



July 14, 1999

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Greetings:

My name is Jacob Dorman and I am working with Professor Robert Hill, Editor of the Marcus Garvey Papers Project at UCLA. We are assembling important Rastafarian texts into a volume that will be called the "Rastafarian Bible." Many Rastas will be included in the volume, from Howell to Pettersborough to Hibbert to Prince Emmanuel Edwards. Composed mainly of primary texts, the work will be the standard compilation of Rasta reasonings, and will expose Rasta writings to a wider audience than ever before.

Do you have writings from Louv Williams, Walter Wells and the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church that we might be able to include in this project? Unfortunately, the deadline for completing the selection of documents for the Bible is rapidly approaching, so if there are materials we might include, it would be very useful if you could send them as soon as possible.

Please respond by e-mail (jdorman@alumni.stanford.org) or phone; I would be glad to answer any questions that you might have.

With best regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacob Dorman".

Jacob Dorman

cc: Robert Hill

Lesson 5

God

There is a God and we believe in Him. He is not a person nor a physical being. He is spirit and He is universal intelligence. Never deny that there is a God. God being universal intelligence created the universe out of that intelligence. It is intelligence that creates. Man is a part of the creation of universal intelligence and man was created in the image and likeness of God only by his intelligence. It is the intelligence of man that is like God, but man's intelligence is only a unitary particle of God's universal intelligence.

God out of His universal intelligence made matter and made mind. That matter is made by God and man is matter as well as mind; then man must be in the image of God, because nothing could exist without God. As God made the universe out of His universal knowledge or intelligence so man in his unitary knowledge or intelligence can make a typewriter, an automobile or a chair, but cannot make the universe because his unitary intelligence is not as much or as great as universal intelligence. All the unitary intelligence of the universe goes to make God who is the embodiment of all intelligence, so no man can be as great as God because he is only a unit of God and God is the whole.

No man therefore can measure God nor ask God questions because he is not as intelligent as God and therefore cannot understand God. It is presumptuous therefore, when man questions God from his limited unitary intelligence.

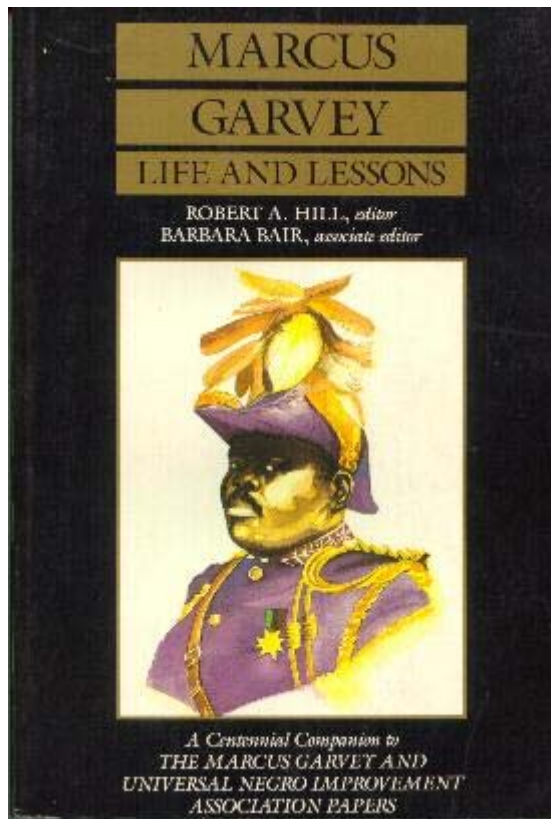
Man never dies. Nothing dies. Man is made of body and spirit. The spirit is God. It is intelligence. The body of man is matter. It changes from living matter in the man to other matter in the soil. It is always the same matter. It doesn't die in the sense of how we understand death. It changes. When man sleeps and passes away in the flesh he goes to earth that lives on, out of which other men and things are formed. All matter is related so man is related to earth and earth related to man. We eat ourselves over and over again. When we eat the apple, the banana, the fig, the cherry, the grape, when we drink the water, we are eating and drinking ourselves over and over again, so nothing is lost and nothing dies, so do not be afraid of death, because what you call death is only change and you are still in the universe either in the spirit of God to whom your spirit goes after the change or as matter which goes on forever.

You are related to the flower, to the beautiful rose, to the trees, to the fish and to other animals just as you are related to God.

All of you sprung from God who is universal intelligence. Do not be more cowardly than the rose, the apple, the coconut, the sheep, the fish or the cow to do that which all must, and which we call death, to die. If you are going to weep to die

then the rose should weep to die. If you weep you are a coward. Die like a man because you are not lost, you are still there. You only weep because you are a glutton, because you think you will not get any more to eat and drink and any more happy times; just as you have been feeding upon things, and other beings who came here before you, so someone else must feed on you to make creation true, otherwise God would not be fair to everybody and everything, and God is fair and just and no respecter of persons or things.

Marcus Garvey: Life and Lessons, edited by Robert A. Hill and Barbara Bair (University of California Press, 1987), Pages 221-222.



Article in the *Blackman*

[Kingston, November 8, 1930]

THE CORONATION OF EMPEROR RAS TAFARI¹

Last Sunday, a great ceremony took place at Addis Abbaba [Ababa], the capital of Abyssinia. It was the coronation of the new Emperor of Ethiopia - Ras Tafari. From reports and expectations, the scene was one of great splendour, and will long be remembered by those who were present.

Several of the leading nations of Europe sent representatives to the coronation, thereby paying their respects to a rising Negro nation that is destined to play a great part in the future history of the world.

Abyssinia is the land of the blacks and we are glad to learn that even though Europeans have been trying to impress the Abyssinians that they are not belonging to the Negro Race, they have returned the retort that they are, and that they are proud to be so.

Ras Tafari has travelled to Europe and America and is therefore no stranger to European hypocrisy and methods; he, therefore, must be regarded as a kind of a modern Emperor, and from what we understand and know of him, he intends to introduce modern methods and systems into his country.² Already he has started to recruit from different sections of the world competent men in different branches of science to help to develop his country to the position that she should occupy among the other nations of the world.

We do hope that Ras Tafari will live long to carry out his wonderful intentions. From what we have heard and what we do know, he is ready and willing to extend the hand of invitation to any Negro who desires to settle in his kingdom. We know of many who are gone to Abyssinia and who have given good report of the great possibilities there, which they are striving to take advantage of.

The Psalmist prophesied that Princes would come out of Egypt and Ethiopia would stretch forth her hands unto God. We have no doubt that the time is now come. Ethiopia is now really stretching forth her hands. This great kingdom of the East has been hidden for many centuries, but gradually she is rising to take a leading place in the world and it is for us of the Negro race to assist in every way to hold up the hand of Emperor Ras Tafari.

Printed in *Bm*, 8 November 1930.

1. Ras Tafari (1891-1975) became king of Ethiopia in 1928. He was crowned emperor of Ethiopia and took the throne name of Haile Selassie I on 2 November 1930. The coronation was an elaborate ceremony attended by the leading rases of Ethiopia as well as representatives of foreign heads of state, including the Duke of Gloucester, representing the King of England, and the Prince of Savoy, representing the King of Italy. The Cathedral of St. George was remodeled and areas of the capital city of Addis Ababa were refurbished for the event. Streets were paved and telephone and electricity lines installed. Horses were purchased from Austria to pull a ceremonial coach previously owned by the ex-emperor of Germany, while the city police were outfitted in khaki uniforms from Belgium; music was provided by a British naval band. The ceremony was carefully planned as "unabashedly modern, although Ethiopian in execution, symbolizing the amalgam that the emperor sought to refine through his administration" (Harold Marcus, *Haile Sellassie I: The Formative Years, 1892-1936* [Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987], p. 114, see also pp. 109-113; see also Christine Sandford, *The Lion of Judah Hath Prevailed* [London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1955], pp. 56-57).

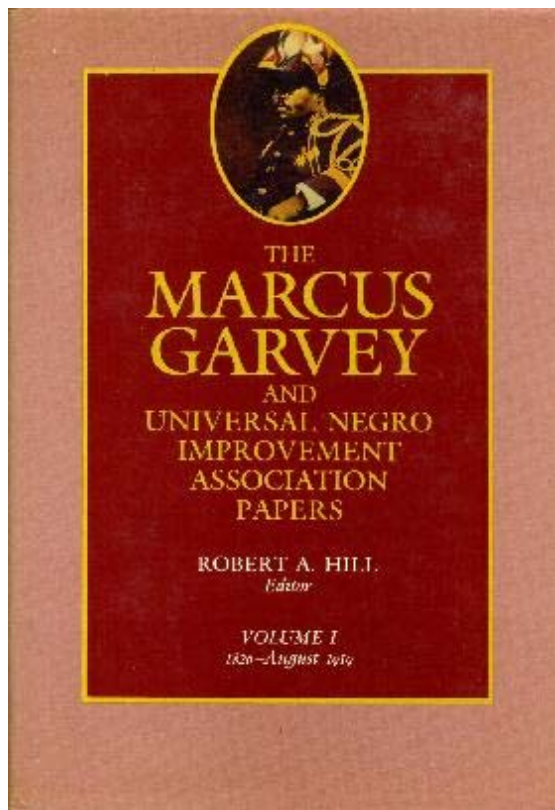
2. Ras Tafari had advocated a policy of modernization for many years before becoming emperor and had traveled to Europe to carry on diplomacy with foreign powers in his capacity as regent in the mid-1920s. As a child

and member of the Amharic elite, he received a mixture of Western, Christian, and traditional education and became an avid reader of European literature. As regent he constructed a home in modern style and furnished it with European furniture and art work. As one biographer has pointed out,

As one entered or left the regent's residence, one could not help noticing that the guard saluted smartly in European style, wore a Khaki uniform, and was armed with modern weapons. Obviously, Tafari had pretensions, mostly European-inspired. It was now time [1924] for him to visit the Continent, to stir people there to assist him in modernizing Ethiopia. Westerners steeped in contemporary racial stereotypes had always found Tafari's features, manners, wit, and intelligence gratifyingly non-African. The ras thus comprised the ingredients for a public relation success in Europe. (Marcus, *Haile Sellassie I*, p. 58)

As emperor, Haile Selassie's modernization policies included creation of a centralized government and civil service, the issuance of a constitution, educational reform, and public works projects.

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, pp. 440-441.



Marcus Garvey and Henrietta Vinton Davis
to Emperor Haile Selassie I¹

Kingston, [ca. 8 November 1930]

His Majesty Ras Tafari,

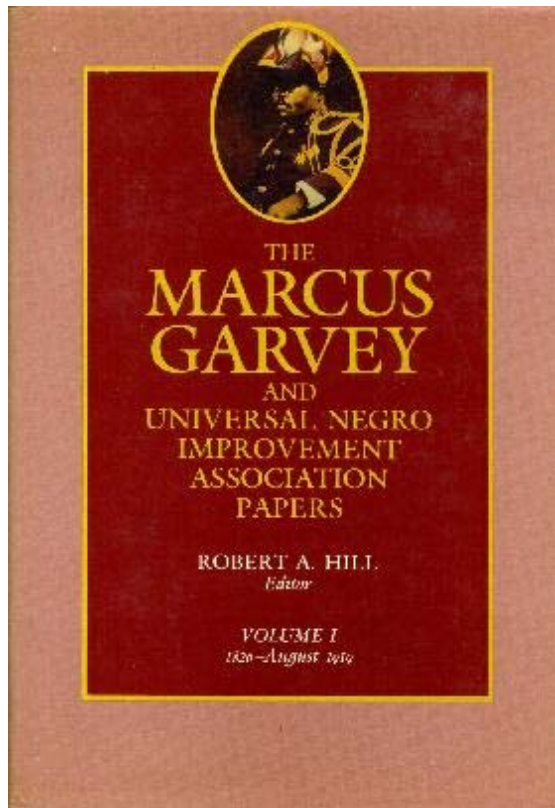
Greetings from Ethiopians of Western World. May your reign be peaceful, prosperous,
progressive. Long live your Majesty.

