

The Black Power Pan-Africanist Perspective

By Chinweizu

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The Black race will be exterminated
if it does not build a black superpower in Africa
by the end of this century.

Marcus Garvey and the Black Power movement: Legacies and lessons for contemporary Black Africa (1)

Introduction

To avoid wasting anyone's time, let me make clear who I am not talking to, who I do not want to hear from, for as Confucius said: "There is no point people taking counsel together who follow different ways." (Analects XV: 40)

My audience consists only of those Black Africans who want the Black African people to survive. If you are a black African, but don't much care if the Black African people survive or not, I have nothing to say to or discuss with you. So, don't read on. Just go away.

But if you want the Black African people to survive, with dignity and in security and prosperity, just like the white or yellow peoples of this earth, then welcome! We have vital matters to discuss.

Since white Europeans began raiding Africa in the 15th century for black captives to enslave; since white Arabs invaded Egypt in 640 AD; and indeed ever since white Persians conquered Black Egypt in 525 BC, the cardinal question for Black Africans has been:

How can Black Africans organize to survive in the world, and with security and respect?

That question has remained unaddressed for 25 centuries. We must today face and answer it correctly for the conditions of this 21st century, or we perish.

Pan-Africanism is an ideology made up of the most important ideas that have brought the Black race thus far in our quest for liberation from imperialism and racism, and for the amelioration of our condition in the world; it continues to be the vehicle for Black African hopes and aspirations for autonomy, respect, power and dignity. This ideology is embedded in the thinking of our intellectual progenitors, from Boukman of Haiti to Biko of South Africa. These thinkers include giants like Dessalines, Blyden, Sylvester Williams, Casely-Hayford, DuBois, Garvey, Padmore, Nkrumah, C.L.R. James, Azikiwe, Malcolm X, Aime Cesaire, Cheikh Anta Diop, Cabral, and Nyerere.

There were three main strands of Pan-Africanism in the 20th century: that of DuBois, that of Garvey and that of Nkrumah. These strands each aimed to accomplish Black Africa's emancipation from white domination, but they differed in what they defined as the constituency to be emancipated and in the project through which that emancipation would be pursued. In other words, they differed in their answers to the two key questions: emancipation for whom? And by what means?

For DuBois [1868-1963], the constituency was the Negroes (black peoples) of Africa and the Negro Diaspora in the Americas; and the project was to abolish the color line and socially integrate blacks with whites.

For Garvey [1887-1940], the constituency was all the Negro peoples of the world, wherever they were; and the means to achieve emancipation was by building a Negro

superpower in Africa, an industrial superpower that would be “strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world, and to compel the respect of the nations and races of the earth. . . .”

For Nkrumah [1909-1972], the champion of Continentalism, the constituency was, as in the OAU, the inhabitants of the African continent, Arabs and Negroes together, but without the black Diaspora; and the means to achieve emancipation was by building socialism and integrating the neo-colonial states on the continent into one continental state with a single continental government.

DuBois was a pioneer, with the inevitable limitations in the work of a pioneer. Garvey was a great leap forward from DuBois; and Nkrumah was a great leap backward from both Garvey and DuBois. Why do I say that? DuBois got the constituency right and the project wrong; Garvey got the constituency right and the project right; Nkrumah got the constituency wrong and the project also wrong. But that is a topic for another occasion.

My task today is to present to you the legacy of Marcus Garvey. I shall start with a summary of what he did, and then go into what he bequeathed us, and then what lessons we should learn from him.

[NOTE: all page references are to Amy Jacques Garvey, ed., *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, New York: Atheneum, 1992. With an introduction by Robert A. Hill]

What Garvey did

Between 1910 and 1914, Garvey traveled to investigate, first hand, the condition of Blacks in the Caribbean and Central American countries, as well as in Europe. In his own words, while in London in 1914, after he had traveled through almost half of Europe, Garvey asked:

“Where is the black man’s Government?” “Where is his King and his kingdom?”
 “Where is his President, his country, and his ambassador, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs?” I could not find them, and then I declared, “I will help to make them.” [II:126]

And he set out to help to make them by dramatizing the possibility of Black power in a world dominated everywhere by white power. By his own account, given in 1925 in the USA, he had, between 1914 and 1922, “rous[ed] the Negro’s mind to all the possibilities of the future one way or the other. We did everything that was humanly possible to arouse consciousness in sleeping Negroes all over the country, all over the West Indies and all over the world . . .” [p. lxxvii]

Through the organization he founded, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and its auxiliaries, and through businesses, conventions and parades, Garvey put before the eyes of Negroes the political, economic, military, religious and social possibilities of Black Power. This drama, enacted in the streets of Harlem, New York, stirred the imagination of Negroes around the world. The impact of Garvey’s drama was felt far and wide. He had, in the words of Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. “awakened a race consciousness that made Harlem felt around the world”. [p. xix]

He made his audience imagine things they had never thought of, things they had been brainwashed to regard as impossible for Negroes to do. Of course, he did not build Black Power, but by putting on the stage, as it were, the symbols of a Negro Empire, he triggered a dream and motivated the next generation of Negroes to actualize it.

Garveyism inspired Zik in Nigeria, Nkrumah in Ghana [pp.xxxviii-xlv]. His work was followed and read about in Kenya, Ghana, Namibia, South Africa. It influenced Harry Thuku, an early nationalist in Kenya, some in the ANC in South Africa, and Sam Nujoma's elders in Namibia belonged to the UNIA branches in Namibia. Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam was heavily influenced by Garvey, and Malcolm X was a son of Garveyites. Such men and their followers, in the generations after Garvey, became the disciples and actualizers of Garvey's dramatized dream.

