

September 1, 2016

ADDRESS

Re: Posthumous Presidential Pardon of Marcus Garvey to President Obama

Dear NAME:

On August 17, 2016, the 129th birthday of Marcus Garvey, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) filed a Posthumous Petition for the Presidential Pardon of Marcus Garvey to President Obama.

Marcus Garvey founded the UNIA in 1914, which grew to become the largest Black organization in history; at its peak the UNIA had over six million members in forty different nations with 1,100 chapters. Garvey and the UNIA led an organized Pan-African international freedom movement to establish Black social and political freedom, economic independence, self-determination and unity. Garvey fueled notions of civil rights and human dignity in the United States and decolonization efforts in Africa.

Marcus Garvey came to the United States at a time when racial tension in our nation ran high, and the government systemically persecuted Black leadership conducting a series of political lynchings to disempower advocates of equal rights including Garvey. In November 1919, the BOI (currently the FBI) began a formal investigation into Garvey, hiring its first five African-American agents to infiltrate and spy on the UNIA. On October 11, 1919, J. Edgar Hoover, head of the BOI's General Intelligence Division wrote a letter regarding Garvey: "Unfortunately...he has not yet violated any federal law whereby he could be proceeded against on the grounds of being an undesirable alien, from the point of view of deportation." By 1922, Garvey was charged and convicted with a single count of mail fraud based on evidence of an empty envelope by a Federal court. Benny Dancy, the key witness and intended recipient of the envelope, testified that he could not remember what the envelope contained or if he ever read its contents. Garvey maintained his innocence and appealed the decision to the Supreme Court, and ultimately filed a Petition for a Presidential Pardon to Calvin Coolidge. President Coolidge issued a commutation of his sentence and deported him to Jamaica, completing the FBI's plan.

Garvey changed the course of history for Africans and descendants of the African diaspora, inspiring leaders including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., credited Garvey with leading the first Black mass movement and restoring dignity and personhood to Black Americans. The first President of post-colonial Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe, praised Garvey for having been: "one of the most far-sighted persons of African descent to walk upon God's earth;" concluding that, "[w]ith Garveyism flying the banner of African redemption...the sacred cause will continue to advance in spite of handicaps. Yesterday Africa was asleep. Today Africa is awake, thanks to Garveyism..." Or as Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of post-colonial Ghana stated: "[Garvey] raised the banner of African liberation on three continents." Marcus Garvey's posthumous contributions to humanity warrant his Posthumous Presidential Pardon.

In Marcus Garvey's own words in his Petition for Presidential Pardon to Calvin Coolidge, "[I]t is my belief that the President will by clemency, remedy a wrong inflicted upon one because of his color and place of birth and effort to help his race in the desire for freedom and liberty in their ancestral home, a land originally theirs...[b]ecause the act of Pardon will tend to convince millions that a Black man aspiring for the highest and best for his race can get justice..."

Now, nearly 100 years after Marcus Garvey's wrongful conviction, the United States faces the same crisis with the world's largest system of mass incarceration and as it continues to criminalize Black life. The instant Petition for the Posthumous Presidential Pardon of Marcus Garvey comes at a crucial moment in our history, a time when the United States is in the midst of another civil rights struggle. In its Petition the UNIA asked President Obama to: "emancipate our children's collective conscience from the transgression of an official history that criminalizes the legacy of Marcus Garvey and many Black leaders, to liberate truth unto this generation as a measure of redemptive justice gifting the dignity of a proud history that breathes hope into a more just and equitable future."

We hope that you will join the UNIA and encourage President Obama to right this historic wrong by issuing the Posthumous Presidential Pardon of Marcus Garvey by signing the letter below and mailing it to the Robert Zauzmer, United States Pardon Attorney, at the address provided below. Please feel free to add your own language to the letter. Please also send a copy via facsimile to (305) 503-9235 or by email to jasminerand@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our attorney Jasmine Rand at (706) 424-1027 or via email at jasminerand@gmail.com.

We thank you in advance for your support and standing in solidarity for this worthy cause. In the words of Marcus Garvey, "One God! One Aim! One Destiny!"

Respectfully,

/s/Cleophus Miller

Cleophus Miller, Jr.
President General UNIA

/s/Steven Golding

Steven Golding
President UNIA, Kingston, Jamaica

/s/Jasmine Rand

Jasmine Rand, Esquire
Ronald Sullivan, Esquire
Counsel to UNIA

INSERT DATE

Robert A. Zauzmer, Esquire, Pardon Attorney
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave.
NW Washington, DC 20530

Re: In Support of Petition for Posthumous Presidential Pardon of Marcus Garvey

Dear Mr. Zauzmer:

This letter is written on behalf of **NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION** in support of the UNIA's Petition to President Obama seeking the Posthumous Presidential Pardon of Marcus Garvey. The United States unjustly persecuted and prosecuted Garvey because of his race, immigrant status, and advocacy for equal rights of African Americans and members of the African diaspora, as made clear by the FBI's own records. In 1919, J. Edgar Hoover wrote a letter regarding Garvey: "Unfortunately...he has not yet violated any federal law whereby he could be proceeded against on the grounds of being an undesirable alien, from the point of view of deportation." Marcus Garvey was charged with a single count of mail fraud based upon evidence including an empty envelope, and maintained his innocence until his death.

Garvey sought a Presidential Pardon from Calvin Coolidge during his lifetime stating that, "[I]t is my belief that the President...remedy a wrong inflicted upon one because of his color and place of birth and effort to help his race in the desire for freedom and liberty...[b]ecause the act of Pardon will tend to convince millions that a Black man aspiring for the highest and best for his race can get justice..." Now is the time to right the wrong of a grave historic injustice.

Garvey changed the course of history for Africans and descendants of the African diaspora. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., credited Garvey with leading the first Black mass movement and restoring dignity and personhood to Black Americans. Former President of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe, praised Garvey for having been: "one of the most far-sighted persons of African descent to walk upon God's earth;" and, former President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah said: "[Garvey] raised the banner of African liberation on three continents." Marcus Garvey's posthumous contributions to humanity warrant his Posthumous Presidential Pardon.

We join the UNIA in its Petition to President Obama to: "emancipate our children's collective conscience from the transgression of an official history that criminalizes the legacy of Marcus Garvey...to liberate truth unto this generation as a measure of redemptive justice gifting the dignity of a proud history that breathes hope into a more just and equitable future." President Obama, we urge you to fully restore the good name and legacy of Marcus Garvey as an example of redemptive justice to American citizens and the global community.

Respectfully,

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION