

Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man

as told by



John P. & C. Buck West

YAKUB AL MANSUR

Greatest of the Moorish Rulers of Spain
(1149-1199 A.D.)

"YAKUB IBN YUSUF, better known as Al Mansur, was the ablest and most powerful of the Moorish rulers who dominated Spain for five hundred years. He was also one of the most enlightened, most just and magnanimous. His surname, Al Mansur, means 'The Invincible.' This was no braggadocio. He defeated all his enemies and never lost a battle.

"Like nearly all the rulers of Morocco he had a Negro strain. Not only was his father, Yusuf, of Negro ancestry, but his mother was an unmixed Negro woman, a slave, probably brought from Timbuctoo or Senegal. Ali Ibn Abd Allah, celebrated Moorish historian, writing in 1326, says in his Roudh el Kartas (History of the Rulers of Morocco), 'He was the son of a Negro woman who had been given to his father and he was born in the house of his grandfather, Abd el Mumen.'

"Mansur came to the throne when his father was killed while besieging Santarem, Portugal in 1184. He swore a great oath of revenge for his father's death but internal troubles with the Almoravides, the dynasty which his family, the Almohades, had ousted from the throne, detained him in Africa. At last having defeated the Almoravides and their allies, the Arabs, he gathered an army for the invasion of Spain and Portugal and in 1189 with 10,000 of his redoubtable cavalry and foot-soldiers, he landed at Algeciras, Spain. Marching on Santarem, Portugal, the scene of his father's death, he destroyed it and continuing to Lisbon, captured it. Hearing that the Almoravides had taken advantage of his absence to rebel again, he returned to Africa. At his coming, however, the leader of the rebels, Yahya, fled into the Sahara Desert.

"The Christians of Spain, who were whites, mostly of Germanic descent, hearing of the new revolt in Africa, began an all out attack on the Moorish kingdoms in Spain. Aided by the English Crusaders who were on the way to Palestine, they swept through Andalusia, and other nearby regions capturing Silves, Beja, Vera and other towns. Mansur, on this, again landed in Spain in 1191 and defeated the Christians. Chaining them fifty by fifty, he took a great number of them to be sold into slavery in Africa.

"On his return there, he was stricken with fever, and the Christians, thinking the time propitious, gathered an immense army, aided by the Crusaders, to drive the Moors out of the Peninsula once and for all. The three principal leaders were Alphonso IX, King of Leon, in supreme command; Alphonso III of Castille; and Sancho I of Portugal. The Christians, winning victory after victory, neared Algeciras on the Mediterranean.

"MANSUR SENT HIS emissaries over his vast domains which stretched from the Atlantic across the length of Africa to the borders of Egypt to come to the succor of Islam. They came in vast numbers and were of all 'races' and colors. In 1194, he sailed from Alcaassar and landed at Algeciras, Spain.

"Alphonso, with an army of 300,000, one of the vastest ever assembled at that time, awaited him near the fortress of Alarcos on the plains of Zalacca. Mansur marched to Zalacca to meet Alphonso and lost no time in giving him battle.

"For hours the Christians tried to pierce their ranks in vain. They were pushed back and back until their retreat became an ignominious flight. Alphonso, wounded, fled to Toledo, while the surviving noblemen of his army, took refuge

VOICE READERS COMPRISE A \$30,000,000 MARKET

EDITORIAL

"United Effort is the Salvation" "DIVISION IS DESTRUCTION"

THREE GREAT DEMOCRATS, one of World War II days, and the others of today, have used identifying slogans which, when combined, formulate a message of vital importance to the Negro. "My friends," (FDR) "Come, let us reason together," (LBJ) and, "Let us create a democracy which has practices which match its principles." (Gov. Grant Sawyer, of Nevada).

This paper has said, on more than one occasion, "the American Negro is destined to salvage democracy, as he wages his struggle to earn his equal share of that utopian ideology." Already the Negro, through organized efforts, has removed many cancerous blemishes which have marred the image of democracy. There are other malignancies, yet remaining, which encumber a healthy democratic way of life.

The Negro of America has more work to do if he is to fulfill his destiny. The work load is heavy and requires many hands to make it light. Negroes must come together to reason and to work toward a better life in a better nation.

