

PROPHET WITHOUT HONOUR

Devised by

THE STAUNCH POETS & PLAYERS

with extracts from

PHILOSOPHY AND OPINIONS OF MARCUS GARVEY

and

GARVEY, LUMUMBA, MALCOLM

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PROPHET WITHOUT HONOUR

SLAVE: We were there, at home and at one with nature. The sun brought light and the moon at night, reflected all that was good about the day. And the waters ran, cycling and recycling, producing all that was necessary to sustain and maintain our needs.

THEN THEY CAME. At first, we stood to gaze and felt sympathy for the strangers who stood to look and beg for assistance. And we gave them food and a place to lay. We bade them stay until they were strong enough to travel on their way. We offered them love and care, we played the part that even the hardest of hearts could not deny to those who came to us weary and hungry in the night.

We bade them farewell. BUT THEY CAME AGAIN. This time they did not ask for help or guidance, they came equipped with guns and whips and they took. They took, not things, but people. They took mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters.

And the brothers were shackled to mothers and daughters layed with fathers in the holds of ships equipped for human cargo.

We knew not why. Some sought to cry. Some jumped, preferring to die. Others waited to complete the journey, not understanding North or South or East or West. Just movement and time which seemed ceaseless.

SLAVE OWNER: I am the ex-pirate and buccaneer, whose respectability as a planter farmer has been created from making a living from among the perils of the sea. My day begins at sunrise when I leave my hammock and make my way over to where six or seven of my finest slaves await me with coffee, toast and butter.

SLAVE: Arriving and not knowing where we'd arrived. Not recognising anything but those faces we'd seen before in another time in another place.

SLAVE OWNER: And yet it is here, where thought I am owner occupier of a camp filled with fortune, life becomes more and more remote. I do not understand the silence of those who serve, or even their eagerness to serve.

SLAVE OWNER: It is certain that the slave though he is chained, is no less
AND SLAVE free than those who locks the chains. Faces filled with hate
TOGETHER and whose temper turns sour with each passing day. To you,
death seems certain.

SLAVE OWNER: Brought to me and sold for a pittance? Have I not served you also? Why then do you force me to soothe my troubled conscience.

SLAVE OWNER: It is certain that the slave though he is chained, is no less
AND SLAVE : free, than those who locks the chains. Faces filled with hate
TOGETHER: and whose temper turns sour with each passing day. To you,
c death seems certain.

SLAVE: We no longer look forward to the rising of the sun because now it brings a renewal of labour and pains. But the night belongs to us, for it is there, where we gain control of those faces, whose understanding of life does not go beyond that of luxury.

Chhoo buoy Yea
Repeat several times.

Okono Ah yea etc.

DANCE

MARCUS: Death bells, ring in death cells
Death ears turn and turn again
but hear nothing
Sunken eyes swing like pendulums
from the rotting sockets
of a dying bitch.
And we moving like ghosts
disguised by the sun's light
reflect images of those
whom night
reveals only as monsters.
We were the night
and there, within the thresholds of our darkness
we shed our skins
and felt the sting
on flesh grown red, and raw and sore
Like a whore
You lay motionless
on your arse, grown fat
Strange men come like dogs
puked up by the sea
They bark, they bite and they slobber all over you
leaving their deadly killing odour
You produce off-spring
who no longer hear the morning drums
of our ancestors
And I, among the daffodils
dancing drunkenly
to the rhythm of a destructive wind
I die the ninth death of a detestable cat.

No, no, no more Tonight is the last night for me. After tonight I am not coming back up here on this hill.

VOICE: Marcus what are you talking about?

MARCUS: Well, I mean I'm not taking part in any more of these meaningless rituals.

VOICE: Meaningless! Don't you understand why we do these things. They are part of us, part of our traditions, part of Africa, our memories of Africa.

MARCUS: But look, Africa is more than a memory. Africa is real, we can do much more than just coming up here once a month, carrying out our performances and thinking we will be better off for it.

VOICE: None of us believe that, Marcus. And I don't see how you can call it meaningless.

MARCUS: I didn't mean meaningless. What I mean't was that it's not enough. Lets make Africa real, let's organise ourselves and the rest of our people, let's get out there and tell the people the truth.

