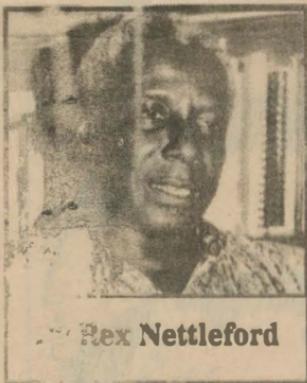


# Recent events give Garvey a renewed relevance

BIN  
GARVEY  
MARCUS



Rex Nettleford

self-development through cultural, educational and economic advancement.

## Ahead of his time

Marcus Garvey, well ahead of his time and with the audacity of wanting to change rather than simply to interpret the lot of his people, remains a major source of energy for the tasks ahead just as he was for the activities that gave birth to Jamaica after 1938.

The mobilisation of the mass of the population around to their full potential, the advocacy of rights through organised labour, the pursuit of economic development rooted in self-reliance and programmes of activity focusing on agriculture, urban planning and industrial growth, the spread of education among native Jamaicans up to the tertiary level, the encouragement of cultural expression as part of national development strategy, the protection of human right through a just and uncorrupt legal system, including legal aid agencies for the poor, the strengthening of a viable local government system, and above all, the attainment of self-government for the people of Jamaica - such were the hopes of Garvey for a civilised society as stated in his 1929 Party manifesto.

They were to become the infrastructure of Jamaica's political and socio-economic development strategy in the long process of decolonisation. He is a true Founding Father and an icon of more than symbolic meaning to this and future generations.

That his significance to the Black Diaspora and the wider world is part of the history of his own fantastic and unique achievements is well established.

This reflection merely affords the opportunity for all men who abhor bigotry and love justice to acknowledge their debt to this inspired pioneer and to renew the tacit vows never to abandon the struggle against all evil that would make human beings less than whole and specially against all efforts that would conspire to prolong the humiliation of Africa and her offspring.

The celebration of the centenary of the birth of Marcus Mosiah Garvey - prophet, priest and virtually 'king' to the millions of followers who put their trust in the guidance he gave in the struggle against racial oppression and human degradation - is in fitting response to the deep feelings carried by the Jamaican majority for one whose life, work and philosophy still promise to millions of Black people all over the globe hope of place and purpose in a world which still refuses to take them and their kind seriously.

Current events in South Africa, the recent resurgence of race-prejudice in parts of the United States, the racial tension that has gripped metropolitan centres in Canada and Britain to which our people have migrated, and our own concerns at home with the equitable distribution of power give to Marcus Garvey a renewed relevance almost fifty years after his death.

There is a vibrant, continuing dialogue between our people and this great visionary and freedom-fighter. It is conducted through those of his writings carefully documented and bequeathed by his late wife Amy Jacques Garvey as well as through the growing literature seeking to analyse, delineate and clarify the core meanings of what was a complex, diverse and even contradictory life of prophetic utterance and intense activity.

This dialogue speaks to the dynamic engagement that the Jamaican people have with their own history and the history's central role in the determination of contemporary life and indeed of the future.

It speaks even more to the end concerns of a people committed to social justice, human dignity, freedom and

(Reprinted from Garvey Centenary)

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