MARCUS GARVEY President-General
HENRIETTA DAVIS Secretary-General
Universal Negro Improvement Association

Printed in *NW*, 8 November 1930.

1. The coronation of Haile Selassie stirred proud identification and enthusiasm among African-Americans, including many Garveyites, who wrote in to the *Negro World* to express their support. The UNIA paper carried extensive coverage of the events surrounding the coronation (*NW*, 27 September, 25 October, 1 November, 8 November, and 15 November 1930, 7 February 1931). Egerton B. Thomas of the New York Garvey Club associated Ras Tafari's rise in Ethiopia with "a Negro prince" being "born in Jamaica," a reference to the birth of Marcus Garvey, Jr., who was born to Amy Jacques Garvey and Marcus Garvey on 17 September 1930, two weeks before the coronation of Haile Selassie (*G & G*, p. 207).

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, p. 442.



Editorial by Marcus Garvey
in the *Black Man*

[London, May/June 1936]

THE MISFORTUNES OF HAILE SELASSIE

Haile Selassie I, last Emperor of Ethiopia, has surrendered the ancient sceptre wielded for ages by an historic line of black sovereigns.³ He was forced to do this because of the unpreparedness of Ethiopia to meet the onslaught of the brutal spirit of Europe - the spirit made manifest by the barbarian Mussolini.

THE RECORD OF HISTORY

History will record the barbarous manoeuvres and actions of this Italian mad man, whom every Negro must learn to despise and hate. For the next five hundred years the blacks of the world must hold in their memories the brutal invasion of Ethiopia by Italy. The French did not forget 1870, the Germans will not forget 1918, the blacks of the world cannot forget 1936. A new chapter is written in the history of man and this chapter of 1936 concerns the Negro deeply. Every paragraph of the chapter written by Mussolini and the League of Nations records deeds that no Negro can forget. The Emperor was betrayed by the League. Mussolini knew well that the League would not hinder him, but would only stall to give him time to carry out his design for the satisfaction of his gaining more territory in the desire of Italy for Colonial expansion.

PAYING THE PRICE!

Africa had to pay the price, and because Ethiopia was not ready to defend herself with barbarian equipments she was given as a prize to Italy by the other nations. What happened to Ethiopia could not have happened to any white country in the world. The nations in 1914 refused to allow Germany to conquer Belgium, and so a war was staged that wasted the wealth of Europe and the blood of mankind everywhere, so that Belgium could be free. The European nations sacrificed nothing to help Abyssinia, even though Italy carried out a more brutal campaign in that country than Germany did in Belgium.

AN EXILE

Haile Selassie is an exile from his country. He is a sadder, but a wiser man. In looking over the countries of Europe he will see the "high civilisation" of the white man. He will see how the masses of white people in Europe exact from their Governments the best of conditions and opportunities for existence, and how the Governments stop at nothing to grant these with satisfaction. He will be able to contrast European civilisation with Ethiopian backwardness, where 99 1/2 per cent. of the population was kept in ignorance, where the people were unable to read or write and knew nothing about the civilised practices of an outer world, where men in a democracy secure rights to which they are entitled.

EVIL OF BACKWARDNESS

We are not blaming Haile Selassie for the present backwardness of Ethiopia, because he has

had but a very short time to show his statesmanship and to help his country. For the time that he was head of the Empire he started to do good reform work, but it was the very attempt of these reforms that caused Italy to become impatient, feeling that if these reforms were allowed to continue the desire to conquer the country would not be fulfilled. So while Haile Selassie was endeavouring to do his best, Italy struck the blow under Mussolini, with the assistance of the other European nations who connived with him as by indications.

FAILURE OF SANCTIONS

The refusal of the nations to apply sanctions in the severe form can be interpreted as nothing else but a tacit encouragement to the aggressor.⁴ The Emperor of Abyssinia did not understand this. He was not accustomed to that kind of diplomacy and so he fell for the hypocrisy of the League of Nations, and has suffered the loss of his country.

MIGHT IS RIGHT

Mussolini has raised the standard of might being right. It is now the understood policy of the world that to possess anything you must first have might, and you must use it against those who do not possess it, and take for yourself the things that you want. This has been well proved by Italy, with the support of the civilised nations of Europe in the conquest of Abyssinia.

NOT THE LAST

We are satisfied, however, that we have not heard the last of the Italo-Abyssinian affair. We know well that within another 500 years the world will return to the very scenes of operation that give Italy her triumph to-day in Abyssinia. We will hear more of Adowa, more of Addis Ababa, more of Harar, more of Dessye. The future is dark and gloomy, but only the people of might will be able to survive it. Those races that depend upon anything else but might must expect to be destroyed. The Emperor of Ethiopia had no might and he and his people have been destroyed. NEGROES BE MIGHTY!!

Printed in BM 2, no.1 (May-June 1936): 4-5.

3. After his armies were forced into retreat at Mai Chew in early April 1936, Haile Selassie began a zigzagging route back to Dessie, hoping to regroup and continue the war effort from there. The Italian air force launched a massive campaign against the retreating column, striking with bombs, strafing, and gas "day after day along the entire route southward until [the Emperor's] army simply dissolved into nothingness, leaving only a trail of corpses and equipment beside the roads" (Thomas M. Coffey, *Lion by the Tail: The Story of the Italian-Ethiopian War* [New York: Viking Press, 1974], p. 324). Haile Selassie's party traveled by night on secondary roads through the mountains, stopping for two days of prayer and fasting in the ancient city of Lalibela. Meanwhile, the Italians captured Dessie on 15 April 1936. When the Emperor's party reached Magdala on 18 April, they encountered "friendly" fire from snipers and villagers who had become accustomed to defending themselves against looting by retreating Ethiopian troops. Avoiding Dessie when warned of the Italian presence there, the emperor reached Addis Ababa on 30 April 1936, where he found little support from his councilors for his desire to regroup. Under pressure from his wife, his chiefs, and his religious advisers, he left the capital by train on 2 May 1936, traveling to Djibouti, and from there sailed to Jerusalem on the British cruiser *Enterprise*. In the wake of his departure Addis Ababa was first ransacked by Ethiopian ex-soldiers, then occupied on 5 May 1936 by Marshall Pietro Badoglio's troops.

From Jerusalem Haile Selassie and his entourage sailed to Gibraltar on the British cruiser *Capetown*, where they were asked to change to a less officially sanctioned passenger liner, the *S.S. Orford*, and on 3 June 1936 arrived in Southampton. No official reception was given the monarch by the British government, but cheering citizens lined his route to the Ethiopian embassy. He shunned a black greeting party that attempted to honor him upon his arrival

at a London train station. He soon traveled to Geneva, where, on 30 June 1936, he addressed the Eighteenth Plenary Session of the League of Nations assembly, eloquently pleading on behalf of his country for respect for international treaties, for active maintenance of the ideal of collective security and protection, and for the continued viable existence of the League of Nations itself.

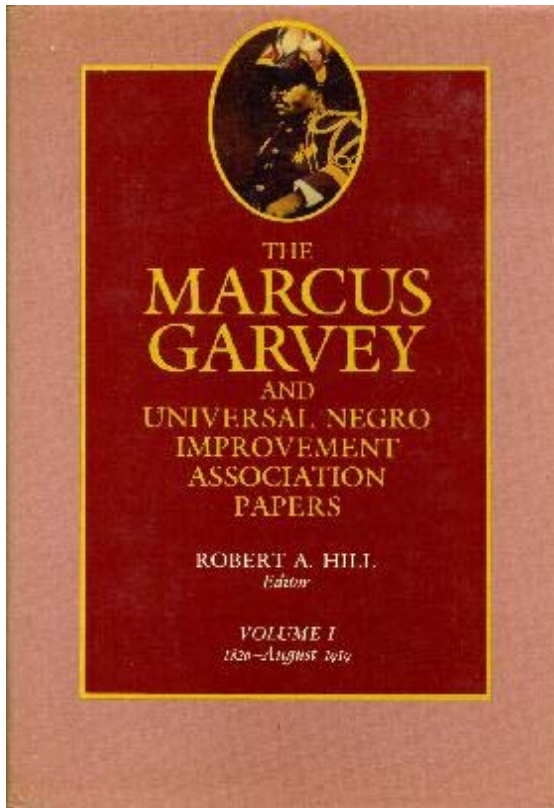
In the following years his warnings against the member nations allowing the aggressor to triumph would serve as portents of future tragedy. It was the desire for continued territorial conquests that eventually provoked British declaration of war in 1939. In the midst of that war (January 1941) Haile Selassie returned to Ethiopia with British expeditionary units and joined forces with the still active Ethiopian resistance, Tekur Ambassa ("the Black Lions"), defeating the Italians and ending his five-year exile. On 5 May 1941 his forces reoccupied Addis Ababa, where he remained in power until he was deposed by military coup on 12 September 1974. (Peter Schwab, *Haile Selassie I: Ethiopia's Lion of Judah* [Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979]).

4. Following the Wal Wal incident in December 1934, Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations to censure Italy for its threat to Ethiopian independence, citing Article 10 and Article 15 of the League of Nations covenant. Action on the issue was forestalled by the activities of British and French officials who were pursuing a policy of appeasement toward Mussolini. Fearful of an Italian alliance with Hitler, of an Italian blockade in the Red Sea, and of helping Ethiopia set a precedent of effective independence from - and diplomatic equality with - imperial powers (which could effect their rule over their own colonies) the British and French boycotted the sale of arms to Ethiopia while making friendly diplomatic overtures to Italy.

Faced with this embargo on the part of fellow League of Nations members, Haile Selassie appealed to other sources, including Japan and the United States, while continuing to plead his case with London and Paris. News photographs of the period contrasted pictures of Ethiopia's meagerly supplied soldiers, armed with second-hand materials of archaic manufacture, with Italy's well-equipped and organized modern forces. The United States, meanwhile, took an official stance of neutrality. American oil interests, however, continued to supply Italy, while the State Department encouraged the Standard Oil Co. to cancel its leases in Ethiopia and notified American citizens resident in Ethiopia to evacuate. In July 1935 Haile Selassie was informed that Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Denmark had all cancelled promised deliveries of armaments in deference to France's and England's 16 May 1935 embargo. It was not until eight days after the 3 October 1935 invasion of Ethiopia that the League of Nations assembly voted, 50 to 4, to condemn Italian aggression against the African nation. One month later it also voted for limited economic sanctions against Mussolini's country.

These actions did little to deter Mussolini, however, leading Haile Selassie to comment to one of his advisors while watching "the bombing and machine-gunning of his troops" that "I fail to understand the role of the League of Nations. It seems quite impotent" (Coffey, *Lion by the Tail*, p. 323). On 6 July 1936, after the emperor was driven into exile and had appealed to the League of Nations directly in his 30 June 1936 speech, the League voted to lift all sanctions imposed against Italy in October, clearing the way on a diplomatic front for Italy's annexation of Ethiopia (*New York Herald Tribune*, 22 March 1935, 9 August 1935; *New York Daily News*, 12 June 1935; *New York American*, 5 August 1935; *NYT*, 7 August and 9 August 1935; *New York World Telegram*, 16 August 1935; George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967]); Coffey, *Lion by the Tail*, pp. 3-9, 24, 36, 55, 57, 62, 87, 101, 111-112, 172, 202, 323, 345; Schwab, *Haile Selassie I*, pp. 68-72).

