

# Politics, nation and postColony: Caribbean inflections

*Small Axe*; Bloomington; Mar 2002; Anthony Bogues

For if the history of Caribbean society is that of a dual relation Between plantation and plot, the two poles which originate in a single Historical process, the ambivalence between the two has been and is The distinguishing characteristic of the Caribbean response.

-Sylvia Wynter

Dem nah pull no string

Dem a just block up the train

Dem no cater for the youth dem wi down de lane

When dem done campaign

Dem go fly out pon plane

And dem and dem friend gone go drink champagne in a Paris and Spain

But Everyting remain just the same.

-Bounty Killer and junior Reid

I

Must be given words to shape my name to the syllables of trees I must be given words to refashion futures like a healers hand.

-Kamau Brathwaite, "Islands"

Politics and the anglophone Caribbean nation-states are in acute crisis, from which there seems no easy exit. This crisis pervades the intellectual climate. Brian Meeks suggests that perhaps we are at the stage of "terminal meltdown," David Scott argues that "there is scarcely a postcolonial society that is not in fundamental crisis,"<sup>2</sup> and Selwyn Ryan opines that the "tensions between economic distress and democratic governance"<sup>3</sup> engender regional political instability. In the contemporary period, "crisis" is a much overworked label. As a political term it is a sign of instability, of chaos, disorder, and broken social

bonds. Clearly the Caribbean nation-states constructed from 1938 onward are in crisis. Beverly Lopez, a prominent Jamaican businesswoman, plaintively says, "[I] recognize that the citizens of this country no longer look to us for a counter point vision or leadership."<sup>4</sup> But if there is general agreement that politics and various regional nation-states are in crisis, there is no consensus on the nature of the crisis. Is it one of "hegemonic dissolution," as Meeks suggests, or of "the modern nationstate project as a whole," as Scott argues?

I agree that there exists a fundamental crisis in the politics of the different Caribbean nation-states. However, while I acknowledge that part of the crisis results in "hegemonic dissolution" and that some of its traces can be found in the general collapse of the modern nation-state project constructed during the period of decolonization, I reflect differently on the crisis. I suggest that the present crisis in politics and the nation is one in which the economic relations, political ideas, and old patterns of domination and power are undergoing wrenching convulsions. To put it another way the crisis is one of "language, life and labor." In developing my arguments I operate from a cognitive-- political space, which David Scott suggested was opened up with Sylvia Wynter's and Kamau Brathwaite's cultural, political and intellectual labors during the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>5</sup> However, though I start from this space my axis is an explicitly political one. The difference, primarily, resides in my focus on the complexities of the nature of the Jamaican state and both the colonial and Creole nationalist project of constructing a particular Afro-Jamaican subject.

The arguments in this essay are constructed around two moments in Jamaican political history. The first moment is the nationalist political practice and discourses of N. W. Manley. Manley's political and social ideas framed the Jamaican Creole nationalist movement. His conception of the political shaped the politics of formal Jamaican decolonization, and, in the words of Stuart Hall, "he was in command of the logistics of the nation."<sup>6</sup> In many ways N. W. Manley is the iconic figure of Jamaican Creole nationalism, a nation-founder who, with his integrity and various excellences, epitomizes the committed, nationalist, middle-class. Central to the core of Manley's political practice was an idea elaborated on by English political theorist T. H. Green. Green had argued that "the good which a man seeks for himself is not a succession of pleasures, but objects which, when realized, are permanent contributions to a social good."<sup>7</sup> In examining Manley's founding political practices we will review some aspects of Caribbean Creole nationalism and its overall importance for Jamaican and Caribbean political thought.

The second moment requires us to unearth silences in Jamaican political history.

The political meanings of the Claudius Henry movement and of the African Reform Church constitute a rich lode that can be used to explore the different types of nationalisms that emerged in Jamaica. If the Creole nationalist movement represented the aspirations of the Jamaican anticolonial middle class, then Henry's movement drew its intellectual and political sources from another tradition in Jamaican political history-black redemptive thought. This current was a powerful presence in late-nineteenth-century Jamaica, marginally influential during the 1938 worker rebellion, abundant during the late 1950s and the 1960s and remains an integral part of the ideational world of many ordinary Jamaicans today. Typically, narratives and political discourses of Jamaican and Caribbean history silence this current, and construct an unproblematic set of stories about Jamaican history and politics." By juxtaposing these two moments in Jamaican political history, I hope to demonstrate how silences limit our understanding of the present crisis of the Jamaican nation-state. The final sections of the essay will conclude with some reflections on the nature of politics in the Jamaican nation-state and discuss a conception of politics drawn from one segment of the Jamaican subaltern.