White power, of course, saw danger to itself from the Garvey drama, and astutely sought to kill the dream by discrediting Garvey. But it was too late. The dream was already implanted in the minds of Negroes the world over. Jailing Garvey after his show had been put on was like shutting the stable door after the horse had bolted.

Whereas Garvey only dramatized Black Power, Dessalines had actualized it in Haiti a century earlier. White power had quickly destroyed the Haitian example and tried to eradicate all memory of it. Haiti had to be made to fail, so that white power should be more secure by sustaining the lie that Blacks cannot rule themselves. For the same reason, Egyptology annexed the Black Egypt of the Pharaohs to white civilization. The inspiring example of Garvey was discredited. Likewise, the inspirational potential of Nkrumah's Industrialization program, contained in the Seven-Year Development Plan he launched in 1964—and symbolized by the Volta River Project, with its Akosombo Dam

& Hydroelectric power complex and the Aluminium smelter at Tema—had also to be discredited.

Garvey's Legacy:

I am going to describe three aspects of the Garvey legacy, the things he left behind for us:

- (I) the example of his practice as an institution builder;
- (II) his profound ideas;
- (III) the projects he defined for his successors to implement.

I: His practice as an institution builder:

Garvey was a futuristic, forward looking nation builder who urged us to create our own future. As he put it: “We have a beautiful history, and we shall create another in the future that will astonish the world.”[I, 7]

His work was founded on an unsentimental analysis of our global historical realities.

He prospected for problems that lay in ambush for us in the future, and devised solutions to forestall them: e.g. the problem of the extermination of the black race by the white race.

He was an all-round entrepreneur, a builder of institutions. Here are some of them:

- Political institutions: The UNIA, with its one thousand (992) branches and several million members world wide, and its Annual International Conventions of the

Negro peoples of the World;

- Business institutions: Black Star Line; Universal Publishing House; Negro
Factories
Corporation; the Negro World newspaper; the Liberian rubber plantation
project (that the Liberian Government handed over to Firestone);
 - Social institutions: Black Cross Nurses; The African Orthodox Church; The
Juveniles;
peerage and knighthood honors [II,313];
 - Para-military institutions: Royal African Guards [II 97]; African Motor Corps;
The
Universal African Legion;
 - Colonization project: The “back-to-Africa” project which sought to build four
settlements
in Liberia, starting with a town on the Cavalla River, at a projected cost of
\$2m [II, 380, 390]
 - Educational institutions: School of African Philosophy, Toronto, 1937
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II: His Ideas:

Garvey's great ideas included the following:

1) Race First principle—"We believe in the supreme authority of our race in all things racial." [II, 137]: "You can do no less than being first and always a Negro, and then all else will take care of itself." [African Fundamentalism]

2) Racial privacy and autonomy—"We demand complete control of our social institutions without interference by any alien race or races." [II,140]

"If we live in our own district, let us rule and govern those districts. If we have a majority in our communities, let us run those communities. We form a majority in Africa and we should naturally govern ourselves there." [II, 122];

3) Intellectual autonomy— "We are entitled to our own opinions and not obligated to or bound by the opinions of others." [African Fundamentalism]

4) Self-Reliance— “The UNIA teaches our race self-help and self-reliance . . . in all those things that contribute to human happiness and well-being.” [II, 23]

“I trust that you will so live today as to realize that you are masters of your own destiny, masters of your fate; if there is anything you want in this world, it is for you to strike out with confidence and faith in self and reach for it.” [I, 91];

“A race that is solely dependent upon another for its economic existence sooner or later dies.” [I, 48]

5) Nation building—“The Negro needs a nation and a country of his own, where he can best show evidence of his own ability in the art of human progress.” [II, 23]

“The . . . plan of the UNIA [is] that of creating in Africa a nation and government for the Negro race.” [II, 40]

6) Entrepreneurship— “Why should not Africa give to the world its black Rockefeller, Rothschild and Henry Ford? Now is the opportunity. Now is the chance for every Negro to make every effort toward a commercial, industrial standard that will make us comparable with the successful business men of other races.” [II, 68]

“Go to work! Go to work in the morn of a new creation . . . until you have . . . reached the height of self-progress, and from that pinnacle bestow upon the world a civilization of your own . . .” [II, 103]

7) Industrialization—“the race can only be saved through a solid industrial foundation.” [I, 8]

“Being satisfied to drink the dregs from the cup of human progress will not demonstrate our fitness as a people to exist alongside of others, but when of our own initiative we strike out to build industries, governments, and ultimately empires, then and only then will we as a race prove to our creator and to man in general that we are fit to survive and capable of shaping our own destiny.” [I, 8]

Garvey based his work on a profound analysis of global historical realities, as illustrated by the following doctrines on (A) the features of the world and (B) the traits of the Negro:

(A) Features of the world:

1) **The ways of the white race**—“The attitude of the white race is to subjugate, to exploit, and if necessary exterminate the weaker peoples with whom they come in contact. They subjugate first, if the weaker peoples will stand for it; then exploit, and if they will not stand SUBJUGATION nor EXPLOITATION, the other recourse is EXTERMINATION.” [I, 13]