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, pp. 682-684.



Editorial by Marcus Garvey
in the *Black Man*

[London, July/August 1936]

ITALY'S CONQUEST?

Mussolini of Italy has conquered Haile Selassie of Abyssinia, but he has not conquered the Abyssinians; nor Abyssinia. The Emperor of Abyssinia allowed himself to be conquered, by playing white, by trusting to white advisers and by relying on white Governments, including the white League of Nations.

We can remember in 1920 inviting the Government of Abyssinia to send representatives to the International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the world in common with other Negro Governments, institutions and organizations. Whilst others replied, and most of them sent representatives to that greatest of all Negro Conventions, the Abyssinian Government returned the communication unopened.² Its policy then, as during the Italo-Abyssinian war, was no doubt to rely completely on the advice and friendship of white people. They ignored Negro relationship[s] from without and throttled Negro aspirations from within. The result was that they dragged along without any racial policy, except that of the ruling classes, believing themselves white and better than the rest, with a right to suppress the darker elements which make up the tremendous population.

When Haile Selassie departed from the policy of the great Menelik, and surrounded himself with European advisers, he had taken the first step to the destruction of the country. It is true that he became heir to the very bad conditions prevailing in Abyssinia, but he had an advantage over previous Emperors. He travelled to Europe and America, he saw what European civilization was like. He saw the freedom of the peoples of the different countries, and must have been impressed with their high social, educational and cultural developments. A wise monarch, like Peter the Great, would have gone back to his country, if he were patriotic and humane, with a programme to lift the standard of his people and push forward the status of his country. This Haile Selassie did in a small way, but too small to be effective, to the extent of saving himself and his country from the designs of the very European sharks whose representatives were advising him. He inherited a vendetta from Italy. He knew that Italy one day would strike. Why he kept the majority of his countrymen in serfdom and almost slavery is difficult to tell. Why he refused to educate on a large scale, thousands of the youths of his country, so that they would be able to help him to carry on the Government and lead the masses in a defensive war against Italy, cannot be understood.

LACK OF EDUCATION

If Haile Selassie had educated thousands of his countrymen and women,³ and raised them to that status of culture and general knowledge necessary to our civilization, the Italians never would have dared an offensive against Abyssinia, because Abyssinia would have found leaders on the spot competent and ready to throw back the invader. But that is not all. If Haile Selassie had negotiated the proper relationship with the hundreds of millions of Negroes outside of Abyssinia - in Africa, in South and Central America, in the United States of America, in Canada, the West Indies and Australia, he could have had an organization of men and women ready to do service, not only in the development of Abyssinia, as a great Negro nation, but on the spur of the moment to protect it from any foe. But he had no consulates, he had no Foreign Ministers, he had no

Diplomatic Agents among Negroes anywhere and the few that he did appoint were to the courts of white nations, and they were chiefly white men or Abyssinians who were married to Italians and had great leanings toward the whites whom they tried to ape.

HOW MUSSOLINI WON

When all this is considered it is not difficult to understand why Mussolini defeated Haile Selassie. We gave all the support that we possibly could during the Italo-Abyssinian war to Abyssinia. We tried our best to influence the British Government at home by our speeches and writing, so as to secure the Government's support for Abyssinia, not only at the League of Nations but independently. This support, at the very start, was given by Great Britain, but the conditions prevailing in Abyssinia, created by the Emperor himself[,] defeated the possibility of immediate success. Italy was attacking Abyssinia from the presumptive high morality of freeing the slaves and developing the country for the good of the people. Everybody knows that this was a lie, that the real motive was to create Abyssinia as a part of the new Italian Empire and to exploit it for the good of Italians. Nevertheless the appeal of Italy, for the cause of humanity arrested the attention of humanitarians the world over and gave Mussolini allies that he never would have had if there were no such conditions in Abyssinia to cause him to pretend as he did.

EMPEROR'S INCONSISTENCY

One cannot really understand the inconsistency of the Emperor, being a devout Christian who adheres to the practice of the Christian religion, and observes all the feasts thereof and the treatment to Abyssinians by his Government for the five years of his Regency and eight years of his regime as Emperor. We are not criticising the Emperor, we are only stating the truth for the sake of the Negro world. We must know why we have lost the battle in Abyssinia for the time being. We cannot flatter and fool ourselves about the truth of it, because it is by the very truth of things that the present situation exists.

WEALTH OF ABYSSINIA

Abyssinia has been reputed to be one of the richest sections of Africa. In fact, it is so. With such a rich country at its disposal a patriotic and sensible Government would have sought its development. It is true that the prejudice against the Negro is great, and that foreign states would not readily give a loan to an Abyssinian Government for its development, but the proper manipulation of the financial affairs of the Abyssinian Government could have brought it to a state of independence whereby it could have developed the country wi[t]hout humiliating itself, wi[t]hout having to beg for foreign loans. With twelve million people in Abyssinia, the Abyssinian Government could have issued a domestic paper currency, backed up by the wealth of the country for local use, and with such a currency labour could have been paid for the exploitation of the country's resources. With the production of that wealth, markets could have been found all over the world ready to accept the productions which not only to stabilize its own domestic currency but to give it a proper credit with other nations. But the Abyssinian Government never even sought a substantial loan. The first time an effort on a loan was made was during the war, when it was too late to raise money.

COUNTRY COULD RAISE LOAN

That the country could stand a tremendous loan is well demonstrated by Mussolini now seeking to raise a loan of more than eighty million pounds for the development of the country. If Mussolini can borrow eighty million on the resources of Abyssinia, the Abyssinian Government could have in thirteen years borrowed twenty or thirty million pounds for civilising purposes. Mussolini has charged the Emperor and his Government with brutalising the blacks, and at the outset of the war he stated that he was not fighting the blacks, but that he was fighting to emancipate them. That, no doubt, had an appeal to the Askaris,⁴ whom he really used as shock troops, and who really conquered Haile Selassie and took not only Adowa but Addis Ababa. It is not [Marshal Pietro] Badoglio⁵ who conquered, it is not the Fascist Army of Italy either, it was the Askaris and the native troops of Italy who temporarily won the war. The same Negroes who have won the war for Italy, can, in co-operation with others, win it back for Abyssinia.

THE EMPEROR'S USEFULNESS

As far as we can see, the Emperor's term of usefulness is at an end for the present in Abyssinia. We say this, because if he returns he will find great trouble with the Abyssinians themselves, and Italy will be spurred on to continue the fight more ruthlessly. Abyssinia must be saved by the Abyssinian youth, and the Abyssinian patriots who are now fighting in the West. They must continue their guerilla Warfare. It will harass Italy. It will ultimately beat Italy. But to continue the fight there must be real patriotism. There must be a real recognition of the Negro Abyssinian. He must not be ashamed to be a member of the Negro race. If he does, he will be left alone by all Negroes of the world, who feel proud of themselves. The new Negro doesn't give two pence about the line of Solomon. Solomon has been long dead. Solomon was a Jew. The Negro is no Jew. The Negro has a racial origin running from Sheba to the present, of which he is proud. He is proud of Sheba but he is not proud of Solomon.

THE PROUD NEGRO

There is always a willingness on the part of certain people to shun the Negro. The Negro is no dog, neither is he a convenience for anybody. The Negro is a man, proud and honourable and willing to bear his share of civilization. Abyssinia or Ethiopia offered a chance for the Negro to show himself, and if Haile Selassie had only the vision, inspired with Negro integrity, he would have still been the resident Emperor in Addis Ababa, with not only a country of twelve million Abyssinian citizens, but with an admiring world of hundreds of millions of Negroes.

NO COMPLAINT

Abyssinia has no complaint against the Negroes of the world in this last war, because from Africa to America, from America to the Central American countries, and to the West Indies and Canada, there was an appeal that found a ready answer among the hundreds of millions of Negroes. They were ready to help, not only with the little money that they have, but with their lives and with their blood. But because the Abyssinian Government heretofore had done nothing to organize them, and to treat with them, there was no knowledge of how they could really assist. The Italians had ambassadors, ministers, plenipotentiary consuls and agents in every part of the world, feeling and testing out the tempers of other governments and races of the world. The Abyssinian Government had none. Do we wonder therefore, why Italy succeeded and Abyssinia failed?

RELIANCE ON THE LEAGUE

The Emperor's reliance on the League was unfortunate, but more so was his reliance on his white advisers.⁶ Would one imagine the cats advising the rats? Would one imagine the lions advising the sheep? Can you imagine the English advising the Japanese, or can you imagine the German advising the French? Yet Haile Selassie having his hand in the lion's mouth allowed the lion to advise him. What else, but be swallowed by the lions as he has been swallowed by the League of Nations. It is too sad, brutally sad, to see the hopes of a people dashed to pieces by bad diplomacy, by bad leadership; but, as stated, Abyssinia is not yet conquered. She will not be conquered. She shall be free. It will take time, for Italy is only stirring up trouble for herself in the future. The spirit of the Negro will never go to sleep. In fact, the Negro will never die. He has learnt too much. He knows too much. The day will shortly come with the blessing of God, when he will stretch forth his hands. Probably it is through Italy in Abyssinia that "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God and Princes shall come out of Egypt."

NOT CONDEMNING

We are not condemning the Emperor. Probably he was only an innocent instrument of God's Will in bringing home to the Abyssinians a consciousness of themselves, and in impressing the Negroes of the world with their true responsibility and duty. Probably his misjudgment was from the best of heart. If it is so, let us be sorry for him. Let us not curse him, but let us hope that he will spend his days in peace in a monastery, and will do the best he can for his country and his race's country. We hope the Emperor will forget that he is from Solomon and realize that the world looks upon him as a Negro, and it was because he was a Negro why they treated him as they did. His cause was as good as that of Belgium's, but they treated Albert of Belgium⁷ differently because he was a European. He was part of the assimilable flock of Europe. The Italians and other Europeans felt their superiority over the Negro Abyssinians and so nothing would be done to save the country and its autonomy.

EMPEROR IN ENGLAND

The Emperor's advent into England again revealed the great love he has for the white race and his belief in their sincerity. When he landed at Waterloo Station, in London, he was, no doubt, advised by his Minister to receive the white delegation that waited on him: but a black delegation that was led by an Association known as the Negro Federation was ignored⁸ and the address that the delegates had to present to him had to be handed in by the holder, by running after one of the ordinary officials of the Ethiopian Embassy. His first reception in London was to the white people, some of whom refused the invitation. He extended his invitation even to the Salvation Army. No invitation went to representative Negro Institutions, organizations or individuals. Probably the Emperor is not to be blamed for this. That must have been the work of his advisers, and if so, it is consistent with the advice he has received, which has caused his defeat.

He has separated himself from the Negro peoples of the world and he fell into the jaws of the lion who was waiting to devour him. We feel sure that the Emperor is a sadder but wiser man, and if he had to live his life over again as Emperor, resident in Abyssinia, his policy would not be that of upholding the oppression of [his] own race in Abyssinia, because they are black, nor of ignoring the Negro peoples of the world, but co-operating with them to build a Negro nation worthy of the race of which he is a member,

If Haile Selassie had borrowed substantially from other Governments before the war to develop Abyssinia, making it the Abyssinians' instead of holding it as his own, and be satisfied with what he has, he would have found many of the nations that refused to carry out sanctions doing so aggressively, to secure their investments in Abyssinian Bonds, but while all the Governments had risks in Italy they had none in Abyssinia, and so they pretended sanctions against Italy but really made it effective against Abyssinia, because they had much to lose with Italy and nothing to gain from Abyssinia, except the delivery of its territory to Italy, to enable Italy to liquidate their bonds. It was the fault of statesmanship that caused Abyssinia to be so deficient.

