observe Marcus Garvey's" incredible life and legacy and help us reverse the curse of shame and indignity meted against him by the foes of African Redemption.

Getting Involved

There are no resources involved and a minimal expense of time (1 minute) needed to pay homage to such a deserving ancestor and let the world know we have not forgotten nor forsaken him. Please sign our on-line petition to fully exonerate Jamaica's First National Hero, the Most Honorable Marcus Garvey:

We thank the Caribbean-American Political Action Committee, Institute for Caribbean Studies, Cong. Rep. Frederica Wilson, Cong. Rep. Yvette Clarke and others who are tirelessly fighting to correct this historic wrong. We also extend a special thanks to the family of Dr. Julius Garvey for championing the exoneration campaign and their faithful adherence to these prophetic words of his beloved father:

"I do not know whether they understand it or not, that if Marcus Garvey dies, Marcus Garvey's son shall avenge every drop of blood and every ounce of flesh and the family record of Garvey shall go on until eternity."

Mwariama Kamau,
International Organizer,
Universal Negro Improvement Association

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