



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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Celebrating Marcus Garvey

Aug. 17 will mark the 125th birthday of the most formidable Pan Africanist leader the world has ever known, the Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey. And, 2012 is the 50th Anniversary of Jamaica's independence. What better time to renew the call for Marcus Garvey's birthday to be proclaimed Universal African Flag Day as an act of Kujichagulia/Self-Determination? This is not a new call. For years I have attempted to make the case that people of African descent should take at least one day to proudly and massively display the flag Marcus Garvey bequeathed to African people as one of his greatest gifts.

Speaking of "audacity of hope," Marcus Garvey burst upon the global scene at a time when the vast majority of Africans suffered under the boot of white supremacy either through ruthless, exploitative and humiliating forms of European colonialism or segregation/apartheid in the Diaspora. As his life's commitment, the Jamaican-born national was determined to use his extraordinary gifts as a visionary, orator and organizer to uplift the African race and propel Black people to their rightful place in the forefront of civilization. To achieve his goal, however, he had to find a way to "keep hope alive." One of Garvey's greatest gifts was his keen appreciation of the role that sym-

WORLD 21ST CENTURY

Dr. Ron Daniels

bols play in inspiring, uplifting and motivating disadvantaged and oppressed people. There was hardly a more daunting challenge than finding a way to give hope to the ethnically disparate and virtually universally despised sons and daughters of Africa. Never one to be discouraged by the difficulty of the task, Garvey boldly declared

The red, black and green flag was not only an answer to the white supremacists, it was intended to be a meaningful cultural-historical symbol

that he would give Black people a vision of a "government," men of "big affairs and a "flag!"

The master organizer built the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) into the largest mass organization of Africans in history, with hundreds of chapters in the U.S., Canada, Central and South America, Europe and Africa. The genius of the UNIA was that Garvey organized it as a virtual government in waiting with social, economic, political and military structures and a chain of command of offi-

cials with the President General at the top. But, Garvey did more than conceive of structures for an African government, he created a National Hymn, rituals and ceremonies and most importantly a Flag as critical ingredients in his formula for inspiring, uplifting and unifying the African peoples of the world. Indeed, in part Garvey was responding to a popular white Supremacist song of the era "Every Race Has a Flag but the Coon." This was no laughing matter for Garvey who said: "Show

suffering of African people, the Black for the Color and Culture of African people and Green for the land we will reclaim to build our nation. We believe this interpretation captures the essence of Garvey's definition of the meaning of the flag. Over time, particularly during the rise of Black consciousness, Black Power and Black Nationalism in the 60s, the flag became closely associated with the Black Liberation Movement in the U.S. But, Garvey never intended the Flag to be for Africans in America exclusively. His goal was to create a substantive unifying symbol for Africans everywhere, an overarching symbol of the power, potential and possibilities of Pan Africanism!

In the red, black and green African people have a universal flag and Africans everywhere should understand its origins, meaning and significance and display it or the colors with cultural, political pride and conviction. At a time when Africans in America are in the throes of a State of Emergency and our sisters and brothers on the Continent are still afflicted by neo-colonialism, intensified exploitation and internal divisions, there is an urgent need for a cultural offensive to inspire Black people, particularly young people to understand the vision of Marcus

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Ryan: A Nightmare for Poor and Minorities

In an apparent off the cuff remark, Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan gushed that he thought it was a "cool thing" that an African-American was president. But Ryan's rapture with President Obama didn't last past the first sentence. In the next breath he quickly added that he didn't like much else about Obama. The much else was how Obama has spent on health, education and job development programs that would help the poor and minorities. That spending has been fiscal heresy for Ryan.

His savage cost cutting plan is well-known. He'd cut tens of billions from Medicaid and Medicare, and more than a trillion from everything from food stamps to welfare over the next decade. The Ryan slash and burn plan mercifully hasn't happened during his tenure as House Budget Committee chair. But as Vice President Ryan, he would be in a commanding position to make his cost cutting plan a nightmare come true for the poor and minorities.

The key to that is winning the vice-presidency. In distant times past, the vice-presidency was little more than a ceremonial, title-laden position that carried little authority, and almost no power to make, shape or change public policy. Presidential candidates picked vice-presidents mostly to shore up their perceived political or ideological weakness, be it sectionalism, inexperience, image, or on domestic or foreign policy expertise. The VP was there to balance a ticket, and help a presidential con-



THE LAST WORD

Earl Ofari Hutchinson

tender win, and nothing more. But that was in the distant past.

The vice presidential pick has morphed into a high stakes game in the evolution of presidential politics. The VP is now much more than just a standard dressing up of the presidential ticket. He or she must be able to actually help a presidential candidate win first

enough to give Reagan a little edge with moderate Republicans. But the vice-president has become much more than that.

A vice president is now directly involved in discussing, implementing and even helping to formulate domestic and foreign policy. Vice-Presidents chair presidential committees and commissions. They are consulted and make recommendations on major policy decisions and changes. They are often the hit men on controversial policy issues and during elections they are on the campaign trail to say what the president often can't say. Clinton's VP Al Gore and Bush's VP Dick Cheney

policy decisions involving spending slashes, almost all of it involving crucial domestic programs.

This would come at the worst possible time for the poor and minorities. The poor are not only getting poorer, they are also more numerous than any time in the last half-century and have slipped even further behind in wealth and income disparities. Other reports repeatedly confirm that a disproportionate number of the poor are blacks and Hispanics. The single biggest reason for their plunge downward is the relentless pecking away at federal spending on enhancement programs in health care, education, job and skills training, and the massive cutbacks and downsizing in the public employment sector.

This has been coupled with a colossal leap in the fortunes of the rich and major corporations. Their wealth bounty has soared through a benign and porous tax and regulatory system that has given the taxpayer company store away to them. The Ryan plan would be a dream come true for them. It would shove out even more of the tax cut bounty to the wealthiest, and do absolutely nothing to insure that any of the tax cut giveaway go toward investment in new job creation. The cuts would leave the tattered safety net for the poor in even greater tatters. It doesn't take a soothsayer to predict that the number of poor will skyrocket even more under the Ryan plan.

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and foremost, or at worse not help him lose. There were times in past elections when VPs have made a difference. Lyndon Johnson in 1960 is the textbook example of that. He brought legislative savvy, he was a Southerner then still in good stead, and he could deliver two or three Deep South states. He did his job. Bush Sr. also helped Reagan in 1980. He brought experience, insider connections, and as a transplanted Southerner, the regional balance that Reagan needed. And he was moderate

played the role of advisor and point man on key issues. Obama VP Joe Biden plays the same role. In any case, the VP is now often right in the center of presidential politics and the national political debate.

Ryan would be even more at the center of that debate and decision making. He was picked in large part not to balance the Romney ticket, but because of his budget hammering big stick. A Romney White House will not only listen to him, but rely heavily on him on

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