Printed in *BM* 2, no. 2 (July-August 1936): 4-6.

2. African-born delegates who attended the 1920 UNIA convention included Gabriel Johnson, mayor of Monrovia, Liberia; George O. Marke, of Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Prince Madarikan Deniyi, of Lagos, Nigeria (whom Garvey accused of being a fraud) *Garvey Papers* 2: 524 n. 4, 525, 563, 650).

3. Before the reign of Menelik II, education in Ethiopia had been restricted to religious training for boys. Secular education was established under Menelik II, and although intended to reach a broader base (including girls), it still extended primarily to the sons of the privileged. Under Haile Selassie, "an embryonic system of secular education and a concept of national indoctrination," was established. Government-operated Amharic-language schools opened in towns and a parallel system of mission schools operated in the rural areas. The Teferi Mckonnen School was founded in Addis Ababa and supported by a special education tax on exports and imports; a national military academy was also founded in 1934. "By the time of the Italian invasion in October 1935, twenty government schools enrolled perhaps five thousand children, and another two thousand went to denominational schools." Under the reform plan, even mission schools that had previously conducted lessons in local languages were directed to teach in Amharic in the name of national unity. The educational reform movement received its strongest support from young Eritrean intellectuals who embraced Haile Selassie's vision of a modern, westernized, state. Many of the young men educated in the new school system were killed during the Italo-Ethiopian war (Harold Marcus, *Haile Selassie: The Formative Years* [Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987], pp. 136-137; see also Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* [Metuchen, N.J., and London: Scarecrow Press, 1981], p. 55).

4. The *askaris*, or black Eritrean soldiers, were members of the regular Italian Colonial Infantry who "provided the army's spear-point." They largely "belonged to the same race and had the same religions and customs as their Ethiopian brothers." Regarded by Italian officers as more expendable, more highly trained, and more experienced in guerilla-style warfare than their Italian counterparts, they "bore the brunt of every action," so much so that "in many of the actions the white toops would seem to have been little more than spectators of the askaris' gallantry." As a result, their casualty rates were far higher than those of white troops (A. J. Barker, *The Civilizing Mission: The Italo-Ethiopian War 1935-1936* [London: Cassell, 1968], pp. 141-142, 215).

5. Pietro Badoglio (1871-1956) was governor general of Libya (1929-1933) before becoming marshal of Italian forces in the Italo-Ethiopian war. He later succeeded Mussolini as premier of Italy (1943-1944). Badoglio replaced Marshal Emilio De Bono as head of the Italian forces in Ethiopia in November 1935. He promptly escalated the war, introducing the bombing and gassing of civilian and medical targets and ordering the befouling of water supplies, the burning of villages, the confiscation of weapons, and other acts of violence and restrictions against the general population. Badoglio's troops entered Addis Ababa on 5 May 1936, and the marshal served as viceroy until he was replaced in August 1936 by Rodolfo Graziani (Barker, *The Civilizing Mission*, pp. 212-214, 221-222, 328).

6. Even before his coronation as Haile Selassie, Ras Tafari had "sought experts whose nationality was consonant with the goals of his administration and tended therefore to hire individuals from Europe's small powers or Americans." When he became emperor his ministers and advisers included one American, one Englishman, two Frenchmen, "one German, one Greek, two Swiss, but *no* Italians." White foreign professionals - engineers, lawyers, military experts, teachers, technicians - were also routinely employed as consultants for specific short-term projects. By 1932, some one hundred Westerners were affiliated with the Ethiopian government (Marcus, *Haile Sellassie I*, pp. 100-101, 138).

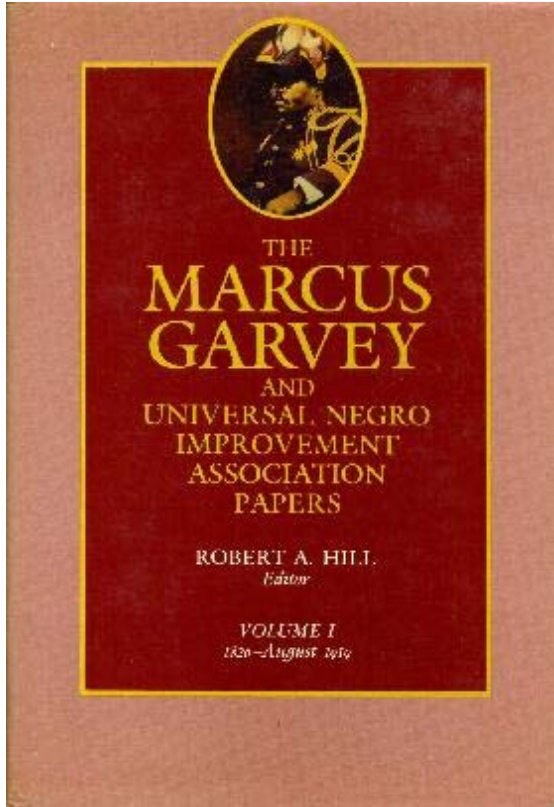
7. A reference to Albert Leopold (1875-1934), who became King Albert I of Belgium in 1909 and set about strengthening his country's army in an effort to maintain neutrality. Despite these efforts, his soldiers were forced into retreat by German troops in 1914. They set up a defense at Ypres; four years later, reinforced with French troops, Albert led the Allied offensive through Belgium (*WBD*).

8. Garvey was a member of a delegation representing the black community in Britain which was spurned by Haile Selassie I when it planned a welcoming reception for him upon his arrival in London. The emperor declined to meet with the committee, which included representatives from the British Guiana Association, the Colonial Seamen's Association, the Gold Coast Aborigines Protection Society, the Gold Coast Students Association, the International Friends of Ethiopia, the Kikuyu Association of Kenya, the League of Coloured Peoples, the Negro Welfare Association, the Pan-African Federation, the Somali Society, and the UNIA. After the emperor arrived in London on 3 June 1936, the tone of Garvey's previously favorable editorials changed (interview by Robert A. Hill with St. Clair Drake, May 1970; see also William Randolph Scott, "A Study of Afro-American and Ethiopian Relations: 1896-1941" [Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1971], pp. 271-273; *Baltimore Afro-American*, 10 April 1937; Claude McKay, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* [New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1940], pp. 175-176; Ras Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within*, ed. Kenneth King [London and Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1973], pp. 115-116; Robert A. Hill, "Introduction," *The Black Man: A Monthly Magazine of Negro Thought and Opinion* comp. Robert A. Hill [Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus-Thomson, 1975], pp. 5-40).

Garvey's criticism of Haile Selassie continued to grow in later issues. In the January 1937 *Black Man* he accused Haile Selassie of "negligence" and called for a more forceful "Abyssinian Napoleon" (*BM* 2, no. 5 [January 1937]: 1; see also pp. 8-9, 17-18, 19). He summed up his revised view of the emperor in the following issue, when he wrote that Haile Selassie was "a great coward who ran away from his country to save his skin and left the millions of his countrymen to struggle through a terrible war that he brought upon them because of his political ignorance and his racial disloyalty." He went on to question Haile Selassie's "intellectual calibre" and to call him "a cringing, white slave hero worshipper, visionless and disloyal to his country" (*BM* 2, no. 6 [March-April 1937]: 8).

In 1937, Garvey criticized Haile Selassie for hiring a white Hungarian as a cook rather than an Ethiopian refugee, describing the incident as one more example of the Amhara Emperor's "claims to be of a blood quite superior in his imagination to that of the blacks, and so he has kept himself in an atmosphere where he is regarded more as a white man than as a Negro." Garvey went on to emphasize the divisions between the Amharic elite and the majority of Ethiopians, who, he said, "are the unfortunate blacks related to other Africans who have always been exploited" (*New York Age*, 28 July 1937).

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, pp. 687-692, 693-695.



Una Brown to Marcus Garvey

[[200 West 113 Street, New York City,
August 31st, 1936]]

Hon. Marcus Garvey. Sir,

I read your article in the August issue of the "Black Man" entitled "[The Italian Conquest](#)," also your unjust criticism of Emperor Haile Selassie.

We in America do not believe those are your sentiments. Sir, you know Abyssinia was hemmed in by colonies dominated by whites. When Mussolini declared his intention of subduing Ethiopia he made it clear that his specific reason was to suppress the arms traffic for the benefit of Europe. That statement met with the approval of all Europe. What excuse could the Emperor give for setting up a munitions factory?

Mussolini also stated there were eleven coloured to every one white person in the world and if the whites were to continue to dominate they must control the world. You speak about slavery in Abyssinia as though it was the kind of slavery we were put in by the Europeans. King Menelik's mother was a slave.¹ That's the facility Abyssinian slavery may have. Here we are free in the Western Hemisphere yet we are segregated even in the churches where all must humble themselves before God.

The Emperor is a descendant of Solomon.² Why should he renounce his right to his heritage on either side? Solomon was a Jew, "black but comely."³ The original Jews were a black race, history tells us.⁴ Solomon and the Queen of Sheba give him a background rivalled by no other monarch in the world.

I feel like a lot of others that you have been quite unfair in your writing. The Emperor's wife is an Ethiopian.⁵ Why do you blame him for the wives his diplomats marry? Moses' wife was an African woman,⁶ not of Jewish stock, and he led the children of Israel through the Red Sea. Solomon fell in love with the Queen of Sheba who was not of his race, but whose country supplied the gold for the building of the temple which God desired. Napoleon's wife was a coloured woman from the West Indies⁷ and France was the greatest country in Europe during Napoleon's reign, but the French did not exile him for marrying a coloured woman.

Speaking about the help we rendered Ethiopia, it was very little; and from all appearances there was an undercurrent of "dirt" somewhere. But Ethiopia shall be redeemed and her rightful heir shall sit on her throne. Sir, we have always looked upon you as a great leader, but those statements about the Emperor have given us cause to wonder if you are your original self.

About your letter to the Ethiopian Government, returned unopened, that was proof enough the letter was not delivered, and if it was the Emperor could not have read it through an unbroken seal. You extol the idea of the Negroes standing behind the British Government. Yes, so they can sell out like they did Abyssinia. "Yes, my Lord." We hated DuBois for antagonizing you; and you who have done so much for the race, surprise the entire race for saying the Emperor has outlived his usefulness and should seek asylum in a monastery. For your own prestige and the high esteem which the race holds for you, it would mean a lot if you would retract those statements and resume the place of honour and confidence which our hearts hold for you.

With deepest regret from one who knows what the Negroes in America are saying; one who would like to see you reach the heights as an ardent supporter of your principles, I beg to call your attention to this great mistake and trust you will rectify same for the benefit of an awakening race and the honour due you in history. I remain, Yours truly,

UNA BROWN

Printed in *BM* 2, no. 3 (September-October 1936): 15. Original headlines omitted.

1. King Menelik II (1844-1913) was born Sahle Maryam, grandson of King Sahle Selassie, (Shoan ruler from 1814 to 1847) and Bezzabbesh (daughter of the ruler of Marhabete). His father, Haile Malakot, was born in 1825 and was king from 1847 until his death in 1855. Oral tradition varies on the origins and social status of his mother, Ijjigayyehu, with some claiming she was well born and more numerous sources reporting that she was a slave, a servant of Bezzabbesh, who watched over the girl's pregnancy and married her to her son, Haile Malakot, after she produced a male heir. According to this tradition it was Bezzabbesh who gave the infant Sahle Maryam the name Menelik, "thus prophesying for the boy a glorious reign during which he would reconstitute the Ethiopian empire, originally constructed by the legendary Menelik I, the son of Solomon and Sheba" (Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II: Ethiopia 1844-1913* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975], pp. 16-17).