VOICE: What truth? Whose truths?

MARCUS: Our truth, there's only one truth for us.

VOICE: Marcus, when you ready to start telling our people truth, let's tell you what will happen.

MARCUS: What will happen?

VOICE: They will laugh at you. And the ones who don't laugh, will organise something to kill you.

MARCUS: Well, let them laugh or let them try to kill me. It's time somebody start telling them how foolish they are.

VOICE: It's time for us to leave this hill. I think tonight's ceremony got to his head.
(They leave).

Lights go down and comes up on Marcus Garvey, sitting.

MARCUS: This morning, today, I sit alone, me, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, sit alone because I dared to challenge my people, black people, a suffering people, who should be determined to suffer no longer. Where can we find in this race of ours, real men. Men of character, men of purpose, men of confidence, men of faith, men who really know themselves. A man, any man who will never say die; the man who will never give up. When will the negro be transferred from the foot of the human race to the top where he once was, where he once gave light and leading to the world on the banks of the Nile. Where now is the black man's Government? Where is his President, his country and his ambassadors, his army, his Navy, his men of big affairs? I cannot find them and so I declare today, I will help to make them. But today I stand alone because I dared to challenge my people to take up the task. Today I stand alone (Wife walks up and touches him on his shoulders) save for the love and support of my wife whom I love, but have never even complicated, and today I stand alone to make my challenge.

MARCUS RISES. They EXIT

THREE HEADS NOW APPEAR. ONLY HEADS ARE LIT.

1st Head: A race without authority and power, is a race without respect.

2nd Head. Wake up Africa, Wake up Ethiopia. Let us work towards the one

2nd Head cont. glorious end of a free, redeemed and mighty nation. Let Africa be a bright star among the constellations of nations.

3rd HEAD: A man's bread and butter is only assured when he works for it.

1st HEAD: The only protection against injustice in man is power. Physical, financial and scientific.

2nd HEAD: Let Africa be our guiding star, our star of destiny.

3rd HEAD: How dare anyone tells us that Africa cannot be redeemed; when we have 400,000,000 men and women with warm blood coursing through their veins? The power that holds Africa is not devine. The power that holds Africa is human. And it is recognised that whatsoever man has done, man can do.

LIGHTS NOW COME UP ON ONE PART OF STAGE WHERE THERE IS A PLATFORM. MARCUS GARVEY APPEARS ON PLATFORM.

MARCUS: I came here to speak to Negroes. I am not here to speak to white people. I want this clearly understood. This peculiar race question is going to destroy Negroes. Destroy the economic and industrial well-being of this Nation because this pecualiar race question of yours is driving abroad more Negroes than we can afford to lose. And when any country drive its native population abroad that country is doomed. I am here to give you my wide esperience and to settle this ignorant race issue of yours. In this country the white man can raise no issue; he is at a discount. Whatever harm is done, you are to balme; it is engineered by yourself. Conditions racially depend on yourselves because some of you Negroes refuse to admit what you are, you want to be everything else except what God created you to be.

This propaganda of dis - associating Western Negroes from Africa is not a new one. For many years white propagandists have been printing tons of literature to impress scattered Ethiopia, especially that portion within their civilization, with the idea that Africa is a despised place, inhabited by savages, and cannibals, where no civilized human being should go, especially black civilized human beings. This propaganda is promulgated for the cause that is being realized today. That cause is Colonial Expansion for the white nations of the world.

The white world has always tried to rob and discredit us of our history. They tell us that Tut-Ankh-Amen, a King of Egypt, who reigned about the year 1350 B.C (Before Christ), was not a Negro, that the ancient civilization of Egypt and the Pharoahs was not of our race, but that does not make the truth unreal. Every student of history, of impartial mind, knows that the Negro once ruled the world, when white men were savages and barbarians living in caves.

It comes to the individual, the race, the nation, once in a life time to decide upon a course to be pursued as a career. The hour has now struck for the individual Negro as well as the entire race to decide the course that will be pursued in the interest of our own liberty.

We who make up the Universal Negro Improvement Association have decided that we shall go forward, upward and onward toward the great goal of human liberty. We have determined among ourselves that all barriers placed in the way of our progress must be removed, must be cleared away for we desire to see the light of a brighter day.

