

Transcript of "Explanation of the Objects of the UNIA" by Marcus Garvey (July 1921)

Fellow citizens of Africa, I greet you in the name of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League of the World. You may ask, what organization is that? It is for me to inform you that the Universal Negro Improvement Association is an organization that seeks to unite into one solid body the 400 million Negroes of the world; to link up the 50 million Negroes of the United States of America, with the 20 million Negroes of the West Indies, the 40 million Negroes of South and Central America with the 280 million Negroes of Africa, for the purpose of bettering our industrial, commercial, educational, social and political conditions.

As you are aware, the world in which we live today is divided into separate race groups and different nationalities. Each race and each nationality is endeavoring to work out its own destiny to the exclusion of other races and other nationalities. We hear the cry of England for the Englishman, of France for the Frenchman, of Germany for the Germans, of Ireland for the Irish, of Palestine for the Jews, of Japan for the Japanese, of China for the Chinese.

We of the Universal Negro Improvement Association are raising the cry of Africa for the Africans, those at home and those abroad. There are 400 million Africans in the world who have Negro blood coursing through their veins. And we believe that the time has come to unite these 400 million people for the one common purpose of bettering their condition.

The great problem of the Negro for the last 500 years has been that of disunity. No one or no organization ever took the lead in uniting the Negro race, but within the last four years the Universal Negro Improvement Association has worked wonders in bringing together in one fold four million organized Negroes who are scattered in all parts of the world, being in the 48 states of the American union, all the West Indian Islands, and the countries of South and Central America and Africa. These 40 million people are working to convert the rest of the 400 million scattered all over the world and it is for this purpose that we are asking you to join our ranks and to do the best you can to help us to bring about an emancipated race.

If anything praiseworthy is to be done, it must be done through unity. And it is for that reason that the Universal Negro Improvement Association calls upon every Negro in the United States to rally to its standard. We want to unite the Negro race in this country. We want every Negro to work for one common object, that of building a nation of his own on the great continent of Africa. That all Negroes all over the world are working for the establishment of a government in Africa means that it will be realized in another few years.

We want the moral and financial support of every Negro to make the dream a possibility. Already this organization has established itself in Liberia, West Africa, and has

endeavored to do all that's possible to develop that Negro country to become a great industrial and commercial commonwealth.

Pioneers have been sent by this organization to Liberia and they are now laying the foundation upon which the 400 million Negroes of the world will build. If you believe that the Negro has a soul, if you believe that the Negro is a man, if you believe the Negro was endowed with the senses commonly given to other men by the Creator, then you must acknowledge that what other men have done, Negroes can do. We want to build up cities, nations, governments, industries of our own in Africa, so that we will be able to have the chance to rise from the lowest to the highest positions in the African commonwealth.

SOURCE: Marcus Garvey, "Explanation of the Objects of the Universal Negro Improvement Association," *Look Up, You Might Race! Two Speeches by Marcus Garvey*, July 1921.