Menelik II reigned as King of Shewa from 1865 to 1889 and as emperor of Ethiopia from 1889 to 1913. Under his rule Addis Ababa was established as the Ethiopian capitol and limited modernization programs were begun. In events that foreshadowed the conflicts of 1935, Italian troops invaded Ethiopia in 1895. Menelik II's forces successfully staved off the invasion at the Battle of Adowa. The confrontation ended in 1896 with the Italian withdrawal of claims to Ethiopia as a protectorate and the tacit recognition of Ethiopian independence (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 February 1936; Gebré Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Menelik II, Roi des Rois d'Ethiopie* [Paris, 1930]); Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* [London: Pall Mall Press, 1965]; Richard Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopia* [Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, 1970], pp. 111-114).

2. Sheba, the Queen of Ethiopia, visited Solomon, the son of David, King of Judah, in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 9: 1 Kings 10). According to Ethiopian legend she converted to Judaism and bore Solomon a son, Menelik I, thus beginning the Solomonic dynasty in Ethiopia (Wolf Leslau, *Falasha Anthology: The Black Jews of Ethiopia* [New York: Schocken, 1969]; Peter Schwab, *Haile Selassie I: Ethiopia's Lion of Judah* [Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979], pp. 11-15).

3. A reference to Song of Solomon 1: 5, "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon."

4. The population of Ethiopia consists of two main ethnographic or linguistic groups, the Cushitic (including the Agaw, the Sidama, the Afar, Oromo, Saho and Somalis, and the Falasha, also known as the Beta Israel or Ethiopian Jews) and the Semitic (the Amharic, Tigrinya, Hararge, and Gurage) peoples. Oniotic and Nilo-Saharan groups are also represented. Historically, the Semitic peoples have been politically and economically dominant, using Amharic as the official state language, and adhering to the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox (Coptic Christian) Church, a powerful political force in its own right. Some 35 percent of the Ethiopian population are Coptic Christians, with an approximately equal number of Muslims in the east, and a smaller percentage of Falasha Jews residing mainly in the area of Gondar (Leslau, *Falasha Anthology*; Schwab, *Haile Selassie I*).

Many African-American Jews, including Rabbi Wentworth Matthew and Rabbi Arnold Josiah Ford, objected to being referred to as Negroes and believed that they were the descendants of the true Israelites through the line of Solomon (Howard Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem* [London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964]; Shaleak Bcn Yehuca, *Black Hebrew Israelites from America to a Promised Land* [New York: Vantage Press, 1975]; Israel J. Gerber, *The Heritage Seekers: American Blacks in Search of Jewish Identity* [Middle Village, N.Y.: Jonathan David Publishers, 1977]).

5. Ras Tafari Makonnen married Woizero Menen in 1911. Menen was an Oromo from Welo province and a deeply religious Coptic Christian. The marriage between Ras Tafari and Menen was arranged by Lij Iyasu, Menen's uncle and the grandson of Menelik II, in an unsuccessful effort to diffuse Ras Tafari's opposition to his succession to the throne. The politically induced marriage lasted until Menen's death in 1962 and produced three sons and three daughters (Schwab, *Haile Selassie I: pp. 34, 39*; see also Haile Selassie's eulogy to Menen in *Selected Speeches of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, 1918-1967* [Addis Ababa: Ministry of Information, 1967], p. 650).

6. The vindicationist or revisionist school of black religious thinkers has identified Moses along with Abraham, Joseph, Judah, Samson, and others - as among those who married or had children with black women and as descendants of Ham, ancestor of the Canaanites, Egyptians, and Ethiopians (W. L. Hunter, *Jesus Christ Had Negro Blood in His Veins* [1901; reprint ed., Brooklyn, 1910]; Alonzo Potter Burgess Holly, *God and the Negro: Synopsis of God and the Negro; or, The Biblical Record of the Race of Ham* [Nashville: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1937]).

7. Marie Joseph Rose ("Josephine") de la Pagerie (1763-1814) was born at Trois Ilets, Martinique, the daughter of elite slave-holding French Creole parents. She married Napoleon Bonaparte in 1796. The emperor divorced her in 1809 after she failed to produce an heir to the throne (Baron de Meneval, *The Empress Josephine* [London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., 1923]; Hubert Cole, *Josephine* [New York: Viking Press, 1962]).

According to Amy Ashwood Garvey, Garvey strongly identified with Napoleon and often called her "my Josephine!" during their courtship (Amy Ashwood Garvey, "Portrait of a Liberator," [New York, unpub. ms.] ch. 4, pp. 54, 55, 65, 76; ch. 7, p. 2; ch. 11, pp. 22-23, 2; AAG).

Marcus Garvey to Una Brown

[[2, Beaumont Crescent, West Kensington,
London, W. 14, England
September 15th, 1936]]

Dear Madam,

I have before me your very interesting letter written from New York, under date of August 31st, and which reached my office here during my absence in Canada. I have observed your displeasure over the article entitled "[Italian Conquest?](#)" which appeared in the July-August Issue of the "Black Man." You are peeved because the Emperor of Abyssinia, Haile Selassie, has been criticised for the purpose of clarifying the complicated situation of the Italo-Abyssinian war and temporary defeat of Abyssinia.

It is for me to inform you that whilst I appreciate your enthusiasm[,] I cannot in the same manner compliment your intelligence, because there is no man on earth above criticism. The Emperor of Abyssinia was not only Emperor in himself, but he held a trust as Emperor of the only surviving Negro Empire in Africa, and by his behaviour he has betrayed that trust consciously or unconsciously. Some Negroes, therefore, cannot compliment him as you want us to do, for the betrayal of that trust, but naturally must seek a way to explain the situation so that the entire world may not think that we are all entirely void not only of racial pride but of character.

You refer to "we in America." I do not know whom you mean by "we." I think the "we" means yourself, because knowing the race as I do, I think that when they have the facts before them they do not act so silly as to let other people laugh at them. From the nature of your letter it doesn't appear that you are a Negro at all, because if you were you could not be so ruthless in encouraging the male members of your race to go throughout the world intermarrying with other races, to the disadvantage of their own. You seem to take great pride in intermarriage with the opposite races. As far as this is concerned, that alienates you from all racial respect as far as I am concerned. I respect and love my race and I feel that the majority of Negroes in America do the same, so that when you write of "we in America" I surely believe you are only referring to your own feeling and not to that of any appreciable number of sensible Negroes who have read the article to which you refer.

You refer to Mussolini's intention of subduing Ethiopia. Mussolini had no more right to the intention than the Emperor of Abyssinia had to the proper intention of defending his country. You seem to put Mussolini on a pedestal like a god and reduce the Emperor to an imbecile who is bound by every caprice of Mussolini's, to the extent of not preparing himself and his country against the vile Italian onslaught. That Mussolini stated there were eleven coloured persons to every white one in the world, was no reason why Haile Selassie should keep his country unprepared, but very good argument why he should have been ready to strike a blow in defence of national integrity. I cannot understand you at all when you try to condone slavery among Negroes. If you like the kind of slavery that the Abyssinians have been kept in by their

Government, why didn't you go there and live under it. Probably you would have been an Empress later on. Your remarks are very simple and show that you are not competent to discuss a matter as important as that which was taken up under the title "Italian Conquest" in the last issue of "The Black Man." If you think that any blood relationship between the Emperor of Abyssinia and Solomon will help him to settle important international questions of today, you may be considered an idle dreamer. People do not care anything about Solomon to-day. They are very much interested in conditions as they are; and as suggested, if the Emperor had paid more attention to modern diplomacy and scientific politics, rather than flattering himself over the idea of his being descended from Solomon, making him superior to the other Abyssinians, because they are black, he would have been still Emperor and we would have been proud of him as our representative.

All the coloured women to whom you refer, from Sheba to Josephine of France[,] have all given away something. Sheba gave away her gold, Josephine gave away her loyalty and devotion and was left in the cold, Moses lost the respect of his sister and brother because he married a black woman, and God himself had to intervene to save Moses from their wrath, the provocation of which with other things prevented Moses from seeing the Promised Land.

You suggest that the Emperor should not be blamed for appointing diplomats to represent Abyssinia who are married to white women, and particularly Italians. If this is the state of your mind as a critic of international matters, than it is plain to be seen that you are only dabbling in something with which you are not competent to express a sensible opinion. It is the very fact that his diplomats had dual affiliations why he was so double-crossed, and even as far as Italy was concerned knew nothing about the preparations Italy was making for fifteen years to attack him, even though he had an ambass[ad]or resident in Rome - but the Ambassador [Negrus Yesus Afework] was married to an Italian woman.¹

You are quite welcome to withdraw from me any good opinion you had of me, if that opinion was based only on your desire for me to play the fool in handling important questions vital to the interest of our race. You expect me to condemn the British Government unnecessarily, just for the vanity of doing so or the madness thereof. There are times when not only the British Government should be criticised in their treatment toward Negroes but any other Government, but when the British Government or any Government is acting in a manner to be complimented in any particular, it is only a fool who would consistently condemn such a Government, and that is what apparently you want me to do. As leader of an important Negro movement I am not inclined to be always making enemies among Governments for my race rather than friends. If you want to do that, you are quite privileged to do so, but you will not inveigle me into such a practice simply to get your approval. My suggestion of the Emperor going to a Monastery is in keeping with his religious professions. As a fact, he has very little of politics in him but much of religion. When he should be fighting he was always praying even though his Government held slaves. His prayers were not answered because he held slaves, quite inconsistent with the manner of approach to receive God's true blessing. When men fail in major matters they either take a rest or they are pushed aside by others who are better able to succeed. When through the disloyalty of my associates I failed to carry out all the aims and objects of the Organisation that I was leading I had to retire for quite a long time to allow others to do better than I could. It was only after finding their inability to do that much better that I was universally requested to assume aggressive leadership once more in the said movement. So that I was not unmindful of the responsibilities and duties of leaders when they failed, when I suggested to the Emperor that he retire to a Monastery, but at the same time pray for the safe-conduct of his country.

You asked me to retract the things I wrote in the article for my own prestige and the high esteem in which I was held by you and others. I am sorry I cannot oblige you. As a leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association I have a duty to perform, not only to the members of

the Organization but to the race, and it is for me to explain to them why Abyssinia failed in the war with Italy, for the time being. It was purely through the bad diplomacy of Haile Selassie who surrounded himself with white advisers and who himself pretended to be white and who continued such a policy even up to his arrival in ENGLAND, where he made it a feature to entertain white people particularly white ladies, and whose conduct exposed him to the severest of criticism as far as loyalty to his own race is concerned.

Again it is stated that there is no desire to be unfair or unkind to the Emperor but there is a desire to give correct information to the race so that its members may know how to act in the matter. I have the honour to be, Your obedient servant,

MARCUS GARVEY
President-General
Universal Negro Improvement Association

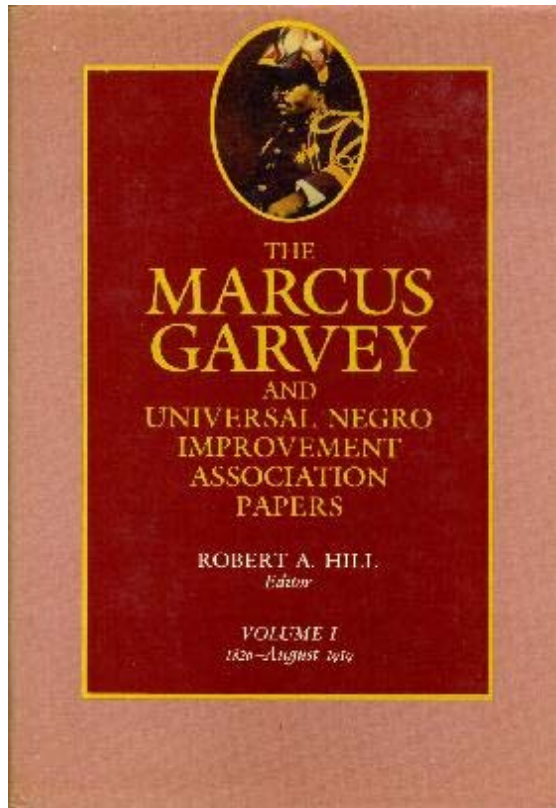
[Address:] Miss Una Brown,
200, W. 113th Street,
New York City, N.Y.