2) **Propaganda**—“among some of the organized methods used to control the world is the thing known and called PROPAGANDA. Propaganda has done more to defeat the good intentions of races and nations than even open warfare. Propaganda is a method or

medium used by organized peoples to convert others against their will. We of the Negro race are suffering more than any other race in the world from propaganda—Propaganda to destroy our hopes, our ambitions and our confidence in self.” [I, 15]

3) **Force**—“The powers opposed to Negro progress will not be influenced in the slightest by mere verbal protests on our part. . . .Pressure of course may assert itself in other forms, but in the last analysis, whatever influence is brought to bear against the powers opposed to Negro progress must contain the element of FORCE in order to accomplish its purpose, since it is apparent that this is the only element they recognize.” [I,16]

“I pointed out to you that your strongest armament is organization, and not so much big guns and bombshells. Later on we may have to use some of those things, however, because it appears that some people cannot hear a human voice unless something is exploding nearby. Some people sleep too soundly, when it comes to a question of human rights, and you have to touch them up with something more than our ordinary human voice.” [II, 112]

4) **Know your enemy**—“To see your enemy and know him is a part of the complete education of man” [I, 17]

5) **Prejudice**—“Prejudice can be actuated by different reasons. Sometimes the reason is economic, and sometimes political. You can only obstruct it by progress and force.” [I, 18]

“So long as Negroes occupy an inferior position among the races and nations of the world, just so long will others be prejudiced against them, because it will be profitable for them to keep up the system of superiority. But when the Negro by his own initiative lifts himself from his low state to the highest human standard he will be in a position to stop begging and praying, and demand a place that no individual, race or nation will be able to deny him.” [I, 26]

6) **Safeguards**—“Races and peoples are only safeguarded when they are strong enough to protect themselves.” [II, 107]

7) **Power**—“The only protection against INJUSTICE in man is POWER—physical, financial and scientific.” [I, 5]

“Power is the only argument that satisfies man. Except the individual, the race or the nation has POWER that is exclusive, it means that that individual, race or nation will be bound by the will of the other who possesses this great qualification. . . . Man is not satisfied or moved by prayers or petitions, but every man is moved by that power of authority which forces him to do even against his will.” [I, 21, 22]

(B) Weaknesses of the Negro race:

1) **A General lack**—“The race needs men of vision and ability. Men of character and above all men of honesty, and that is so hard to find.” [I, 49]

2) **Traitors at the top**—“The traitor of other races is generally confined to the mediocre or irresponsible individual, but, unfortunately, the traitors among the Negro race are generally to be found among the men highest placed in education and society, the fellows who call themselves leaders.” [I, 29]

3) **Lack of respect for internal authority**— “The Negro in Western civilization . . . has but little, if any, respect for internal racial authority. He cannot be depended upon to carry out an order given by a superior of his own race. . . . This lack of obedience to orders and discipline checkmates the real, worthwhile progress of the race.” [II, 292]

4) **The Intellectuals** —“It is astonishing how disloyal and selfish is the average Negro ‘intellectual’ of the passing generation to his race. . . [He] is the greatest fraud and stumbling block to the real progress of the race. He was educated with the wrong psychology and perspective. . . .[and] intermingling with the whites is their highest ambition.” [II, 286]

5) **The Negro politicians**—“the thoughtless, selfish Negro politician and leader sold the race back into slavery.” [II, 103]

6) **The Negro rich**—“The rich are selfish and foolish, and their primary purpose in life is to ape the whites, and as quickly as possible seek their company with the hope of social absorption, and jumping over the race line.” [II, 88]

7) **Disloyalty of the successful Negro**—“Billions of dollars have been lost to the Negro race within the last fifty years through disloyalty on the part of successful Negroes, who have preferred to give away their fortunes to members of other races, than to bequeath them to worthy institutions and movements of their own to help their own people.” [II, 92]

Such insights into realities provided the basis for Garvey’s prescriptions for solving the problems of the Negro race.

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Garvey's Africa:

It is important to take note of Africa's place in Garvey's ideas. Some have been misrepresenting Garvey's idea of Africa, hijacking him to support Gadhafi's USofAfrica. For example, Prof. Molefi Asante has stated [in an email of March 31, 2007] : "I support the United States of Africa as the vision of Nkrumah, and Garvey before him."

I shall show that Prof. Asante is wrong.

Garvey's was a Pan-Africanism of the Negro race, a Pan-Negroism to which he was unequivocally devoted. I challenge anyone to produce any passage where he could be correctly interpreted as speaking for both the Negroes and the white Arab invaders/settlers and enslavers of Negroes in Africa. Here are a few examples of Garvey's references describing what he wanted to do in Africa.

II, 37: Establishing a nation in Africa for Negroes

II, 39: An African nation for Negroes

II, 40: Creating in Africa a nation and government for Negroes

II, 48: Restoration of Africa to the Negro peoples of the world

II, 49: A national homeland for Negroes in Africa

II, 81: Promotion of a strong and powerful Negro nation in Africa

II, 230: To give the Negro a country of his own in Africa

II, 253: To found and develop a nation for the race in Africa

I submit that none of these can be correctly construed as referring to building in Africa a continental union of Arabs and Negroes, with a continental union government. For Garvey, Africa was the Negro homeland, a place for Negroes to do great things for and by themselves.