It is no use crying over spilt milk, and so we need not worry too much over the lost opportunity that as a race we have suffered. Our duty is now to look forward hopefully for the best. The Negro has before him a splendid career of usefulness.

He has many more opportunities to take advantage of. Will he seek them and grasp them? My advice is that he does so immediately. In looking forward he must realize that he is his own keeper and his own advocate. If he is to get anything out of life it must be the result of what he has put into it. He must put thoughtfulness, energy, determination, ambition into the affairs of life. He must not be compromising, neither must he be silly enough to think that others will do as much for him as he will do for himself. There is a disposition for the Negro to be dependent upon professed sympathy and charity from other channels.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association is a world-wide movement of Negroes, black and coloured, who have enough self-respect to call themselves by a race name.

What is the movement for? For the industrial, commercial, social, educational and political betterment of the race - not only in one country, but everywhere.

Why do we call it UNIA? Because after careful study and analysis, we have discovered that Negroes nowhere ^{REPRESENT ANYTHING OF POWER, AND NEGROES EVERYWHERE} are badly treated simply because they represent no power of their own. Hence, if all are universally backward, let us organize and go forward. Hence, I come before you, representing the Universal Movement of Negroes. We are going home to destiny, and what is destiny? Destiny is the point to be reached by every individual race and nation. And the destination of the black people shall lead them on to a great African Empire.

BLACK OUT HEADS APPEAR AGAIN.

1st HEAD: The world ought to know that it could not keep 400,000,000 Negroes down forever. There is always a turning point in the destiny of every race, every nation, of all peoples, and we have come now to the turning point of Negro where we have changed from the old cringing weakling, and transformed into full-grown men, demanding our portions as MEN.

2nd HEAD: The Negro who lives on the patronage of philanthropists is the most dangerous member of our society, because he is willing to turn back the clock of progress when his benefactors ask him so to do.

3rd HEAD: For over three hundred years the white man has been our oppressor, and he naturally is not going to liberate us to the higher freedom - the truer liberty - the truer Democracy. We have to liberate ourselves.

1st HEAD: Let us prepare TODAY. For the TOMORROWS in the lives of the nations will be so eventful that Negroes everywhere will be called upon to play their part in the survival of the fittest human group.

2nd HEAD: Let us in shaping our own Destiny set before us the qualities of human justice, love, charity, mercy and equity. Upon such foundations let us build a race, and I feel that the God who is Divine, the Almighty Creator of the world, shall forever, bless this race of ours, and who to tell that we shall not teach men the way to life, liberty and true human happiness?

3rd HEAD: LEADERSHIP means everything - PAIN, BLOOD, DEATH.

BLACK OUT. SCENE CHANGES.

George Padmore is sitting doing some paperwork. MARCUS GARVEY AND AMY GARVEY ENTERS.

MARCUS: George Padmore.

GEORGE: Come in. Come in. Well. Well. I am more than honoured to receive a visit from the honourable prophet and his remarkable wife.

MARCUS: Don't play games, George. This is not a social visit.

GEORGE: I didn't think so. What would two distinguished members of Society want to be socialising with me for?

MARCUS: Well, you're right, we wouldn't be socialising with you, not after this.

GEORGE: After what?

MARCUS: Amy show him the letter.

AMY HANDS HIM THE LETTER. SHE THEN CHANGES HER MIND AND TAKES IT BACK.

AMY: I'll do better than that. I'll read it for you. (She reads)

Dear Sir,

As Chief Law enforcement officer of the Nation we wish to call your attention to a heretofore unconsidered menace to harmonious race relationships. There are in our midst, certain Negro criminals and potential murderers, both foreign and American born, who are moved and actuated by intense hatred against the white race. The undesirables continually proclaim that all white people are enemies to the Negro.

...It's present and moving spirit is one Marcus Garvey, an unscrupulous demagogue, who has ceaselessly and assiduously sought to spread among Negroes distrust and hatred of all white people.

The official organ of the U.N.I.A., The Negro World, ...sedulously and continually seeks to arouse ill-feeling between the races...

The U.N.I.A. is composed chiefly of the most primitive and ignorant element of West Indian and American Negroes...In short, this organization is composed in the main of Negro sharks and ignorant Negro fanatics...

