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THE TIES THAT BIND

By Julius W. Garvey, M.D.

Africa has been a victim of colonialism since the nefarious Berlin Treaty of 1885. It is important as we struggle with its consequences to see the problem in historical perspective.

The structure of Pan Africanism as a response to colonialism rests on the shoulders of many giants in the latter half of the 19th century. Men such as Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, Alexander Crummell, Martin Delaney, Henry Garnet, Edward Wilmot Blyden and others. It was in 1900 that a Trinidadian lawyer, Henry Sylvester Williams, first used the word and organized the first Pan-African Conference in London.

W.E.B. DuBois subsequently had four Pan-African Congresses between 1919 and 1927. The ideology meandered between liberal integrationist and Marxist Socialist advocates such as C L R James and George Padmore.

Marcus Garvey was the premier Pan Africanist of the first half of the 20th century.

He was born in Jamaica in 1887, just two years after the Berlin Conference where European powers divided up the continent of Africa among themselves. The second most dastardly deed in history after the advent of the slave trade and the destruction of the indigenous people of the Americas.

He died in 1940 just short of his 53rd birthday.

During his lifetime he defined Pan Africanism and led the largest mass movement of African peoples outside the continent of Africa. The organization which he founded in 1914 in Kingston, Jamaica, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, had at its height a membership variously estimated at between 6 million and 11 million, 1200 divisions in 40 countries from America to Zambia.

The organizational newspaper, the Negro World, was the largest Negro weekly in the United States and was published continuously from 1918 to 1933. It was printed in 3 languages, English, Spanish and French. Even though banned in many colonial territories it penetrated them all. From Kenya in the East, to South Africa, and to Senegal in the west.

Jomo Kenyatta said, "In 1921, Kenyan 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 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."

The main principles of his organizational effort were:

(1) to unite all African people in a fraternal bond based on a common identity, common source, common descent, common beliefs, history and culture.

(2) To develop a nation state in Africa that would lead to the future freedom, independence and unity of other African states.

(3) Self-Reliance, whereby the paradigm for development was African, not European. It was therefore communal, inclusive, cooperative and socially just.

The economic policy was to regulate the use and flow of capital for the greatest good. There was no free market, no invisible hand and no free trade.

(4) Education. He said, "We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery, because whilst others might free the body none but ourselves can free the mind."

He recognized that education began with the spiritual essence of the human being and this had to be nurtured in order to guide scientific materialism, which on its own was leading to chaos and disaster. But he recognized that the proper application of science and technology was the only way for Africans to develop industrially.

(5) Culture. He saw culture as the milieu in which people developed and as such could be used as an instrument to change the dependent psychology of the previously enslaved colonized African person. His use of titles, symbols, images, propaganda and parades are without parallel in the motivation of the African.

His social and political philosophy was a major impetus for the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920's. He had a similar influence in the Caribbean in the 1930's.

His theosophy and theology predate Black Liberation Theology and there is no area of African Nationhood that he did not cover in his organizations structure or his philosophical teachings. Psychology, culture, education, religion, government, economics, business entrepreneurship, trade,

investment, character development, etc. He was completely dedicated to the unity and development of African people.

He said, "We, of the UNIA, are determined to unify the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world to give expression to their own feelings. We are determined to unite the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world for the purpose of building a civilization of their own and, in the effort, we desire to bring together the 15,000,000 in the USA; the 180,000,000 in Asia, the West Indies, Central and South America and the 200,000,000 in Africa. We are looking toward political freedom on the continent of Africa, the land of our fathers."

He penned a prophetic poem while imprisoned in Atlanta in 1927. Hail United States of Africa. The first two stanzas are:

'Hail! United States of Africa - free!
Hail! Motherland most bright, divinely fair!
State in perfect sisterhood united,
Born of truth; mighty though shalt ever be

Hail! Sweet land of our father's noble kin!
Let joy within thy bounds be ever known;
Friend of the wandering poor, and helpless, thou,
Light to all, such freedom's reign within.

