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BLACK COLORISM AND WHITE RACISM: DISCOURSE ON THE POLITICS OF WHITE  
SUPREMACY, BLACK EQUALITY, AND RACIAL IDENTITY, 1915-1930

By

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Bachelor of Arts in History, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT, 2017

Thesis

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Black Colorism and White Racism: Discourse on the Politics of White Supremacy, Black Equality, and Racial Identity, 1915-1930

Chairperson: Tobin Miller Shearer

Abstract:

The following study unravels how Garveyite black nationalists, black integrationists, and Virginian white supremacists understood the race problem and its solution between 1915 and 1930. The racial identity and experiences of these three distinct groups, each informed how they understood the race problem and its solution. The divergent notions about the source of and solution to the race problem coalesced with colorism, sowing seeds of intraracial and interracial conflict and cooperation between the Garveyite black nationalists, black integrationists, and Virginian white supremacists as they navigated how to redress white supremacy and black equality. According to black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists, the race problem was the system of inequality in America and elsewhere that prescribed blacks as inferior and whites as superior. Both sought to dismantle this inferiority-superiority complex through organizations by pursuing policies that elevated black pride and brought about social, political, and economic equality and opportunities for blacks. While black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists both understood the source of the problem as the same, their methodology differed drastically. As both race-based organizations attempted to protect their own agenda and bring about the end of racial discrimination and injustice, both colorism rhetoric and Garveyite black nationalists' alliance with Virginian white supremacists, strengthened rather than weakened white supremacy. Colorism imbued more disunity within the black race, making it difficult for either organization to obtain an immediate end to white racism. Conversely, Virginian white supremacists understood black agitation for equality to be the source of the problem and thus sought to preserve the color line by reaffirming white supremacy. By affiliating themselves with the UNIA, Virginian white supremacists hoped to convince whites that the only way to preserve white supremacy and purity was to repatriate blacks to Africa. The Garveyite black nationalists, they advocated, could assist in this process because they sought to return to Africa. Even though Virginian white supremacists wanted to maintain white supremacy, their solution vis-à-vis racial separation aligned with the agenda Garveyite black nationalists, who also wanted racial separation. Thus, as Garveyite black nationalists used colorism and like agendas to align themselves with Virginia white supremacists, they exacerbated intraracial racial conflict with the black race.

**BLACK COLORISM AND WHITE RACISM:  
DISCOURSE ON THE POLITICS OF WHITE SUPREMACY,  
BLACK EQUALITY, AND RACIAL IDENTITY, 1915-1930**

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## Introduction:

In 1895, W. E. B. Du Bois, a black intellectual and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) stated that the race problem was “nothing more nor less than a question of humanity and national morality” that ultimately regards citizens through their race.<sup>1</sup> Du Bois believed “the United States has made the dangerous mistake of calling a mass of complicated social problems...by the common name of ‘Negro Problem.’”<sup>2</sup>

The race problem, as described by Du Bois, stood at the heart of the newly minted modern America, captivating the minds of many black and white Americans who each had different solutions to the problem. In the aftermath of the Civil War, white southerners sought to maintain the two-tiered racial caste system by imposing a new racial order. To maintain a hold on white superiority, whites claimed there was a “negro problem” that needed to be solved. While many twentieth-century Americans were captivated by the race problem, what it was exactly, remained elusive and ill-defined. The following study unravels how Garveyite black nationalists, black integrationists, and Virginian white supremacists understood the race problem and its solution between 1915 and 1930.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963, “The Afro-American,” ca. 1895, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (WEBDP), MS 312, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> A note on my use of Garveyite black nationalists and black integrationists. Garveyite black nationalists is used to distinguish between the black nationalism that occurred in the early twentieth century and black nationalism that occurred later in the century. While black nationalism as territorial separation or racial exclusivity can apply to varied forms of black nationalist organizations, Garvey’s movement was a distinctive form of black nationalism. Garveyite black nationalists advocated for black self-determination through black racial and economic uplift which could only be achieved by completely separating from white society. Garveyite black nationalists supported the term “Negro” compared to later black nationalists who advocated for the term “Black.” Garvey promoted a “race first” mentality and sought to unite all blacks of the world by returning to Africa. Black nationalist organizations of the late-twentieth century drew upon these early ideas of black nationalism but did so within the context of their

The racial identity and experiences of these three distinct groups, each informed how they understood the race problem and its solution. According to black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists, the race problem was the system of inequality in America and elsewhere that prescribed blacks as inferior and whites as superior. Both sought to dismantle this inferiority-superiority complex through organizations like the NAACP and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) by pursuing policies that elevated black pride and brought about social, political, and economic equality and opportunities for blacks.<sup>4</sup> While black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists both understood the source of the problem as the same, their methodology differed drastically. Conversely, Virginian white supremacists, Walter A. Plecker, Earnest S. Cox, and John Powell understood black agitation for equality to be the source of the problem and thus sought to preserve the color line by reaffirming white supremacy.

The divergent notions about the source of and solution to the race problem coalesced with colorism, sowing seeds of intraracial and interracial conflict and cooperation between the Garveyite black nationalists, black integrationists, and Virginian white supremacists as they navigated how to redress white supremacy and black equality. Garveyite black nationalists' and black integrationists' competing visions for the solution to the race problem—black equality—created intraracial conflict which became entrenched in colorism debates that centered around issues of miscegenation, black pride, and class colorism. Virginian white supremacists' solution to the problem, typified by their organization the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America (ASCOA), was to maintain white supremacy through complete racial separation. Even though Virginian white

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own political culture. Significantly, these supported autonomy, black pride and culture through racial exclusivity within the United States. For more on this distinction see Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Racial Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 2-7. In this study black integrationists encapsulates a wide range of black individuals and organizations. Some, like Du Bois and the NAACP, actively sought integration and black equality in the U.S. Others were not actively involved in this process but supported black equality and integration.

<sup>4</sup> The full organization name of the UNIA is the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League or UNIA-ACL. The organization will be referred to as the UNIA hereafter.

supremacists wanted to maintain white supremacy, their solution vis-à-vis racial separation aligned with the agenda of Garvey and the UNIA, who also wanted racial separation. As circumstances changed, Garvey exacerbated intraracial conflict by establishing a white supremacist-affiliated colorism platform as the primary strategy to achieve black independence.

This study traces the life of Marcus Garvey, whose determination to dismantle white supremacy and achieve black equality through separation was the seed from which intraracial and interracial conflict and cooperation between these race-based organizations germinated. A close analysis of Garvey's decisions and interrelationships with black integrationists and Virginia white supremacists provides a base for understanding the complexity and entrenchment of colorism in miscegenation and black equality debates. The unfolding of intraracial conflict and interracial cooperation was highly dependent upon the actions of all three race-based organizations as well as other blacks and whites. As the NAACP and the UNIA clashed over how to affect racial discrimination and injustice, they saturated the conflict with colorism.

Ibram X. Kendi, leading scholar of race, asserts that in addition to racism and the color line between blacks and whites, the other color line and colorism developed as a result. In essence, colorism and the other color line are one and the same. The other color line is an intraracial hierarchy where blacks with a lighter complexion are considered to be superior to blacks with a darker complexion.<sup>5</sup> Colorism is discrimination against blacks with a darker complexion by those who are lighter. Moreover, the other color line and colorism are byproducts of the social construction of race. As many scholars have noted, colorism and the other color line

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<sup>5</sup> Ibram X. Kendi discusses colorism and the other color line in his article "Colorism as Racism: Garvey, Du Bois and the Other Color Line," *Black Perspectives*, African American Intellectual History Society, (May 2017), accessed October 10, 2019, <https://www.aaihs.org/colorism-as-racism-garvey-du-bois-and-the-other-color-line/>. Also see his book *How to be an Anti-Racist* (New York: One World, 2019).



dates back to slavery when slaveholders favored blacks with a lighter skin-tone over blacks with a darker skin-tone, often giving house positions to the lighter skin-toned blacks.

During the early twentieth century, colorism persisted because whites denied blacks equal rights and opportunities and propagated a culture of white superiority—typified in music, film, books, and advertisements. As a result, America’s highly racialized society provided the breeding ground for a colorism-based intraracial conflict between Garveyite black nationalists and black integrationists. Furthermore, while this study agrees with Kendi’s assertion of colorism as racism, what follows argues that colorism was propagated by blacks as they navigated their individual and group identities in their effort to achieve black equality. Whereas Du Bois and other black integrationists propagated a colorism that favored light-skinned individuals, Garvey propagated a different kind of colorism—one that favored those with darker skin tones—but colorism just the same. Garvey employed a colorism rhetoric that espoused discrimination against blacks with a lighter skin-tone. He did so in order to discredit black integrationists’ solution to white racism and secure support for his organization’s objective.

Garvey’s and Du Bois’s employment of two very distinct versions of colorism, of which racial identity was a central component, was determined by several internal and external forces. In a racially conscious society where every aspect of life revolved around race, how these two groups of blacks understood their individual racial identity was contingent upon their individual racial identity, their group racial identity, and a societal racial identity. In other words, how one understood one’s racial identity was determined by self-identification; a distinctive group identity based on shared experience and culture; and a racial categorization system based on laws and a culture of white supremacy.<sup>6</sup> Each identity informed the other, creating points of

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on the complexities of racial identity and how it affected blacks see Werner Sollors, *Neither Black nor White yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (England: Oxford

contention as Garveyite black nationalists, black integrationists, and Virginian white supremacists navigated a society dominated by race. In this context, between 1915 and 1930, these race-based organizations were forced to navigate issues of racial identity—the crux of the race problem—creating moments of intraracial conflict and interracial cooperation.

The period during which this complex set of identity-focused interrelationships emerged is just one of many moments where contestations over racial identity reigned supreme. “Black Colorism and White Racism” seeks to uncover how political, social, and ideological transformations at the national and regional levels informed the internalization and projection of one’s racial identity within the black community. Moreover, this study follows the evolution of black integrationists, Garveyite black nationalists, and Virginian white supremacists as they came to understand their own racial identity and position within American society. The actions and interactions between these race-based organizations further informed their conclusions about their own racial identity and the identity of others between 1915 and 1930.

The search for order in an ever-changing society at the turn of the century laid the foundations for heightened racial tensions and the reaffirmation of white racial pride and purity. During this period, middle-class professionals attempted to combat the “degenerative effects of industrialization and urbanization and immigration” in order to find a new viable social order.<sup>7</sup> Progressive Era reforms and consequences of World War I fostered a cascade of social, cultural, and political transformations that had a tumultuous effect on race relations. As a result, the early twentieth century saw an upsurge in state anti-miscegenation statutes as a means to maintain the

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University Press, 1997); Randall Kennedy, “Racial Passing,” *Ohio State Law Journal* 62, 1145 (2001): 1144-93; Randall Kennedy, *Sellout: The Politics of Racial Betrayal* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Charles F. Robinson II, *Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South* (Fayetteville, NC: The University of Arkansas Press, 2003), 80.

color line and prevent blacks from achieving equality. This included twenty-one different attempts to pass a federal anti-miscegenation statute between 1907 and 1921.<sup>8</sup>

White Southerners felt an even more insistent need to preserve white supremacy and the integrity of the white race beyond segregation, disenfranchisement, and economic subordination. Growing suspicions that blacks were passing for white coupled with unfounded scientific fears of biological race destruction pushed many white supremacists, including members of the ASCOA, to reaffirm racial definitions. Plecker, Cox, and Powell's efforts to reinforce white supremacy through a new racial integrity law in 1924 was only the beginning of their efforts to maintain white purity and supremacy. When they realized the UNIA's objective of racial separation aligned with their own organization, they used Garvey's agenda and distrust of black integrationists to generate white support for their colonization and nationwide anti-miscegenation plans. While many white southerners were actively pushing to pass laws to tighten the color line and bolster white supremacy, blacks actively sought to dismantle racial discrimination and segregation.

World War I ignited a flame in many blacks who, with a new sense of racial consciousness, were eager to change the black status quo. In the aftermath of World War I, the New Negro Movement emerged which "shook off the psychology of the 'Old Negro'" and embraced a new racially conscious identity.<sup>9</sup> The New Negro Movement projected a "new spirit in black America," one that was assertive and engaged in pragmatic action.<sup>10</sup> No longer were blacks willing to bow to submission for white America. Many blacks attempted to throw off the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>9</sup> Kathleen Wehnert, *Passing: An Exploration of African-Americans on their Journey for an Identity Along the Colour Line* (Hamburg, Germany: Diplomic Verlag GmbH, 2010), 5.

<sup>10</sup> Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 30.

cultural baggage of societies' racial categorization system and instead uplift blacks' individual and group identity through various forms of activism and expressions of racial pride.

The NAACP and the UNIA were two of many black organizations and movements that embodied the New Negro Movement. This study argues that these new celebrations of racial pride were an explicit attempt to overturn the culture of white supremacy. Various black organizations, like the NAACP and the UNIA, sought to overcome white supremacy and achieve racial equality but with opposing objectives and strategies. These conflicting strategies and solutions—the NAACP's support of integration and equality led by Du Bois—and the UNIA's support of equality through separation led by Garvey—pitted each organization against each other. Du Bois was not the only black leader of the NAACP but was an essential figure in the movement and conflict between these two race-based organizations.

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“Black Colorism and White Racism” engages in dialogue with various fields of historical scholarship including topics that discuss the concept of race, scientific racism, marriage laws, anti-miscegenation laws, and black organizations. Moreover, in many ways, this study brings these disparate historiographical works in conversation with each other to analyze the pervasiveness and complexity of miscegenation, racial identity, and colorism implanted in the race relations of the 1920s. In doing so, “Black Colorism and White Racism” provides a more in-depth examination of the interracial and intraracial cooperation and conflict between UNIA members and Virginia white supremacists than has been previously published.

Analyzing the scholarship on the UNIA's interrelationship with other black organizations contextualized the growth of colorism within the black community. Many scholars who focus on black social and political movements of the early twentieth century have examined Du Bois's

and Garvey's contentious relationship. Scholars including Jeannette Smith-Irvin and Elliot Rudwick analyze how the tension between the two men stemmed from both strategic differences and Garvey's belief that Du Bois and others attempted to have him arrested.<sup>11</sup> Colin Grant and Randall Kennedy, among others, have also analyzed the colorism rooted in their relationship.<sup>12</sup> This study draws upon these works to advance the notion that colorism was expressed in multiple forums, not just in Du Bois's and Garvey's relationships. Further, "Black Colorism and White Racism" adds to the existing scholarship on the conflict between Garvey and Du Bois by arguing that debates about racial purity and anti-miscegenation laws typified the development of the colorism rhetoric espoused by Du Bois and Garvey.

Most of the existing scholarship on the color schism between Du Bois and Garvey does not address the essential role of other blacks in the solidification of the other color line. Du Bois and Garvey are significant actors in this study. However, this study extends the historical scope beyond these two leaders. Doing so illustrates that without the involvement of other blacks, the strategical, ideological, and intraracial conflict between the two leaders would not have unfolded in the way that it did. A broader analysis indicates that colorism was not only used by Garvey and Du Bois but by other Garveyite black nationalists and black integrationists as well. Moreover, the use of colorism by these other individuals played a crucial role in how Garvey and Du Bois employed colorism against each other and others.

There is a robust collection of scholarship on Marcus Garvey and the UNIA. While Garvey has not been disproportionately represented in the historiography of the era, historically,

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<sup>11</sup> Jeannette Smith-Irvin, *Footsoldiers of the Universal Negro Improvement Association: Their Own Words* (Trenton, N.J: Africa World Press, 1988); Elliot Rudwick, "DuBois versus Garvey: Race Propagandists at War," *The Journal of Negro Education* 28, no. 4 (1959): 421-29.

<sup>12</sup> Colin Grant, *Negro With a Hat: the Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 298-306; Randall Kennedy, *Sellout: The Politics of Racial Betrayal*, 25, 43-6; Martin O. Ijere, "W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey as Pan-Africanists: A Study in Contrast," *Présence Africaine*, Nouvelle Série, no. 89 (1974): 188-206; Rudwick, "DuBois versus Garvey."

he and his organization have been mischaracterized when compared to other black intellectuals of the period. As E. David Cronon, a leading scholar of Garveyism, notes, early scholarship harshly criticized Garvey and his philosophies.<sup>13</sup> As a new, more balanced generation of scholarship emerged, Garvey still received unequal treatment as these accounts frequently characterized Garvey and his movement as a failure. In concert with an emphasis on the success of other black intellectuals like Du Bois that is often typified in scholarship on the conflict between the two, Garvey's and the UNIA's lasting successes receive little attention. More recent scholars including Adam Ewing and Claudrena Harold have attempted to redress these mischaracterizations in their studies.<sup>14</sup> This study builds upon the work of Ewing and Harold to overturn the negative connotation often applied to Garvey and the UNIA. "Black Colorism and White Racism" aims to present a balanced approach to the decisions and competing visions of both groups by not conferring either as better or more successful than the other. Doing so provides not only a more complete analysis of the intellectual debates but asserts that a more substantial set of social, cultural, and political factors shaped their relationship.

To understand the complexity of the race problem and race relations between 1915 and 1930, this study provides a close examination of the cooperation between Garveyite black nationalists and Virginian white supremacists. Most of the scholarship on Garvey and the UNIA lacks an in-depth analysis of the interracial cooperation between these two groups.<sup>15</sup> A more

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<sup>13</sup> E. David Cronon, ed., *Marcus Garvey* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973), 123.

<sup>14</sup> See Adam Ewing's *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement & Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014); Claudrena Harold, *The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South, 1918-1942* (New York: Routledge, 2007). Note that many other scholars of Garvey and the UNIA including E. David Cronon and Tony Martin offer foundational studies but their work focus on the organizational triumphs and struggles of the UNIA once Garvey was arrested.

<sup>15</sup> The following scholarship focuses only on Garvey's relationship with white supremacists and no other blacks: Ula Yvette Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 159; Mary G. Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill: The University of North

comprehensive analysis is pertinent to the understanding of the history of intraracial conflict between black organizations and race relations during this period.

