

FBI Memo from J. Edgar Hoover concerning Garvey (October 11, 1919)

J. Edgar Hoover to Special Agent Ridgely
Washington, D.C., October 11, 1919

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. RIDGELY.

I am transmitting herewith a communication which has come to my attention from the Panama Canal, Washington office, relative to the activities of Marcus Garvey. Garvey is a West-Indian negro and in addition to his activities in endeavoring to establish the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation he has also been particularly active among the radical elements in New York City in agitating the negro movement. Unfortunately, however, he has not as yet violated any federal law whereby he could be proceeded against on the grounds of being an undesirable alien, from the point of view of deportation. It occurs to me, however, from the attached clipping that there might be some proceeding against him for fraud in connection with his Black Star Line propaganda and for this reason I am transmitting the communication to you for your appropriate attention.

The following is a brief statement of Marcus Gravey and his activities:

- Subject a native of the West Indies and one of the most prominent negro agitators in New York;
- He is a founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League;
- He is the promulgator of the Black Star Line and is the managing editor of the Negro World;
- He is an exceptionally fine orator, creating much excitement among the negroes through his steamship proposition;
- In his paper the "Negro World" the Soviet Russian Rule is upheld and there is open advocacy of Bolshevism.

Respectfully,
J. E. Hoover

[Typewritten reference] JEH-GPO
DNA, RG 60, file 198940. TMS, recipient's copy.

SOURCE: Robert A. Hill, ed. The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume II, 27 August 1919 - 31 August 1920. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.