This movement towards freedom, nationhood, independence and self reliance created enormous resistance among the colonial powers and those with ideological differences such as integrationist and communists. He was targeted by J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI, the British, French, Belgian and Dutch colonial powers.

In 1920 he held his First International Convention of the Negro peoples of the world in NYC.

There were 2500 delegates from all over Africa and the Diaspora. The opening session at Madison Square Gardens had a crowd of over 25,000 people that spilled out into the streets.

The issues and grievances of the delegates and the people they represented were discussed for the entire month of August, at the end of which they adopted the, "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World". It set out in 12 sections the conditions faced by Africans throughout the world and ended with 54 demands which outlined the broad agenda of Pan-African Nationalism.

This was a Magna Carta for African people and in his own words, "was the greatest legislative assembly ever brought together by the Negro Peoples of the World".

In as much as it included statements such as, "Be it known that whereas all men are created equal, they are entitled to the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We believe all men entitled to common human respect.

We further demand free speech universally for all men.

We believe in the self-determination of all peoples.

We declare for the freedom of religious worship.

We believe in the freedom of Africa for the Negro people of the world and by the principle of Europe for the European and Asia for the Asiatic, we also demand Africa for the Africans, those at home and those abroad.

It predated the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

There were further conventions in NY, in 1921, 1922, 1924 and 1926; in Kingston Jamaica in 1929 and 1934; and in Toronto Canada in 1938, each allowing for an exchange of experiences and the development of organizational initiatives, about political, economic and social issues that faced Africans everywhere.

I think historically that these conventions were the precursor for the Pan African Parliament of today.

Of local interest is the fact that there were 8 divisions in South Africa, the largest of any other African country. Cape Town and Johannesburg had divisions and maintained relations with the NY office. Many letters to the Negro World came from Bechuanaland, Cape Colony, Ciskei and Transkei. Clements Kadalie, leader of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was influenced by Garveyism, as was Sol Plaatje, Seloape Thema and Proj. James Thaele of the African National Congress.

There were always several West Indians on the Executive Committee of the ICU and they were usually members of the UNIA.

The UNIA was among 30 organizations represented in the 1927 non-European Conference in Kimberly. This was one of the first attempts at a nation wide front to resist Apartheid.

Kwame Nkrumah said, "Long before many of us were even conscious of our own degradation, Marcus Garvey fought for African national and racial equality". "I think that of all the literature I studied, the book that did more than any other to fire my enthusiasm was the 'Philosophy and Opinions' of Marcus Garvey published by his wife."

Malcolm X said, "Every time you see another nation on the African continent become independent you know that Marcus Garvey is alive. It was Marcus Garvey's philosophy of Pan-Africanism that initiated the entire freedom movement, which brought about the independence of African nations. And had it not been for Marcus Garvey, and the foundations laid by him you would find no independent nations in the Caribbean today... All of the freedom movement that is taking place right here in America today was initiated by the work and teachings of Marcus Garvey."

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Marcus Garvey was the first man of colour in the history of the United States to lead and develop a mass movement. 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."

The Pan African Mantle passed to Kwame Nkrumah after the 1945 Manchester Conference. He returned to Ghana in 1947 and began his political struggle which led to the independence of Ghana in 1957.

For him this was but the first step. He said, "...the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is followed by the total independence of all Africa". His watchword was "Africa must unite". He called the first all African Peoples Conference in 1958 and began seeking support for his ideas of unity and the continuing anti-colonial effort of Liberation for all Africa among the 8 independent countries. He was willing to put the resources of

his own country to bring about that goal. He set up training centres and financed liberation movements.

The various heads of state were subject to ideological differences, external manipulation and the heady wine of new found Nationalism, this quickly divided the players into two groups. The Monrovia Group (Ethiopia, Liberia and Nigeria) and the Casablanca Group (Egypt, Ghana and Guinea), Nkrumah and others founded the "Organization of African Unity" in 1963 as a compromise to the support of immediate unity of all African states.

This effectively enshrined the colonial boundaries established in 1885 and laid the groundwork for the capitulation of individual, politically free states, to succumb to the economic control and manipulation by their former colonial masters and their citizens. The Cairo Resolution at the Second Meeting of the OAU in 1964 guaranteed this.