Claudrena Harold's *The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South, 1918-1942* is one of the few pieces of scholarship on Garvey to synthesize the relationship between Garveyite black nationalists and Virginian white supremacists. While Harold examines Garveyite black nationalists' response to Garvey's cooperation with Virginian white supremacists, her study is geographically limited to Virginia. As this study suggests, Garveyite black nationalists from across the nation played a crucial role in fomenting interracial cooperation and intraracial conflict. Furthermore, the intraracial conflict between black organizations fostered the relationship between Garveyite black nationalists and Virginian white supremacists. Thus, this study advances Harold's work by analyzing the cause of Garvey's relationship with Virginia white supremacists.

"Black Colorism and White Racism" also builds upon the historiography of anti-miscegenation policies and Virginian white supremacists. The current historiography of anti-miscegenation legislation and Virginian white supremacists lacks an adequate analysis of the significance and consequences of the cooperation between Virginia white supremacists and Garveyite black nationalists. J. David Smith, author of *The Eugenic Assault on America: Scenes in Red, White, and Black*, is the only scholar to place significant attention on the cooperation between Garvey and Powell, but he fails to provide significant analysis of their interactions.<sup>16</sup>

Other scholars dedicate only a small section of their biographical studies of whites to the alliance

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Carolina Press, 2007), 35; Derryn E. Moten, "Racial Integrity or 'Race Suicide': Virginia's Eugenic Movement, W. E. B. DuBois, and the Work of Walter A. Plecker," *Association for the Study of African American Life and History* for the Negro History Bulletin (1999): 5; Colin Grant, *Negro With a Hat: the Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 351-355.

<sup>16</sup> See J. David Smith, *The Eugenic Assault on America: Scenes in Red, White, and Black* (Fairfax, VA: George Mason University Press, 1993).

between Garvey, Powell, and Cox but again do not closely examine their interactions.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, a black-centered approach is missing from the historiography of the anti-miscegenation policies advocated by these white supremacists. These gaps necessitate a historiographical intervention, which this study offers. This research provides a more in-depth and black-centered analysis of the interactions between Garveyite black nationalists and white supremacists as well as the intraracial conflict that developed as a result.

While the secondary literature provides a framework, this study draws heavily upon primary source material. The primary source base for this research includes printed material, correspondence, and newspaper and magazine articles. This thesis consulted manuscript collections at Fisk University, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Virginia, and Duke University. The Amy Garvey Memorial Collection on Marcus M. Garvey, held at Fisk University, is a collection of materials provided by Garvey's second wife, Amy Jacques-Garvey. The holdings include her correspondence with various black intellectuals and a broad array of magazine and newspaper clippings. The University of Massachusetts holds the W. E. B. Du Bois Collection, which includes various correspondences and articles relating to the NAACP, the UNIA, and miscegenation. Finally, the University of Virginia and Duke University hold the papers of Powell and Cox, respectively. Those archives offer material on Garveyite black nationalists' relationship with Powell and Cox as well as their racial integrity ideology.

The published writings of Garvey including the *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* provided insight into his and the UNIA's philosophy and agenda and their relationship with white supremacists. In addition, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement*

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<sup>17</sup> Karen Adam, "The Nonmusical Message Will Endure With It: The Changing Reputation and Legacy of John Powell (1882-1963)," Master's thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2012; Gregory Michael Dorr, *Segregation's Science: Eugenics and Society in Virginia* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2008); Paul Lombardo, "Miscegenation, Eugenics, and Racism: Historical Footnotes to *Loving v. Virginia*," 21 U.C. Davis Law Review 421 (1987-1988): 443.



*Association Papers, Volume VI: 1924-1927*, edited by Robert A. Hill, et. al. contains a substantial set of documents necessary for understanding the internal dynamics of the UNIA and the intraracial conflict that developed.

This study analyzed a variety of black newspapers to discern the intraracial and interracial controversies and support of the racialized laws. Organizational publications including the *Negro World*, the UNIA's weekly publication, and *The Crisis* magazine, the official organ of the NAACP, revealed the critical debates concerning racial identity and miscegenation as well as Garveyite black nationalists' involvement with Virginia white supremacists. Further, they illustrated how each organization sought to attack each other's agendas rather than find racial cohesion. The *Norfolk Journal and Guide* and the *Chicago Defender* illustrate the black community's response to the intraracial and interracial conflict and cooperation. The study of these two newspapers provided a context for understanding how these debates occurred outside the organizational framework of the NAACP and the UNIA. Black newspapers revealed that these interrelationships fostered both consensus and disagreement on both sides of the color line.

"Black Colorism and White Racism" attempts to let the sources speak for themselves amid evidence of many contradictions. These sources reveal that, at the moment under study in the particular circumstances of that time, blacks and whites involved with these race-based organizations held congruent and differing ideologies as navigated white supremacy and black equality. "Black Colorism and White Racism" attempts to unveil how these race-based organizations of various backgrounds and races interacted with each other as they responded to white supremacy and black equality.

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As the NAACP and the UNIA developed their solutions to white supremacy, colorism rhetoric became the primary defense strategy for promoting their agendas, and they denounced anyone who was against their strategy as a race traitor. Both Du Bois and Garvey labeled one another a race traitor as colorism became rooted in their debates about white racism. Du Bois, according to Garvey, was a race traitor because his objective of integration would destroy the black race. On the contrary, from Du Bois's perspective, Garvey was a race traitor because he ostracized members of his own race in favor of white supremacists who perpetuated racial inequality and discrimination. Virginian white supremacists who sought to preserve their threatened livelihood of white supremacy impeded the black integrationists' and Garveyite black nationalists' struggle for equality. To combat this impediment, Garveyite black nationalists joined forces with the Virginian white supremacists to further their objective of black equality through racial separation. Consequently, as Garveyite black nationalists used colorism rhetoric to secure support from Virginian white supremacists, his cooperation with the ASCOA incited more intraracial conflict and disunity, not only with black integrationists but within the UNIA.

## Chapter One: The Genesis of Colorism

The racial terminology and categorization evidence throughout the United States in the early twentieth century fomented animosity between Garveyite black nationalists and black integrationists in their efforts to reclaim their racial identity with new terminology and combat white racism. Rather than join forces to challenge white supremacy, the two conflicting groups brought the other color line to the surface by blaming each other for being a sellout and race traitor to the black race. Unwilling to put their methodological differences aside, colorism framed the debate over how to dismantle the inferiority-superiority complex and achieve black equality. Thus, as one unidentified black individual once expressed to Du Bois, the lack of cooperation and unity within the race, which was exactly what whites wanted, came true as a consequence of colorism.<sup>18</sup>

In the formative years of the UNIA, Garvey's relationship with the NAACP was hampered by opposing solutions to the racial discrimination and injustice blacks faced under white supremacy. In 1914, Garvey established the UNIA in Jamaica to combat the country's racial discrimination and inequitable economic and educational opportunities. Garvey recognized the "humiliating discrimination and exploitation" of blacks, but British consular authorities were "indifferent to the mistreatment of blacks."<sup>19</sup> This realization that whites would never help blacks secure equal treatment pushed Garvey to establish the UNIA only a few years later. After the UNIA's programs failed in Jamaica, Garvey moved to the United States in 1916 whereupon he established Liberty Hall, UNIA headquarters, located in Harlem, New York.

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<sup>18</sup> Letter from unidentified correspondent to Du Bois, January 16, 1921, WEBDP.

<sup>19</sup> Cronon, ed., 2.

During the first few years in the U.S., Garvey focused on building a foundation for the UNIA. This process required recruiting a solid membership base and establishing the UNIA's first business enterprise, the Black Star Line Corporation. As a charismatic leader, Garvey built an "intoxicating narrative of revolution" garnering support from "tens of thousands of members, and millions of admirers" from both lower-and middle-class backgrounds.<sup>20</sup> The UNIA appealed to many blacks who felt alienated from both class-and race-based organizations led by white and black elites like the NAACP.<sup>21</sup> The UNIA offered a new political vessel to combat the postwar racial violence and intolerance. During the first few years in the U.S., Garvey traveled across the U.S. promoting the UNIA and its racial separatist agenda.

Hoping to unite all blacks, Garvey frequently reached out to other black organizations; however, a combination of factors pushed Garvey to determine that these organizations did not represent the best interest of blacks. When Garvey first visited the NAACP Headquarters, he stated that Du Bois sought "the company of white people" and created an environment that had only the "lightest of colored people in his office."<sup>22</sup> Garvey's perception of the NAACP was influenced by his experience growing up in a racialized caste system. The three-tier Jamaican racial caste system was composed of a ruling white class, a privileged mixed-race class, and an underprivileged maroon or dark-skinned black class.<sup>23</sup> Despite wanting to come to a collective agreement with black integrationists on a solution to racial discrimination and inequity, Garvey's initial interactions with black integrationists made him apprehensive. The NAACP's predominately white and mixed-race black staff as well as Du Bois's frequent refusal to participate in UNIA events called into question the NAACP's motives. These factors were

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<sup>20</sup> Ewing, 1, 130-1.

<sup>21</sup> Ewing, 131.

<sup>22</sup> Marcus Garvey, "W. E. Burghardt as a Hater of Dark People," *Negro World* (New York), February 17, 1923.

<sup>23</sup> Cronon, ed., 1.

ultimately determined by the perspective of Garvey, who as a black man, understood the opportunities and motives of mixed-race blacks through the lens of a racial hierarchy. As a result, by 1920, the struggle over how to achieve black equality became entrenched in colorism based on a system of hierarchy.

The United States legal system, from its inception, categorized people by race through laws which established a strict social and cultural environment of white superiority. In this environment, racial identity, based on appearance, most notably skin color, determined the social, political, and economic boundaries. Consequently, blacks were forced to reimagine their racial identity on society's terms. In addition to numerous racial definition and anti-miscegenation state statutes categorizing blacks and whites, from 1890 to 1920, the U.S. Census Bureau separated blacks into two categories, "mulatto" and "black."<sup>24</sup> In 1910 and again in 1930, the Bureau changed its racial categories by combining "mulattoes" and "blacks" into the single category of "black."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the federal government did not provide instructions for determining the difference between "mulatto" and "black" people, and, as a result, such determinations were at the discretion of the enumerator.<sup>26</sup> The constant reassortment of racial identity on U.S. Census records, as well as social and cultural norms, and stereotypes all continued to reinforce racial differences within the black race. These underlying factors, although not obvious, contributed to the intraracial conflict between the black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists.

The intraracial conflict over an effective solution to white racism became embroiled in colorism as it entered the public realm. Du Bois first alluded to Garvey creating an intraracial hierarchy in his two-part editorial "Marcus Garvey" published in *The Crisis*. As Du Bois's first

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<sup>24</sup> Kennedy, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 18.

editorial detailing the goals of Garvey and the UNIA, the tone of the piece was primarily one of support and approval. “Garvey is an extraordinary leader of men” asserted Du Bois in the first installment published in December 1920; an “honest and sincere man with a tremendous vision,” he continued.<sup>27</sup> As was the case in the first installment, Du Bois largely supported Garvey’s goals in the second installment published in January 1921, which focused on the viability of the Black Star Line. There was a caveat, of course, one of suspicion under all the adoration. What Du Bois did not support and vehemently critiqued were his methods. Du Bois believed Garvey had “serious defects of temperament and training: he is dictatorial, [and] domineering.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Du Bois called out Garvey for transforming America’s two-tier racial caste system into Jamaica’s racial caste system.<sup>29</sup> Garvey sought to “capitalize the antagonism between blacks and whites” and in the process “aroused more bitter color enmity inside the race than has ever existed before,” Du Bois contended.<sup>30</sup> As indicated in his editorial, Du Bois appreciated Garvey’s efforts to elevate black autonomy but believed Garvey’s strategy divided rather than united blacks because he incited a colorism-based conflict.

Du Bois’s insinuation that Garvey created an intraracial hierarchy by upsetting race relations pushed Garvey to react similarly. Before a crowded room on January 2, 1921, at Liberty Hall, Garvey issued his first colorism-based critique of the NAACP and Du Bois. In the tirade Garvey did not address the critical issues facing blacks or even attack Du Bois’s integration agenda; instead, Garvey began to etch his colorism rhetoric. Du Bois was a “white-man Negro” who had “never done anything yet to benefit Negroes” Garvey informed his supporters.<sup>31</sup> Garvey’s tirade was reactionary, but in the succeeding years colorism-based attacks like this

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<sup>27</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, “Marcus Garvey,” *Crisis* (New York), December 1920, 60.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, “Marcus Garvey,” *Crisis*, January 1921, 114.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Grant, 302.

became the centerpiece of a platform to discredit black integrationist organizations and promote the UNIA. Again, in late October, Garvey alluded to the racial differences between himself and the NAACP. Garvey claimed that “[a]ll true negroes were against social equality” while “only a few selfish members of the negro race believe in the social amalgamation of black and white.”<sup>32</sup> Although Garvey did not name anyone specifically, he implied that Du Bois was not a “true negro” but among the selfish members of the black race.<sup>33</sup>

The thrust of Garvey’s colorism message emerged from what he saw as the direct link to the destruction of the black race—organizations that promoted social equality with whites. Garvey asserted that black integrationist organizations like the NAACP wanted to destroy the purity of the race because they looked to achieve social, political, and economic equality in the U.S. Garvey was adamantly opposed to this solution. After all, he believed the white race would never give up their superior position.

In the early twentieth century, as social and cultural subordination bridged with scientific claims of inferiority, many whites, including Virginian white supremacists, sought to further enforce racial segregation. In most parts of the country, white Americans endorsed political disenfranchisement, segregation of public spaces, and anti-miscegenation laws as a means to maintain white supremacy. Whites like Virginian white supremacists, who supported a more restrictive anti-miscegenation statute, and the leaders of the NAACP believed intermarriage and miscegenation stood at the forefront of the race problem. The NAACP, however, did not support tightening the color line through anti-miscegenation legislation. Rather, the NAACP regarded miscegenation as a key tenet of social equality and thus fought state anti-miscegenation bills

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<sup>32</sup> “Harding is Praised by Negro Leader,” *Evening World* (New York), October 27, 1927, in WEBDP.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

across the nation.<sup>34</sup> In fact, by 1920, the NAACP claimed they had defeated twelve anti-intermarriage bills, a significant step toward the social equality of the races.<sup>35</sup> Du Bois noted that, while he did not “advocate nor oppose race amalgamation,” but he believed blacks should have an equal opportunity and the right to marry whomever they wanted.<sup>36</sup> Despite several articles published in *The Crisis* and elsewhere, Garvey chose to believe that by solving the race problem through integration, the NAACP looked to jump “over the fence into the white race.”<sup>37</sup> As a result, the NAACP’s position on miscegenation provided Garvey with a platform and justification for his colorism critique of black integrationists.

The year 1922 ushered in a series of events involving the UNIA that gave Garvey and black integrationists the ammunition to propagate their colorism-based critiques of each other. At the same time that the FBI conducted the Palmer Raids, a series of raids to capture and arrest suspected leftists, they began to surveil Garvey in 1919. Their surveillance culminated in Garvey’s formal arrest for mail fraud on January 12, 1922; he was then held on bond pending trial before a federal grand jury. During the spring and summer of 1922, while Garvey awaited trial, he went on a tour of the southern U.S. During this trip, Garvey met with Klan Imperial Wizard Edward Young Clarke in Atlanta, Georgia. Garvey’s two-hour-long interview with Clarke in June galvanized both black and white suspicions of Garvey, precipitating the fall 1922 “Garvey Must Go” campaign.

Garvey’s interview with Clarke reverberated across the nation and initiated an outpouring of criticism from the black community after Garvey spoke about Clarke at Liberty Hall. Shortly

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<sup>34</sup> “Races,” *Crisis*, August 1911, 158.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Lee Moon, ed. *The Emerging Thought of W. E. B. Du Bois: Essays and Editorials from The Crisis with an Introduction, Commentaries and a Personal Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 80.

<sup>36</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois to Bernice E. Brand, November 16, 1927, WEBDP.

<sup>37</sup> Marcus Garvey, “Eight ‘Uncle Tom’ Negroes try to ‘Tell’ on the Man who is Exposing Negro Crooks as Leaders,” *Negro World*, February 10, 1923.



after Garvey's address on July 16, 1922, George Harris, editor of the New York *Amsterdam News*, reported that Garvey formed an alliance with the KKK. In regards to Garvey's actions, Harris stated that nothing since emancipation "has angered and alarmed Negro citizens more deeply."<sup>38</sup> Harris claimed that blacks do not object to the UNIA's aim to go to Africa; however, they objected to him "pandering to the prejudices of bigots and traitors."<sup>39</sup> According to Harris, Garvey was "ignorant of Negro history" and failed to understand the role the KKK played in establishing "jim-crow cars and riveted political disenfranchisement."<sup>40</sup> Although Harris's critique was not based on colorism, his argument indicated a growing sentiment among black integrationists, one of distrust. Garvey's arrest for defrauding blacks through the mail in addition to his most recent interaction with the KKK was a clear sign that he was a race traitor, someone who through his racial separatist agenda did not represent black interests.

Outraged by the allegations that he supported white supremacy, Garvey delivered a poignant speech clarifying his actions at Liberty Hall. His address, later reprinted in the *Negro World*, illustrated Garvey's ability as a masterful orator and strategist. In contrast to Harris's claim that Garvey "knows nothing of the history of race in this country," Garvey illustrated that he intimately understood how entrenched inequality was in American history and society. Garvey called out Harris's and others' outdated attempts to dismantle white supremacy. He claimed that the "ability to cope with the present-day situation" with new maneuvers, rather than harping on the past, was the best way to combat racism.<sup>41</sup> According to Garvey, "rather than aggravate and provoke" white supremacy—as Harris and other blacks integrationists were

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<sup>38</sup> "Marcus Garvey defends his position in the famous Ku Klux Klan Interview," Richmond *Planet* (Virginia), August 18, 1922; George W. Harris's article from the New York *Amsterdam News* was reprinted in the Richmond *Planet*, August 18, 1922.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

doing—blacks needed to employ common sense and “a method of diplomacy”—as demonstrated by the UNIA.<sup>42</sup> Using a hand in the lion’s mouth as a metaphor, Garvey stated that the black race was in the hands of white supremacists, and the only way to solve this was to adopt “methods that will preserve your life,” and thus the race.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, Garvey defended his interview with the KKK not because he supported the organization but because it was a methodical attempt to understand the inner workings of the KKK.