For the above reasons, we advocate that the Attorney-General use his full influence completely to disband and extirpate this vicious movement, and that he vigorously and speedily push the Government's case against Marcus Garvey... We desire the Department of Justice to understand that those who draft this document...sound this tocsin only because they foresee the gathering storm of race prejudice and sense the imminent menace of this insidious movement, which cancerlike, is gnawing at the very vitals of peace and safety - of civic harmony and interracial concord.

MARCUS: Do you hear that George.

AMY: That's you and your lot, isn't it George.

GEORGE: (Stunned at first, then he smiles).

Sorry to disappoint you, but I had nothing to do with that this.

AMY: Oh yes you did George, the committee of eight, all prominent members of the communist party, George.

GEORGE: My party, yes. But we don't fight like that. We did not send that letter.

AMY: Don't fight like that? Marcus, listen to this man, and who do you think is responsible for beating our people in the streets, shooting them in dark alleys. Having them fired from their jobs and sent to prisons under all sorts of trumped up charges, your party, the communist party.

GEORGE: Our struggle against you represents one of the major tasks, not only for us, but for every negro worker in the colonies of Africa and the Caribbean, and I believe you and your beliefs ought to be combatted, but not...

MARCUS: Why must my beliefs be combatted.

GEORGE: Because it constitutes a dangerous ideology, which bears not a single Democratic trait and one which toys with the aristocratic attributes of a non-existent Negro kingdom, and that ideology is blocking the progress of Negro masses.

MARCUS: Non-existent Negro kingdom, blocking the progress of the Negro masses, what would you say about all the developments that has been taking place in America and the Caribbean?

GEORGE: I say, that the Landlords and black capitalists who support you, do so for no other reason than to mobilise the peasants and workers to create a Negro republic in Africa, they will be the only ones to benefit, and in time, they will understand that the only road by which they can acquire their freedom and emancipation, is by organising their forces and establishing an alliance with white workers.

MARCUS: I have watched those white workers in your communist party and I have seen enough of this method to keep me shy of communism for the rest of my natural life. Come on Amy, let's get out of here. (Start to go)

GEORGE: ?Marcus Garvey, you are dishonest. Just another agent of American Imperialism.

MARCUS: A group of men of any ism or party who would seek to kill or illegally or improperly dispose of a political adversary, because he doesn't agree with his particular brand of politics are no association of those who seek perfection of Government. Because I seek to build up a democratic Negro State in Africa and not a commune, you Negro Communists prefer me dead than alive, well I pray the day will never come for the Negro, when the Government falls in the hands of such representatives of Communism. I would rather be dead than alive under Government administered by such characters. (They leave).

VOICE: ...we advocate that the Attorney-General use his full influence to disband and extirpate this vicious movement, and that he vigorously and speedily push the Government's case against Marcus Garvey...

LIGHT COME UP ON A COURT SCENE.

MARCUS: Mr. Dancy, I am accused of and on trial for defrauding the public. My freedom depends on your testimony. Mr. Dancy, Can you remember what you read about the Black Star Line?

MR. DANCY: Well, a few things, not all.

MARCUS: You wouldn't swear to what you said about the Black Star Line? Positively?

MR. DANCY: What I said about it?

MARCUS: Yes, the things you said awhile ago, you wouldn't swear those were the things you saw or read, you wouldn't swear positively, you cannot remember and therefore you cannot swear positively that the things you said awhile ago are the things you read?

MR. DANCY: Sure, what I said, that is what I read.

MR. GARVEY: You wouldn't swear positively that they were true - yes or no - it is so long a time you could not remember - yes or no - you would not swear positively - just say yes or no, Mr. Dancy, yes or no?

MR. DANCY: What do you mean?

MARCUS: That is to say, the answers you gave to Mr. Mattuck. The things you said.

MR. DANCY: What answers?

MR. GARVEY: The answers you gave awhile ago?

MR. DANCY: Tell me what the answer was?

MARCUS: That you read in a circular about ships and everything and so forth.

MR. DANCY: Yes it was in the circular.

MARCUS: But you wouldn't swear positively those things those things were in the circular?

MR. DANCY: They were in some letters.

MARCUS: Would you swear what letters they were in?