Garvey's idea of the Negro—Who he included among Negroes:

“I am a Negro. I make absolutely no apology for being a Negro.” [I, 212]

“We [of the UNIA] are determined to unite the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world for the purpose of building a civilization of their own. And in that effort we desire to bring together the 15,000,000 of the United States, the 180,000,000 in Asia, the West Indies and Central and South America, and the 200,000,000 in Africa. We are looking toward political freedom on the continent of Africa, the land of our fathers.” [II, 95]

“When we speak of 400,000,000 Negroes we mean to include several of the millions of India who are direct offsprings of that ancient African stock that once invaded Asia.” [II, 82]

Not a word anywhere of any Arabs, whether in Africa or Asia! Garvey was exclusively concerned with Negroes and what they should do in Africa; never with the Arabs and the Negroes doing anything together, least of all uniting under one continental government.

III: Garvey's paramount projects:

Garvey had two paramount projects:

1] To help create black governments, presidents, ambassadors, armies, navies, etc.

2] The project of a black superpower in Africa

In the 1920s, Garvey, after diagnosing the global prospect of the Blacks, prescribed the remedy for their problems when he said:

“[T]he Negro peoples of the world should concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa. . . [of] creating for ourselves [there] a political superstate . . . a government, a nation of our own, strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world, and to compel the respect of the nations and races of the earth. . . .” [*P&O*, I:68; II:16; I:52]

Whereas the first project of creating Black governments was achieved world-wide in the second half of the 20th century, beginning with Nkrumah's Ghana in 1957 and concluding with Mandela's South Africa in 1994, the second has not even been attempted.

The challenge of Garvey's example:

Having taken a glimpse at what Garvey did a century ago, what does his example challenge us to do in this century. What lessons must we learn from his example?

Consider the breathtaking range of Garvey's projects: The UNIA with about a thousand branches and millions of members world wide; businesses that ranged from a

steamship company to restaurants and laundromats; colonization projects to build towns in Liberia; a massive rubber plantation project in Liberia; mammoth month-long annual conventions; a church denomination; paramilitary outfits; etc. All in a space of ten brief years!

Garvey tried to do all at once, which is why he is Garvey the Great. And by far the greatest leader of blacks in the 20th century.

I submit that the challenge to Black Africans in the 21st century is to build on Garvey's legacy by following his example, embracing his ideas and implementing his project of a Black superpower in Africa.

We ordinary folks should do whatever bit we can out of the lot; but we must form a movement that sees to it that every dimension of the nation building/race uplifting project he pioneered is carried out.

I submit that what is needed for the 21st century is *a new Pan-Africanism* with two paramount features inspired by Garvey's legacy:

[a] a Pan-Africanism that can cure Black Africa of the weakness and powerlessness that made slavery, colonialism and racism possible; a powerlessness that has today exposed us to extermination—as through the AIDS bomb and other biological weapons of mass destruction that target only people with black skin; and through destroying our food security and autonomy by obliging us to use GM (genetically modified) seeds; and through the policies of impoverishment imposed by the IMF-World Bank-WTO regimen.

[b] a Pan-Africanism that addresses the everyday problems of the Black African masses, at home and abroad.

I submit that we don't need any brand of Pan-Africanism that lacks these two features, for it would not help Black Africans to regain their dignity or to physically survive.

Lessons from Garvey for the new Pan-Africanism:

In building a new mass-oriented Pan-Africanism shaped by Garvey's black superpower project, we would do well to apply the following lessons from Garvey's arsenal of methods and ideas.

- 1) We should thoroughly study the world and proceed to action from a fundamental and comprehensive analysis of our global historical realities.
- 2) We should end our ancestral habit of not discerning when danger looms; and form a habit of prospecting for future dangers and problems and providing solutions well ahead of their arrival on our doorsteps.
- 3) We should insist on a monoracial, Pan-Negro constituency.
- 4) We should insist, in all things, on race consciousness, racial self-reliance and racial autonomy.
- 5) We should take full responsibility for our survival, today, tomorrow and the most distant future—Garvey was concerned about our situation five hundred years into the future.

The mother of all problems in Black Africa: the lack of a strong core state:

Before I go on to outline a 21st century upgrade of Garvey's Pan-Negroism, let me begin by considering the paramount problems Garveyism set out to solve, problems that are still very much with us.

Back in 1922, Garvey correctly articulated what he called the "True Solution to the Negro Problem" when he said:

"We are determined to solve our own problem, by redeeming our Motherland Africa from the hands of alien exploiters, and found there a government, a nation of our own, strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world, and to compel the respect of the nations and races of the earth."
[P&O, I 52]

That is a succinct statement of the solution to the fundamental problem that has plagued Black Africa ever since the Black Egypt of the Pharaohs was conquered by white invaders 2,500 years ago! It is the solution to the mother of all problems of Black Africa, the absence of a strong core state. But that solution, though so clearly articulated, has been ignored for the past 50 years during which it could and should have been implemented.

In some other elaborations of his solution, Garvey spoke of the need to create "for ourselves a political *superstate*" [II, 16]

To what problems of the Negro was this superstate, this strong core state, the solution? These were the problems of (a) the sufferings and humiliations of the Negroes and (b) the prospect of their extermination by the white race. Garvey summarized them:
(a) About the first problem, Garvey said:

“Do they lynch Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans or Japanese? No. And Why? Because these people are represented by great governments, mighty nations and empires, strongly organized. Yes, and ever ready to shed the last drop of blood and spend the last penny in the national treasury to protect the honor and integrity of a citizen outraged anywhere.” [I, 52]

Some of us may think that the lynching problem of a century ago is over. It is not. Just remember Jena! There are still too many cases of blacks being shot with impunity by police in every part of the world, of blacks being economically lynched through racial profiling and other illegalities; of judicial lynching whereby blacks are disproportionately jailed for offenses that blacks and whites commit. All over the world, black lives are still regarded as valueless. Black people are still victims everywhere in the world. They remain a people marked out for destruction.