Despite Garvey’s attempts to clarify his meeting with Clarke as a means to disrupt white supremacy, blacks were not convinced. William Pickens, the NAACP’s field secretary, criticized Garvey’s association with the Klan. Pickens asserted that, by aligning with the KKK, blacks got nothing in return and were giving up everything while white America got what they wanted.<sup>44</sup> In a letter to Garvey, Pickens denounced his association with the Klan stating, “You [Garvey] compare the aim of the Ku Klux in America with your aims in Africa” and because of that “no civilized man can endorse either one of you.”<sup>45</sup> Pickens continued, “The Ku Klux are boldly proposing to commit a great crime against civilization by turning the world back to the racial geography of fifty generations ago.”<sup>46</sup> Unlike Harris, Pickens linked Garvey’s goal to return to Africa with his association with the KKK, reinforcing Garvey’s status as a race traitor. Furthermore, while Garvey did not think there were any similarities between the KKK’s and the UNIA’s agendas, in the subsequent years, he came to this realization with another set of white supremacists, the Virginian ASCOA.

Harris and Pickens were not the only ones astounded by Garvey’s actions, but Garvey’s association with the KKK allowed black integrationists the opportunity to call for his

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> William Pickens to Marcus Garvey (MG), July 10, 1922, WEBDP.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

deportation. In a call to arms for all blacks to support Garvey's deportation because he opposed black equality, Chandler Owen, co-editor of the *Messenger* magazine, epitomized Garvey as a "‘good nigger’ race traitor."<sup>47</sup> Owen also used class colorism to censure the UNIA, calling the organization the "Uninformed Negroes Infamous Association" and asserting that it was composed of "Negro ignoramus."<sup>48</sup> Owen's article initiated the "Garvey Must Go" campaign, which aimed to convict and deport Garvey by any means necessary. Since the founding of the UNIA in the U.S., Owen and others recognized the threat Garvey posed to the black community at large. Garvey's latest indiscretions as the "Black Kluxer," however, pushed them to take direct action by enlisting the federal government to deport Garvey.<sup>49</sup>

By the following January, almost a year to the day after Garvey's initial arrest, Owen, Pickens, Harris, and five other black integrationists sent a letter to Harry M. Daugherty, the Attorney General of the United States.<sup>50</sup> The signers provided Daugherty with a series of examples illustrating the criminal actions taken by Garvey and the UNIA. The signers asserted that Garvey and his associates were "just as objectionable and even more dangerous" than the Klan.<sup>51</sup> Hoping to gain white sympathy for the threat Garvey posed to the U.S., they urged Daugherty to "extirpate this vicious movement" and prosecute Garvey for mail fraud.<sup>52</sup> The signers also hoped that by destroying the credibility of Garvey and the UNIA, they would be able to convert UNIA support toward their cause of black equality in the U.S. However, Garvey

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<sup>47</sup> Chandler Owen, "Should Garvey Be Deported?," *Messenger*, September 1922, 480.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> The letter was signed by Harry H. Pace, president of the Pace Phonograph Corporation; Robert S. Abbott, editor and publisher of the *Chicago Defender*; John E. Nail, president of Nail and Parker, Inc. Real Estate; Julia P. Coleman, president of Hair-Vim Chemical Company, Inc; William Pickens, field secretary of the NAACP; Chandler Owen, co-editor of the *Messenger* and co-executive secretary of the Friends of Negro Freedom; Robert W. Bagnall, director of the NAACP branches; and George W. Harris, editor of the *New York Amsterdam News*.

<sup>51</sup> Garvey, "Eight 'Uncle Tom' Negroes."

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

would not go so easily. Upon hearing about the letter, Garvey retaliated—denouncing all the charges made against the UNIA. Garvey instead suggested that the only reason these black integrationists wanted to deport him was that they felt threatened by his movement.

The perception that these black leaders used colorism to convince both blacks and whites that the UNIA was a threat to society and everyone’s economic security prompted Garvey to speak more about colorism. Garvey expanded upon his colorism rhetoric in order to subvert support for black integrationists. Garvey’s colorism rhetoric combined occupational differences and skin complexion. Garvey believed the signers of the letter, “under the guise of race business men and race leaders,” were turning America against the UNIA because the UNIA would “make it impossible to continue to suck the last drop of blood out of our people.”<sup>53</sup> In short, Garvey assumed that the UNIA’s uplift of black racial pride threatened the future livelihood of these elite black leaders which entailed a mixed-race America. Garvey focused on “these black leaders’ privilege,” contending that they were not “improving the condition of the race” for the good of the entire race but looked to “how much they will benefit.”<sup>54</sup>

In addition to asserting class colorism, Garvey began to build his colorism rhetoric around a racial epithet. In “Eight ‘Uncle Tom’ Negroes,” Garvey contended that these black integrationists were “selling out the race.”<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, by labeling these black integrationists “‘Uncle Tom’ Negroes,” Garvey marked them as race traitors. Randall Kennedy, a scholar of racial conflict and legal institutions, asserts in his book *Sellout*, that blacks attach the term “Uncle Tom” to black individuals whom they believe are “dangerously antagonistic to blacks’ well-being.”<sup>56</sup> The “Uncle Tom” insult provided Garvey with leverage to substantiate the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Kennedy, 5.

assertion that black integrationists “endeavored to make themselves Caucasianized.”<sup>57</sup> As a result, Garvey concluded that they were the ones creating internal racial hierarchies.

Garvey contended that the black integrationists who wrote Daugherty, inflicted color caste prejudice as a means to further their agenda and turn America against the UNIA.

“[W]henever anything is referred to derogatory to the race, the gentlemen use the term ‘Negro,’” stated Garvey.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, “whenever they want to impress either the Attorney-General or the white people of the standing of any member of the race they refer to him as ‘colored.’”<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, Garvey claimed that this color caste prejudice reinforced their endeavor “to set up social caste as distinct from Negro.”<sup>60</sup> To that end, at the same moment Garvey accused these black leaders of being “colored caste prejudice,” he reified the inverse of that prejudice.<sup>61</sup>

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The amplification of Garvey’s colorism convinced many blacks that Garvey had in fact substantiated a racial hierarchy within the black race. The *Norfolk Journal and Guide* published “Marcus Garvey Draws the Color Line,” accusing Garvey of drawing “the color line inside the race.”<sup>62</sup> According to the *Norfolk Journal & Guide*, Garvey had created internal racial hierarchies by “taking the attitude that there was such” a division within the black race.<sup>63</sup> The article also suggested that the other color line was “one of the most troublesome” consequences of Garvey’s actions.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, in his article, “Back to Africa,” published in the *Century*

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<sup>57</sup>Garvey, “Eight ‘Uncle Tom’ Negroes.”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> “Marcus Garvey Draws the Color Line,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide* (Virginia), July 21, 1923.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

magazine, Du Bois conceded that a race problem existed in America, but he blamed Garvey for bringing “a new negro problem” to the U.S.—a three-tiered racial caste system.<sup>65</sup>

Du Bois offered his most explicit claim to date that Garvey imposed Jamaica’s racial problems on American society in his “Back to Africa” article. Jamaica’s tense race relations, much like America’s, developed in part because whites intermixed with blacks. To prevent racial strife, a consequence of the denial of rights to the offspring of interracial relationships, Jamaica created a caste system where “[t]he mulattos are virtually regarded and treated as whites.”<sup>66</sup> According to Du Bois, it was assumed that under this racial caste system, mixed-race blacks would continue to intermarry with whites and “bleach out their color as soon as possible.”<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, blacks, many of whom were poor and uneducated like Garvey, were left “socially, politically, and economically helpless and voiceless.”<sup>68</sup> It is from these circumstances, in conjunction with Garvey’s colorism statements, that Du Bois charged Garvey with generating intraracial conflict within the black race and America.

“Back to Africa,” written in the past tense, suggested that Du Bois believed he and other black integrationists had successfully ousted Garvey as a race traitor. According to Du Bois, “He meant well,” but “He saw what seemed to him the same color-lines which he hated in Jamaica” and pursued black independence along those lines.<sup>69</sup> In the process, Du Bois explained, Garvey sought to oppose “white supremacy” with “black supremacy.”<sup>70</sup> While Garvey claimed “he was not excluding mulattoes from his organization,” Du Bois maintained that Garvey generated

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<sup>65</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, “Back to Africa,” *Century* (New York), February 1923, 540 in WEBDP and in Box 1, Folder 8: “Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt, 1923-1972,” Amy Garvey Memorial Collection on Marcus M. Garvey (AJGMC), Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 542.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

propaganda that remained “all-black.”<sup>71</sup> As a result, Du Bois suggested that the UNIA would not recover, because, from the start, Garvey’s policies eroded black solidarity through alienation.

Du Bois continued to praise Garvey’s black autonomy ambitions, but under all the acclaim he issued his own class colorism. DuBois belittled Garvey’s capabilities and intelligence, stating, “[H]e had a childish ignorance of the stern facts of the world,” which according to Du Bois was “perhaps excusable for this black peasant” because he was “born in a little realm.”<sup>72</sup> Du Bois and other black integrationists stopped at nothing to demean Garvey’s and his followers’ education and social standing. It was true that many Garveyite black nationalists were from lower-class backgrounds, and much of the article condemned Garvey for exploiting this class. However, in many ways, Du Bois directly evoked class colorism on lower-class blacks, writ large. According to Du Bois, the UNIA was composed of blacks who were “mostly unlettered, poor, and ignorant,” and because of this, they cry “Garvey forever! [N]o matter what he does.”<sup>73</sup> He censured lower-class blacks’ inability to recognize that Garvey was exploiting them. Du Bois asserted that Garvey’s movement “was the sort of appeal that easily throws ignorant and inexperienced people into orgies of response and generosity.”<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, like Harris, Du Bois asserted that Garvey was ignorant of the tense race relations in America. Du Bois disparaged Garvey’s understanding of black oppression, asserting that Garvey’s belief that the “mere removal of the injustice will at a bound restore the group to full power” was illogical.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, Du Bois suggested that Garvey’s aim of racial separation would not instantly alleviate white supremacy and elevate black independence, rather there were other factors at work that needed to be addressed.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 543.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 546.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 541.

Garvey, like black integrationists, continued to espouse a class colorism rhetoric in order to discredit the education and leadership of Du Bois and thus elevate the UNIA's efforts to achieve black independence. In response to "Back to Africa," Garvey asserted that Du Bois had "no respect or regard for the independent Negro effort" because of his commitment to "the charity and philanthropy of white people."<sup>76</sup> Du Bois's education, which was funded by whites, "was among the first 'experiments' made by white people on colored men," Garvey asserted.<sup>77</sup> Higher education, as obtained by Du Bois and others, was meaningless if it meant blacks were forced to be a "lackey for good white people."<sup>78</sup>

Garvey's criticism of Du Bois's "Back to Africa" article was in part self-defense, but more significantly it illustrated how Garvey deployed colorism to galvanize blacks around the UNIA movement. Again, Garvey expressed that Du Bois was leading the race in the "direction of losing our black identity...by assimilation and miscegenation."<sup>79</sup> According to Garvey, because Du Bois was "a little Dutch, a little French, and a little Negro," he believed anything black "is ugly, is hideous, [and] is monstrous."<sup>80</sup> Garvey did not criticize Du Bois for calling him a "fat, black, ugly man," rather Garvey used the characterization to further censure Du Bois. Garvey claimed that labeling him an ugly black man only illustrated Du Bois's hatred of the "black blood in his veins."<sup>81</sup> This was why Du Bois "likes to dance with white people, and dine with them, and sometimes sleep with them," Garvey contended.<sup>82</sup> Garvey's attack on Du Bois aimed to lead the black race toward independence and convince blacks that his organization sought to preserve the black race.

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<sup>76</sup> Garvey, "W.E. Burghardt as a Hater of Dark People."

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.



Garvey's response to the "Garvey Must Go" campaign and Du Bois's "Back to Africa" article galvanized him. Whereas he had previously expressed disdain for the agenda of other black organizations, he now felt threatened by these groups. As the notion that Du Bois was "a friend of the Race" faded from view and Garvey's livelihood was threatened, he made it his mission to convince blacks that enemies within sought to destroy black livelihood.<sup>83</sup> In response to people who claimed that the UNIA "seeks discord and discontent," Garvey resolved, "[W]e are organized not to hate other men, but to lift ourselves, and demand respect of all humanity."<sup>84</sup> However, "[i]n the fight to reach the top" Garvey concluded that "the oppressed have always been encumbered by the traitors of their own race."<sup>85</sup> Garvey contended that those he deemed traitors generally have the highest place "in education and society, the fellows who call themselves leaders."<sup>86</sup> Moreover, these elite blacks were "susceptible to bribery for the selling out of the rights of their own people."<sup>87</sup> Throughout 1923 and 1924, Garvey continued to propagate his colorism rhetoric to ostracize blacks he believed were "encouraging wholesale bastardy in the race."<sup>88</sup> Garvey's 1923 work, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, volume I* and *An Appeal to the Soul of White America*, as well as his 1924 publication, *Aims and Objects*, all outlined what Garvey saw as the relationship between the destruction of the black race and black integrationists' attempts to achieve black equality in the U.S.

Garvey's publications reveal that he intimately understood how entrenched the social construction of race was in American society. The UNIA's mission and Garvey's philosophies were predicated on the belief that, as long as whites believed blacks were "intruding upon their

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<sup>83</sup> Universal Negro Improvement Association, Letter from Universal Negro Improvement Association to Du Bois, November 5, 1921, WEBDP.

<sup>84</sup> Amy Jacques-Garvey, ed., *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Volume I* (Paterson, NJ: Alexander Street Press, 2003), 54.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

rights” and prejudice continued, then black progress in America was impossible.<sup>89</sup> Yet, even though Garvey asserted that whites were impeding black progress, Garvey also believed that members of his race were the greatest hindrance to progress. “The greatest stumbling block in the way of progress in the race has invariably come from within the race itself,” Garvey proclaimed.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, Garvey insisted that white aims to maintain white purity would result in casting the black race “off to die in a whirlpool of economic starvation.”<sup>91</sup> As a result of these convictions, Garvey disapproved of the social equality program advocated by black integrationist organizations. From Garvey’s perspective, with the NAACP promoting miscegenation, the destruction of the black race was inevitable. By preaching integration these black organizations were committing racial suicide because they looked to create an American race “that will in complexion be neither white nor black.”<sup>92</sup> Garvey whole-heartedly believed that integration would only lead to unending violence against blacks in the US and “no preaching, no praying, no presidential edict” would destroy the superiority-inferiority complex.<sup>93</sup> These circumstances informed what Garvey saw as the one solution to the race problem—for blacks to have their own country where both races could be free to pursue any profession or passion. According to Garvey, however, the black integrationists who sought to thwart UNIA’s efforts evoked colorism when they eschewed members of their own race to achieve black equality in the U.S.

Garvey used colorism rhetoric to illustrate the various ways in which the UNIA’s objectives maintained black identity instead of the NAACP’s integrationist policies. As an avid

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<sup>89</sup> Marcus Garvey, *An Appeal to the Soul of White America* (New York: Press of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, New York in Box 28, Folder “Printed Material Garvey, Marcus,” Earnest Sevier Cox Papers (ESCP), David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

<sup>90</sup> Jacques-Garvey, ed., *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Volume I*, 37.

<sup>91</sup> Garvey, *An Appeal to the Soul of White America*.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

promotor of black beauty and racial pride, Garvey denounced black newspapers for their lack of racial pride as an elaborate attempt to secure support. Garvey's "'Colored' or Negro press" editorial reified the other color line using racial terminology. Garvey contended that black integrationists, including organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of 'Colored' People, used the term "Colored" to separate themselves from the black race.<sup>94</sup> Conversely, although quite contradictorily, Garvey boasted that he "started the 'Negro World' to preserve the term 'Negro' to the race," unlike the NAACP, which according to Garvey was clearly "bleaching out black skin for light complexions."<sup>95</sup>

Racial terminology as illustrated by Garvey's "'Colored' or Negro press" editorial, represents a crucial point of debate within the black community during the early twentieth century. In many ways, blacks pushed back against the racial order by asserting their identity as proud blacks and Americans using racial terminology. In a society where derogatory names like "nigger" dominated and laws categorized and obstructed rights based on race, blacks like Garvey attempted to push back against these stereotypical norms and practices. At the first international convention of the UNIA in August 1920, Garvey proclaimed that blacks criticized the use of the term "'nigger' as applied to Negroes," and "demand[ed] that the word 'Negro' be written with a capital 'N.'"<sup>96</sup> In addition, other black groups such as Philadelphia's Alliance of Colored American Citizens of the United States of America reimagined racial terminology to assert blacks' racial and national identity. In a letter to Earnest S. Cox in 1924, Alliance leaders contended that they were "unalterably opposed to the nick-name, negro," because "[t]he nick-name, negro, is used as a derision or slander:—as low, burly, bugaboo or scare-crow, and is

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<sup>94</sup> Marcus Garvey, "'Colored' or Negro press" reprinted in Cronon, ed., 45.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World" reprinted in Cronon, ed., 33.

associated with rape and crime.”<sup>97</sup> Following a period of extreme patriotism brought on by World War I, the Alliance demanded, as their organization’s name suggests, to be recognized as American citizens and thus wanted the term “American” included in their racial identification. While whites were largely successful in stripping blacks of their constitutional rights, the Alliance attempt to secure those rights by emphasizing that they were American citizens.

By emphasizing that black was beautiful blacks also attempted to reclaim a racial identity that white Americans had legally, socially, and culturally dictated. Du Bois pointed out in his 1920 “In Black” editorial that blacks were not “ashamed of our color and blood.”<sup>98</sup> Rather blacks were “instinctively and almost unconsciously ashamed of the caricatures done to our darker shades.”<sup>99</sup> To that end, “In Black” urged blacks to throw off the “thought-chains and inchoate soul-shrinkings [*sic*], and let us train ourselves to see [the] beauty in black.”<sup>100</sup> Blacks like Du Bois tried to combat the degenerative effect of popular culture on the black-self-image by encouraging the black community to “embrace the darker world.”<sup>101</sup> In many ways, this early black is beautiful movement was an essential element in achieving social equality. As such, many blacks understood embracing black beauty and promoting racial pride as another step to dismantle the inequitable inferiority—superiority complex. Yet, Garvey was not convinced by black integrationists’ claims of black racial pride.

