

# THE CRUSADER

VOL. 2

MARCH, 1920

No. 7

## A Paramount Chief for the Negro Race

By CYRIL V. BRIGGS

THE Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities' League announces an International Convention of Deputies for August 1, 1920, for the purpose of electing "his Supreme Highness, the Potentate, His Highness, the Supreme Deputy, and other high officials, who will preside over the destiny of the Negro peoples of the world until an African Empire is founded."

To many this announcement may seem high-flung and even comical. To those "leaders" whose only followers now are their shadows, and who have long since lost touch with the masses of their people because their elongated ears, always alert for the jingle of silver, were not primed to catch and interpret the murmur of the growing aspirations of the race, the announcement may appear to offer a good opportunity for a hearty laugh. They would not be the first to laugh at the first distant grumbings of volcanoes or at the omens of mighty changes. These jackal "leaders" will undoubtedly miss the vast importance attached to the quoted announcement, because, for one thing, it is their nature to pass up the important and, for another, they have kept themselves as ignorant as possible of the meaning, the strength and the possibilities of the movement engineered by the U. N. I. A. C. L.

But this announcement of an election of a paramount chief is the most important that has emanated from any Negro source since "the glory that was Egypt's and the grandeur that was Ethiopia's" and the passing of the great medieval Negro States of the Sudan and West Africa.

One of the principal reasons for its importance is the need, long evident to keen observers in and out of the race, of a paramount chief or supreme leader of the race,

deriving his powers and authority from the race and thus enjoying its confidence in a degree great enough for his opinions to command universal respect and making it possible for wholesale and whole-hearted support for his policies. That the race is in sore need of a paramount chief is amply evidenced by the present chaotic disagreement between the few recognized and many self-appointed leaders of the race. Not even upon the most important and vital questions affecting the race are any two of these leaders able to agree. As a result we have had proffered for our acceptance, with voluble assurance that each and every one in itself will solve the problem, the various policies of buying pigs, ownership of property, attainment of education, self-defence, self-immolation, turning the other cheek, agitation, servile silence, etc., etc.

Such a paramount chief or leader the white race has attempted to give us in the person, first, of Booker Washington, and later, of Moton. But the Negro masses would have none of these white-advanced leaders. Neither would they get together and elect a leader of their own choice. And in the meantime the interests of the race have suffered because there was no pilot at the helm, no person authorized to speak in our behalf and clothed with such authority as would be bound to command the respect and attention of the world.

Now the strength of the U. N. I. A. C. L. is sufficiently great to command obedience from a very large number of Negroes throughout the United States, Africa and the West Indies, for the person elected Paramount Chief at the coming convention. And it is this fact especially that makes the matter so important, since no Negro patriot or any other Negro in his senses would desire to see our approaching unity

menaced with division even before it is fully achieved. The Negro race now uniting from the ends of the earth should not have inflicted upon it the evils of an internal struggle and divided authority. The Paramount Chief or Supreme Leader, elected at the August, 1920, conference should be accepted as such by the entire race. And to make such acceptance possible and prob-

able all purely Negro bodies outside of the U. N. I. A. A. C. L. should be invited to send delegates to the convention, and should be anxious, if their policies are at all dictated by love of race and broad vision, to accept such an invitation. The projected proceedings too greatly affect the Negro race to be other than open to all Negro organizations and to the Negro press.