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(b) About the second problem, Garvey said:

“The Negro is dying out . . . There is only one thing to save the Negro, and that is an immediate realization of his own responsibilities. Unfortunately we are the most careless and indifferent people in the world! We are shiftless and irresponsible . . . It is strange to hear a Negro leader speak in this strain, as the usual course is flattery, but I would not flatter you to save my own life and that of my own family. There is no value in flattery. . . . Must I flatter you when I find all other peoples preparing themselves for the struggle to survive, and you still smiling, eating, dancing, drinking and sleeping away your time, as if yesterday were the beginning of the age of pleasure? I would rather be dead than be a member of your race without thought of the morrow, for it portends evil to him that thinketh not. Because I cannot flatter you I am here to tell, emphatically, that if we do not seriously reorganize ourselves as a people and face the world with a program of African nationalism our days in civilization are numbered, and it will be only a question of time when the Negro will be as completely and

complacently dead as the North American Indian, or the Australian Bushman.
[II:101-102] . . .

“If we sit supinely by and allow the great white race to lift itself in numbers and in power, it will mean that in another five hundred years this full grown race of white men will in turn exterminate the weaker race of black men for the purpose of finding enough room on this limited mundane sphere to accommodate that race which will have numerically multiplied itself into many billions. This is the danger point. What will become of the Negro in another five hundred years if he does not organize now to develop and to protect himself? The answer is that he will be exterminated for the purpose of making room for the other races that will be strong enough to hold their own against the opposition of all and sundry.” [I, 66]

Three reasons for building Black Power today:

That was how Garvey, looking five hundred years ahead, characterized our vital problem a century ago. How can it be described today? I would put it like this:

We have three types of problems today:

- (a) the daily attacks and humiliations we suffer at the hands of racists;
- (b) the poverty and misery of the Black African masses; and
- (c) our extermination that is already in process today. I must emphasize that **the future is not long for Black Africans, if we continue with our foolishness in not recognizing that our extermination is already in process—as through AIDS and other biowarfare weapons that target only black-skinned people; ethnic cleansing as in Darfur; the destruction of our economies by IMF/World Bank/ WTO policies;**

the destruction of our food autonomy through GM foods; enemy-induced wars and culturecide; etc.

These are the problems that Pan-Africanism must offer to solve and be able to solve for Blacks if it is to have any value for us, if it is to deserve any claim on our allegiance. If we built black power we would solve all three problems and guarantee our survival in dignity and prosperity. Who would dare to assault any black-skinned person on the streets of Jena or Munich or Kiev or Libya if the whole world knew that a black superpower was watching out, and would and could punish the attack? Black Africans would cease to be poor and miserable if their countries produced industrial and agricultural abundance. And all thought of exterminating blacks would perish if our enemies knew they would be severely punished, militarily and economically, for merely entertaining the idea. So, those are the three reasons why we must build a Black Superpower in Africa today. I would, therefore, say that

The problem of the 21st century is the problem of Black African power: how to build it, and enough of it to stop the extermination of Blacks that is now in process, and to compel the respect of all humanity and guarantee the survival, dignity and sovereign autonomy of Pan-Africa.

Let me first show how Garvey's superstate project, if upgraded and implemented, would supply the power that we sorely need. Then I will go a little bit into why so vital a project has not been undertaken for 50 years.

What the project of building a Black superpower can do for our society.

Let me point out how a leadership that understands the need to build a Black superpower, and is committed to building it, would have to transform our society and give us all a much better life.

Like Garvey told us a century ago: “the race can only be saved through a solid industrial foundation.”[I, 8] And he set up the Negro Factories Corporation to show the way. Now, a superpower of today has to be industrialized. It must build its own factories to produce everything from cups to computers, from towels to tanks, from books to atom bombs, from medicines to machine guns, from spoons to satellites. Such is the currency of national and racial power in this age.

If Black Africans are to live in safety and be respected, we must make our own medicines, light bulbs, pots and pans; and build our own kitchen utensils, electrical appliances, generators, computers, rockets, tanks, aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, atomic bombs, ICBMs, satellites, etc. And a program of industrialization to enable us to make these things requires all manner of things that would transform the lives of our population.

Let’s consider the case of Nigeria. What are some of the woes that afflict Nigerians, that Nigerians endlessly complain about after five decades of deliberately and foolishly evading industrialization? Nigerians routinely complain of NEPA (erratic electric power), bad roads, bad system of transportation, poor housing, poor medical facilities, filthy streets and neighborhoods, poor healthcare systems, decayed education system, anarchy on the roads, a political leadership incurably addicted to corruption, lootocracy, etc. etc. What impact would a program of industrialization have on these ills?

The hub of an industrial society is its set of factories. These must be daily fed with raw materials, energy, finances, machines and skilled workers; their output must be evacuated and transported to the markets for consumers to buy. This means that, on a daily basis, enough and steady electrical power must be made available (a factory town cannot afford erratic NEPA outages, brown-outs, burn-outs, surges, etc. or the machines will be breaking down, making the workers idle and causing financial losses to the factory proprietors, whether these be private investors or the state). The machines must be attended each working day, from opening time to closing time, (hence the workers must all get to their workstations on time so there will be the full complement of hands to service the machines once switched on).