Printed in *BM* 2, no. 3 (September-October 1936): 15-16. Original headlines omitted.

1. Negrus Yesus Afework, also known as Afework Gebre Iyesus (1868-1947), was the Ethiopian chargé d'affaires in Rome from 1931 to 1935. Afework was born into an upper-class family and educated at the Academia Albertina di Belle Arti and the Collegio Internazionale in Turin, Italy. In 1902 he became an assistant to Francesco Gallina, an Italian who chaired the Amharic Studies Department at the Oriental Institute in Naples. He married an Italian, Eugenia Rossi, in 1904. He was the author of a handbook of Italian-Amharic conversation and numerous pro-Italian articles, as well as other literary and scholarly works. His *Lebb wallad tarik* (*Story Born Out of Fantasy* [Rome, 1908]) has been called "the first modern Amharic novel" (L. H. Ofosu-Appiah, ed., *Dictionary of African Biography* [New York: Reference Publications, 1977], p. 44).

Afework held a number of diplomatic posts before becoming minister to Italy in 1931. He was recalled to Addis Ababa when Count Vinci, the Italian minister to Ethiopia, was expelled from the Ethiopian capitol in October 1935. He became chief of the Ethiopian court system during the Italian occupation (1936-1941) and was exiled to Jimma, in southwest Ethiopia, when Haile Selassie I returned to power. He died in exile six years later (*Times* [London], 10 October, 11 October, 15 October, 24 October, 29 October, 1 November, and 14 November 1935).

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, pp. 698-703.



MORE LIGHT ON HAILE SELASSIE

(By MARCUS GARVEY)

From **THE BLACK MAN**

[November/December 1936]

The [July/August](#) [1936] and [September/October](#) [1936] issues of *The Black Man* carried criticisms "pro" and "con" about the Emperor of Abyssinia - Haile Selassie - who is now residing in exile in England.

The criticisms on the matter were really prompted for the purpose of enlightening the Negro world about the true situation of affairs and to awaken him from his usual sentimental dreams.

NOT UNDERSTANDING.

Some people, a limited few, not understanding the purpose, entertained narrow views as to whether the Emperor should be criticized or not, and actually suggested that he was above criticism, no doubt, because of his "divinity." Where they got this idea from we are unable to explain, other than to charge it to real ignorance about the present state of our peculiarly civilized world. There is one satisfaction, and that is, that *The Black Man* being read in all parts of the world, has succeeded in creating an enlightenment that is positively necessary if the Negro is to seriously and intelligently grapple with the problems that confront him, particularly those that are political.

NOT UNFAIRNESS.

No one desires to be unfair to Haile Selassie. The only sad thing is that he has been unfair to himself, to his country and his countrymen, by acting in a manner not consistent with ordinary political intelligence necessary to our age, in understanding the machinations, cunning and vile methods and systems of Governments and peoples.

Those who pay a little attention to European and American politics, must wonder, with great astonishment, how Haile Selassie could have made such colossal blunders in ignoring the sacred trust imposed upon him, of jealously safe-guarding the interest of the country and people whom he elevated himself to rule so as to prevent them from falling into the very covetous hands and under the domination of an enemy who made no secret of his threat toward the usurpation of the people's political freedom and the conquest of the country.

SYMPATHY FOR THE EMPEROR.

If there is sympathy for Haile Selassie, it must be for his unfortunate ignorance of history which should be the guide of every modern statesman and ruler to enable him to successfully protect the national interests involved. Any tyro who has read European history knows that the Machiavellian policy is as evident today as in the day of the originator of the policy, and politically the diplomatic word must be taken not in the literal sense but with a grain of salt. Undertakings between Governments should be considered from the angle of diplomacy which generally hides the truth that is intended.

Haile Selassie was not able to understand the hidden methods and motives encouched in diplomatic papers and ad- vices. The result was, as Machiavelli would suggest, his being trapped to the advantage of the astute Mussolini, whose diplomacy for the good of Italy could well be understood by the keen diplomat.

When it is understood that Haile Selassie ruled over a State with more than twelve million people and one of the richest in the world in natural resources, his best friends surely cannot compliment him for leaving that country in the hands of a foreign foe, and by the methods he adopted.

KEPT COUNTRY UNPREPARED.

He kept his country unprepared in a modern civilization whose policy was strictly aggressive. He resorted senti- mentally to prayer and to feasting and fasting, not consistent with the policy that secures the existence of present-day freedom for peoples whilst other nations and rulers are building up armaments of the most destructive kind as the only means of securing peace and protection. He reclined on the peculiar policy of leaving everything to the Almighty Wisdom of the Universal Creator Who, in all history, has never yet taken political sides between two rival human political forces and powers. For God to maintain his equilibrium, He cannot take sides in human political differences between peoples and nations, otherwise He would cease to be the God of the one, yet positively declaring Himself to be the God of the other. So as the result shows, God had nothing to do with the campaign of Italy in Abyssinia, for on the one side we had the Pope of the Catholic Church blessing the Crusade and the other the Coptic Church fasting and praying with confidence of victory.

THE ITALIAN FORCE.

The Italians triumphed by the use of mustard gas. Surely God was not on the side of the Italians helping them to disload the gas of death. The Abyssinians lost. God

could not have been on their side either. It is logical therefore that God didn't take sides, but left the matter to be settled by the strongest human battalion. Haile Selassie had no equipment and no food. He never even had gas masks. The Emperor remained in the Palace long enough to give the Italians a good foothold in Abyssinia, and then when he left the Palace it was only for seeing his poorly equipped soldiers flee before the enemy and to gain time for himself to get back to the Palace and flee the country with all he could lay his hands on, leaving the unfortunate people to the mercy of the heartless invader.

These are the facts. Those who do not want to know them may, like the ostrich, hide their heads in the sand; but those of us who know and understand, realize that battles are not won this way.

We are sorry for the Emperor, because we realize he didn't know better. As a fact, he didn't know what it was all about, but that it was just a matter of attacking his Divine right of being Emperor and that the consequence could well be left to God Who ordained the Divinity that made him Emperor.

HOLDING CROWNS.

Kings and Emperors do not hold their crowns today by Divine right. They hold them by superior statesmanship, such as is being demonstrated to us by the nations of Europe and America. When the Negroes get this kind of a sense in their heads they will be able to fight a successful war in Abyssinia and elsewhere.

Editorial by Marcus Garvey
in the *Black Man*

[January 1937]

FIGHTING IN ABYSSINIA - THE EMPEROR RUNS

The poor Abyssinian native patriots, disorganized and almost helpless, are still fighting against the invading Italians. These poor people have been left by Haile Selassie to fight out their own destiny, although pretence is being made that it is the Abyssinian Government that is doing the fighting. There is no Abyssinian Government in the sense of a recognized government, but there are scattered bands of Abyssinian patriots who are fighting in guerilla and other warfare with the hope of saving their country.

It is a pity that there is no real Abyssinian Napoleon to gather these scattered patriotic units together and conduct a proper campaign against the Italian settlers. In the absence of such a leader we can only hope that the guerilla warfare will continue, such as the Cuban guerilla warfare did,¹ until some well organized power is able to go to the assistance of the patriots to help them to recover their freedom. In the absence of such benefaction, the patriots of Abyssinia will have to bide their time, when a better opportunity will present itself to expel the invaders.

Although the Emperor has thrown away the country and left the people leaderless, there is still hope such as history generally presents in cases of the kind. Owing to the bad Government organization of Abyssinia prior to the war, there was no proper or systematic control of the country, so much so that a large number of the population lived more as bandits and wild men than as disciplined citizens. This is not creditable when it is considered that Abyssinia is a great country and had as great an opportunity for civilized progress as any other country in the world.

There are some people who think that the Emperor and his Government should not be harshly criticised, but when it is considered that the freedom of twelve million people is taken away by the negligence of the governing authority, no sensible person can exclude such authority from blame if they really think that the Abyssinians should be free and independent like anyone else. The Negroes of the world have been very much interested in Abyssinia and are still interested, because Abyssinia is a Negro Country, even though the Emperor did not think so. As such it would have been the happiest thing in the world for Negroes to see it rated among the first-class nations of the world. When the war broke out, we glorified the Emperor, we defended him, we did everything to encourage him, but he has failed in his trust, and as the facts reveal themselves to light, we have no other course than to present the truth to the Negro world. The Emperor was never competent. His incompetence was shown primarily through his dependence upon other people who were clearly not his friends to advise him. The result of the advice is that he has been tricked by the League of Nations and by the European Nations. All in keeping with the desire to give a European Power a controlling hand in Abyssinia.

If Mussolini had lost a war for Italy, or should Hitler lose a war for Germany, or Stalin one for Russia, their respective peoples would not pay them compliments but would send them running. The Kaiser lost the war for Germany and they sent him into permanent exile.² The Emperor has lost the Abyssinian battle and he is now in permanent exile in England, and will only be able to return to Abyssinia, at least Addis Ababa, after he becomes an Italian citizen. This is bad for him, and also bad for the Abyssinians, but we must pay all honour to the native patriots who are still doing their best without the assistance of the Emperor. If they could be reached they are the ones to be helped. Sooner or later we will have to reach them, but not in the way some people expect it can be done at the present time - through the agency of the Emperor. He has no

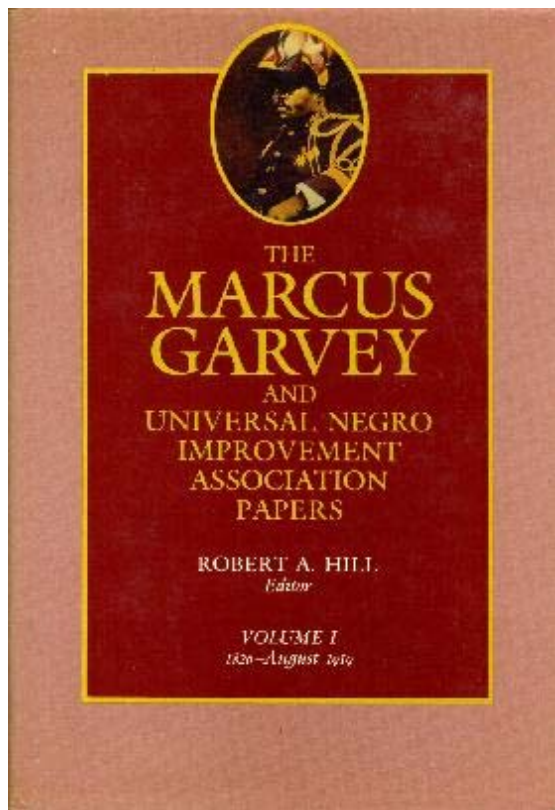
more control over the fighting patriots than Mussolini has. In fact, Mussolini has more, because he is on the spot. The Emperor is thousands of miles away, hiding. In truth he doesn't know what is going on.