In 1963 he wrote, "Imperialism is still a most powerful force to be reckoned with in Africa. It controls our economies. It operates on a world-wide scale in combinations of many different kinds: economic, political, cultural, educational, military and through intelligence and information services. In the context of the new independence mounting in Africa it has begun and will continue, to assume new forms and subtler disguises. It is already making use of the different cultural and economic associations which colonialism has forced between the erstwhile European masters and African subjects. It is creating client states, which it manipulates from the

distance. It will distort and play upon, as it is already doing, the latent fears of burgeoning nations and independence. It will as it is already doing, fan the fires of sectional interests, of personal greed and ambition among leaders and contesting aspirants to power.

We in Africa can only meet them effectively by presenting a unified front and a continental purpose.

Our freedom stands open to danger just as long as the independent states of Africa remain apart.

If we are to remain free, if we are to enjoy the full benefits of Africa's rich resources, we must unite to plan for our total defense, the full exploitation of our material and human means, in the full interests of all our people. To go it alone will limit our horizons, curtail our expectations and threaten our liberty".

In 1966 the CIA engineered a coup while Nkrumah was out of the country and he went into exile in Guinea where he died in 1972.

Lumumba, Mboya, Kimathi, Sankara, Sekou Toure, Cabral, Steve Biko, and Nelson Mandela and many others fell or were marginalized.

Finally African leaders after 40 years of stagnation and futility inaugurated the African Union in Durban in 2002, to replace the OAU as the continent's paramount Pan-African institution.

The vision of the AU was that of an "Africa Integrated, prosperous and peaceful, an Africa driven by its own citizens, a dynamic force in the global arena", as stated by the AU Commission.

The AU has a broader mandate and is oriented towards the regional economic communities in bringing about integration, cooperation, peace, security, good governance and economic development.

There has been a renewed sense of Pan Africanism pushed by the late Muammar Qaddafi and Abdoulay Wade, but subscribed to by Thabo Mbeki, Olusegun Obasanjo, Alpha Konare, Abdel az iz Bloutefika and Joachim Chissano.

This led to the 2007 Accra Declaration" to accelerate the economic and political integration of the African continent....with the ultimate objective of creating the United States of Africa".

The AU has a number of institutions, the one that I think can be pivotal in creating the links with the Diaspora that can unite all Africans is the Pan African Parliament.

The AU, through the decisions of its Executive Council and its amended constitution designated the African Diaspora as the 6th Region of Africa and defined "the Diaspora as consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union".

The PAP in accordance with the AU directive held a preparatory meeting in NY on February 16th with African Diaspora Parliamentarians. It was attended by delegates from Europe and Brazil and from representatives of the Congressional Black Caucus, The National Conference of Black Mayors and NY state representatives.

The unlimited potential of Africa in terms of resources, human, agricultural and mineral were alluded to and the persistent problems of inadequate infrastructure, food insecurity, environmental damage and climate change, lack of adequate health care, potable water and other problems encapsulated in the 8 Millennium development Goals as outlined by the U.N. addressed.

The CBC has 43 members with 5 full committee chairs and 18 subcommittee chairs. If the Caucus can reach a unified position, those 43 votes can have a significant impact on the legislative process.

The late Congressman Payne of New Jersey and Congressman Bobby Rush of Chicago are examples of legislators with a willingness to work in the cause of African development.

The NCBM has 658 African American Mayors across the U.S. collectively representing 48 million citizens. Twinning of cities with Mayors in Africa has already begun, in Senegal and Benin and it is also willing to work for Africa's development.

Contacts have already been made between the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) and universities in Senegal and Ghana.

NAFEO represents the historically Black colleges and universities with an enrollment of 500,000 students and 50,000 faculty.

Exchanges of faculty and students are being arranged. There are other institutions, NGO's, Civil Society Organizations, and individuals that are already working in Africa, working with Africans here in the U.S. or represent African countries in the U.S.

