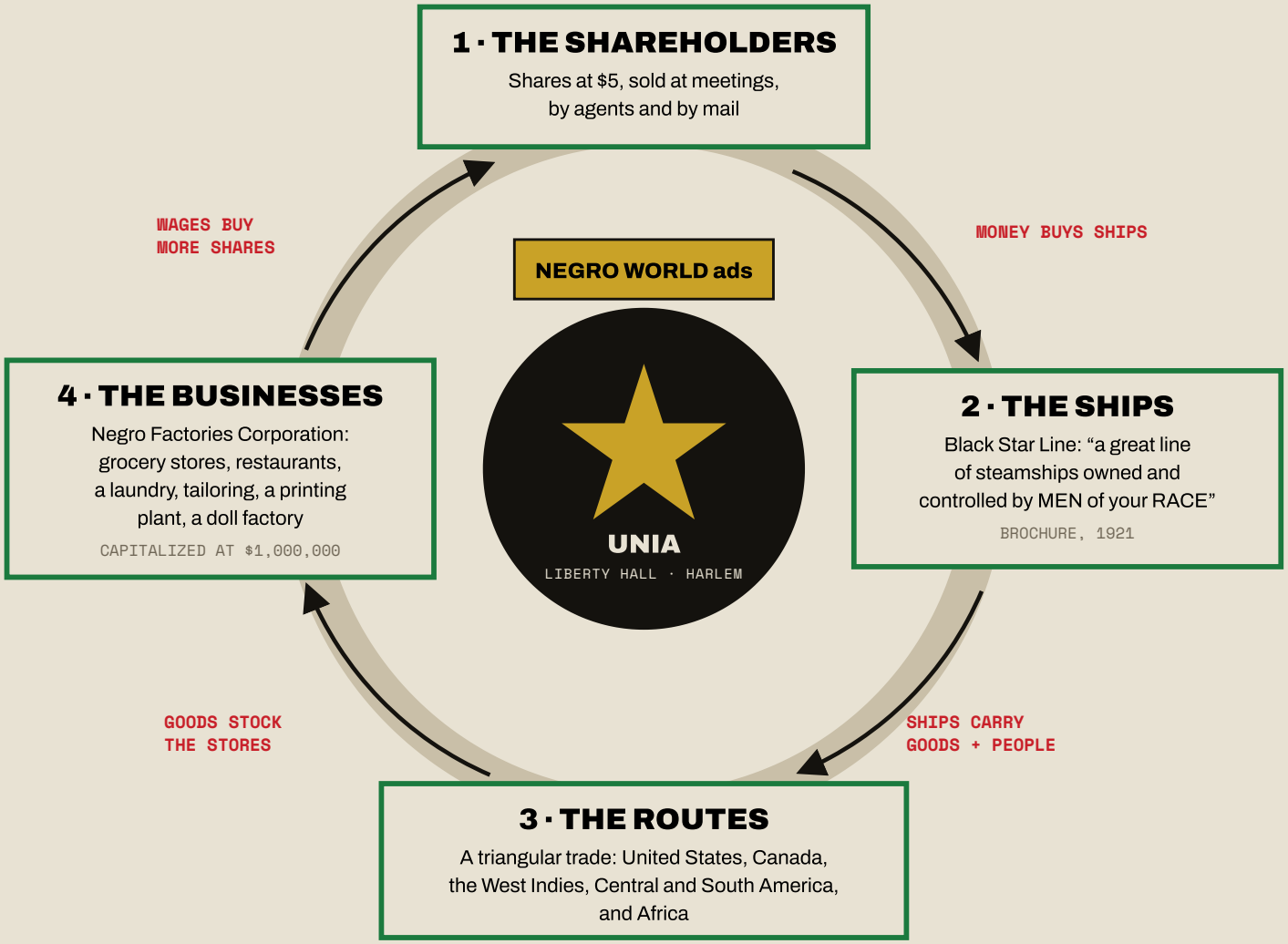
THE ECONOMY THE UNIA SET OUT TO BUILD · 1919 TO 1922

Every dollar meant to come back around

The Black Star Line was one piece of a larger plan: Black money buying Black ships, carrying Black goods between Black communities, with the profits kept inside the race. The circle below is our drawing of that plan, labeled with what each piece actually was.

> *"A race that is solely dependent upon another for its economic existence sooner or later dies."*
>
> MARCUS GARVEY, PHILOSOPHY AND OPINIONS, VOL. 1, 1923



What it promised

Jobs for "Ship Masters, Engineers, Wireless Operators," passage without "inferior accommodation," and ownership by the people who paid.

