

GARVEY, MARCUS MOZIAH, JR., 1887-1940 . **SPEECH ON DISARMAMENT
CONFERENCE DELIVERED AT LIBERTY HALL** .Paterson, NJ :
Frank Cass and Company Limited , 1921 .

Speech on Disarmament Conference Delivered at Liberty Hall

Just at this time the world is again preparing for a reorganization. Since the war of 1914 the world became disorganized. Many conferences have been held, in which statesmen of all the reputable governments have taken part, for the purpose of settling a world policy, by which humanity and the world could return to normal. Several of the conferences were held in France, others in Switzerland and England. On the 11th of this month will assemble in Washington what is to be known as an Armament Conference. At this conference statesmen from Great Britain and her self-governing dominions, statesmen from France, Japan, China, Norway, Holland and several other countries will there assemble and partake in the discussion for regulating the armaments of the world.

Every race will be represented at that conference except the Negro race. It is a sad confession to make, nevertheless it is true. The world wants to return to normal and the only people preventing it from returning to normal, apparently, are the white and yellow peoples, and they only are taken into account. I suppose after they have met and discussed the issues, the world will return to normal, but I believe someone has a second thought coming. I have no faith in the disarmament plan of the nations. I am a pessimist as far as disarmament goes. I do not believe that man will disarm until there is universal justice. Any attempt at disarming when half of the world oppresses the other half is but a farce, because the oppressed half will make somebody get armed sooner or later, and I hope Negroes will pay no attention to what is said and what is done at the conference. It does not concern you one bit. Disarmament may sound good for heaven and paradise, but not for this world that we live in, where we have so many robbers and plunderers. You keep a pistol or a gun in your home because the robber is at large, and you are afraid while you sleep he will creep through the window or get through the door and make an attempt to rob your property; and because you know he is at large, and may pay you a visit, you sleep with a gun under your pillow. When all the burglars and all the robbers are put in jail, and we know they are in jail, then we will throw away our pistols and our guns. Now everybody knows that the robber -- the thief -- is at large; he is not only robbing domestic homes, he is robbing continents; he is robbing countries, and how do--NA--

--111--you expect, in the name of reason, for races and peoples to disarm when the thief is at large trying to get into your country, trying to get into your continent to take away your land -- your birthright. The whole thing is a farce, and I trust no sensible Negro will pay any attention to it.

Negroes Must Arm Through Organization

I am not advising you to arm now with the things they have, I am asking you to arm through organization; arm through preparedness. You do not want to have guns and bombs just now; you have no immediate use for them, so they can throw away those things if they want in Washington on Armistice Day. I am saying to the Negro people of the world, get armed with organization; get armed by coming together 400,000,000 strong. That is your weapon. Their weapon in the past has been big guns and explosive shells; your weapon must be universal organization. You are a people most favorably situated today for getting what you want through organization.

Why? Because universally Negroes have a common cause; universally Negroes suffer from one common disadvantage. You are not like the other people in that respect. The white people cannot organize as you are organizing. Why? Because their society is disrupted -- is in chaos. Why do I say this? They are so disrupted -- they are in such chaos that they have to fight against

themselves -- capital fighting labor, labor fighting capital. There is no common cause between capital and labor, and, therefore, they cannot get together, and will never get together until they realize the virtue of justice -- the virtue of equity to all mankind. You have no fight among yourselves as between capital and labor, because all of us are laborers, therefore we need not be Socialists; we have no fight against party, because all of us are belonging to the "Suffering Party." So when it comes to organization we occupy a unique position.

England cannot organize with France, for England will be looking to rob France, and France looking to rob England, and they will be suspicious of each other. The white races will never get together. They have done so many injustices one to the other that between here and heaven they will never get together. Do you think Germany and England will ever get together? Do you think France and Germany will ever get together? They have no cause that is in common; but 400,000,000 Negroes have a cause that is in common, and that is why I pointed out to you that your strongest armament is organization, and not so much big guns and bombshells. Later on we may have to use some--112--of those things, however, because it appears that some people cannot hear a human voice unless something is exploding nearby. Some people sleep too soundly, when it comes to a question of human rights, and you have to touch them up with something more than our ordinary human voice.

Believes Arms Conference Will Be Fiasco

This conference on disarmament, I have said, is all a joke, and every one of them is going there to see what can be gotten. Japan to see what she can get out of America; America to see what she can get out of France; England to see what she can get out of Japan; Italy to see what she can get out of England, and the greatest vagabond will come out with the big stick. Everybody knows that; all sensible statesmen know that. They do not want any conference on disarmament, because you must arm to a certain extent. Swords are in heaven to keep the angels in good order. So since human nature is what it is, the world cannot afford to disarm. But do you know what they are getting together for? Not so much disarmament; they are getting together to form a pact by which they can subdue and further oppress the weaker peoples, who are not as strong as themselves to demand a place in this conference now to be held.

I told you during the war in my speeches throughout the length and breadth of this country and through my writings in The Negro World week by week in 1916 it was planned in England that the Negro should pay the cost of the war. You will remember (some of you) my saying that several years ago it was the determination in Europe that Africa was to be exploited to pay the cost of the war and Negroes everywhere were to be used to supply the source of revenue by which the bankrupt nations would be able to declare themselves once more solvent. Since peace was declared -- since the armistice was signed -- those of you who have seen the conduct of statesmen in Europe, of governments and of subsidized commercial agents, will recall that great demands have been made and are being made to commercialize the raw, and mineral products of Africa, and by the spoils gained out of exploiting Africa they hope to reimburse themselves of the billions of dollars lost in the war of 1914 to 1918.

The Aim of European Statesmen

It does not take the vision of a seer; it does not take the vision of a prophet, to see what the future will be to us, as a race, through the ambitions of the present-day statesmen of Europe.--113-- They feel that they have a divine right because of the strength of arms; because of their highly

so long as this injustice is perpetrated against weaker peoples there is going to be wars and rumors of wars. It is human nature and the world knows it. If you take my property, and I know it, is a different proposition, to taking my property and my not knowing it. In the past they took our property and we did not know about it, therefore we did not say anything; but they do not seem to count on the change that has come about. We know all about it now. If a man breaks into my house and steals some of my things and I do not know him, I will meet him on the street and shake hands and say, "Brother, how are you?" If he salutes me and says "Hello, how are you?" I will return it. But when I come home and find out that my property is robbed, and that he is the man who robbed my property, I am going to change my attitude. Just give me what is belonging to me. That is the situation between weaker peoples and stronger ones. They have fooled us; they have robbed us, when we did not know any better; but it is a different proposition now.

The new Negro is going to strike back or is going to die; and if David Lloyd George, Briand and the different statesmen believe--115--they can assemble in Washington, in London, in Paris, or anywhere and dispose of black people's property without first consulting them they make a big mistake, because we have reared many Fochs between 1914 and 1918 on the battlefields of France and Flanders. It will be a question later on of Foch meeting Foch.

Now the world of oppressed peoples have got the spirit of liberty and from far-off India we hear the cry of a free and independent India; from far-off Egypt we hear the cry of a free and independent Egypt. The Negro loves peace; the Negro likes to disarm, but the Negro says to the world, "Let us have justice; let us have equity; let us have freedom; let us have democracy indeed"; and I from Liberty Hall, on behalf of 400,000,000 Negroes, send a plea to the statesmen at Washington in their assembly on the question of disarmament, give the Negro the consideration due him; give the Hindoo the consideration due him; give the Egyptian the consideration due him; give the weaker peoples of the world the consideration due them, and let us disarm. But until then, I repeat, there will be wars and rumors of wars.