MR. DANCY: I don't remember what letters they were in, they were in some Black Star Line. But what letters they were in, I don't know.

MARCUS: You don't know whether they reached you through the mail or not, you just saw things about the Black Star Line?

MR. DANCY: I saw things about it?

MARCUS: Yes.

MR. DANCY: I didn't saw things. I saw it in the letter.

MARCUS: Can you remember what you saw in the letter positively?

MR. DANCY: I just told you I couldn't remember all - do you understand it?

MARCUS: I am not vexed with you.

MR. DANCY: I am not vexed with you; you raised your voice to me; I raised mine to you.

MARCUS: I am not vexed. I just want to hear what you say.

MR. DANCY: Take your time.

MARCUS: Would you really swear...

MR. DANCY: I just told you I couldn't remember all the letter, bring the letter up here.

MARCUS: None of the letters that were shown you were the letters.

MR. DANCY: What?

MARCUS: The letters that the District Attorney showed you, they weren't the letters?

MR. DANCY: They weren't the letters?

MARCUS: No.

MR. DANCY: Yes, they were the letters.

GARVEY IS FOUND GUILTY AND SENT OFF TO PRISON.

GARVEY: (As he is being led away). In life or death I shall come back to you to serve even as I have served before. In life I shall be the same: In death I SHALL BE A terror to the foes of Negro liberty. If death has power, then count on me in death to be the real Marcus Garvey I WOULD LIKE TO be. If I may come in an earthquake, or a cyclone, or plague, or pestilence... then be assured that I shall never desert you and make a your enemies triumph over you. Would I not cry a million times for you? Would I not... walk the earth forever for you? Would I not cry forever... for you? Then why be sad? Cheer up, and be assured that if it takes a million years, the sins of our enemies shall visit the millionth generation of those that hinder and oppress us...

GARVEY'S SPEECH AS HE COMES OUT OF PRISON.

If I die, my work shall then only begin, but I shall live, in the physical or spiritual to see the day of Africa's glory. When I am dead, wrap the mantle of the Red, Black and Green around me, for in the new life I shall rise... to lead the millions up the heights of triumph with the colours that you well know. Look for me in the whirlwind or the storm, look for me all around you, for... I shall come and bring with me countless millions of black slaves who have died in America and the West Indies and the millions in Africa to aid you in the fight for Liberty, ohh, aagh, (He clutches his chest) Freedom and Life.

GARVEY DIES IN HIS WIFE'S ARMS. SHE HAD ENTERED WHILE HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS SPEECH. SHE LAYS HIM GENTLY ONTO THE FLOOR.

AMY: (Kneeling beside him) Be prepared, you said. Be prepared. And the masses followed. Because you awakened in them, the true spirit of manhood and womanhood. You gave them a purpose in life, to live like men or die like men. And yet, it is I more than anyone else who has had to prepare for this moment. Always wondering how I would behave when it finally came. At this moment, the tragedy is mine and mine alone. As in war, everyone counts up the dead, but very few understand the tragedy for mothers and wives. Black people everywhere, have lost a leader of the highest quality and character, but I have also lost my husband, and my suffering is unique. Its true, we all suffer, but the vision of leadership is given only to a few, and it is from this moment on that I gather my strength, because it is now that I truly understand the real spirit of leadership. (She strokes his face) And so...

To you I come, my beloved,
I who abandoned you, in pursuit
of a formless deity.

Do I hear the sailing winds murmur,
that the elders of my village would
bestow clemency on a recalcitrant daughter
If I discoloured my decaying dentures
with the bitter
juices of the cola nut or smeared
my ageing face with the clay from the
beds of the Volta river?

And, perhaps, the spirit of my forebears
dispel the clouds of misfortune that
has hovered above my head,
ever since I deserted the
warmth of your bosom.

To you, I come my beloved,
I, who rejected your slender arm
in adherence to the devil's call.
Armed with words I venture forth,
to shatter every illusory yarn spun by
his emmisaries;
Lest our young ones be stupified
by the mistaken wisdom
of his intellectual mongols.

Prepare me a supper of Fufu
before the dozing sun scurries past
your golden skies.

And in your arms peacefully repair
until the cockerels register
their amazement at the haste
with which the moon
vacates its post.