Printed in *BM* 2 no. 5 (January 1937): 1-2.

1. Garvey is referring to the protracted struggle of Cuban revolutionaries to gain independence from Spain. A large-scale rebellion broke out in 1868 that lasted for ten years; Spain only managed to defeat the revolutionaries due to Cuban dissension over the institution of slavery. A second rebellion broke out in 1895; the United States entered the war on the side of the Cuban rebels in 1898. American intervention swiftly decided the war, and Spain relinquished title to the island in the Treaty of Paris, signed in December 1898. Though formal political independence was attained, Cuba remained under military occupation by U.S. forces, and American influence remained predominant long thereafter (Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1978], p. 170).

2. In early November 1918, faced with growing revolutionary unrest, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany abdicated and went into exile in Holland; an armistice ending World War I was concluded soon thereafter. There existed considerable sentiment in the allied countries to try the deposed Kaiser as a war criminal, but he was allowed to live out his declining years peacefully. He died at Doorn, Holland, on 5 June 1941 (Virginia Cowles, *The Kaiser* [London: Collins, 1963], pp. 407-430).

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, pp. 727-728, 734.



Article by Marcus Garvey
in the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*

[[London,]] [23 January 1937]

HAILE SELASSIE IS BAD HISTORIAN
AND WORSE PSYCHOLOGIST,
OPINES FAM[OU]S U.N.I.A. LEADER

The American Negro is the most loyal, self-conscious, and expressive member of the racial group. He is never wanting in his response to racial appeals that stir him to the possibility of real service - religiously, politically, and otherwise.

He has never failed those who appeal to him. Most of the time, however, he allows his enthusiasm for racial causes to get the better of his judgment, and then, when the truth is brought home to him, he becomes disappointed and disgusted.

Efforts should be made not to spoil his good disposition and character in this respect, for he it is who is leading the world of other Negroes in the race in the hope of solving a problem that calls for their true responsibility to the most serious application.

THE WAR, FOR INSTANCE

The Italo-Abyssinian War had an immediate appeal to the American Negro, like Negroes in all other parts of the world, and his response was immediate and most enthusiastic.

Unfortunately when Ethiopia entered upon the War and before, there was no organized intelligence about its true position among Negroes anywhere. It was difficult, therefore, for Abyssinia to get the right kind of support that was absolutely necessary at the very start of things.

The lack of information among Negroes of the world about Abyssinia was due to the fault of the Abyssinian government which up to that time took no diplomatic pains of creating contact with the Negro peoples of the world and particularly those of America so as to create among them an interest that was most necessary and vital for a successful resistance of an Italian or European offensive.

ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR

From our knowledge and experience, we are able to say that the Abyssinian government headed by Emperor Haile Selassie felt that its existence was possible without any catering to and contact with Negroes.

In fact, they held themselves to be a separate and distinct race from the Negro race, and the entire administrative policy was to treat the blacks as an inferior people in whom they were not politically interested, except for their enslavement and exploitation.

The Amharic Rulers felt that they had descended from a superior race and even in Abyssinia the darker races of the country were regarded as inferiors only fit to be feudal serfs and in many instances overburdened slaves.

NOT ENLIGHTENED

Unfortunately the Emperor's government was not an enlightened one, in the sense that it

could not understand and appreciate European diplomacy and the methods of European statesmen in preserving the political independence of their respective countries and in catering to their respective peoples.

The Abyssinian policy was based on the absolute elevation of the ruling classes and the positive lack of national interest in the native masses. This is contrary to the policy of enlightened and civilized governments where the rulers - whether they be kings, emperors, dictators, or presidents - hold office only as executive trustees for the people whom they must serve, the wishes of the said people being supreme will and law.

With them, the people dictate the policies of government and demand service from government in their interest. With Abyssinia, it was the Emperor who dictated the policy of the government and he used the government, people, and country for his own divine and personal purposes.

AN OBSTACLE

Naturally, such a condition in Abyssinia would make it rather difficult for the government to rally the real patriotic support of the people in a crisis such as was brought about by Mussolini.

Mussolini[,] being an astute diplomat and expert statesman, pandered to the weakness of the Abyssinian oppressed and neglected masses. While the Emperor failed to feed them, to equip them, and to properly train and educate them, Mussolini stepped in after his invasion and supplied their necessary human needs, particularly in feeding and caring for them.

The result was a stampede of the Abyssinians from the Emperor to the invader. This, more than anything else, assisted Mussolini to conquer the country.¹

BAD PSYCHOLOGIST

As bad an historian and psychologist as Haile Selassie was, he overlooked the necessary human elements - human aspirations which were common to people of all races. He, instead of providing for the Abyssinian masses as stated, only provided for himself; hence, when the fight reached its crucial point, he had no one to stand alongside of him and so he had to flee, leaving the people to the mercy of Mussolini and the Italian hordes.

Much news has been published after Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia, about the Abyssinians still fighting successfully against the Italians. This must be taken with a grain of salt.

There is really no organized opposition to Italy in Abyssinia. The incompetent rulers who opened Abyssinia to invasion are still making the effort to hold on to Abyssinia, hence a lot of misrepresentative statements which seem to be affecting the American public.

FREEDOM DESIRED

Every Negro desires the freedom of Abyssinia, but that freedom is now suspended, in that Italy is fully established in the country. There is no well recognized government in the country among the Abyssinians. The few men who have been holding out, have been doing so on their own account, but not because they have been supported by the exiled Emperor or his defunct government.

Any appeal therefore, to the American public on behalf of Haile Selassie's government, suggesting that the war is still going on for the re-conquest of the country, should not be accepted as a truth, but should be explained so that the American public might use proper judgment in the matter.

SELASSIE VS. MASSES

Haile Selassie[,] until his defeat and exile, only considered Negroes as being of no consequence, but his view point must not be considered as the view point of the Abyssinian masses who are as unfortunate as the oppressed Negroes everywhere.

The American Negro should, through his own agency, establish contact with the Abyssinian Negroes for better understanding, that they may work for the redemption of Africa.

An independent course should be taken and no one should allow himself to be deceived into believing that much more can be accomplished through Haile Selassie himself.

EXILE PERMANENT

His exile from the country will be as permanent as Mussolini decides. The hope of Abyssinia, therefore, rests with other forces than Haile Selassie. Primarily, it rests with the loyal Abyssinians who remained in Abyssinia and who must work out a diplomatic scheme of surprising the Italians.

This may come through civil war, when they are ready, or through Italy becoming involved in a European war to render her incapable of protecting her interest in Abyssinia.

To accomplish any good this way, the Abyssinians and their Negro friends must work quietly and diplomatically and not in the way the Emperor and his agents have been working by making statements which are unfounded and which tend to expose the Abyssinian natives to the retaliation and revenge of the ever watchful Italian forces which are gathering information internationally on the Abyssinian situation.

NO GOVERNMENT IN GORE

When the Emperor went to Geneva and stated that he had a government in Gore which he knew he hadn't at the time, he was only focusing Italian military activities against the few remaining patriots at Gore, who were endeavoring to hold on.²

If left alone without any interference from the Emperor, they might have been able to strike a bargain with the League of Nations, the British and French governments or with Italy herself to remain independent in the western section of Abyssinia.

The Emperor knows nothing about history and European diplomacy, and he seems to be interested in no one else but himself and his family. Everything is lost to the Abyssinians - the poor Abyssinians who remained at home whilst everything has been taken by the Emperor who sought immediate and voluntary exile, when the situation became too warm for him to remain on the spot.

MUST BE CAREFUL

The American Negro should be careful how he continues to support a lost cause. He is advised not to give away his money foolishly to something that will never be realized, but if he has to support the cause of Abyssinia or the cause of any Negro government, he should first have a proper understanding and agreement with that government to share in the benefits to accrue from the assistance given.³

This is the only business way to help. This is the way for peoples and governments to act. The Negroes should be no different. A government cannot be built up on sympathy and charity, but on a sound business basis.

Any assistance, therefore, to Negro governments should be given only when there is a proper understanding to result in those offering assistance being considered as being entitled to certain rights which they would not be able to demand without a proper understanding before their assistance was given.

Printed in the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 23 January 1937. Original headlines abridged.

1. In the months leading up to the war, Mussolini tried to undermine Haile Selassie's influence over the provinces by infiltrating and bribing Ethiopians loyal to local chieftains. This method was particularly successful among the Azebu Gallas. Haile Selassie himself acknowledged that many of his rases were on the Italian payroll but described the transactions as "bribery without corruption" since they would "pocket Italian money and remain steadfast to Ethiopia" (Thomas M. Coffey, *Lion by the Tail: The Story of the Italian-Ethiopian War* [New York: Viking Press, 1974], p. 173; see also pp. 39, 177). One of Ethiopia's more famous defectors was Dejasmatch Haile Selassie Gugsa, Haile Selassie's former son-in-law, who made overtures to General De Bono early in the war, bringing some twelve-hundred men and five vintage rifles with him. De Bono appointed him to a powerless position as a civilian chief of Tigre (Coffey, *Lion by the Tail*, pp. 179-186).

In the 1935 poem "The Brutal Crime," Garvey had voiced a different view from the one stated in this document on the issue of the disloyalty of some Ethiopians. The poem included the following stanzas: "When Mussolini challenged us, / He knew the weakness of the men; / To feed and pat them on the back / Was all, to get them in the pen. / The cursed fool who fell for Rome, / And marched against the Motherland, / Should never live to tell the tale / Of his unholy traitorband . . .," (*BM* 1, no. 11 [December 1935]: 4).

2. When Haile Selassie returned to Addis Ababa on 30 April 1936, he summoned his remaining elders to a meeting wherein he supported a plan to transfer both himself and his government to the town of Gore (a settlement in the mountains near the Sudanese border, two hundred miles west of Addis Ababa in the province of Ilubabor). Discouraged by British, French, and U.S. officials, opposed by his family, and supported by only three of his own councilors, the emperor was forced to abandon his plan to continue the resistance and moved himself and government records outside of the country, instead of to Gore. The mountainous region surrounding Gore did remain, however, a stronghold for patriot cadres, including resistance fighters led by Ras Imru (David A. Talbot, *Haile Selassie I: Silver Jubilee* [The Hague: W. P. Van Stockum and Zoon, 1955], pp. 43-44; Coffey, *Lion by the Tail*, p. 333). For Garvey's view of the internal resistance in Ethiopia, see his editorial comments in "The Patriots of Abyssinia" (*BM* 2, no. 2 [July-August 1936]: 20) and "Fighting for Abyssinia - The Emperor Runs" (*BM* 2, no. 5 [January 1937]: 1-2). See also his two patriotic poems, "Ras Nasibu of Ogodon" (*BM* 2, no. 5 [January 1937]: 11) and "Ras Desta" (*BM* 2, no. 6 [March-April 1937]: 7).