Garvey frequently eschewed black integrationists for not supporting black beauty and insisted that his organization exemplified black pride and beauty. However, Garvey’s stated desire to see blacks embrace their natural hair and complexion had little integrity when almost

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<sup>97</sup> Alliance of Colored American Citizens of the United States of America to ESC, n.d., Box 2, Folder “Correspondence, 1924,” ESCP.

<sup>98</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois “In Black,” *Crisis*, April 1919, reprinted in Moon, ed., 51.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

every issue of the *Negro World* ran advertisements for products like Dr. Fred Palmer's Skin Whitener Preparations and Nelson's Hair Dressing. Most revealing were *Negro World* issues that included advertisements for skin whitening and hair straightening alongside advertisements for the sale of black dolls.<sup>102</sup> These advertisements for black dolls even claimed that the toys were the "easiest way to teach race pride."<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile, the *Negro World* continued to promote products like Pluko Company's "Be Proud of your Hair!" which included reviews exclaiming, "My hair became straighter and softer."<sup>104</sup> These beauty product advertisements came at a particular moment when advertising emerged as a thriving business during the rising consumer culture of the 1920s. Moreover, most beauty product advertisements of the decade reinforced gender-specific roles and objectified women.<sup>105</sup> The skin lightening and hair straightening ads that Garvey criticized even as he included them in his publications, not only objectified women but reinforced colorism.

Like beauty product advertisements, Garvey's second marriage to Amy Jacques-Garvey stood in stark contrast to the philosophy he preached and his justifications for censoring other blacks. Jacques-Garvey, a mixed-race black woman from Jamaica, recalled how much Garvey liked her hair. She said, "My hair, let down, thrilled him. It was long and naturally wavy; he asked me never to cut it."<sup>106</sup> Garvey's admiration for his wife's hair both supported and undercut his promotion of black pride. On one hand, these remarks reinforced Garvey's assertion that blacks should embrace the natural hair they were born with. On the other hand, Garvey's remarks suggested that he preferred mixed-race black characteristics over other black

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<sup>102</sup> For a few examples see the October 7, 1922, August 18, 1923, and October 2, 1926 issues of the *Negro World*.

<sup>103</sup> "Negro Dolls" Advertisement, *Negro World*, October 9, 1922.

<sup>104</sup> Pluko Advertisement "Be Proud of your Hair!," *Negro World*, October 2, 1926.

<sup>105</sup> See Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Grant, 301.

characteristics which he claimed to support. A thorough analysis of the reasons Garvey married Jacques-Garvey is impossible, as a host of reasons factor into romantic attraction. Nonetheless, some analysis is necessary in order to understand the degree of complexity encapsulated in Garvey's colorism rhetoric. Garvey's disdain of Jamaica's racial caste system informed his racial and class colorism attacks on black integrationists, yet he married a mixed-race black woman. An examination of this contradiction in conjunction with his other actions suggests that, although he did whole-heartedly believe in the purity of the races, Garvey's colorism rhetoric was strategic. The belief that other blacks set out to destroy his movement pushed Garvey to strategically use racial divisions within the black community to ensure the survival of the UNIA and its objectives.

Garvey believed that Du Bois and others were directly attempting to destroy the black race because they advertised hair straightening and skin whitening products in their newspapers and magazines. Unlike NAACP leaders who desired to join the white race as their "bleaching processes and the hair straightening escapades" revealed, Garvey claimed he promoted black beauty and racial pride to preserve the black race.<sup>107</sup> However, as previously illustrated, at the same time that Garvey blatantly accused the *Chicago Defender* of publishing "advertisements against the pride and integrity of the race," he also supported the products that undercut black beauty.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, in response to Du Bois's "Back to Africa" article, Garvey claimed that "the standard of beauty within a race is not arrived at by comparison with another race."<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, while Garvey attempted to discredit white beauty standards, the *Negro World's* hair straightening and skin whitening advertisements demonstrated that he instead reified these beauty standards.

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<sup>107</sup> Garvey, "W. E. Burghardt as a Hater of Dark People."

<sup>108</sup> Garvey, "'Colored' or Negro press" reprinted in Cronon, ed., 45.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

The contradiction exemplified in advertisements and articles is indicative of the internal conflict between Garvey's business goals and personal beliefs. On one hand, he encouraged racial pride because he believed in racial purity and uplifting black culture. On the other hand, the promotion of black entrepreneurship was a primary aim of the UNIA, and many of these companies that advertised skin and hair products represented that entrepreneurial enterprise. Furthermore, those advertisements offered a source of revenue needed for the financially insecure UNIA.

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Throughout 1923 and 1924, black integrationists concluded that Garvey was unstable, paranoid, and prone to create intraracial problems where none had previously existed. Du Bois argued that Garvey was "inordinately vain and egotistic."<sup>110</sup> According to Du Bois, Garvey was not a liar. Instead, Garvey's inconsistencies were the result of "dream, fact, fancy, [and] wish, [which] were all blurred in his thinking."<sup>111</sup> Others including Robert Bagnall, the National Director of Branches for the NAACP, came to a similar conclusion. Bagnall suggested this in his "The Madness of Marcus Garvey" article published in the *Messenger* magazine, in which he contended that the only way to understand Garvey's actions was to assume "that he is insane—that he is a paranoiac."<sup>112</sup> Bagnall noted that with paranoia "there is no distinction between the ideal and the actual," and in Garvey's case, "fact and fancy are twisted in Garvey's mind."<sup>113</sup> Therefore, Garvey was "unduly suspicious," always imagining that someone was "trying to harm him."<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Du Bois, "Back to Africa," 541.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Bagnall, "The Madness of Marcus Garvey," *Messenger* (New York), March 1923, 638-648 found on <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5120>, accessed March 31, 2019.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

Black integrationists, especially Du Bois, understood Garvey's unrestrained attacks on members of his own race as a clear indication that he was the race traitor and sellout. Du Bois's initial claims that "full credit must be given [to] Garvey" took another notable turn in 1924 when he published "Marcus Garvey: A Lunatic or a Traitor?" in the May issue of *The Crisis*.<sup>115</sup> According to Du Bois, Garvey was "the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and in the world."<sup>116</sup> Du Bois condemned Garvey for sending pamphlets to various businessmen and congressmen in hopes of garnering their support for racial separation.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, Garvey "has not dared to print a single word against white folk" but rather chose to attack "his own race," Du Bois asserted.<sup>118</sup> Not even the worst enemies of the black race including Thomas Dixon, writer of the *Clansman*, "have ever stooped to a more vicious campaign" than Garvey who applauds white supremacy. Du Bois, like other blacks, concluded that Garvey was worse than any white man or KKK member.

It was easy for black integrationists to blame Garvey for instigating discord between blacks along racial and class lines; however, the decision to respond to Garvey in the same manner also made them culpable. Both groups, in order to protect and validate their vision for the future of the black race, employed extreme racial and class colorism attacks. Garvey believed black integrationists played a vital role in thwarting the UNIA solution to the race problem. The constant criticism Garvey and his organization received prompted Garvey to translate racial divisions within the black race into colorism rhetoric that would effectively revitalize his vision for the black race. Simultaneously, black integrationists came to understand the UNIA's

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<sup>115</sup> DuBois, "Marcus Garvey," *Crisis*, January 1921, 114.

<sup>116</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, "Marcus Garvey a Lunatic or a Traitor?," *Crisis*, May 1924 in Henry Louis Jr. and Jennifer Burton, ed., *Call and Response: Key Debates in African American Studies* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011), 266.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.



objectives as a viable threat to their solution of black equality through integration, prompting them to attack Garvey's methods with their own colorism rhetoric.

Both black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists were set out to discredit one another, by any means necessary. Thus, as each group vied for support, their use of colorism divided blacks not only along strategical lines but along racial lines. In the process, as the one unidentified black correspondent warned, whites were getting exactly what they wanted—black disunity and discord. However, from the black integrationists' perspective, disunity did not matter. Getting rid of Garvey, who was out on bail in 1923, would allow them to achieve black equality in the U.S. unhampered by opposition from within. Yet, what black integrationists failed to realize was that Garvey would not rest his cause so easily.

## Chapter Two: Sowing the Seeds of Unity and Discord

It was Sunday. The previous day the *Negro World* had published another issue rallying blacks to invest in UNIA steamships to provide transport to Africa. But this was not a typical Sunday; it was Sunday, February 8, 1925. Garvey, who had been arrested three days prior, now sat in an Atlanta federal penitentiary prison cell with a five-year sentence for “using mails to defraud.”<sup>119</sup> Black integrationists like Du Bois, Pickens, Owen, and Harris likely celebrated the occasion believing that the UNIA would finally crumble without Garvey at the helm. Garvey, the man they labeled a race traitor, no longer threatened black integrationists’ agenda—or so they thought.

Garvey and Garveyite black nationalists did not waver under the pressure of Garvey’s new circumstances. Rather, Garvey’s new life within the confines of a prison cell emboldened him to alter his methods. Around the time Garvey was arrested, his revolutionary rhetoric transformed into what scholar Adam Ewing, a professor of history at Virginia Commonwealth University, calls “the Birth of Second-Period Garveyism.”<sup>120</sup> In this second period, Garvey transitioned to a “quiet and peaceful penetration” platform which fostered more intraracial conflict.<sup>121</sup> Before his arrest, Garvey’s colorism rhetoric was a product of his attempt to disavow any critique made by other black organizations against the UNIA. Colorism was a public reactionary response to the feared demise of the black race and his organization. Garvey’s new “quiet and peaceful” colorism platform used the same colorism rhetoric, but his methods and necessity for it changed.

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<sup>119</sup> Copy of Marcus Garvey’s Atlanta State Federal Penitentiary Registration Form, reprinted in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume VI: 1924-1927*, edited by Robert A. Hill, et. al., ed., 95.

<sup>120</sup> Ewing, 121.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

When the opportunity to cooperate with Virginian white supremacists arose, Garveyite black nationalists used colorism to discredit mixed-race blacks and, in the process, secure support and advocate for Garvey's release. In doing so, Garveyite black nationalists hoped they could convince whites to support the UNIA's black independent—racial separatist agenda over the integrationist agenda of the NAACP. At the same time, Virginian white supremacists understood their cooperation and endorsement of the UNIA as a means to promote and obtain support for their own agenda of white supremacy and racial separation. Thus, each race-based organization—the UNIA and the ASCOA—used each other to further their goal of racial separation, albeit for disparate reasons. In turn, their relationship incited debates within their own respective races over how to best deal with the heightened racial tensions and the inferiority-superiority complex.

Despite his circumstances, Garvey's aim to achieve black equality and overcome racial discrimination in the U.S. and the world remained unchanged. A few days after arriving in Atlanta, Garvey gave his first address to the UNIA, which was printed on the front page of the *Negro World*. In the address, Garvey urged his supporters to “hold up the hands” of “those at the helm” and carry on until he was released from prison.<sup>122</sup> Garvey's initial hope of reprieve came to an end in late March when his petition for writ of Certiorari—a request for a lower court's decision to be reviewed—was denied by the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>123</sup> James Finch, the Department of Justice Pardon Attorney, also informed Jacques-Garvey that he would not be

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<sup>122</sup> Marcus Garvey, “Marcus Garvey's Message to the Negroes of the World as he Pays the Price of Leadership,” *Negro World*, February 14, 1925; also reprinted in Hill et. al., ed., 96-8.

<sup>123</sup> William Howard Taft, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Denial of Writ of Certiorari, March 23, 1925 in Hill, et. al., ed., 125

eligible for parole until October 7, 1926.<sup>124</sup> Garvey, however, was not defeated; he and other Garveyite black nationalists continued to look for means to obtain his release.

In his first written address from prison, Garvey also announced his official repudiation of the NAACP and its members. Garvey declared to the black people that “W. E. B. Du Bois” and the “[National] Association for the Advancement of ‘Colored’ People are the greatest enemies the black people have in the world.”<sup>125</sup> In another address, Garvey reassured the UNIA that these enemies would soon meet the same fate as him. Garvey exclaimed, “The wicked and obstructive elements of our own race who have tried to defeat us shall meet their Waterloo, and when they fall we feel sure they shall not rise again.”<sup>126</sup> This threat, supported by his assertion that “[t]he graves that the enemies of race pride and purity dug for us may yet entomb [*sic*] them” indicated that Garvey was not defeated but energized. While black integrationists may have thought their colorism-based critiques demoralized Garvey, Garvey’s words made clear that he was not planning to dissolve the UNIA or stop his colorism rhetoric. Rather, these statements indicated that he planned to strengthen the UNIA, but at that moment Garvey had not quite articulated how he planned to do so. Shortly after delivering his first address since imprisonment, however, Garvey was presented with an opportunity that enabled him to use colorism to promote the UNIA’s solution to racial discrimination and white supremacy.

While Garvey sought a means to gain clemency, John R. Ditto, a member of the UNIA from St. Louis, Missouri, proposed a solution to Garvey’s predicament and, through that, to racial injustice and insubordination. In early March, Ditto wrote a letter to Walter A. Plecker, a white supremacist and the state registrar of the Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics. Ditto’s contact with Plecker and other white supremacists fell in line with Garvey’s previous connections with

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<sup>124</sup> James Finch to Amy Jacques-Garvey (AJG), April 7, 1925 in Hill et. al., ed., 134.

<sup>125</sup> Garvey, “Marcus Garvey’s Message to the Negroes of the World.”

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

the KKK. Contact with Plecker, however, was more direct and personal, which represented a shift away from the UNIA's philosophy of opposing white assistance. After reading "Shall We All be Mulattoes?" in the *Literary Digest*, an article that expressed ideas frequently articulated by UNIA members, Ditto reached out to Plecker, the subject of the article.

On October 23, 1924, in Detroit, Michigan, Plecker read "Virginia's Attempt to Adjust the Color Problem" before the joint session of the Public Health Administration and Vital Statistics Sections of the American Public Health Association (APHA). Plecker claimed that the "great American problem" was a consequence of enslaved Africans who were brought to the new world.<sup>127</sup> Plecker asserted that ethnological and scientific studies proved that "[T]wo races as materially divergent as the white and negro, in morals, mental powers, and cultural fitness, cannot live in close contact, without injury to the higher."<sup>128</sup> He argued that these studies proved that biological traits of the "more primitive" race—the black race—were dominant, and therefore miscegenation would eventually destroy the white race.<sup>129</sup> In the paper that was also later summarized in the *Literary Digest*, Plecker explained how Virginia addressed the race problem with its passage of the Racial Integrity Act in March 1924.

Plecker was just one of many white supremacists who were members of the ASCOA, the very group that had lobbied the Virginia General Assembly to pass the Racial Integrity Act. The ASOCA, created by John Powell in September 1922, sought to maintain what its members saw as the original American ideals, including racial separation and white purity and supremacy.<sup>130</sup> The ASCOA was comprised of former members of the KKK and other white supremacists, like

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<sup>127</sup> Walter A. Plecker, "Virginia's Attempt to Adjust the Color Problem," *The American Journal of Public Health* 15, no. 2 (2003): (1925): 111.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Price, Lawrence T., *Anglo Saxon Clubs of America* (Richmond, VA: The Liberty Press, Inc., 1923), 2; Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America, *Constitution of the Anglo-Saxon Club of America*, adopted in Convention at Richmond, Virginia, October 13, 1923, 1-2.

Earnest S. Cox, who felt the KKK's violent-extralegal actions did not align with Virginia's "polite racism" image.<sup>131</sup>

The timing of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 exposed a larger transformation in Virginia society and politics. The Act came only fourteen years after Virginia amended its 1866 racial integrity law in 1910. Whereas the 1910 law defined a "colored" person as someone with 1/16 or more "black blood," the 1924 Act defined a white person as someone without any trace of non-Caucasian blood.<sup>132</sup> Situated within Virginia's notions of benevolent race relations, and in the absence of an organized KKK at the time of the 1924 Act, many whites believed legal, non-violent, recourse was necessary to maintain the white supremacy.<sup>133</sup> To maintain white supremacy and purity, white supremacists employed a combination of strategies including using the eugenics movement and so-called scientific racism to convince blacks and whites that stricter racial categorization was necessary.

These three white supremacists—Plecker, Powell, and Cox—became important players in promoting racial purity rhetoric throughout the 1920s. Their efforts to maintain white and black purity and advocate for racial separation convinced Ditto that they could assist the UNIA to achieve the same goal. Ditto initially wrote to Plecker because his work was the subject of the *Literary Digest* piece, but Plecker forwarded the letter to Cox for a response. Plecker, busy enforcing the Racial Integrity Act, frequently asked Powell or Cox to respond to letters addressed to him. More importantly, there were striking similarities between the agenda and

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<sup>131</sup> For more information on Virginia's "polite racism" see Clayton McClure Brooks's *The Uplift Generation: Cooperation Across the Color Line in Early Twentieth Century Virginia* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2017).

<sup>132</sup> Richard B. Sherman, "'The Last Stand': The Fight for Racial Integrity in Virginia in the 1920s," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Feb., 1988), 9; The Code of Virginia, as Amended to Adjournment of General Assembly 1924 in *Eugenics in Relation to The New Family and the Law on Racial Integrity* (Richmond, VA: Davis Bottom, Supt. Public Printing, 1924), 29-31.

<sup>133</sup> J. Douglas Smith, "The Campaign for Racial Purity and the Erosion of Paternalism in Virginia, 1922-1930: 'Nominally White, Biologically Mixed, and Legally Negro,'" 30; Virginia went without an official Ku Klux Klan until 1925 when Virginia received a new Klan charter.

philosophy of the UNIA and ideas presented in Cox's book *White America*, suggesting Plecker believed Cox could better address Ditto's concerns.

Cox's ardent desire for racial separation, reflected in his education and published writings, reveal the complexity of white supremacist ideology and propaganda of the 1920s. Born near Louisville, Tennessee, Cox was a man of many trades but was most widely known as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves, an author, and ethnographer.<sup>134</sup> After studying sociology in graduate school at the University of Chicago, Cox became fascinated with blacks and their relations with whites.<sup>135</sup> Although initially supportive of interracial coexistence, the violent racial climate, which he believed was perpetrated by blacks, pushed Cox toward the racial separatist cause.<sup>136</sup> Cox's ethnographic study of African culture from 1910 to 1915, later presented in his book *White America*, cemented his white supremacist and purity ideology.<sup>137</sup> In 1920, Cox moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he put aside the development of his own organization, the White America Society, to assist Powell with the establishment of the ASCOA.<sup>138</sup> The five years Cox spent in Africa significantly fostered the development of his views on white superiority leading him to join other white supremacists in the cause for racial purity.