What tied it together

The Negro World carried the ads; Liberty Hall meetings sold the shares; the same members bought, worked and shopped.

Where it broke

Old ships bought at high prices, bad officers and graft, a government case against the leader, and rivals who wanted it gone. See Side B.

GARVEY, PHILOSOPHY AND OPINIONS, VOL. 1 (1923), PUBLIC DOMAIN. BLACK STAR LINE BROCHURE, 1921. PURPOSES AND ROUTES: MILTON H. WATSON, "BLACK STAR LINE," STEAMBOAT BILL, P. 264. NEGRO FACTORIES CORPORATION BUSINESSES AND CAPITAL: SECONDARY SUMMARIES (TO CHECK AGAINST HILL, ED., GARVEY PAPERS). THE CIRCLE IS OUR DIAGRAM OF THE PLAN, NOT A UNIA DRAWING. BLACK STAR ARCHIVE × RADICAL IMAGINATION.

WHAT THE MONEY WAS · IN 1920 AND IN TODAY'S DOLLARS

A people's fortune, by the numbers

Every 1919–1925 figure here comes from the line's own reports, court records or Watson's ship history. Today's dollars use the U.S. consumer price index: $1 in 1920 is roughly $16 today. Treat those as rough, not exact.

$5

≈ $80 today

One share. Priced so a working family could own a piece.

151,430

shares, 1919–1921

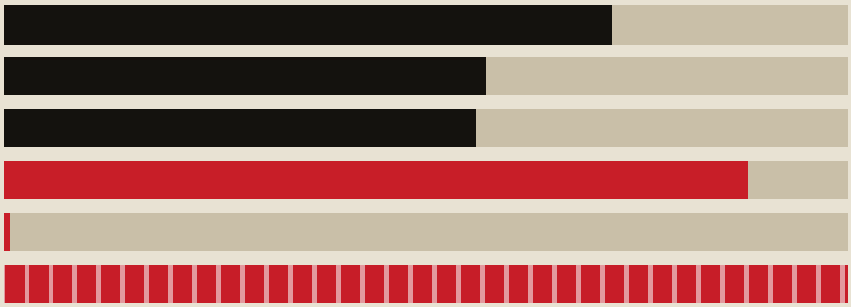
Issued July 1919 to August 1921. 148,973 still held.

$757,150

≈ $12 million today

Those shares at $5 each: the people's money, at face value.

Where it went



Bars are drawn to scale against $240,000; the striped bar runs off the scale (≈ $20 million today).

If the ships had run: three what-ifs

WHAT-IF · ARITHMETIC ONLY

A full *Yarmouth*

First voyage, Nov 1919: 23 passengers at $60 (Cuba) to $80 (Colón). Room for 50.

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50 × $60–80 = $3,000–4,000 a trip
$171,500 ÷ $4,000 ≈ 43 trips
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43 full trips, fares alone, just to pay for the ship. She made three.

The what-ifs need full ships. What would it have taken to fill them?

WHAT-IF · ARITHMETIC ONLY

A full *Booker T. Washington*

Jan 1925: berths for 70 first class at $350–400 round trip, 100 second class. She sailed with 14.

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70 × $350 = $24,500
14 aboard ≈ 1 in 12 berths
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First class alone could have brought $24,500 a cruise. On sailing day, 4,000 visitors paid $1 each to look.

Is a share a bad investment if it never pays, but changes what you believe you can own?

WHAT-IF · ARITHMETIC ONLY

The money, kept circling

$757,150 raised from shares. Picture it spent at UNIA stores, then paid out as wages, then spent there again.

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each dollar spent twice
inside the community
= $1.5 million of trade
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This is the plan on Side A, not a record. No one counted how often the dollars actually turned over.

What would a $5 share buy into today, in your community?

SHARES, PRICES, COSTS, LOSSES, FARES, BERTHS, VISITORS: WATSON, "BLACK STAR LINE," STEAMBOAT BILL, PP. 264–72. TODAY'S DOLLARS: BLS CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, 1920 AVERAGE TO 2025 (ABOUT 16×), ROUNDED. WHAT-IFS ARE CLASSROOM ARITHMETIC ON THOSE FIGURES, NOT FORECASTS OR HISTORY. BLACK STAR ARCHIVE × RADICAL IMAGINATION.