

Bob Marley And Una Marson - Similarities

Comparisons have been drawn between Bob Marley and Barack Obama. On another level can we compare Marley with writer Una Marson, both born February 6?

On the face of it, author Una Marson and reggae icon Bob Marley would seem to have nothing in common. It's not so difficult to imagine the number of raised eyebrows caused by this headline. For a start, they belong to different generations. Also, Marley was a devout Rastafarian, while I'm yet to ascertain to what religious persuasion Una Marson ascribed, but as far as we know she never expounded or embraced the culture of Rastafari as we know it. Marley was/is a superstar, while Marson, to those in the know, is at best an unsung heroine. However, be that as it may, apart from the fact that they are Jamaicans and are no longer around, Una Maud Victoria Marson and Robert Nesta Marley (Bob Marley), shared a few interesting similarities. To begin with, they both in their lifetime displayed their enormous power of poetry as they were both poets of the highest order. That you may have known, but what you may not have known, is that they shared the same birthday, albeit, 40 years apart. Una Marson was born on February 6, 1905, Bob Marley was born on the day she was celebrating her 40th birthday, February 6, 1945. As if, having been born on the same date of the same month was not intriguing enough, Una Marson while on an assignment in Israel doing social and literary work fell ill. She returned to Jamaica and after 10 days in hospital, had a heart attack and died on May 5, 1965, three months after her 60th birthday. Bob Marley died on May 11, 1981, 16 years after the death of Una Marson. Like her, he was on an assignment (except that his was musical) in a foreign country, New York, to be exact, where he collapsed in Madison Square Gardens while playing football. But unlike her the reggae poet never made it back to Jamaica before he died. There is at least one other piece of fascinating similarity between Marley and Marson. Una Marson who made history in 1928 (at the age of 23) when she became the first Jamaican woman to edit and publish a monthly magazine, The Cosmopolitan, geared towards social and cultural issues relating to women, would in time become interested in politics. Her interest led her to England in 1931 and with a desire to learn more about journalism and politics, she identified herself with the League of Coloured People, for which she was assistant secretary and editor of its magazine, Keys. Due to her interest in improving the living conditions of black people, Marson joined the Ethiopian Legation in London during which time she published several volumes of poems, wrote plays such as London Calling, Pocomania, At What Price and publications like Heights and Depths and Toward The Star. She also accompanied Emperor Haile Selassie to the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. It was at this visit to the League of Nations (later became the United Nations), Haile Selassie sought — unsuccessfully to arouse the conscience of world leaders against the Italian attack on his country. It was on this occasion he made that famous speech, “until the colour of a man's skin is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes, until there is no more first and second class citizens....” That speech which Bob Marley adopted, decorated with music and recorded as a song titled War, was prepared (edited and typed) by Una Maud Victoria Marson who returned to England in 1938 and worked during the war years at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as a broadcaster for the popular radio programme, Calling The West Indies, making her the first black woman to broadcast and produce a show on the BBC. writer : Herbie Miller