Due to the publicized news of Garvey's arrest and imprisonment, Ditto set out to clarify the aims of the UNIA and NAACP by sending Cox the constitutions of each organization. Ditto was attempting to convince these white supremacists, who shared the same ideology, to assist

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<sup>134</sup> Cox was promoted to Colonel by the time of his death on April 26, 1966.

<sup>135</sup> Jason Ward, "'A Richmond Institution': Earnest Sevier Cox, Racial Propaganda, and White Resistance to the Civil Rights Movement," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 116, no. 3 (2003): 265.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> For a more thorough analysis of Cox's experience in Africa see his book *White America: The American Racial Problem as Seen in a Worldwide Perspective* (Richmond, VA: White America Society, 1923).

<sup>138</sup> Many people of the time believed that the White America Society and the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America were the same organization and used the organizational names interchangeably. The White America Society, however, was never more than Cox's publishing company for his books and booklets.

Garvey. Ditto asserted in his first letter to Plecker that the UNIA “represent[s] an organization who's [*sic*] aim is to build up a Gov. for Negroes in Africa.”<sup>139</sup> In a grand attempt to convince these white supremacists of the UNIA’s sincerity, Ditto perpetuated the colorism rhetoric Garvey had developed. He asserted that other blacks looked “forward to the Day when they can slip in to [*sic*] the other Race via the Back Door,” while the UNIA represented the “True Negroes” who “don’t want to be anything else.”<sup>140</sup> Cox reassured Ditto that he had felt a desire to aid Garvey for some time and saw “[t]he unexpected getting in touch with you [Ditto]” as an opportunity to act on those desires.<sup>141</sup> Cox was not insincere; for at least the past year he began to pay attention to the similarities between the two organizations. Two days before the passage of the Racial Integrity Act, Madison Grant, a prominent eugenicist of the period, urged Cox to “get in touch with Garvey as it might be worth while [*sic*] to back his proposition.”<sup>142</sup> By that summer, Cox attended a gathering in Richmond, Virginia, where Garvey was speaking.<sup>143</sup> While there is no direct evidence suggesting they spoke to each other, Cox’s attendance indicates his keen interest in learning more about the UNIA.<sup>144</sup> Therefore, Ditto’s unexpected correspondence provided Cox with the opportunity to carry the Racial Integrity Act a step further.

Solving tense race relations in the U.S. was, according to Cox and his colleagues, a two-fold process. In addition to creating the Racial Integrity Act, white supremacists preyed on black

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<sup>139</sup> John R. Ditto to Walter A. Plecker (WAP), March 10, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, Jan.-Apr.,” ESCP.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Earnest Sevier Cox (ESC) to Ditto, March 31, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, Jan.-Apr.,” ESCP.

<sup>142</sup> Madison Grant to ESC, March 18, 1924, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1924,” ESCP.

<sup>143</sup> ESC to Ditto, March 31, 1925.

<sup>144</sup> In a letter dated March 18, 1924, two days before the passage of the Racial Integrity Act, Madison Grant, an attorney and eugenicist, urged Cox to get in touch with Garvey. Later, on August 24, 1924, Grant’s secretary, Imeda Fox, on Grant’s behalf, urged Cox once again to get in touch with Garvey. Sometime during the summer of 1924 Cox attended a gathering in Richmond, Virginia where Garvey was speaking. This is described in a letter to John Ditto dated March 31, 1925. There is no direct evidence that Garvey and Cox spoke at the event in Richmond, but scholar Johnathan Spiro states that they did. See page 160 of his book *Defending the Master Race: Conservatism, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant*.



admiration of Lincoln to promote colonization. The Racial Integrity Act was the first step to achieve permanent white supremacy. The second step was the permanent separation of the races in order to completely prevent miscegenation and preserve white purity. In his booklet, *Let My People Go*, which Ditto's inquiry inspired him to finally write, Cox outlined how to permanently solve the "Negro Problem."<sup>145</sup> Noting the United States' long history of miscegenation, Cox asserted in the booklet as well as in other documents that there were two solutions to the "negro problem"—complete racial miscegenation or complete separation.<sup>146</sup> With the former already in practice, Cox believed that a constitutional amendment mandating the repatriation of blacks back to Africa would be the last step to preserve white supremacy and purity. According to Cox, this "compulsory separation" was necessary to "solve the problem" because while he "favor[ed] voluntary migration," he recognized not all blacks would volunteer.<sup>147</sup> Cox did point out that "compulsory colonization would not apply to" blacks who "wish [to have] a nation of their own."<sup>148</sup>

Ditto's initial letters and Garvey's later support provided Virginian white supremacists with a platform from which to build a publicity campaign centered upon supporting the UNIA. Cox asserted that those blacks "who wishe[d] to save [themselves] racially" were "natural allies"; thereby *Let My People Go* became a deliberate declaration of Cox's endorsement of Garvey and the UNIA.<sup>149</sup> Cox dedicated the booklet to Garvey, asserting he was "a martyr for the independence and integrity of the Negro race."<sup>150</sup> The dedication was the first of many

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<sup>145</sup> ESC to Ditto, March 31, 1925.

<sup>146</sup> Earnest S. Cox, *Let My People Go* (Richmond, VA: White America Society, May 1925, June 1925, July 1925), 5; see also ESC to Grover W. Ayers, n.d., Box 2, Folder "Correspondence 1924," ESCP.

<sup>147</sup> ESC to Grover W. Ayers draft of letter, n.d.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Cox, dedication page.

references to Garvey in the booklet, in which Cox again claimed that “Garvey held aloft the ideal of Negro independence, Negro integrity, and Negro progress.”<sup>151</sup>

While Garvey and Cox shared the commitment to racial separation, what united them more was their common conclusion that mixed-race individuals hindered their racial separation efforts that would preserve white and black purity. Cox contended in *Let My People Go* that “[o]pposition to Garvey came mainly from mixedbreeds [*sic*]” who were the “products of miscegenation and the advocates of it.”<sup>152</sup> This statement in conjunction with Cox’s dedication to Garvey initiated Garvey and Cox’s fifteen-year long friendship. Cox reiterated in one of his first letters to Garvey that he was “convinced the movement for voluntary separation of the races comes from black men, not from mulattoes.”<sup>153</sup> Cox’s racist statements reinforced Garvey’s colorism ideology that linked intraracial differences with what Garvey saw as the best solution to black equality and independence. As such, Garvey recognized the benefits of associating with Virginian white supremacists.

Garvey’s strict commitment to racial separatism and purity pushed him to associate with some white people, despite previously criticizing his enemies for doing so. Before Garvey was arrested, he frequently criticized black integrationists who attempted to “win the sympathy of the ‘great benefactor,’” and desired to establish themselves “as the pet of some philanthropist of another race.”<sup>154</sup> Yet, by 1925 he was following in their footsteps because Virginian white supremacists provided him with a means to achieve black independence.

Although Garvey had previously disavowed black integrationists’ claim that he was associated with the KKK, by 1925 the circumstances had changed. His arrest forced him to

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<sup>151</sup> Cox, 6.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>153</sup> ESC to MG, June 7, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, May-June,” ESCP.

<sup>154</sup> Jacques-Garvey, ed., *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Volume I*, 23.

associate with the ASCOA, another white supremacist group. In the aftermath of Garvey's visit with the KKK in 1922, Garvey contended that "the Ku Klux Klan is a white organization and stands for white supremacy"; therefore it "would be illogical and foolish" if he "allied himself with the Ku Klux Klan."<sup>155</sup> However, Garvey was willing to cooperate with the ASCOA if it helped achieve a "White America for white men and a black Africa for black men."<sup>156</sup> Garvey not only contradicted his previous disregard of white supremacists but he also completely disassociated himself from members of his own race. By July 1925, Garvey proclaimed "[b]etween the Ku Klux Klan and Morefield Storey National Association for the Advancement of 'Colored' People group, give me the Klan for their honesty of purpose toward the Negro."<sup>157</sup> The KKK and the ASCOA were "better friends of the race than all other groups" because Garvey believed all other whites were deceiving black organizations such as the NAACP.<sup>158</sup>

Colorism was both obvious and subtle as Garvey attempted to appeal to blacks and whites in their support of racial purity and the UNIA. Garvey contended that "hybrids of the Negro race" and their white associates were the greatest threat to racial purity because they advocate for miscegenation.<sup>159</sup> Garvey went on to insist that "all self-respecting whites and blacks" should frown upon the "extraneous arguments" made by these advocates.<sup>160</sup> A "great internal conflict" is "silently being waged" between "those who want to be white and those who

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<sup>155</sup> Garvey, "Eight 'Uncle Tom' Negroes."

<sup>156</sup> "Garvey Disclaims Editorial on Cox and John Powell," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, August 29, 1925 in Box 43:52, PJP.

<sup>157</sup> Marcus Garvey, "The Negro, Communism, Trade Unionism, and His (?) Friend," ca. July 1925, in Hill, et. al., ed., 216; originally printed in Amy-Jacques Garvey, ed., *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Volume II* (1926).

<sup>158</sup> Garvey, *An Appeal to the Soul of White America*.

<sup>159</sup> Marcus Garvey, "Race Purity a Desideratum," ca. July 1925 in Hill et. al., ed., 216; originally printed in Amy-Jacques Garvey, ed., *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Volume II* (1926).

<sup>160</sup> Marcus Garvey, "The Internal Prejudices of Negroes: Those Who Want to be White and Those Who Want to be Remain Black," July 1925, in Hill, et. al., ed., 217; originally printed in Amy-Jacques Garvey, ed., *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Volume II* (1926).

want to remain black.”<sup>161</sup> Therefore, Garvey insisted that those who wanted to remain black could “be of great use to the white man and vise [*sic*] versa in standardizing the purity and character of the races.”<sup>162</sup> With racial purity as the primary driver of racial separation, Garvey was willing to “render all the services I can” to Virginian white supremacists “irrespective of the consequences.”<sup>163</sup> Garvey’s persistence indicated that it did not matter if he alienated members of his own race as long as “the danger and evil to both sides”—the advocates of miscegenation—were curbed.<sup>164</sup>

To solve the race problem and reveal the injustice done to Garvey, loyal Garveyite black nationalists attempted to convince Virginian white supremacists that black integrationist organizations were the actual threat to America. Ditto first expressed this concern, telling Cox, “We have had moore [*sic*] trouble with the N.A.A.C.P. than any other Body of People.”<sup>165</sup> Ditto recognized the necessity of getting support from Virginian white supremacists to convince the federal government to release Garvey. Ditto insisted that “Just a word of Praise for Garvey is a great help,” because “our Enemies [are] trying to break our association by telling the White People we are against the Gov.”<sup>166</sup> Ditto stated the NAACP was “only trying to get us to forget Africa an[d] stay here and try to overcome” but rest assured the UNIA supported a “desire to return to our own Country.”<sup>167</sup>

Convincing white supremacists and in turn the federal government that black integrationist organizations were the true threat to the U.S. required Garvey and Garveyite black nationalists like Ditto to validate white supremacy and America’s racial ideologies concerning

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> MG to ESC, June 24, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, May-June,” ESCP.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ditto to ESC, April 6, 1925, Box 2, “Correspondence 1925, Jan.-Apr.,” ESCP.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

miscegenation and a strict color line. The fear of losing white superiority and power manifested into a series of progressive reforms to combat the threat to white supremacy. These reforms included immigration and anti-miscegenation laws to combat what many saw as a threat to white supremacy by blacks and foreigners.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, Cox's own remarks that the "negro problem" was primarily a result of biology and not due to "economic, political, and religious" issues played into fears that the white race was being threatened.<sup>169</sup> As a result, Garvey turned his belief that the NAACP was out to destroy the black race into a strategy for achieving black independence.

To secure support from Virginian white supremacists, Garveyite black nationalists translated their already deep resentment of the NAACP and black integrationists into a concerted effort to vilify educated and mixed-race blacks. Situating his colorism rhetoric at the center of his new platform provided Garvey with leverage to promote himself and the UNIA members as respectable blacks. Both Ditto and Garvey ensured Cox that "[t]he Negro Preacher and Profs. men Don't lead the mass of Negroes [*sic*]."<sup>170</sup> Rather, the masses desire "to get away from Race Prejudice an[d] Race congregation."<sup>171</sup> Garvey asserted that it was his mission to fight for the "purification and nationalization of my race."<sup>172</sup> They both claimed, "All the Negro Ministers Editors an[d] Profs. Arrayed against Him [Garvey]," but Garvey commenced "a great fight for

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<sup>168</sup> In *Takao Ozawa v. United States*, (1922) 260 U.S. 178 (United States), the U.S. Supreme Court denied Ozawa, who was a Japanese-American, citizenship because he was non-white. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that physical characteristics is not a good indicator of whether someone was white. Thus, the U.S. Supreme Court found that skin color is not a practical indicator of one's race and noted that ethnological origins should be consulted when determining one's race. For more on anti-miscegenation laws see Randall Kennedy, *Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Marriage, Identity, and Adoption* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003); Peter Wallenstein, *Tell the Court I Love my Wife: Race, Marriage, and Law—An American History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Charles F Robinson II, *Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South* (Fayetteville, NC: The University of Arkansas Press, 2003).

<sup>169</sup> Cox, 5.

<sup>170</sup> Ditto to ESC, April 15, 1925, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence 1925, Jan.-Apr.," ESCP.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #2, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence 1925, May-June," ESCP.

principle, morality, and liberty.”<sup>173</sup> In their appeal to white supremacists, Garveyite black nationalists also used class colorism to draw a clear distinction between the “True Negro”—the UNIA—and the “enemy”—other black organizations. Garvey alienated members of his own race to appeal to Virginian white supremacists’ racial sensibilities, asserting “the mulattos are only fooling . . . . to get political power.”<sup>174</sup> These mixed-race blacks “are now in political power in Washington and their influence is great,” Garvey warned.<sup>175</sup> Colorism, previously only used to critique black integrationists, was now being used by Garvey and Garveyite black nationalists as a tool to promote the UNIA’s black equality agenda of racial separation.

Garvey exacerbated the tension between cultural Victorianism and cultural modernism that developed during the 1920s. As a new generation challenged existing intellectual and moral ideologies, they created a culture of moral uncertainty. Garvey used the changing assumptions about morality, which threatened preexisting notions of right and wrong, to convince whites that the NAACP and their white associates could not be trusted. Garvey contended that the NAACP and their white associates were “either crazy or positively immoral,” and something needed to be done to “curtail them and prevent them from ruining the morals of both races.”<sup>176</sup> Their advocacy of miscegenation, Garvey insisted, would “lead to the moral destruction of both races.”<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, in concert with Plecker’s “Virginia’s Attempt to Adjust the Color Problem,” Garvey contended that the “promotion of a hybrid caste,” as a result of miscegenation, “will have no social standing” or “critical moral judgement [*sic*].”<sup>178</sup> Hoping to appeal to white moral and racial sensibilities of the previous generation, Garvey insisted that “race loving whites

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<sup>173</sup> Ditto to ESC, March 24, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, Jan.-Apr.,” ESCP; MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #2.

<sup>174</sup> MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #1, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, May-June,” ESCP.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Garvey, “The Negro, Communism, Trade Unionism, and His (?) Friend,” July 1925.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

and blacks” needed “to take notice” of this “immoral force” and “fight against them.”<sup>179</sup> Moral uncertainties were just one facet of cultural modernism that took root during the 1920s and stood at the core of Garvey’s new platform.

The cultural sexualization of America, including films about interracial relationships, had a significant effect on white fears. Garvey legitimized both the reality and fear of miscegenation stating that many mixed-race blacks “seek to further intermix with whites and thereby create a new race for America.”<sup>180</sup> Garvey all-knowingly asserted “this is the subtle design of the man W. E. B. Du Bois who is the genius behind the N.A.A.C.P. program” and many whites are helping this organization.<sup>181</sup>

Garvey and his associates’ statements about the motives of mixed-race blacks most certainly reinforced white supremacists’ own fears of miscegenation and race destruction. In the process, Garveyite black nationalists felt that they had white support. Cox reassured Garveyite black nationalists that the UNIA’s cause would be “brought to the attention of the white people of the nation.”<sup>182</sup> In fact, Cox claimed that he wrote *Let My People Go* to build white support for Garvey and the UNIA.<sup>183</sup> The thousands of order requests for *Let My People Go* from blacks and whites indicated that the booklet “is giving much encouragement to your people” Cox told Jacques-Garvey.<sup>184</sup> While the true intention of these statements is unclear, evidence suggests that the relationship between the UNIA and Cox solidified at the moment when Cox was still struggling to obtain support for his constitutional amendment for compulsory colonization.

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<sup>179</sup> MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #1.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> ESC to MG, June 7, 1925.

<sup>183</sup> ESC to AJG, July 7, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence May-June,” ESCP.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, miscegenation fears reinforced by the UNIA also provided Virginia white supremacists with a basis for promoting federal action on colonization.

The paradoxical nature of conservative policies of the 1920s helps explain why on one hand the ASCOA promoted an anti-miscegenation law and colonization and why on the other hand Cox was unable to garner widespread support from whites. Many whites including William W. Gregg, a lawyer from New York, were skeptical of a constitutional amendment for compulsory colonization. The tension between the UNIA and other black organizations like the NAACP was well-known, and Gregg tried to warn Cox in June 1924 of the infeasibility of those colonization efforts after finishing *White America*.<sup>185</sup> Gregg suggested that the “hostility existing between the black negroes as represented by Marcus Garvey and the late Booker T. Washington (although he was a mulatto), and the near-white negroes as represented by DuBois and other negro intellectuals” would make it “pretty difficult to deport all negroes.”<sup>186</sup> Gregg’s differentiation between the groups by race suggests that white supremacists understood that racial divisions were an integral part of the conflict between blacks.