If hundreds of thousands of workers must be at their jobs by say, 8 am, there must be an efficient public transport system to get them there on time from their homes, preferably in dormitory suburbs. And if they are to do this five working days a week, the transport system must work efficiently every day. And since the machines must all be fully manned at any time, worker absenteeism cannot be tolerated. Hence it becomes important to the proprietors that workers be seldom off work because of illness or accidents. Hence adequate health facilities must be available in the factory town. This also means that public health and hygiene become the concern of the proprietors and the town authorities. Hence filthy streets and neighborhoods would be discouraged by factory owners and city authorities alike.

Since factories must have skilled and disciplined workers, the education system would have to be sound. The products of all schools would have to know their stuff. Ill-trained and incompetent holders of fake certificates would be unacceptable in factory and

society. And campus gangsters who disrupt work and life on campuses would have to be exterminated. So too exam malpractices which make the certificates inauthentic and worthless.

And in-as-much as the factories will need to draw raw materials from the farms, they will stimulate agriculture. In fact, it is the inputs from industrialization, and the demands from industrialization that can galvanize our agriculture, and so increase employment in the rural areas, thereby reducing the flight of the rural poor to the urban areas. Jobs galore; jobs in the towns, jobs in the villages, no hungry and angry desperados (alias area-boys, yan iska or bayeye), no plague of armed robbers, no shanty towns. Safety in the streets. This is just an indication of how the requirements of its factories would transform a factory town.

The Black Power Pan-Africanist Perspective

By Chinweizu

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The Black race will be exterminated
if it does not build a black superpower in Africa
by the end of this century.

Marcus Garvey and the Black Power movement: Legacies and lessons for contemporary Black Africa (5)

Now imagine a country whose life is shaped and disciplined by tens of thousands of industrial factories. There are many such. They are the developed countries to which members of the Nigerian elite escape in order to enjoy their loot while perversely keeping Nigeria in disorder and poverty.

Such is the transformative potential of the project of industrialization. By the way, what is the transformative potential of the OAU or AU or the USofAfrica? Zero! And what is the transformative potential of racial integration? Again, zero!! We can racially or politically integrate all the countries of the African continent, or even of Black Africa, and nothing will improve for us. We can build all the infrastructure we want; we can meet all the MDGs and employ all the neo-liberal NEPAD devices and meet the targets of the African Peer Review Mechanism and still leave our economies and societies in the rut of maldevelopment. (By the way, do you know what the acronyms NEPAD and MDG really stand for? I'll tell you: NEPAD is the New European Program for Africa's Demise; and to see what MDG means, you have to reverse the order of the letters to GDM, which means Goals that will prevent Development in this Millennium). Consider the OAU, AU, USofAfrica, racial integration, NEPAD, MDGs, infrastructure building, and all that

jazz—such will not pull Black Africa out of its social decay, poverty and powerlessness. That's all like building a car with a fine body, but without an engine.

Industrialization, I submit, is the engine missing from our economies and societies, and we should dedicate ourselves to industrialization if we want to be prosperous and respected, and if we don't want to perish. Of course we shall, in due course, together work out the details of the kind of industrialization program we need and the modalities for accomplishing it, so as to optimally satisfy our collective security requirements as well as conform to our cultural, social, economic and ecological needs; but my task here is simply to get across the point that *industrialization is absolutely necessary, is the priority area, if we are to have any future at all.*

Now, to the obvious and key question: where will the political will be found to create such a society in Black Africa? The answer is **FEAR**. If a leadership is aware of the dangers from lagging behind in the competition between the powers in the world, if it understands that it will itself be defeated and exterminated by the more industrially powerful societies, it will find the will to undertake such a transformation of its society. That was how Japan, Russia, China, found the political will to industrialize. So too the rival countries of Europe since the late 18th century.

So, if our leadership gets to appreciate Garvey's point about the danger of us all being exterminated by the more powerful races who desire to take our land and resources for themselves, it is *almost guaranteed* that they will find the political will to build an industrialized superpower in Black Africa.

Let me emphasize: The political will to industrialize and become a great power comes from a healthy *fear of being conquered, dishonored, oppressed, enslaved and*

exterminated through losing a war. This was made explicit in the case of the Soviet Union when *in February 1931, Stalin predicted and warned his people: “We are 50 or 100 years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this lag in 10 years. Either we do it or they crush us.”* And he drove his people with the proverbial whip and scorpion, and forced them to industrialize at a desperate pace. And Russia industrialized in 10 years flat! Which was just in time to be ready when Hitler unleashed his armies on Russia in June 1941.

In the case of Japan, the Japanese spirit felt deeply dishonored in 1853 by Commodore Perry’s breach of their self-imposed isolation, and by the arrogance of the American and European intruders. And they feared they would be colonized and oppressed by the white world powers. To redeem their honor and avoid such a detested fate, they found the political will to industrialize and turn Japan into a world power of the first rank during the Meiji era in the second half of the 19th century.

In the case of China, it was the fear, in 1919, of China being carved up by the European powers that gave Mao’s generation the will to wage a thirty-year civil war against the Chinese compradors, and conquer China by 1949, and then to industrialize it into a nuclear power by 1964.

The motivation was the same for Britain, France, Germany and the other members of the concert of Europe. For centuries, the fear of losing any of the wars between them motivated each to build up its power. None wanted to be defeated and lose its sovereignty.