Three different streams shaped the formal Caribbean intellectual tradition during the post-World War II period. The first can be located in the work of Caribbean scholars like M. G. Smith and Lloyd Braithwaite, and in the historical writings of Elsa Goveia. This stream, which Smith and others call "Caribbean studies," partly laid the foundation for much of Caribbean scholarship in politics, history and sociology.<sup>9</sup> The second stream was a literary one, in which figures like George Lamming, Vic Reid, Vidia Naipaul and Ralph de Boissier produced novels that grappled with the complexities of growing up in the colonial world. The third stream was that derived from political intellectuals of the period-those who explicitly attempted to propagate notions about the nation and the political. The first section of this essay will focus on one segment of this third stream.

In this stream, the issues of nation and nationalism in the Caribbean were organically linked to the role of the political party. Two major texts form the political-cognitive ground for the creation of mass nationalist parties in the Caribbean beginning in the 1930s and ending in the late 1950s-N. W. Manley's speech to the founding conference of the PNP (People's National Party) in 1938, and Eric Williams's 1956 speech "The Case for Party Politics in Trinidad and Tobago." Both were politically interventionist, seeking to create new frameworks for political practices with immediate practical political implications. However, since my focus is on Manley, it is to his political intervention that I will turn.

Manley's tactical political objectives in 1938 were threefold. Given his social

standing and relationship to the ascending brown middle class, he wanted to publicly enunciate his own commitment to the Jamaican nationalist movement. He also wished to counter the developing perception that the PNP's formation was a political calculation meant only to catapult him into the upper ranks of the emerging labor movement. His third and final tactical aim was to mollify the nagging suspicions amongst the Jamaican elite about the communist hue of the party. Like all major political statements that become framing texts for political practice, Manley's speech established the normative political standards of Jamaican Creole anticolonialist political discourse. How did this occur?

First, Manley had to define the political.' So he states early in the speech, "I am a Jamaican who takes the view that politics is essential to the vitality of this country as it has been essential in the life of every civilized community and to the development and achievement of a national spirit in every people in the world."" Here the political performs two functions. First, it is the means by which to awaken the national spirit, and second it is a product of civilizing processes. If politics was the frame for nation-creation and a marker of civilization, then what should be its practice? In 1938 Manley elaborated a role for politics-a role that restricted its definition to issues of leadership, political authority and the control of state power. Manley argued in 1938 that the colonial government was undemocratic but only on the grounds that the Jamaican colonial institutions lacked democratic procedures. This lack of democracy meant, in Manley's words, that "politics is a reproach to our ears."<sup>12</sup> This view of politics privileged institutional forms of the state and government as the markers of political modernity. For Manley the control of the state was the condition for the creation of the nation. In the end he conflated nation and state. Manley's restrictive view of politics meant that organized politics became essentially the constitutional process of transferring political power from the colonial elite to a democratic majority. Manley's key political objective was to create a political system in which the majority could exercise its franchise. Thus, for Manley the central political problem of colonialism was that its structure lacked political equality. Manley understood that the colonial state was the overarching reality, that it protected the political economy of colonial extraction and organized a polity in which its presence was all-powerful. As an authoritarian structure, the colonial state did not claim any consensual political authority nor rested in any polity of juridical-political liberal freedoms. Colonial state practices were rooted in coercion and violence. The near exclusive focus of Creole nationalism on the illiberal, undemocratic power of the colonial state limited its political practice. In the final analysis Creole nationalist politics was reduced to the machinations of party politics, the forward march to constitutionalist decolonization<sup>13</sup> and to

what Stuart Hall has called "constitutional nationalism."<sup>14</sup> Manley confirms this when he says, later on in his political career, "I make no apology for the fact that we did not attempt to embark upon any original or novel exercise in constitutional building. ... Let us not make the mistake of describing as colonial, institutions which are part and parcel of this country."<sup>15</sup> This form of politics has been called "modular nationalism" and was common to the political thought of many native political intellectuals. Partha Chatterjee, who ably documents this typology for Indian nationalism, writes that the

Moment of departure [for the native political intellectual is] in the encounter of a nationalist consciousness with the framework of knowledge created by post-Enlightenment rationalist thought .... The nationalist's claim is that ... backwardness is not a character which is historically immutable: it can be transformed by the nation acting collectively."<sup>16</sup>

