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# An Opponent of Garveyism:

## Letter to the Editor of *The World Tomorrow*, November 1921

by W.A. Domingo

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As a Negro and a West Indian who is familiar with most of the external and many of the internal manifestations of Garveyism, and especially as I was the first Negro journalist to subject the movement to critical examination from every angle, I must compliment Miss Tuttle upon having established in her article in your September issue a clear distinction between the UNIA [Universal Negro Improvement Association] and the Negro race.<sup>1</sup> By no means can the recent 31-day convention of the UNIA at Liberty Hall be regarded as having been a convention of the Negro race; it was only a convention of the UNIA, a Negro organization.

In all of his outpourings to the press, in all his bombastic, exaggerated, and misinformed statements Mr. Garvey has sought to convey the impression that he speaks for the race, that his satellites (who are mostly hand-picked and recipients of handsome salaries from his bounty) are democratically elected, that he represents, in short, a point of view that finds endorsement among large numbers of his race. This position has been accepted by the white press and no matter how strenuous a protest is offered no effort is made to correct this erroneous view. This has led to the suspicion on the part of Negroes that the white press, or those who control it, realizing the inherent fallacies of Garveyism which have been so ably pointed out by Miss

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<sup>1</sup> Worth Tuttle, "A New Nation in Harlem," *The World Tomorrow*, vol. 4, no. 9 (Sept. 1921), pp. 279-281.

Tuttle, are consciously aiding in the growth of the movement by giving it undue publicity so as to make the ruin and consequent reflection upon the ability of Negroes all the more widespread when disaster comes, as it surely will, sooner or later.

Mr. Garvey claims a membership of 4,500,000. According to a signed report covering ten months ending July 31 [1921], the death tax of 10 cents per month collected from each member amounted to less than \$20,000. By a process of simple arithmetic one sees that the membership of the movement is less than 20,000.

Miss Tuttle's criticism of the business projects is admirable. Mr. Garvey's fundamental error rests in the fact that he does not understand the world in which he lives, although he does understand the unlettered of his race. If he understood of politics, intrigue, finance, and might, he would never have made the mistake of inextricably joining his property and his business. When the material foundation is destroyed — as the ordinary laws of economics and the machinations of those whom he thinks he is fighting surely will destroy it — the spiritual superstructure will cease to be. And as reaction is equal to action, the race will be plunged into despair and will lose faith in its own capacity for industrial leadership even within the narrow limits left to it by monopolistic capitalism and world-enslaving imperialism.

Speaking, as I believe [I do], for the intelligent, dispassionate members of my race, it is my sober judgment that Mr. Garvey is unfitted by intellect to formulate a program for the race. Unquestionably he is a man of great energy, a man who understands the art of advertisement and race capitalization to a degree comparable only to Col. [William Joseph] Simmons of the Ku Klux Klan; but as to his being leader of the intelligent among us, I must enter an emphatic protest.

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*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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