THE CONSTANT prodding of the NAACP brought about the Supreme Court edict of 1954 reversing an 'ancient' court ruling which had condoned the principle of 'separate but equal' in America's schools.

The combined crusading of Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, CORE, Students Non-violent Conference, together with the NAACP pricked the conscience of the nation, and led to the passage of many Civil Rights Bills. Without these relentless crusades there would have been no legislation. The 'War' against bigotry has not been won.

in the fortress of Alarcos where Mansur besieged them and forced them to surrender.

"Going to Seville, Spain, Mansur made that his headquarters and then swept northward capturing the principal Christian strongholds of Calatravas, Guadalajara, Madrid, Salamanca and Toledo, where Alphonso and his family had taken refuge.

"With the greater part of Spain and Portugal in his power, he yielded to the Christian pleas for a truce of ten years and returning to Africa began to meditate on a project he had long in mind: the invasion of Egypt. But before he could set his plans in motion he died on March 20, 1199, at the age of fifty and in the fifteenth year of his reign.

"Mansur was not only a great organizer and a military genius but a patron of the arts and a lover of justice. On coming to the throne his first act was to distribute vast quantities of food to the poor. He also freed all who were unjustly held in prison and reformed the laws to prevent others from being so held. He gave larger salaries and pensions to the holy men and began a vast public works program, rebuilding cities and erecting mosques, schools, hospitals and aqueducts. He built the city of Rabat, now capital of French Morocco; Alcaassar, near Sallee; Mansurah and other cities. He also built the famous Kasbah of Morocco as well as the Giralda, one of the greatest monuments of Moorish rule in Spain, at Seville. It was the impetus given by Mansur that led to such immortal specimens of architecture as the Mosque at Cordova; and the Alhambra and the Generalife at Granada.

"ALI IBN ALLAH, fourteenth century historian, says of him. 'His reign was remarkable for the tranquility, the safety, the abundance, and the prosperity that reigned everywhere. . . His government was excellent; he increased the treasury; his power was exalted; his actions that of a most noble ruler; his religion was sincere and deep; and he was a great benefactor of Islam.' Biographie Universelle says he was 'the most magnificent and the most powerful of the Moslem rulers' since the caliphs of Bagdad. In fact, the great Saladin, sultan of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, appealed to him for aid against

Many battles have been won but the crusade must continue if final victory is to be gained. Negroes must stick together like soldiers on the field of battle. The combined efforts of all soldiers is necessary to turn the tide. They must fight together and not fight each other. They must pull together, not apart, until "democracy has practices which match its principles." (Gov. Sawyer--address to the Nevada Legislature Jan. 1959).

WHEN FINAL VICTORY is won, not only the Negroes of America will have gained, but all Americans will share in the gains, and Democracy will have been salvaged for all people of the world who covet freedom and self-determination.

Negroes in many areas of America are waging the battle for freedom at great cost, with great danger, and at great sacrifice, but with greater determination. Nevada Negroes do not face the sacrifices and dangers that constantly threaten their southern brothers, but Nevada Negroes do not exhibit the kind of 'togetherness' and enthusiasm that is a part of their southern brothers.

My friends, come, let us reason together and do our part in Nevada. We can not, and, we must not sit complacently on the sidelines while others fight the battles in Alabama, Mississippi, and other places. The spoils of victory are sweet, but our consciences would take away much of the savor if we took no part in the battle.

We have as much to gain on our home front as our brothers have in Selma, or Bogalusa. Together we win--divided we lose.



*A Good Thing to Remember
A Better Thing to Do
Is to Work for the Construction Gang
And NOT the Wrecking Crew*



the Crusaders, whose alleged motive was to free 'the tomb of Christ' from Islam.

"Mansur was not only the most powerful ruler in the West, that is, of Africa, Europe, and eastern Asia, but in his time, probably of the world. His kingdom stretched from the Atlantic along the Mediterranean to the borders of Egypt and included Mauretania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, the Balearic Islands, and most of Spain and Portugal.

"Because of the great wealth he brought into Morocco and his patronage of the arts he is often called 'The Golden.' But to the common people, who adored him and repeated his sayings, he was known as 'The Black Sultan.'"

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