The establishment of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 by black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey promoted change and progress in black America and the world. By encouraging blacks to unite and be proud of their heritage, Garvey helped hundreds of thousands of people advance in business and achieve economic independence.

**READING FOCUS:**
How did Marcus Garvey have both positive and negative influence on the black nationalist movement of the 1900s?

Marcus Garvey was a black nationalist leader in the 1920s. Although he only lived in the United States from 1916 to 1927, his philosophy of black racial unity earned him hundreds of thousands of followers.

Born in Jamaica in 1887, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914. The UNIA's two main goals were to establish economic independence through black businesses and to establish an independent black nation in Africa. The UNIA encouraged blacks around the world to be proud of their racial heritage. In his newspaper, the "Negro World", Garvey told African Americans that racial prejudice was so much a part of white civilization that it was worthless to appeal to white Americans' sense of justice and democratic principles.

In 1916 Garvey moved the UNIA headquarters from Jamaica to New York City. Hundreds of thousands of African Americans, many of whom had migrated to the northern United States during and after World War I, supported Garvey and his organization. According to Garvey, the UNIA had more than 30 chapters by mid-1919. In addition, Garvey founded the Universal African Legion, the Universal Black Cross Nurses, the Universal African Motor Corps, the Black Eagle Flying Corps, and the Black Star Steamship Line. Many African Americans found Garvey's message of racial pride appealing and participated in rallies and parades organized by the UNIA. As one observer put it, "thousands of . . . awakened Negroes believe that Garvey is their God-appointed deliverer--the Moses of their race. Their confidence in him is unbounded and unshakable."

Other people disagreed with Garvey's opinions and disapproved of his organization. Many African American leaders believed that he was an "insincere, selfish impostor." W. E. B. Du Bois, one of the founding members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was particularly critical of Garvey. Many white Americans felt threatened by the UNIA's call for blacks around the world to band together politically and economically.

In 1922 Garvey was arrested by federal authorities and jailed for cheating people who had invested in the Black Star Steamship Company, a UNIA-affiliated business. He was convicted of one count of mail fraud in 1923 and began serving a five-year sentence in 1925. In 1927 Garvey was pardoned by President Calvin Coolidge and immediately deported to Jamaica. He moved to London in 1935 and died there five years later.
While Garvey lost most of his followers after he was deported, he had a lasting influence on American history. His message of black racial unity and cooperation inspired later black nationalist leaders like Malcolm X.

**Analysis Questions:**

1. What were the two main goals of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)?
2. What future black nationalist leader did Garvey inspire with his message of black racial unity?

**Answers:**

1. The UNIA's two main goals were to establish economic independence among Africans and African Americans through black businesses and to establish an independent black nation in Africa.
2. Malcolm X