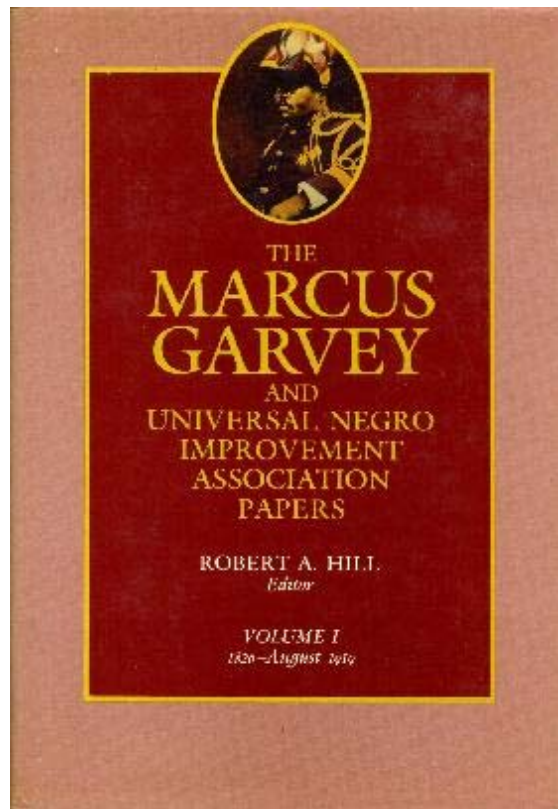
3. Garvey's concern over the disposition of the money collected for Ethiopia had some substance. Despite local efforts, American neutrality legislation made direct recruitment of soldiers and shipment of arms difficult; there is also little evidence that a significant amount of the money solicited for Ethiopian support ever reached its source. For example, the Friends of Ethiopia, a leading national association organized for Ethiopian aid, failed actually to deliver assistance, and a New York newspaper headline of 1935 proclaimed Ethiopian relief "A Juicy Racket" in Harlem (*New York Herald Tribune*, 2 August 1935).

Garvey's skepticism about Ethiopia as a lost cause, however, was not shared by most of his American followers. After the fall of Addis Ababa to the Italians and Haile Selassie's escape into exile, UNIA members in the United States continued to work for the relief movement, even though white supporters largely lost interest. In the months following the fall of the Ethiopian capital the relief effort thus took on an increasingly black nationalist cast. For example, United Aid for Ethiopia, a Harlem-based organization in which white progressives participated, disbanded in 1937 and was replaced by the Ethiopian World Federation, made up largely of blacks who saw their organization as a "pro-Ethiopia movement of mass proportions with a black nationalist base" (William Randolph Scott, "A Study of Afro-American and Ethiopian Relations, 1896-1941" [Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1971], p. 183).

The fact that the Ethiopian cause became increasingly attractive to black nationalists rather than waning with the turn of events in the African nation left Garvey politically isolated. As Claude McKay noted, the Ethiopian World Federation drew its supporters "from the same common people that gave power to the Garvey movement"; as a result, "Garvey's denunciation did not swing his swing his people" (*Harlem: Negro Metropolis* [New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1940] pp. 175-176. Considerable evidence suggests that McKay's assessment was accurate (*New York Post*, 15 July 1935; *New York Herald Tribune* 29 August 1935; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 February 1937; Scott "A Study of Afro-American and Ethiopian Relations," pp. 152-329). For an earlier instance of Garvey's skepticism, see his

editorial commentary "Collecting Money for Abyssinia" (*BM*, 1 no.11 [December 1935]: 11).

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, pp. 718-722.



Editorial by Marcus Garvey
in the *Black Man*

[London, March/April 1937]

THE FAILURE OF HAILLE SELASSIE AS EMPEROR

When the facts of history are written Haile Selassie of Abyssinia will go down as a great coward who ran away from his country to save his skin and left the millions of his countrymen to struggle through a terrible war that he brought upon them because of his political ignorance and his racial disloyalty.

It is a pity that a man of the limited intellectual calibre and weak political character like Haile Selassie became Emperor of Abyssinia at so crucial a time in the political history of the world. Unfortunately, Abyssinia lost the controlling influence of a political personality of patriotic racial character like the late Menelik, whose loyalty to his race and devotion to his country excelled all his other qualities, to the extent that he was able to use that very strength to continuously safeguard the interests of the Ethiopian Empire. What he did so well to preserve, a cringing, white slave hero worshipper, visionless and disloyal to his country, threw away. This is the impression the serious minded political student forms of the conduct of the ex-Emperor of Abyssinia.

EVERY NEGRO ASHAMED

Every Negro who is proud of his race must be ashamed of the way in which Haile Selassie surrendered himself to the white wolves of Europe. These statements may be considered very severe, and in fact, they are. We could have been otherwise apologetic and sympathetic, but that would have been only if we were dealing with a Coptic Priest or a Religious Monk and not a[n] Emperor who held and presided over the political trust of twelve million people of his own country, and the political destiny of the entire Negro race. This little misguided Emperor could not realise that he held in his hands the political trust of the hundreds of millions of Negroes of the world, men and women, who were looking up toward the firm establishment of political sovereignty, and that Ethiopia, like Liberia and Haiti were to them prizes of glory to be perpetuated and strengthened in the maintenance of the dignity of that black race that other men have claimed to be incompetent, inferior and unworthy, which every black man must disprove.

LOOKED WITH HOPE

When the war started in Abyssinia all Negro nationalists looked with hope to Haile Selassie. They spoke for him, they prayed for him, they sung for him, they did everything to hold up his hands, as Aaron did for Moses; but whilst the Negro peoples of the world were praying for the success of Abyssinia this little Emperor was undermining the fabric of his own kingdom by playing the fool with white men, having them advising him[,] having them telling him what to do, how to surrender, how to call off the successful thrusts of his Rases against the Italian invaders. Yes, they were telling him how to prepare his flight, and like an imbecilic child he followed every advice and then ultimately ran away from his country to England, leaving his people to be massacred by the Italians, and leaving the serious white world to laugh at every Negro and repeat the charge and snare - "he is incompetent," "we told you so." Indeed Haile Selassie has proved the incompetence of the Negro for political authority, but thank God there are Negroes who

realise that Haile Selassie did not represent the truest qualities of the Negro race. How could he, when he wanted to play white? how could he, when he surrounded himself with white influence? how could he, when in a modern world, and in a progressive civilization, he preferred a slave State of black men than a free democratic country where the black citizens could rise to the same opportunities as white citizens in their democracies?

TELL THE TRUTH

The truth must be told so that the white world will realise that it was not the pride of the Negro that surrendered in Abyssinia. It was the disloyalty of a single man who was too silly to take pride in his race, who played such a game as to disgrace the political integrity of a noble people. The Negroes of Abyssinia and of the world are satisfied however that Abyssinia was not conquered by Italy and the European forces of Mussolini. Abyssinia was only conquered by the black levies of Italy. The Askaris have really been the victors in Abyssinia. [Rodolfo] Graziani only marched into Addis Ababa after he had made sure of the advanced guard of the Askaris. Every battle that the Italians won in Abyssinia resulted from the advanced charge of the Askaris. It was black men fighting black men, and this was made possible in Abyssinia because the regime of Haile Selassie had given a bad taste to the mouth, not only of the blacks of Abyssinia but of those of the surrounding territories. They felt that they had a cause against the Amharic white loving Emperor who liked to chain and flog black men, and whose brutality to them gave Mussolini the cause to fool the world that he was bestowing a blessing upon the people of Abyssinia by freeing them.

NO SLAVES

It was a piece of impertinence to suggest that black men should be held as slaves. We must admit that we glorified Haile Selassie when the war started, fought his battles to win international support, but we ever felt deep down in our hearts that he was a slave master. We had hoped that if Abyssinia had won that we would have forced the Government of Abyssinia to free the black whom they held as slaves. We would have preferred this than seeing the country taken by Mussolini or any European power; but now that the country is temporarily lost and the Emperor has cowardly exiled himself, the truth must be told.

WHAT RIGHT HAS HE?

The future freedom of Abyssinia must be built upon the highest principles of democracy. That is why it is preferable for the Abyssinian Negroes and the Negroes of the world to work for the restoration and freedom of the country without the assistance of Haile Selassie, because at best he is but a slave master. The Negroes of the Western World whose forefathers suffered for three hundred years under the terrors of slavery ought to be able to appreciate what freedom means. Surely they cannot feel justified in supporting any system that would hold their brothers in slavery in another country whilst they are enjoying the benefits of freedom elsewhere. The Africans who are free can also appreciate the position of slaves in Abyssinia. What right has the Emperor to keep slaves when all the democratic sections of the world were free, when men had the right to live, to develop, to expand, to enjoy all the benefits of human liberty[?]

The Emperor who has been exiled in Europe must have seen the civilization of Europe. In England where he lives he sees that men are not flogged and chained and kicked because of their colour or because of their condition, but where true human liberty guarantees to every man the

happiest pursuit he can bring to himself. It has been reported that he is leaving England for Syria, where a large number of Abyssinian refugees are living. There is an interpretation that the decision to leave England and to live among "his people?" in Syria is to perpetuate his divine majesty in the presence of that king worship that he doesn't get in England, where men look at others as equals and not as masters by divine right. In truth, the Emperor is out of place in democratic England. He wants to be once more in the environment of the feudal Monarch who looks down upon his slaves and serfs with contempt. Except he changes the attitude of thinking himself better than the Negro who constitutes the larger number of Ethiopia and profit by the experience he has gained, he should not be a fit person to be in authority in the very country in which he was born. After all, Haile Selassie is just an ordinary man like any other human being.

What right has he to hold men as slaves? It is only the misfortune of the slaves that causes him to be a slave master. Negroes who have the dignity of their race at heart resent the impertinence of anyone holding the blacks as slaves. Haile Selassie ought to realise this and abolish his foolish dream of being an Emperor of slaves and serfs and try to be an Emperor of noble men, and for him to be that he must himself be the noblest of them all. He hasn't proved his nobility in the war between Italy and Abyssinia. Ras Desta¹ proved to be the Lord, the Nobleman of Ethiopia whilst Haile Selassie proved a cringing coward!²

Printed in *BM* 2, no. 6 (March-April 1937): 8-9.

1. Ras Desta (1892-1937), a Shoan noble who favored Haile Selassie's policy of modernization, was married to the emperor's daughter, Tenagne Werq Haile Selassie. He instituted public works projects in the provinces of Borana and Sidamo in the 1920s. Haile Selassie made him commander-in-chief of southern Ethiopian forces with the onslaught of the Italian invasion in 1935. Marshal Rodolfo Graziani destroyed his exhausted and malaria-ridden army in the Battle of Ganale Doria, near the southeastern Ethiopian border, in January 1936. The Italians identified the whereabouts of the starving Ethiopian forces with aerial reconnaissance, then used some seventeen hundred kilograms of mustard gas against them. Thousands died in the battle. Others were driven into the desert, where they succumbed to hunger and dehydration. Ras Desta and his servants escaped. He emerged later as a leader of the guerilla resistance. After Haile Selassie's exile, he maintained a guerilla force with Dejazmatch Gabre Mariam in the Great Lake District. He was captured and put to death by the Italians in 1937, his severed head displayed to the population of Jimma province as a warning against opposition. Shortly after, an assassination attempt was made against Viceroy Graziani. The Italians attributed it to the followers of Ras Desta and, in the few days following the attempt, massacred thousands of inhabitants of Addis Ababa in reprisal (A. J. Barker, *The Civilizing Mission: The Italo-Ethiopian War 1935-1936* [London: Cassell, 1968], pp. 244, 282-283; Thomas M. Coffey, *Lion by the Tail: The Story of the Italian-Ethiopian War* [New York: Viking Press, 1974], pp. 272-274; Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* [Metuchen, N.J., and London: Scarecrow Press, 1981], p. 49).

2. George Padmore debated Garvey on 30 May 1937. According to Ralph Bunche's account of the debate:

Marcus boasted that he was for Mussolini; called [Haile] Selassie a coward, dumb and a trickster; Padmore had to protect him from the white proletarian audience when Garvey attacked them as riff-raff pointing out that the great Empire would be lost if it weren't for the "great men" at the head [o]f the govt. [Stanley] Baldwin, et al, attacked Selassie for having white advisors. (diary entry of Ralph Bunche, courtesy of Robert Edgar, Howard University, Washington, D.C.)

See also *PT*, 4 September 1937.

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press 1983), vol. 7, pp. 739-742.

