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Second International Convention of Negroes The Second International Convention of Negroes held in August 1921 reflected the broader changes in American history for the period. Following World War I, African-American soldiers who participated in the war returned home to a serious condition of increased discrimination, racial violence and segregation. This was against the fundamentals of the war that was intended to defend democracy and the right of self-determination.

Going to the 1920s, disillusioned Black Americans formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The movement was committed to separatism and racial purity (Fredrickson, 1995). African Americans wanted to become autonomous. This autonomy would be achieved if an Africa free of White domination was achieved. Africans had to be liberated from colonization. This notion was demonstrated in the speech of Marcus Garvey in the Second International Convention of Negroes held at Liberty Hall, New York (Garvey, 1921). The speech centrally suggested that Africans should fight for freedom even if it will cost their lives. This reflects the broader changes in American History because African Americans were becoming disillusioned due to segregation, racial discrimination and racial violence; and they were ready to fight for their liberty.

In the early 20th century, there was a general wave of calls for the liberty of African Americans that led to the formation of Universal Negro Improvement Association and the African Communities League. The founder of the association was Marcus Garvey. It was based on the belief of respect of human rights and supremacy of God almighty. At the period when the organisation was formed, African Americans were suffering from the injustice

committed by the Whites. In Africa, African states were colonized. Europeans had sliced their land and divided among themselves (Fredrickson, 1995). Africans were forced to surrender their wealth to aliens, and to make things worse, they were forced to work for the Whites in the same lands that belonged to them before they were taken away.

In United States, African Americans were still enslaved, segregated and discriminated. In United States, like in Africa, Black people were not accorded equal treatment with whites. They were not allowed in hotels and inns in the same extent as their white counterparts (Fredrickson, 1995). As a result of this, African Americans were determined to fight for their liberty. Southern parts of USA experienced high levels of African-American segregations in public places. The Jim Crow compelled African Americans to be provided with separate and inferior accommodations from those provided to the Whites (Fredrickson, 1995). They were also insulted and abused by drunken Whites in various states. As a result of all these situations, Black Americans formed organisations to fight for their rights and equal treatment.

Marcus Garvey thought that such liberation would begin from Africa. In his speech in the Second International Convention of Negroes he argued that the Negroes had decided to form an organization to improve their conditions (Garvey, 1921). He recognized the progress of the organization since it was formed, suggesting that it has empowered them to become an influential mighty force. He argued that the force they gained can be used to redeem Africa (Garvey, 1921). Garvey also encouraged Negroes to fight against all obstacles, considering them as stepping stone towards freedom of Africa.

Their mission was a redeemed and free Africa. Like other nations, Africa also needed liberty, freedom and democracy. Marcus Garvey also suggested that Africans should be prepared to die for liberty; arguing that it better to die free than to live as a slave (Garvey, 1921). All these messages passed by Marcus Garvey during the convention reflected the cries of African Americans who wanted their freedom from discrimination and lack of liberty from the White domination.

#### References list

Fredrickson, G. M. (1995). *Black liberation: A comparative history of Black ideologies in the United States and South Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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