The goals of Virginian white paternalists also conflicted with the Racial Integrity Act and the colonization plans espoused by the ASCOA because white paternalists wanted to maintain the superiority-inferiority complex. Even though paternalism waned in the rest of the South by the early twentieth century, many white Virginians believed paternalism could be an effective means of preserving white supremacy without violence.<sup>187</sup> To maintain the racial order, Virginian white paternalists engaged in interracial cooperation with blacks to promote black uplift. Yet, these interracial projects sought “to manage and control black space as they deemed

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<sup>185</sup> William W. Gregg to ESC, June 16, 1924, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1924,” ESCP.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Brooks, 5.



necessary” within the framework of segregation.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, these white paternalists believed that the racial strife including issues of miscegenation was best solved “through vigilant segregation where whites could keep a benevolent eye on their darker-skinned neighbors who they felt needed their guidance.”<sup>189</sup> Virginian white paternalists’ prospective solution to the race problem, as represented by their interracial uplift efforts, maintained both white supremacy and Virginia’s image of polite racism.

White paternalists and white supremacists were ideologically aligned in terms of white superiority, but their proposed solution to the race problem differed considerably. Both groups advanced the Progressive Era rhetoric that whites were responsible for determining what was best for blacks. White paternalists and supremacists were also diametrically opposed to the KKK’s methods; however, the two groups were not methodologically aligned. While Powell and Cox believed that the race problem could only be solved through permanent separation, white paternalists believed strict social control would solve the race problem.

The ASCOA’s growing concern that blacks were infringing upon white superiority and purity, which Garveyite black nationalists reinforced, was just one of the factors that contributed to whether whites supported a federal amendment for colonization. When the onset of World War I spurred the Great Migration, many whites, in both the North and South believed the 1.5 million some blacks who left the South between 1915 and 1930 threatened their livelihood. Virginian white paternalists viewed the outmigration of blacks as a severe detriment to their livelihood, which was predicated on white superiority. On the other hand, the influx of blacks into northern cities prompted many to latch on to the sentiment that blacks were going to destroy white purity and superiority as expressed by the ASCOA.

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 178-9.

<sup>189</sup> Brooks, 140.

According to white paternalists, the Great Migration threatened to undermine both Virginia's social order and economy, both of which relied on a large subservient black labor force. White paternalists did not support black Virginians migrating North because Virginia's economy and more significantly its society and image were predicated on preserving white supremacy through benevolent race relations.<sup>190</sup> Therefore, white paternalists were strongly against the Great Migration and the ASCOA's colonization efforts.

Fortunately for white paternalists, many blacks did not want to leave Virginia, but that did not mean they were willing to forego black equality. John Mitchell Jr., editor of the *Richmond Planet*, and P.B. Young, editor of the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, encouraged black Virginians to stay in Virginia during the Great Migration, asserting "that Virginia was just as much their home as the whites."<sup>191</sup> According to the scholar Clayton McClure Brooks, black Virginians like John Mitchell Jr. and P.B. Young hoped that their efforts to stem emigration and black participation in WWI would translate into more rights.<sup>192</sup> These black leaders believed that, if segregation could not be defeated, then they could use interracial cooperation and goodwill to better conditions within the confines of segregation.<sup>193</sup> Thus Black integrationists, who considered themselves to be the elite black class, were often willing to work with white paternalists to increase their opportunities within the state.

By 1925, Garveyite black nationalists and Virginian white supremacists actively worked to undermine the goals of both white paternalists and black integrationists in Virginia and elsewhere. Powell and Cox believed white paternalists and their interracial organizations—which encouraged interracial interactions—were the cause of the state's rising miscegenation, an

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 122.

obvious detriment to the preservation of the white race. Cox asserted that by “giving the negro the option to remain we are affording him the right to decide whether the future American is to be white or colored.”<sup>194</sup> “Colored” stood for mixed-race blacks, who according to the scientific studies of the era would eliminate the white race, “the one [upon] which progress depends.”<sup>195</sup> To prevent this, Cox stated that the ASCOA proposed the Racial Integrity Act “as a measure to make America undesirable for the near whites.”<sup>196</sup> Although, as Powell noted, the Racial Integrity Act would not completely solve the “negro problem” but provided a temporary solution until “the evolvement of an effective solution” became a reality.<sup>197</sup> Powell and Cox recognized that anti-miscegenation laws would not permanently prevent miscegenation and thus asserted that complete racial separation was the only way to effectively preserve the future of both races.

White supremacists hoped to enforce segregation so stringently that mixed-race blacks would see repatriation as the last viable option to secure rights and freedoms. It is conceivable that by endorsing Garvey, who reaffirmed fears that whites might lose their superior position, Cox believed he could sway skeptical whites into supporting colonization. Furthermore, Garvey assured Cox that the UNIA was “willing to absorb these unfortunate people and make a morally strong and healthy race” in Africa.<sup>198</sup> Garvey’s willingness to ultimately embrace all blacks—coupled with the Racial Integrity Act and similar laws—would, in theory, solve the issue of black resistance to colonization. Garvey’s supposed willingness to accept all blacks after he had been discrediting many for years, indicated that his colorism rhetoric was primarily a tactic to garner the trust of these few Virginian white supremacists and achieve black independence.

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<sup>194</sup> ESC to Gregg, July 10, 1924, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1924,” ESCP.

<sup>195</sup> Plecker, “Virginia’s Attempt to Adjust the Color Problem,” 111.

<sup>196</sup> ESC to Gregg, July 10, 1924.

<sup>197</sup> John Powell (JP) to Honorable George H. Roberts, House of Representatives, Columbus, Ohio, February 28, 1925, Box 39:45, Papers of John Powell (PJP), 1888-1978, n.d., Accession #7284, 7284-a, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

<sup>198</sup> MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #1.

In addition to Cox's proposed federal colonization amendment, Powell, in line with attempts by southern progressives to enact stronger anti-miscegenation laws, sought to enlist other states to pass more restrictive anti-miscegenation measures. Powell believed preserving white purity would not "be effective without the collaboration of the other states in the Union."<sup>199</sup> According to Powell, the Racial Integrity Act, which was passed to prevent miscegenation and in turn maintain the purity of the white race, necessitated a nationwide re-evaluation of state anti-miscegenation statutes. To encourage other states, E. Lee Trinkle, the Governor of Virginia, sent copies of the Racial Integrity Act to the governors of every state "requesting them to propose similar legislation to their respective legislatures."<sup>200</sup> Virginia's efforts to influence other states came to fruition in late June when a similar law was brought before the Georgia state legislature.

Recognizing the importance of Georgia passing a similar law, Powell made a trip to Atlanta to assist the state in its passage. While Georgia was considering such a bill and would go on to pass one in 1927, many southern states did not support the idea of passing new anti-miscegenation legislation. Conversely, of the thirty-one replies Governor Trinkle received, eleven northern and western states strongly approved of such legislation.<sup>201</sup> Considering southern progressives had spent the previous decade lobbying for a federal anti-miscegenation statute, the South's relative disapproval of a stricter law seems odd. However, with the South's extralegal activity, including the return of the KKK in 1915, many southern states may not have felt the necessity of a stricter anti-miscegenation law. Meanwhile, feeling the effects of the Great Migration, the ASCOA received a growing number of supporters from northern states.

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

To bolster Powell's attempt to get all states to pass a similar law, Cox tried to convince northern states, which were now dealing with the effects of the Great Migration, to adopt a stricter anti-miscegenation law. Cox sent copies of *White America* to all U.S. Senators and House of Representatives, and the governor and state legislators of Indiana to persuade them into believing the influx of blacks threatened the white race and their livelihoods.<sup>202</sup> Cox selected Indiana to lead the way in the passage of stricter anti-miscegenation laws in the North.<sup>203</sup> At the same time that Plecker and Cox were making an "effort to obtain support in Indiana" so they could secure "a white nation for ourselves," support of racial integrity gained traction within the White Supremacy League (WSL) founded in Indianapolis.<sup>204</sup>

The establishment of the White Supremacy League by Daisydean Deeds in the 1920s was rooted in what many northern whites saw as the encroachment of blacks across the color line as a result of the Great Migration. A leaflet put out by the WSL, entitled "Who is My Neighbor?" directly illustrated that blacks migrating into white neighborhoods were met with white racism. While "Who is My Neighbor?" was a rhetorical question, Deeds went on to answer the question literally.<sup>205</sup> In the pamphlet Deeds averred that one's neighbor was "[t]he ape that lives next door," who destroyed "my once pleasant home."<sup>206</sup> Reinforcing the colorism rhetoric and arguments made by Garvey and Virginian white supremacists, Deeds went on to explain that whites must understand that there is a difference between a "nigger" and a "negro."<sup>207</sup> The former, "Has not the proper conception" of the "respect he owes" to whites, Deeds claimed.<sup>208</sup> On the other hand, the latter, according to Deeds is a "self-respecting black who knows his place

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<sup>202</sup> WAP to Dr. Joseph Graham, April 7, 1925, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence 1925, Jan.-Apr.," ESCP.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Mrs. O.J. Deeds Inquiry, August 1925, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence 1925, July-Aug.," ESCP.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

and keeps it, and who does not try to force himself on white people socially or otherwise.”<sup>209</sup> It was this feeling of black agitation for equality and white insecurity that the ASCOA’s efforts in Indiana provided the WSL and the ASCOA with an effective means to promote the maintenance of white supremacy. As correspondence between Deeds and Cox illustrates, both believed they needed to make “America free from the propagation of half-breeds” in order to secure white supremacy permanently.<sup>210</sup>

As Virginian white supremacists fortified a relationship with Indiana white supremacists, the alliance between Garveyite black nationalists also grew when Powell made a conscious effort to see Garvey in prison. While he was in Atlanta lobbying for Georgia’s anti-miscegenation law, Powell went to the Atlanta State Federal Penitentiary to express his “admiration for his [Garvey] courageous leadership.” He also hand-delivered a message to Garvey from Cox.<sup>211</sup> During their visit, Powell praised Garvey’s *Appeal to the Soul of White America*. In response, Garvey stated that the UNIA was “unalterably opposed to racial amalgamation.”<sup>212</sup> In anticipation of Powell’s visit, Garvey expressed that he hoped Powell “will succeed in making an impression upon the Georgia Legislature to bring about a similar law as exists in Virginia.”<sup>213</sup> Garvey’s support of another racial integrity law made evident the paradoxical and strategical nature of Garvey’s new white supremacist-affiliated platform.

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Mrs. Otto Jay Deeds to ESC, August 14, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, July-Aug.,” ESCP. Other correspondence between Deeds and Cox, reveals her name as Daisydean Jenkins Deeds, see Daisydean Jenkins Deeds to ESC, October 2, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, July-Aug.,” ESCP. Deeds was adamantly opposed to black equality and the threat she believed blacks posed as they migrated into Northern cities and white neighborhoods. This sentiment is illustrated in her correspondence with Cox and an article she wrote entitled “The Race Problem,” which she sent to Cox. The article is held in his collection, Box 28, Folder “Writings and Speeches of Others B-V.”

<sup>211</sup> JP to the editor of the *Negro World*, August 22, 1925, Box 39:62, PJP.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> MG to ESC, June 24, 1925.

Garvey's unfortunate circumstances—the financial collapse of the Black Star Line in 1922—and his final arraignment in 1925—determined how he continued to pursue black equality through racial separation as a viable solution to the race problem. When Virginian white supremacists endorsed Garvey's racial separatist agenda, Garvey saw it as an opportunity to exonerate himself and still achieve black independence through racial separation. To secure support from Virginian white supremacists and the federal government, Garvey used his colorism rhetoric to vindicate the UNIA and himself. Likewise, by affiliating themselves with the UNIA, Virginian white supremacists hoped to convince whites that the only way to preserve white supremacy and purity was to repatriate blacks to Africa. The UNIA, they advocated, could assist in this process because they sought to return to Africa.

In just a few months, Garveyite black nationalists and Virginian white supremacists were convinced that they could use each other to secure their solutions to the race problem—black equality through racial separation and white supremacy through racial separation—respectively. While many Garveyite black nationalists and Virginian white supremacists were growing in their appreciation for each other, other blacks within and without the UNIA did not understand or support such an association. Thus, in the coming months, it soon became apparent that intraracial conflict and colorism would manifest in new ways.

### Chapter Three: The Unraveling

The relationship between Garvey and Virginian white supremacists took place outside the purview of most Garveyite black nationalists. Even though the booklet *Let My People Go* drew a clear link between the two race-based organizations, initial awareness of Garvey's new platform, which was predicated on using colorism to gain white supremacist support for black independence and equality, was little known. However, as thousands of copies of *Let My People Go* began circling among Garveyite black nationalists and whites, the black press soon exposed the cooperation between the UNIA and the ASCOA. The public unveiling of Garvey's alliance with Virginian white supremacists engendered intraracial conflict that was more expansive in scope.

Reminiscent of previous reactions to Garvey's involvement with the KKK, Garvey's new and more intimate association with the ASCOA transformed the scope of intraracial conflict surrounding Garvey's methods to transverse racial discrimination and injustice. As summer changed to fall, knowledge of Garvey's new association with Virginian white supremacists became well-known among the UNIA, but it was not embraced by everyone. While debates over the UNIA's new white-affiliated platform reverberated from state to state, loyal Garveyite black nationalists on board with this new platform strengthened their ties with the ASCOA through a concerted effort at physical interaction. Consequently, the prolonged financial problems and the lack of cohesion within the UNIA prompted Garvey to reinstitute intraracial hierarchy and colorism rhetoric as a means to secure black support. In the process, Garvey expanded upon who he considered was a race traitor to include not only black integrationists but Garveyite black nationalists as well.



Although many Garveyite black nationalists read *Let My People Go*, it was primarily distributed to white Americans. Even though Ditto claimed that *Let My People Go* should be in “every Negroes Home instead of the Bible,” many of the booklets that the UNIA ordered were redistributed to white Americans as Garveyite black nationalists attempted to gain white support for Garvey and the UNIA.<sup>214</sup> While the distribution of *Let My People Go* indicated that Garveyite black nationalists supported the aims of white supremacists on a broad level, their request for the booklet was primarily strategic.

On June 28, 1925, under the auspices of the Richmond Division of the UNIA, Cox delivered one of his first public speeches to a crowded room of blacks. In the speech, Cox “expressed full agreement with Marcus Garvey’s program” and praised Garvey “as the greatest Negro of the century.”<sup>215</sup> In an attempt to sway black opinion, Cox declared that he believed the “U.S. Government would pay [for] transportation” to transport blacks to Africa. While many blacks listened to Cox’s speech, including many of Richmond’s prominent black leaders, an article published in the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* revealed that support of Virginian white supremacists was not uniform within the black community.

“Maj. Cox Defends Marcus Garvey’s Migration Scheme” illustrates the important role newspapers played in educating blacks on the objectives of black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists. Articles like this were a source for which blacks could make an informed decision, but those same articles also sparked intraracial conflict. The *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, an integrationist leaning newspaper, claimed that Cox achieved what he set out to do, but he did not successfully persuade the black audience who resented “his frequent use of the word

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<sup>214</sup> Ditto to ESC, April 15, 1925; also see “White Southerner Discloses Real Attitude of the White American towards the Negro in the United States,” *Negro World*, November 7, 1925.

<sup>215</sup> “Maj. Cox Defends Marcus Garvey’s Migration Scheme” *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, July 4, 1925.

‘nigger.’”<sup>216</sup> The article also made clear that Cox was “an active sponsor of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America and collaborator with Dr. W. A. Plecker in the advocacy of racial integrity legislation.”<sup>217</sup> Furthermore, to inform and persuade blacks of the danger Cox posed to black livelihood, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* noted that Cox’s two publications “without reservation sets forth his belief in Nordic supremacy.”<sup>218</sup>

Immediately following the passage of the Racial Integrity Act, many black newspapers published articles disparaging the reasons for the Act as racist and unequal. An article by Thomas L. Dabney, a journalist the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, explained that blacks were “not advocating for amalgamation.”<sup>219</sup> He also noted that blacks recognized that the law explicitly “preserve[d] the integrity of the white race” and did not preserve the integrity of the black race.<sup>220</sup> Along similar lines, Pickens also wrote an article for the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* in which he called the anti-miscegenation law pointless. Further strengthening the NAACP’s position on miscegenation and black equality, Pickens determined the Racial Integrity Act was unequal and defective. Pickens stated that the law “to prevent colored people in Virginia from marrying white people is a Great Joke.”<sup>221</sup> The law attempted to prevent black women from pursuing white men, which Pickens argued, “does not happen.”<sup>222</sup> On the other hand, Pickens noted the Racial Integrity Act did not prevent “the intrusion of white males into the Negro race” which was “occurring every minute in the South, [and] every hour in Virginia.”<sup>223</sup> Pickens went on to argue that that the fastest-growing number of mixed-race individuals were coming from

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Thomas L. Dabney, “Race Amalgamation and Science,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, March 15, 1924.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> William Pickens, “The “Mulattos” and “Anglo-Saxon” Clubs,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, May 23, 1925.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

states with the strictest anti-miscegenation laws. In these states, most prominently Virginia, these laws gave white men, who often sexually assaulted black women, the “free public license” to do so without consequence.<sup>224</sup> On the other hand, black women have “no standing at law” to do anything in response, and their mixed children were left to take the backlash from both sides of the color line.<sup>225</sup> In this article, Pickens completely destroyed the basis of the Act as well as Powell, Cox, and Garvey’s argument that mixed-race individuals sought to intermix with whites. However, the fact that he stressed that blacks were and would always be opposed to anti-miscegenation laws strengthened Garveyite black nationalists’ belief that black integrationists were race traitors out to destroy the black race.

Shortly after the publication of “Maj. Cox Defends Marcus Garvey’s Migration Scheme,” Dabney hoped to gain further insight into the activities of both Garvey and the white supremacists before the *Norfolk Journal and Journal* published another article on their relationship. To do so, Dabney wrote Du Bois a letter requesting his opinion on the UNIA’s new association with the white supremacists. Dabney explained that Du Bois’s opinion on the matter would be useful because he previously expressed strong opinions about the UNIA.

In his letter to Du Bois, Dabney discussed a recent interview with Cox in which he reaffirmed Plecker and his endorsement of Garvey. Cox stated he regarded Garvey as “the most influential leader that the Negro race has ever produced.”<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, Dabney informed Du Bois that with “a few leading white Americans...speaking in favor of it,” the UNIA was “still popular among a great number of Negroes” and was gaining considerable traction.<sup>227</sup> This comment seemingly contradicted the opinion that blacks were not overly persuaded by Cox’s

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Thomas L. Dabney to Du Bois, July 9, 1925, WEBDP.

overt racial epithets. However, both Cox's public address and the Richmond UNIA's strong endorsement of white supremacists revealed that the movement remained steady despite Garvey's imprisonment.