In the 19th century, nearly every Black African polity went to war to prevent loss of sovereignty to the invading Europeans. Though massively outgunned, they still fought.

Against larger armies using artillery, maxim guns, etc., they fought even with spears and arrows and cutlasses. It was “sovereignty or death” as it were! Given that quite natural reaction of our ancestors, why are we behaving differently now? Why did I say “*it is almost guaranteed* that they will find the political will to build an industrialized superpower in Black Africa”? Why didn’t I say “it is guaranteed”?

It could well be that the Black comprador elites in Africa today have degenerated from the level of humanity displayed by their ancestors, and have become subhuman in their preference to stomach insults and dishonor gladly; that they are spineless enough to suffer humiliation with equanimity; that they are so debased that they can contemplate without indignation the prospect of the extermination of the black race; that they lack human self-respect, lack a sense of dishonor, and are quite happy to live in a state of shame! Otherwise, why have they put up with the disgrace of being last in everything laudable on earth? Why are they tolerating gross misgovernment, chronic maldevelopment and a disgraceful powerlessness?

It is quite possible that our Black comprador rulers are too infantile to take responsibility for the collective security of Black people; too infantile or comatose to take an interest in the processes of extermination that have already been unleashed on us by our European and Arab enemies; too infantile to comprehend the abundant evidence of our extermination; too deranged to understand that the survival of a people cannot and should not be left to happenstance or to the enemy’s goodwill.

Frankly speaking, our leaders are like crawling babies who are eating dirt and playing in a sandpit without knowing they are in the middle of a battlefield. All they are concerned with is stuffing their mouths and being entertained by the booming sounds of

artillery, the rat-a-tat-tat of machine gun fire, the spectacle of explosions and laser guns lighting up the night sky. Being breast-feeding infants well below the age of reason, and too young to be frightened, thinking about their safety is well beyond their ability.

The point is that if fear of extermination will not cause our comprador elites to undertake industrialization, then nothing will get them to do it. In which case Black Africa is doomed and finished.

But if we have any sense of race honor, and if we wish to physically survive, we need a new Pan-Africanism, a Pan-Africanism with a clearly articulated and consistent set of doctrines, a Pan-Africanism with correct objectives and strategy, a Pan-Africanism that is committed to building a Black superpower in Africa. Such a Pan-Africanism will have two vital merits:

[a] by creating industrial power, it would cure Black Africa of the weakness and powerlessness that made possible slavery, colonialism, racism, and our ongoing extermination;

[b] by seeking to meet the requirements for industrial power, it would address the problems of the everyday life of the Black African masses, and eliminate poverty.

Now, why has this vital project of building a Black industrial superpower in Africa not been undertaken thus far? There are five main reasons. First, it has not been undertaken primarily because for 50 years we blindly followed Nkrumah and Padmore who had shunted the train of Pan-Africanism unto the wrong tracks, the Afro-Arab OAU/USofAfrica tracks that have led us nowhere but towards the dungeons of Arab colonialism. Their obsession with building continental unity through a continental

government has diverted us from the correct task of building a Black African industrial superpower.

We need to note that the OAU/AU Pan-Africanism of the past 50 years failed to meet our most vital need for the Black power that would ensure our dignity and physical survival. Nor can its current devices, like NEPAD, MDG, and USofAfrica do the job. These are all diversionary nonsense sold to us by our enemies to serve their own anti-Black African interests.

Secondly, our leaders have been indulging in delusions. Some said they were building socialism; all claimed they were pursuing development; all claimed they were engaged in nation building. But, in reality, all were simply addicted to the conspicuous consumption of psycholollipops like gold beds, private jets, mansions in Europe and Dubai, and Swiss bank accounts. So addicted are they to consumania that they can spare no thought for the dignity and survival of the race.

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Thirdly, we are saddled with a comprador elite that is in mental slavery to Arabs and Europeans; a Black elite for whom life without white mentors and white approval is too terrifying to be thinkable; a comprador elite that is too terrified or stupid to admit that Arabs and Europeans have been our mortal enemies for centuries; a comprador elite that is too comatose to independently analyze our situation, diagnose our problems and think up our own solutions to them.

Fourthly, Black Africa's elite is so scatterbrained that some resist evidence of the danger of our extermination out of the naïve and false belief that this is the "modern world" and it won't be allowed by "world opinion"; and some stupidly trust in Jehovah or Allah, the gods of our white enemies, to ensure that Blacks are not wiped out.

Fifthly, our leadership is infantile. They are psychologically retarded babies in adult-sized bodies. Never having been taught their true history, they are like those adults who have regressed to the mental state of babies after being hypnotically deprived of the memory of their past. The babyish mentality of our elites prevents them from

understanding the danger in which we are. Like babies at the breast, we cannot recognize the abundant evidence of the grave threats to our survival.

We suffer from a profound lack of knowledge of world and Black African history, and we exhibit complete ignorance of the devious ways of the world; and since we do not know or value the history we need to learn from to survive, we don't know that many peoples have been killed off by their enemies, and we don't know that a people's survival is not automatic but has to be ensured by foresight, forward planning and vigorous action. Since babies are unable to monitor their environment to discover what dangers the future holds for them, the security of a society cannot be entrusted to its babies, no matter how big in body they are.

Let me emphasize that a village is doomed which leaves its security in the hands of its breast-feeding babies. Breast-feeding babies are only concerned about their food and body comfort. The habit of constant reconnaissance is not for babies. Our comprador elites are entirely like breast-feeding babies. They cannot therefore discern and confront and defeat the forces orchestrating our extermination.