What is needed is a mechanism, and structure to link Africa with it's Diaspora and to develop knowledge and trust that will allow the linkages to grow stronger.

I think it is appropriate that at this time we should ask, 'What are the mediating principles of the Pan African Agenda? What are the core values that we must and will share and own, that will break the logjam between national sovereignty and union and repair the breach between Africa and it's Diaspora'?

I am indebted to a colleague in constitutional law, Dr. Bereket Selassie for the enumeration of the 5 core values that we both agree on:

1. Democracy
2. National Unity and Stability
3. The rule of law and human rights
4. Social Justice
5. Sustainable development

These will here be addressed only briefly.

1. Democracy derives from the will of the people and serves the common good. Elections are a means of establishing the proper functioning of representative institutions.

It is not about permitting citizens to vote every four years for a new dictator.

Professor Elshtain has written, "Democracy...is a political world within which citizens negotiate compromise, engage and hold themselves and those they choose to represent them accountable for actions taken.

As Cheika Anta Diop has shown us in, "The Cultural Unity of Black Africa", Africans lived side by side as 'negotiating ethnicities", before the depredations of the slave trade and colonialism turned them into 'competing tribes'.

2. National Unity and Stability. Both of these depend on shared values and the belief in a common good that cannot be obtained or guaranteed individually. This involves the education of the citizenry. This takes place at home, in schools, in religious institutions and a variety of cultural events. It stresses communalism, cooperation and communication.

3. Rule of Law and Human Rights. This includes gender equality and religious freedom. No one is above the law and all are equal under the law.

4. Social Justice. This implies the optimization of opportunity for development and participation for all citizens equally.

5. Sustainable Development. This can be defined succinctly as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and without environmental degradation.

African traditional values of communal life and spiritual beliefs are the essence that runs throughout the five core values and binds them together. Their modernization will allow us to create the African Renaissance while still being African and not imitating Europeans.

Marcus Garvey said, in the 1920's, "Let us in shaping our own destiny set before us the qualities of human justice, love, charity, mercy and equity. Upon such a foundation let us build a race and I feel that the God who is Divine, the Almighty creator of the world shall forever bless this race of ours and who to tell that we shall teach men the way to life, liberty and true happiness".

This of course is African Humanism, Karenga has emphasized its source as the basic laws of the universe, laid down by MAAT, at the first time, as taught by our ancestors in Egypt.

Nkrumah's version added a touch of socialism and called it Consciencism.

Nyerere had his Ujamaa doctrine that was socialism with communalism and Kaunda added Christianity to his African humanism.

In southern Africa it is called Ubuntu and it is based on the understanding of our common humanity and equality, "I am because you are and you are because we are".

Ruel Khoza is demonstrating how Ubuntu can be a part of business ethics. Our intellectuals need to show how Ubuntu works in all areas of human endeavor in the modern world, social, political, economic and religious.

Dr. Karenga calls this the sociology of Maatian Ethics.

Let us as we plan and work for the African Renaissance not forget the principles of life and governance bequeathed to us by our ancestors and fashion a new paradigm for human relationships and international relations that will bring peace and prosperity to all mankind.

We need all Pan-Africanists to embrace these values. We need our institutions to popularize them. We need leaders of the caliber of Albert Luthuli, Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Randall Robinson and the Reverend Leon Sullivan and we need 1.2 billion African men and women to unite and commit to making the 21st century the century for the African Renaissance.

So as we deliberate on building institutional cooperation and capacity between the AU and the Diaspora to deal with issues such as:

- Business and Investment
- Education
- Health and Medicine
- Food Security
- Media and Journalism

- Youth
- Science, Engineering and Technology
- Sports
- Tourism
- The use of remittances and Diaspora bonds
- Dual citizenship

over the next few days and build towards the Diaspora being an important development partner; let us not forget the ties that bind, the core values that represent our African Humanism. The ancestors are watching.

Kwame Nkrumah would say, "African must unite".

Marcus Garvey would say, "Africa for the Africans those at home and those abroad". "Up you mighty people you can accomplish what you will".

Thank you