Interestingly, Du Bois responded with a letter stating that his perspective could be found in various issues of *The Crisis*.<sup>228</sup> Du Bois's lack of a fresh statement on Garvey's new association with whites suggests that he either did not want to give his opinion to an outside source or he believed the organization would never amount to anything with Garvey in prison. Although Dabney was not able to obtain any new information from Du Bois, one week after his correspondence with the NAACP leader, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* published another article on the ASCOA's and the UNIA's relationship. "Garvey, In Prison Cell, Forms New Alliance" recounted the "warm friendship" developing between the two organizations.<sup>229</sup> It also indicated that "Alarm felt over peculiar alliance" galvanized blacks, and noted that the ASCOA was "mistaken in their estimate of the influence of the U.N.I.A."<sup>230</sup> The *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, as the primary black newspaper in the state of Virginia, continued to closely watch the ramifications of the alliance between the two race-based organizations.

The *Norfolk Journal and Guide*'s estimations of the alliance between the UNIA and the ASCOA were only the beginning of the controversy. Shortly after the "Garvey in Prison Cell, Forms New Alliance" article, Thomas Fortune, editor of the *Negro World* published "Mr. Garvey and White American Society" criticizing accusations that the UNIA was involved in such an alliance. The content of and the response to the editorial revealed that the extent to which some Garveyite black nationalists supported Virginian white supremacists. The editorial stated that the ASOCA was using "Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association to further their

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<sup>228</sup> Du Bois to Dabney, July 15, 1925, WEBDP.

<sup>229</sup> "Garvey in Prison Cell, Forms New Alliance," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, August 18, 1925.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

infamous propaganda” in order to “smash the Negro’s head.”<sup>231</sup> According to the editorial, the ASOCA’s slogan of race purity “would make a pariah out of the American Negro and drive him out of the country, whether he wanted to or not.”<sup>232</sup> An examination of Fortune’s activism and ideology explains the tone and language of “Mr. Garvey and White American Society.” Before becoming editor of the *Negro World* in 1923, Fortune was associated with black integrationist organizations and newspapers. Therefore, the editorial’s suggestion that the UNIA did not want white assistance to leave America or support race purity is logical; however, it also revealed a growing division and intraracial hierarchy within the UNIA.

The editorial indicated that, unlike Garvey and certain Garveyite black nationalists, not all were willing to undercut their citizenship and dignity in favor of an immediate solution—by-way-of white supremacists—to racial discrimination and prejudice. The editorial suggested that Garvey was not willing to either, asserting Garvey would not “stand for anything that would degrade the Negro in his manhood or citizenship” such as groups like the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America and the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>233</sup> To support this claim, Fortune included an article that illustrated Powell and Cox’s rejection of an alliance with Garvey. Furthermore, Fortune upheld the UNIA’s philosophy that black independence needed to be achieved without white assistance. Fortune asserted “the American Negro will go to Africa when he gets to it and will go when he does of his own free will.”<sup>234</sup> Many Garveyite black nationalists were unwilling to be pushed out of the U.S. just because “a bunch of race-hating white busybodies” wanted them to leave under

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<sup>231</sup> “Mr. Garvey and White American Society,” *Negro World*, August 15, 1925; reprinted in “Garvey Disclaims Editorial on Cox and John Powell,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, August 29, 1925 in Box 43:52, PJP.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

the guise of racial advocacy.<sup>235</sup> Thus it became apparent that not everyone admired Garvey's new white supremacist-affiliated platform.

Whereas Fortune and presumably others believed it was unwise to associate with white supremacists, Garvey saw it as a means to an end. Immediately following the publication of "Mr. Garvey and White American Society," Garvey sent a telegram to the *Negro World* stating he repudiated "the attack upon these two friends [Cox and Powell]."<sup>236</sup> Despite, Garvey's quick dismissal of the editorial, the unveiling of Garvey's alliance with white supremacists in black newspapers exposed a growing organizational split between loyal and disloyal Garveyites.

In many ways, the growing organizational split divided along intraracial lines as Garvey began to question Garveyite loyalty, beginning with Fortune. A letter to Cox in the aftermath of Fortune's editorial demonstrated Garvey's continued use of colorism. However, this time Garvey's colorism rhetoric was not used in reference to black integrationists but in reference to members of his own organization. It must be noted that Fortune's previous association with black integrationist organizations did factor into Garvey's colorism-based critique. However, Garvey's use of colorism directed at members of the UNIA, like Fortune, represented a significant shift in Garvey's colorism rhetoric. Garvey made sure to inform Cox that because of Fortune's past association with black integrationists, and because he was "of the 'more colored' element," Garvey "never had much confidence" him.<sup>237</sup> As a result, in order to ensure Cox's trust, Garvey argued that Fortune's editorials since his incarceration represented more of

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> "Hon. Marcus Garvey Repudiates Editorial Which Appeared in Previous Issue of Negro World," *Negro World*, August 22, 1925; reprinted in "Garvey Disclaims Editorial on Cox and John Powell," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* August 29, 1925 in Box 43:52, PJP.

<sup>237</sup> MG to ESC, August 27, 1925, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence 1925, July-Aug.," ESCP.

Fortune's "personal feelings" than the "policy of the Association."<sup>238</sup> In the process, Fortune's actions undermined the UNIA's objective.

Garvey was not alone in denouncing Fortune using colorism. Jay J. Peters, President of the New Orleans Division of the UNIA and an avid supporter of the UNIA's cooperation with white supremacists, also disapproved of Fortune's actions. In one of the many letters sent to Cox, Peters stated "on behalf of the loyal members" of the UNIA, "we vehemently condemned, the pernicious and insidious pen of Thomas Fortune."<sup>239</sup> Emulating Garvey, Peters linked Fortune's disloyalty with his racial identity, explaining that Fortune was a mixed-race black man.

Garvey's desire to effectively accomplish black equality, purity, and separation, to which white supremacists now offered the solution, Garvey felt the growing need to put loyal Garveyites into leadership positions. Despite his perceived disloyalty based on his racial identity, Fortune remained editor of the *Negro World* until he died in 1928. Unwilling to purposely incite more intraracial conflict because he could not "fight back" against black integrationists, Garvey decided not to remove Fortune from his post.<sup>240</sup> Rather, Garvey appointed Jacques-Garvey and Norton G. Thomas, his executive secretary and associate editor, as acting managing editors of the *Negro World*.<sup>241</sup>

As the debates concerning his alliance with the ASCOA intensified and the fear of disloyalty grew, Garvey reinvigorated his colorism rhetoric to convince Garveyite black nationalists that the real enemy was within the race. Garvey continued to use colorism to persuade blacks to support him by warning that "certain elements [of the race] composed chiefly

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Jay J. Peters to ESC, August 17, 1925, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence, 1925 July-Aug.," ESCP.

<sup>240</sup> MG to ESC, August 27, 1925.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.; also see *Negro World* issues October 17, 1925 and October 24, 1925 noting the change; also see Hill, et. al., ed., 151, no. 3.

of a few octoroons and quadroons” were race traitors.<sup>242</sup> Garvey explained that the black integrationist organizations who turned the federal government against Garvey betrayed the black race because they were too closely aligned with the oppressor.<sup>243</sup> His own association with white supremacists, however, was not an indication of racial betrayal. Unlike black integrationists and their white associates, these white supremacists were promoting the purity of both races. Furthermore, from Garvey’s perspective, his alliance with white supremacists protected black identity whereas black integrationists’ placement of their “whiteness” before their “blackness” did not. Again, Garvey was attempting to promote himself as an advocate of the black race and all its beautiful characteristics and culture. By contrast, he maintained that the mixed-race blacks and the NAACP, in particular, were advocating and reaffirming white supremacy.

Despite Garvey’s best efforts, the ASCOA’s alliance with the UNIA continued to spark intraracial controversy within the state of Virginia and elsewhere into the fall of 1925. In early September, John J. Fenner Jr., president of the Richmond division of the UNIA invited Cox to speak at a meeting where William Sherrill, acting president-general, was set to give an address on September 10.<sup>244</sup> The highly anticipated meeting ended abruptly when the presence of white supremacists engendered animosity between Garveyite black nationalists and other black community members. In preparing to host what was expected to be a large crowd, the Richmond division rented the Sharon Baptist Church. Upon hearing that white supremacists were scheduled to speak, the pastor, Roger H. Johnson informed the UNIA that they would only allow them to

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<sup>242</sup> “Message of Marcus Garvey to Membership Universal Negro Improvement Association from Atlanta,” n.d., Box 28, Folder “Writings and Speeches of Others B-V,” ESCP.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> John J. Fenner, Jr. to ESC, September 7, 1925, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1925, Sept.-Dec.,” ESCP.



use the church if the members of the ASCOA did not speak.<sup>245</sup> On the night of the meeting, as Cox joined Sherill to address the audience, Johnson quickly intervened, stating “[I]t is against the wishes of the church as a whole to allow these gentlemen to speak.”<sup>246</sup> One day later, in a letter to Cox, Johnson apologized for the unpleasant evening but asserted that the UNIA was to blame. Johnson went on to explain that it was his duty to halt the “doctrine and measures” espoused by the speakers, which were “exceedingly distasteful to many Americans.”<sup>247</sup> In conclusion, Johnson clarified that the Sharon Baptist Church was not affiliated with the UNIA.

On the cusp of the controversy surrounding the UNIA’s association with the ASCOA, a financial crisis involving Liberty Hall and rumors of internal fracture lines marked the unraveling of the UNIA. The UNIA was fraught with leadership and organizational issues from its inception. The *Norfolk Journal and Guide* claimed that the problems stemmed from Garvey’s obsession with micromanaging and his failure to delegate important tasks to any UNIA administrators.<sup>248</sup> Garvey’s incarceration, however, prompted the entrustment of UNIA operations into the hands of the UNIA administration. When Sherrill assumed the position of acting president-general, Garvey stated that he was bound to Garvey’s “instructions and advice.”<sup>249</sup> Therefore, Sherrill’s role in mortgaging Liberty Hall generated concern over whom Garvey could trust.

Growing intraorganizational problems and fears of disloyalty prompted Garvey to continue to promote loyal Garveyites to leadership positions in order to ensure his and the UNIA’s future. This future included his release from prison and the realization of black equality

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<sup>245</sup> Roger H. Johnson, Pastor of Sharon Baptist Church to ESC, September 11, 1925, Box 2, Folder “1925, Sept.-Dec.,” ESCP.

<sup>246</sup> Robt. A. Crump, “Maj. Cox Denied Right to Speak in Richmond Church,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, September 19, 1925.

<sup>247</sup> Roger H. Johnson, Pastor of Sharon Baptist Church to ESC, September 11, 1925.

<sup>248</sup> “Marcus Garvey Draws the Color Line,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, July 21, 1923.

<sup>249</sup> MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #2.

through separation. Garveyite loyalists and Virginian white supremacists' assistance were central to achieving these objectives. To ensure the fulfillment of Garvey's vision, with the pending loss of Liberty Hall—the most valued property owned by the UNIA—Garvey appointed Peters as acting president of the New York Local division.<sup>250</sup> Peters' loyalty, as illustrated in his close contact with white supremacists and appraisal of Garvey as the “Fearless leader with the Real Solution to the Race Problem,” indicated that he could assist in reconstituting loyalty within the UNIA.

With Peters appointed to his new position, Garvey attempted to ensure loyalty and quell defection by warning Garveyite black nationalists that there were enemies within the organization. “You must not forget that we have enemies within our own organization” who are not always discernable, Garvey warned.<sup>251</sup> These internal enemies were driven by selfish motives either because it provided them with an “opportunity for exploitation,” or because they did not “want to see the Negro rise.”<sup>252</sup> However, the deep entrenchment of internal strife meant that Garvey's words were lost to the wind. As a result, loyal Garveyite black nationalists looked to take direct action to denounce Garveyite black nationalists whose actions were inconsistent with Garvey's new white supremacist-affiliated platform.

A few weeks after Peters' appointment, in mid-October, the UNIA administration looked to solve the internal divisions rising within the UNIA. Without Garvey's knowledge, Sherrill convened a conference composed of the presidents from the largest UNIA divisions to establish a committee of four presidents to head up an investigation of the issues plaguing the UNIA.<sup>253</sup> A few weeks after the formation of the Presidents Committee, headed by William Ware, Fred

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<sup>250</sup> Hereafter, the New York Local division is referred to as the New York Local.

<sup>251</sup> “Message of Marcus Garvey to Membership Universal Negro Improvement Association from Atlanta,” n.d.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Hill, et. al., ed., 266, n. 1.

Toote, J.A. Craigen, and Samuel Haynes, the group presented a series of resolutions based upon their investigation in a hand-delivered letter to Garvey.<sup>254</sup> The foremost resolution recommended the reorganization of the current UNIA administration. The Presidents Committee stated they felt “the people have lost confidence in the present administration, as headed by the Acting President-General [William Sherrill].”<sup>255</sup> According to the Presidents Committee, the current administration has “taken no definite action in regard to bringing about the release of the President-General [Garvey].”<sup>256</sup> In addition, the committee informed Garvey that G.O. Marke, Supreme Deputy, was “antagonistic” towards Garvey and did not sympathize “with the policy of the administration.”<sup>257</sup> The Presidents Committee resolved that “there must be harmony between the administration and the President-General [Garvey],” in order to carry out black equality and independence in Africa.<sup>258</sup> This goal, the Presidents Committee contended, was not actively pursued by the current administration.

Despite the emergence of intraracial conflict within and outside of the UNIA, loyal Garveyites’ relationship with Virginian white supremacists remained strong. On the same day that the Presidents Committee informed Garvey about the current UNIA administration, Garvey had arranged for Powell to speak at Liberty Hall.<sup>259</sup> Recognizing the potential backlash of Powell’s visit amid intraorganizational conflict, Garvey preemptively attempted to avoid criticism by writing a letter to the New York Local. In the letter printed in the *Negro World*, Garvey urged the UNIA to extend Powell and the ASOCA “the courtesy and fellowship that is

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<sup>254</sup> Fred A. Toote, William Ware, Samuel Haynes, and J.A. Craigen to MG, October 28, 1925 in Hill, et.al., ed., 250.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.; see also Hill, et. al., ed., 266, n. 1.

<sup>259</sup> The fact that these two events happened on the same day was pure coincidence. A couple weeks after the Sharon Baptist incident in September, Garvey arranged for Powell to speak at Liberty Hall. See Louise Burleigh to MG, September 17, 1925, Box 39:64, PJP; MG to JP, September 26, 1925, Box 39:66, PJP.

logical to the program” of the UNIA.<sup>260</sup> Under Garvey’s new platform, a “Free and Redeemed Africa” continued to be the UNIA’s primary goal, but the methods to achieving that goal now relied on a white supremacist-affiliated platform that placed racial purity and colorism at its center.<sup>261</sup> Consequently, this new platform validated rather than challenged white supremacy.

Garvey persistently claimed that whites would never allow blacks to be equal. However, this remained true in part because Garvey’s new platform reinforced the inferiority-superiority complex. Garvey praised the ASCOA in the letter to the New York Local stating, “I maintain the greatest respect” for the people Powell represents “because of their honesty and lack of hypocrisy.”<sup>262</sup> In a complete reversal of his previous disdain for whites, Garvey now promoted the doctrine of “Live and let live,” denoting that he supported those who wanted racial harmony for both races.<sup>263</sup> Garvey urged the New York Local to accept Powell because he, according to Garvey, represented the “clean-cut and honest section of the white race” and desired “to purify and preserve the white race” just as the black race was “determined to purify and standardize” itself.<sup>264</sup> Garvey projected his new alliance and platform onto the UNIA stating, “[W]e, as the Negroes, admire the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs,” expecting UNIA adherents to comply.<sup>265</sup>

Jacques-Garvey’s and Peters’ opening remarks on the day of Powell’s address also illustrated the extensive effort of Garvey and loyal Garveyites black nationalists to maintain cohesion within the UNIA. Hoping to reinforce to Garveyites black nationalists that the UNIA’s vision for blacks was in their best interest, Jacques-Garvey maintained that black prosperity

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<sup>260</sup> Marcus Garvey, “The Ideals of Two Races,” *Negro World*, November 7, 1925.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

could only be achieved in Africa. Black prosperity in America is “hopeless” because “the white race is the majority” and will not “permit another race to develop alongside of them.”<sup>266</sup> This vision of black equality through racial separation was best achieved by supporting Virginian white supremacists who could assist in lifting “our race to the standard and pinnacle that the white race holds.”<sup>267</sup> Thereby, Jacques-Garvey warned Garveyite black nationalists “to take no offense at anything Mr. Powell or his associates might say.”<sup>268</sup> Furthermore, Jacques-Garvey noted the important role black separation would play in effectively preserving the black race from further intermixing, stating “we are making every effort to keep our race pure and keep it black.”<sup>269</sup> Jacques-Garvey’s speech attempted to reinforce to Garveyite black nationalists, many of whom may have been skeptical of Powell, that the black independence, purity, and equality was the goal, and white supremacists were merely the ticket to achieving it.

Peters also outlined why blacks needed to support white supremacists, but, while doing so, alluded that Virginian white supremacists needed to reframe their thinking of blacks as inferior. Peters insisted that, in order to effect change, blacks must join with others whether they are “yellow, brown, or white, upon a plane of equality.”<sup>270</sup> As such, Peters asserted that “we welcome tonight these gentlemen [Powell and three associates]” who offer a means to elevate the race in Africa.<sup>271</sup> While, Peters was attempting to convince blacks to support Powell, in many ways his opening statements reflected a desire to have these Virginian white supremacists view blacks as equals. His remarks, in many ways, mirrored a statement made by Garvey to Cox, claiming “the line of race separation cannot be drawn so tight as to make it impossible for either

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<sup>266</sup> “Dr. Peters and Mrs. Garvey Explain what the Negro in the U.N.I.A. is Working for and the Views he Holds,” *Negro World*, November 7, 1925.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

group” to achieve the desired goal.<sup>272</sup> Garvey charged that interracial cooperation was required, quoting how the French and Germans came together for the necessary good without destroying each other.<sup>273</sup> Therefore, Garvey insisted that there had to be “an understanding between black and white leaders” to overcome the “race problem.”<sup>274</sup> Although these white supremacists never avowed black equality because doing so would have betrayed the Virginian white supremacists’ ideals set forth by the constitution of the ASCOA, they were willing to cooperate with the UNIA if it led to racial separation.