Which is why we are today in the situation which Garvey projected we would get to in 500 years; we are in the situation in which the Native Americans of the USA found themselves in the 19th century, and the Black Australians were in the 19th century.

What is to be done?

First of all, we need to learn our true, Afrocentric history. This requires a profound reform of the education system, and especially reform of the history curriculum. This is where we must begin. A cure to the babyish mentality of our comprador elites has to begin with psychotherapy, with a therapeutic education curriculum that would implant

in our leaders at all levels a patriotic spirit and a collective security consciousness and teach them the social responsibilities of leadership. We must look to psychotherapy for further remedies.

Secondly, for half a century we have had a Pan-Africanism that, due to ignorance or lack of appropriate information about Black Africa's historical, sociological, cultural and security realities, is mostly disconnected from and unresponsive to the Black African peoples' problems, aspirations and interests. The time is overdue for the demise of that kind of Pan-Africanism.

I submit that the relevant Pan-Africanism for the 21st century must be based on the Garvey Pan-Negroism that was abandoned since 1958. Pan-Negroism must be reinstated and upgraded and its projects quickly accomplished if the Black race is to survive till the end of this 21st century.

We do not need to politically integrate or federate all the Black African neo-colonial states on the African continent to produce a Black African superstate that can protect all Black Africans wherever they are on earth.

To implement the Garvey idea, what we need, above all, is just *one* Black African country, big and industrialized enough, and therefore powerful enough to be of G-8 rank, a country that could serve as the core state—protector and leader—of Global Black Africa.

We also need a Black African League that shall be the collective security organization of Global Black Africa, our equivalent of NATO and the defunct Warsaw Pact. These are the two things we need to implement in this 21st century to meet the Garvey requirement for Black African survival.

For building a Black African superpower, as urged by Garvey, an ECOWAS or SADC Federation, or some equivalent in East or Central Africa is more than enough. Just one of them, if integrated and industrialized by 2060, would meet the need. ECOWAS or SADC is big enough in territorial size, population and resource endowment to become an industrialized world power *provided* its neo-colonial character is eliminated.

Let us look at the numbers:

Country	AREA in sq. km	Population in 1993
ECOWAS	6.5m	185m
SADC	7m	130m
Brazil	8.5m	156m
USA	9.5m	256m
Russia	17.1m	148m
India	3.3m	900m
China	9.6m	1.2b
EU	2.4m	350m

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ECOWAS, with 16 states, 6.5m sq. km and nearly 200m population, or SADC, with 11 states, 7m sq km and some 130m population, would be a country of sub-continental size, and in the megastate league, in territory and population and resources, to which belong the USA—with 9m sq. km and some 260m people; Brazil—with 8.5m sq. km. and 156m people; and Russia, India, etc. ECOWAS or SADC, if properly integrated, industrialized, and thoroughly decolonized, would be a megastate of the type Black Africa needs. So why don't we get on with the task of building each into a power of G-8 rank?

It is by building Garvey's Negro superstate in Africa that the redemption of Negroes will be accomplished. Let me translate that into today's language: It is by building a Black superpower in Africa that the Black race will redeem itself from its backwardness and weakness and poverty, and from racism and the contempt of the rest of humanity.

To avoid the integrationism and lack of attention to racial survival, racial security and racial power-building that DuBois and Nkrumah exhibited, it is important for the new Pan-Africanism to be given a name that reflects its focus on power for an exclusively Black African constituency. I therefore propose we call it BLACK POWER PAN-
AFRICANISM. That will also distinguish it from the feckless continentalist, integrationist OAU/AU variety of the last 50 years.

Conclusion:

It is unfortunate that Garvey's statement of the solution to our paramount problem is not as well known as Du Bois' claim that "the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line." Here is Garvey again:

“[T]he Negro peoples of the world should concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa. . . [of] creating for ourselves [there] a political superstate . . . a government, a nation of our own, strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world, and to compel the respect of the nations and races of the earth. . . .” [P&O, I:68; II:16; I:52]

We should make this Garvey statement the central mantra of Pan Africanism from here on, as it should have been for the last 80 years. It is the solution to the problem of the color line and much else besides, since *the individual members of two cohabiting races cannot be socially equal if their races are grossly unequal in power*—a simple fact that escaped our learned Dr Du Bois but did not escape Garvey.

Finally, I propose the following slogans for this revitalized Pan-Africanism:

[a] Black Africa for Black Africans, at home and abroad

[b] The problem of the 21st century is the problem of Black African power: how to build it, and enough of it to stop the extermination of Blacks that is now in process, and to compel the respect of all humanity and guarantee the survival, dignity and sovereign autonomy of Pan-Africa.

[c] *Build ye first the kingdom of collective security, and you can, within its ramparts, achieve all your other desires!*

[d] Build a Black superpower in Africa and build also a Black African League as the collective security organ of the Black race.

[e] Black Africa! Industrialize or perish!!

And the last word, Garvey's solution once again:

[f] “[T]he Negro peoples of the world should concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa. . . [of] creating for ourselves [there] a political superstate . . . a government, a nation of our own, strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world, and to compel the respect of the nations and races of the earth. . . .” [*P&O*, I:68; II:16; I:52]

Finally, I recommend that every Black African should own a copy of Marcus Garvey's *Philosophy and Opinions*, and read it every day, the way you read your Bible or Koran.