Placating Garveyite black nationalists, Powell spoke with great appreciation for efforts made by members of the UNIA towards racial purity and separation. At Liberty Hall, Powell applauded those who recognized “the race situation in America” and who “face[d] the facts” that indicated the two races could no longer coexist.<sup>275</sup> In progressive era rhetoric, Powell justified his remarks again by claiming that he was motivated to do what was best for both blacks and whites. In his opening remarks, Powell reminisced that he was delighted to hear that the black race supported *White America*.<sup>276</sup> Powell explained that *White America* had received much criticism from certain newspapers which he believed were “under the influence of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.”<sup>277</sup> Powell’s statement illustrates that Garvey and loyal Garveyite black nationalists firmly planted the threat of the mixed-race blacks and black integrationists in the minds of white supremacists.

Virginian white supremacists used Garvey to create a propaganda platform that prescribed whites as racial advocates while advancing white supremacy. Powell rhetorically

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<sup>272</sup> MG to ESC, August 27, 1925.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Smith, *The Eugenic Assault on America*, 27.

<sup>276</sup> “White Southerner Discloses Real Attitude of the White American towards the Negro in the United States,” *Negro World*, November 7, 1925.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

asked, “Why is it you are not free?,” followed by “[y]ou are not free because the civilization that you are living under is not your own.”<sup>278</sup> Powell insisted that “[t]he war did not make you free, and constitutional amendments did not make you free and the N.A.A.C.P has not made you free,” but never once did he suggest that blacks were not free because of the very white supremacy that his organization upheld.<sup>279</sup> He merely suggested that blacks needed a civilization of their own. Moreover, he continued his racist racial advocacy rhetoric, contending “the Negro is not allowed to vote freely” and “he is treated legally and politically with less consideration.”<sup>280</sup> As such, “No one denies the unfairness and injustice of that, I least of all.”<sup>281</sup> Yet again, while Powell claimed to loath the social and political disenfranchisement of blacks, he founded a white supremacy organization that promoted racially discriminatory laws. Furthermore, this came from a man who also described himself as a white southerner from a slaveholding family even while asserting that he possessed no racial hatred.<sup>282</sup> Despite these rather racist remarks, an article in the *Negro World* detailing the events of the night claimed that Powell’s speech was met with great applause, especially when Powell claimed that all efforts were being made to prevent Garvey’s deportation.<sup>283</sup>

Regardless of efforts to prevent upheaval, following Powell's address at Liberty Hall, the UNIA only continued to unravel. In November, the Presidents Committee “announced the reorganization of the UNIA and the formation of the Parent Body of the UNIA” subject to approval by Garvey.<sup>284</sup> Upon Garvey’s approval including his own resignation, all but two

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Smith, *The Eugenic Assault on America*, 27-8.

<sup>283</sup> “America’s Honor Demands that Marcus Garvey be Free”; “White Southerner Discloses Real Attitude of the White American.”

<sup>284</sup> Hill, et. al., ed., 266, n. 2.

incumbents, Sherrill and Marke, agreed to resign.<sup>285</sup> Sherrill's and Marke's refusal to resign gave Garvey and loyal Garveyite black nationalists incentive to scapegoat them and mark them enemies of the UNIA and black race. However, their indictment of Sherrill and Marke represented a significant shift in Garvey's race traitor paradigm, which previously had only been reserved for black integrationists.

The financial crises involving the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company and Liberty Hall pushed Garvey to broaden his concept of racial betrayal. Garvey already believed enemies lurked within the organization, but Sherrill's and Marke's refusal to resign actualized this belief. The Presidents Committee's appraisal of Sherrill and Marke convinced Garvey that they interfered with the new platform, in which white supremacists played a key role. Although Garvey never directly linked their betrayal to the UNIA's involvement with ASCOA, the timing of intraorganizational strife cannot be a coincidence. Garvey claimed that Marke had "long ceased to be loyal to the organization" because of "his evasive tactics."<sup>286</sup> According to Garvey, because of tactics "creating prejudice against our work," he needed to be impeached.<sup>287</sup> Furthermore, while initially hesitant to openly "fight against" Sherrill, Garvey concluded that he had to in order to save his movement.<sup>288</sup> Garvey noted that Sherrill's failure "to carry out my instructions" or make a concerted effort to assist in his exoneration was from Garvey's perspective a clear indication of his betrayal.<sup>289</sup>

At the height of Garvey's new platform, at a point when mixed-race enemies took center stage, it is unsurprising that colorism filtered into Garvey's condemnation of Sherrill. While

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Marcus Garvey, "'Turn out the Traitors' is Hon. Marcus Garvey's Appeal to Delegates in Convention in Ringing Message," *Negro World*, March 20, 1926.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> MG to ESC, January 11, 1926 in Hill, et. al., ed., 308.

<sup>289</sup> Marcus Garvey, "Garvey Reveals Disloyalty of Sherrill as Acting President General of the U. N. I. A.," *Negro World*, February 20, 1926.



Garvey's dismissal of Sherrill was primarily rooted in his leadership failings, Garvey justified his denouncement of Sherrill through colorism. Garvey claimed that he "never turned against Sherrill" in the early months of his imprisonment.<sup>290</sup> However, in June Garvey suggested that he was suspicious of Sherrill because of his complexion.<sup>291</sup> Garvey informed Cox that Sherrill was of "slightly mixed blood" and, therefore, could not be fully trusted.<sup>292</sup> This was in stark contrast to Jacques-Garvey, whose loyalty Garvey never doubted, asserting that the ASOCA could "speak frankly and freely to her."<sup>293</sup> According to Garvey, "[S]he understands thoroughly the question and the opposition" even though she is "of slight mixed blood."<sup>294</sup> Garvey claimed that Sherrill was "guided by the policy of the organization" but informed Cox that too much information should not be revealed to him.<sup>295</sup> Garvey reaffirmed these assertions to Cox in early January 1926, stating that, even though he had previously hinted that he "was suspicious of Sherrill's honesty," he was now completely "convinced that he [Sherrill] is a dishonest man."<sup>296</sup> Garvey expressed to Cox that Sherrill "has miscarried my plans and has wrought havoc everywhere."<sup>297</sup>

Garvey linked Sherrill's act of disloyalty to black integrationists who were, in Garvey's eyes, the symbol of racial betrayal. Garvey contended that those who betrayed his organization did so because they were unable "to resist the temptation of the evil one [NAACP]."<sup>298</sup> In Sherrill's case, he did not resist the temptation of these organizations and thus "has become a

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Garvey, "'Turn out the Traitors'"; MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #2.

<sup>292</sup> MG to ESC, June 10, 1925, Letter #2.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> MG to ESC, January 11, 1926.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> "Message of Marcus Garvey to Membership Universal Negro Improvement Association from Atlanta," n.d.

tool of our enemies, and especially mine, to crush us.”<sup>299</sup> Sherrill was now “under the influence of the enemy”—the NAACP—and nothing could persuade Garvey otherwise.<sup>300</sup>

While the UNIA remained encumbered with intraorganizational problems for most of 1926, those who remained loyal to Garvey continued to reach out to the Virginian white supremacists for assistance. On March 26, 1926, Caleb G. Robinson, a leader in the Philadelphia UNIA, sent Powell a seventeen-page letter extending his support to Garvey and whites. Robinson claimed that he was “searching in Virginia and in the South for friends of Marcus Garvey and ‘Garveyism’ especially among your [Powell] people.”<sup>301</sup> With all the support the UNIA received from the Virginian white supremacists in the past, Robinson hoped the ASCOA would be able to provide financial assistance to pay off a debt on a school building in Claremont, Virginia. The UNIA planned to establish a university and “Southern Headquarters of the Garvey ‘Back to Africa Movement’” and use the Claremont building.

Although there is no evidence indicating that Powell responded to Robinson, the letters that do exist reveal that both Garvey and Virginian white supremacists believed it would be beneficial to establish southern UNIA headquarters in Virginia. When the letter concerning the southern headquarters reached his office, Powell was out of town. Louise Burleigh, Powell’s future wife, informed him of the letter stating, “I hope he and his Garveyites will get their school.”<sup>302</sup> Considering Virginia was home to the ASCOA, it is unsurprising that loyal Garveyite black nationalists were looking to establish a headquarters and university in the state. By the end of July, the UNIA broke ground on Liberty University in Claremont, with Robinson appointed as

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<sup>299</sup> Garvey, ““Turn out the Traitors.””

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Caleb G. Robinson to JP, March 26, 1926, Box 39:89, PJP.

<sup>302</sup> Louise Burleigh to JP, March 31, 1926, Box 39:91, PJP.

the principal. Liberty University began enrolling students for the 1926 fall semester.<sup>303</sup> In a letter to Robinson, Garvey stated that he believed the university was a “wonderful asset to racial uplift.”<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, the location of the university suggests that Garvey was optimistic about his release from prison and the possibility of establishing a formal alliance with the ASCOA.

The extent to which colorism took on a prominent role in the denouncement of those Garvey deemed disloyal remains unclear; however, evidence suggests that controversy over Garvey’s colorism platform involving white supremacists played a role in the fracturing of the UNIA. Following Garvey’s emergency convention in March 1926, the UNIA officially split between the Garveyites loyal to Garvey, now led by Fred Toote, and the rival New York Local, headed by George Weston.<sup>305</sup> At the New York Local convention in August 1926, Garveyite black nationalists there stated that they repudiated “Garvey’s administration” and censured “him severely for his scandalous exploitation” of the UNIA and “the unfortunate Negro masses.”<sup>306</sup> The press release detailing the convention noted that Garvey, the late President-General, “gravely misrepresented” the organization.<sup>307</sup> The New York Local wanted to restore order to the UNIA and reestablish itself as an esteemed and respectable organization. According to the press release, Garvey’s “reckless utterances” had driven out “various individuals of Negro blood whose experience, integrity, and educational attainment” would have been beneficial.<sup>308</sup> It becomes apparent from this statement that many Garveyite black nationalists did not agree with Garvey’s attacks upon educated blacks. More significantly, the convention ridiculed Garvey’s association with the ASCOA. They declared that “he sought an alliance in the name of the

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<sup>303</sup> Liberty University held its first commencement ceremony in May 1927. However, due to financial problems, this would be Liberty University’s first and last commencement.

<sup>304</sup> MG to Robinson, July 21, 1927 in Hill, et. al., ed., 570-1.

<sup>305</sup> The New York Local was eventually legally recognized as the UNIA, Inc in August 1929. Garvey eventually legalized the split when he formed the unincorporated UNIA-ACL in Jamaica.

<sup>306</sup> UNIA, Inc. Press release, August 16, 1926 in WEBDP.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

Association with organizations whose programs and activities are inimical to the larger interests of the Negro Race.”<sup>309</sup>

The fracturing of the UNIA consumed most of Garvey’s time during 1926, but it did not stop his efforts at exoneration, especially when he was eligible for parole in October. Garvey resubmitted his application for executive clemency on January 17, 1927. However, when nothing immediately manifested, several black and white supporters submitted letters to President Coolidge in support of his release.

When news from Jacques-Garvey arrived that Garvey’s executive clemency application had been submitted to the Department of Justice, Plecker and Cox seized the opportunity to assist. In his March 19, 1927, letter to President Coolidge, Plecker stated that he was “one of a considerable number of white people” who believed Garvey’s actions were an “error of judgment rather than a deliberate crime.”<sup>310</sup> Plecker believed Garvey had served his time and pleaded that he should be “pardoned, and permitted to continue his work with his race in this country.”<sup>311</sup>

Cox’s letter to President Coolidge is also a strong indication that Garvey and loyal Garveyite black nationalists successfully convinced Cox that the UNIA’s solution to the race problem aligned with most of white America. In the letter, Cox insisted that he had painstakingly determined that “he [Garvey] teaches his people to value their blood integrity and not seek to mate with whites.”<sup>312</sup> Furthermore, based upon his interactions with Garveyite black nationalists, Cox contended that Garvey represented blacks who “do not wish to solve the negro problem by

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> WAP to Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States, March 19, 1927, Box 41:48, PJP.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> ESC to Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States, March 23, 1927 in Hill, et. al., ed., 525.

mixing the blood” of blacks and whites.<sup>313</sup> In this regard, Garvey “stands unique among negro leaders.”<sup>314</sup> In his appraisal of Garvey, Cox unsurprisingly managed to further his own agenda. Cox asserted that Garvey’s philosophy indicated that a program “based upon the ideal of race integrity” and “race independence” was logical.<sup>315</sup> Not only did Cox suggest a new program be adopted that represented the ideals of both the UNIA and ASCOA, but Cox also believed it was “sound public policy to support” the UNIA.<sup>316</sup> As a result, Cox recommended a commutation of Garvey’s sentence that would not “cause his deportation.”<sup>317</sup> Plecker and Cox’s decisions to petition President Coolidge to exonerate Garvey indicated that, despite all the controversy surrounding their alliance, their comments about Garvey were genuine.

The outpouring of black and white support likely influenced President Coolidge to finally commute Garvey’s sentence on November 18, 1927. Unfortunately, immigration law mandated that Garvey, as an alien and convicted felon, be deported. Thus, after maneuvering interracial and intraracial cooperation and conflict in a bid to fulfill his vision for black equality, Garvey was deported on December 2, never again to return to the United States.

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion: Turning Over New Leaves

Garvey's long-held assertion that he was going to "unite the scattered Negroes of the world" a notion which once stood at the forefront of the UNIA cause had long since lost relevancy.<sup>318</sup> After his deportation, Garvey continued to promote black independence and pride through his new weekly publication, *The Blackman*, as well as via programs in Jamaica and England. Finally, the intraracial colorism conflict between Garvey and Du Bois had ceased and in its place, cooperation took root.

As time passed and the struggle for black equality persisted, colorism faded from the conflict between Garvey and Du Bois, opening up new opportunities. After Garvey died in 1940, Jacques-Garvey maintained a cordial relationship with Du Bois.<sup>319</sup> Amid WWII, they exchanged a series of letters and articles as they worked together on the Pan-African Congress and to "influence the United Nations to declare...an African Freedom Charter."<sup>320</sup> They united because they both believed that blacks deserved to have "a standard of self-assertion and self-reliance."<sup>321</sup> With colorism aside, Jacques-Garvey and Du Bois made a concerted effort to dismantle systems of inequality and injustice around the world.

Cooperation efforts also persisted between Cox, Garvey, and Jacques-Garvey following Garvey's deportation. In fact, Jacques-Garvey continued to correspond with Cox until he died in 1966. Their exchanges after 1927 discussed Cox's continued colonization efforts, including the Great Liberia bill presented to Congress in 1940. At one point recalling the development of his close relationship with the couple, Cox noted that his correspondence with Garvey and Jacques-

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<sup>318</sup> Cronon, ed., 3.

<sup>319</sup> For more on the relationship between Jacques-Garvey and Du Bois see letters in Box 1, Folder 8: "Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt, 1923-1972," AJGMC.

<sup>320</sup> AJG to Du Bois, April 24, 1944, Box 1, Folder 8: "Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt, 1923-1972," AJGMC.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

Garvey numbered in the forty-nine range, most of which is now held in his collection at Duke University.<sup>322</sup> In 1942, two years after Garvey's death, Cox wrote a letter to the editor of the *New Negro World* in which he praised the UNIA. He also endearingly wrote, "[I]t was my privilege, as you know, to have sustained friendship with Marcus Garvey, a good man, a genius in organization, and whose soaring spirit attracted the attention of nations of the world."<sup>323</sup> Despite their opposing goals—Cox's aim to reinforce white supremacy and Garvey's aim to achieve black equality, the longevity of their friendship indicated that there was more to their cooperation than using each other to affect their objectives.

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Garveyite black nationalists, black integrationists, and Virginian white supremacists viewed the inferiority-superiority complex from their perspective vantage points. Individualized experiences in America's racialized society all shaped how these individuals and race-based organizations navigated white supremacy and black equality. As black integrationists and Garveyite black nationalists both looked to dismantle white supremacy by elevating black pride and equality, their opposing strategies hindered their ability to unify. In the process of attempting to persuade blacks to support their respective organizations and agendas, their tactics became deeply rooted in colorism. Despite their best intentions, the espousal of colorism, which raised more intraracial tensions, was ultimately a significant hindrance to the black freedom struggle of the twentieth century.

As both race-based organizations attempted to protect their own agenda and bring about the end of racial discrimination and injustice, both colorism rhetoric and Garveyite black nationalists' alliance with Virginian white supremacists, strengthened rather than weakened

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<sup>322</sup> Hill, et. al., ed., 202, n. 4.

<sup>323</sup> Quoted in Hill, et. al., ed., 169, n. 3.

white supremacy. Colorism imbued more disunity within the black race, making it difficult for either black integrationists or Garveyite black nationalists to obtain an immediate end to white racism. While it is difficult to know for certain who used colorism first in the black equality debates between the two groups, black integrationists' colorism rhetoric and denouncement of Garvey as a race traitor forced Garvey to retaliate in a similar manner. As a result, over time, Garvey expanded upon his methods of colorism which ultimately exacerbated intraracial conflict. In addition, when Garvey chose to put his own interests and his own individual identity before the interests and identity of his racial group by associating with Virginian white supremacists, he substantiated the racial hierarchy within the black race. In the process, Garvey and loyal Garveyite black nationalists validated Virginian white supremacists' discriminatory and unequal laws, the exact laws black integrationists were trying to dismantle. Garvey's actions were both a reflection of his belief in the purity of the races and his determination to carry out his vision of racial separation for black equality.

While on the surface Garvey's actions may seem absurd, a close examination of his activities during the 1920s reveals that alienating members of his own race was not his foremost goal. Rather colorism and aligning with white supremacists was a strategy used by him to achieve black equality and independence. When internal and external forces threatened his vision, Garvey used colorism to scapegoat black integrationists and even Garveyite black nationalists. Those affected by Garvey's colorism-based attacks were the scapegoats Garvey needed to carry forth his vision for the black race. Unfortunately, by placing colorism at the front of his platform, in combination with what many came to understand as a questionable alliance with Virginian white supremacists, he fostered more intraracial conflict than the black unity necessary to obtain black equality in either the U.S. or in Africa.