For Manley, Jamaican "backwardness" could be overcome through a linear development that would take the nation from tutelage to a form of civilization embodied in responsible and representative government. However, the promise of civilization was not a guaranteed one. Manley notes that success was possible only "if we believe in what we are aiming at, if we appreciate those who regard the country as their home, those who believe that a real civilization is possible for people of mixed origins [emphasis mine], if we never allow people to deflect us from our goals."<sup>17</sup> Besides the steely political determination one can discern in this section of the speech, Manley provides hope for a possible successful future for the "race" that inhabited the island. Parenthetically, it is intriguing to note that what seems to be pressing on Manley at this point in the speech is the distinctive nineteenth-century debate in imperial English thought about the possibilities of civilization for the "Creole Negro." There were many elements in this debate, which included the famous exchanges between John Stuart Mill and Thomas Carlyle around the "Negro Question." The debate was animated by the aftermath of the Morant Bay Rebellion and by the writings of James Anthony Froude, particularly *The English in the West Indies: The Bow of Ulysses*. But perhaps the most systematic work of the period on the possibilities of civilization for nonwhite peoples was Comte de Gobineau's work *The Inequality of the Races*. Gobineau argued that "racial hybridization" was a major cause for the decline of civilizations. The debate about the possibilities of civilization for African populations in the West raged across both sides of the Atlantic for a long time. In the intellectual context of social Darwinism and later in the development of eugenics movement, any serious anticolonial thinker had to grapple with the weight of this argument.<sup>18</sup>

With specific reference to the Caribbean, Anthony Trollope's book *The West Indies* (1859) was also an important influence. Trollope argued that "Providence has sent white men and Black men to these regions in order that from them may spring a race fitted by intellect for civilization and fitted by physical organization for tropical labor."<sup>19</sup> He further noted, "But how strange is the race of Creole Negroes-of Negroes, that is born out of Africa."<sup>20</sup> This idea of the "Creole Negro" was to become a powerful one in Jamaican and Caribbean history and served as a marker for the educated black native. Although the nineteenth-century nationalism of the black intelligentsia can be distinguished from the native nationalism of the brown Jamaican by its preoccupation with Africa, there was some commonality between the two. Both nationalisms were enmeshed with the "virtues" of Western civilization, and Christianity.<sup>21</sup> The preoccupation with civilization, given the political context, would obviously spill over into concerns about political modernity.

Manley's political thought drew from currents of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century English liberalism. At the core of this liberalism was a secular rationality in which the state represented the "interest of all" and "the nation organized in the form of a self-governing community."<sup>22</sup> At the foundation of this community was the political idea of the common good. T. H. Green had made the point that "it is only as members of a society, as recognizing common interests and objects that individuals come to have ... attributes and rights."<sup>23</sup> How to construct the common good in a former colony using the state became an abiding concern of Manley's political practice.

The evidence for Manley's concern is abundant. A few days after the 1955 electoral victory of the PNP, Manley delivered a radio broadcast in which he outlined the critical tasks facing the new government. The speech focused on planning and on building the central apparatuses of government. In the same year, he made the following remarks to a group of reporters: "We are still a colonial people. The values of a plantation society still prevail. Let's get ahead with transforming Jamaica into a viable modern state."<sup>24</sup> And in 1942 Manley demonstrated vividly his notion of political modernity by sharply critiquing the Fabian Colonial Bureau's report on Africa. He wrote:

I am astonished that no clear utterance comes from England recognizing that the Imperial idea must be abandoned once and for all if peace... is to become reality. Surely the first question is not how to improve the colonies but whether to end colonial status and what to do in the interim period which must come before the backward peoples [emphasis mine] can stand at all in any real status alongside those who have gone ahead.<sup>25</sup>

For Manley, the colonial peoples could march to the altar of political modernity through a process of uplift and improvement. Political independence could be achieved only after achieving responsible government.

Two central demands animated Manley's political thought: political equality and the creation of a modern state. Once the first was achieved, the state would become the instrument and the axis for nation building. Thus, two political ideas became important to Manley's political practice. First, he believed in creating political leaders who would be fit to "encourage the masses of this country to reach up for better things and to work for them."<sup>26</sup> (It seems that Manley had forgotten that some months before, in May 1938, the masses had risen up and shaken the colonial system.) Second, he wanted nationalist politics to create an organization that would politically educate the population about the issues of self-government. Manley states, "One of the first aims of the party in Jamaica today is to educate the people of this country to the true position they should occupy and what they should expect of their democratic institutions."<sup>27</sup> In summary it is safe to say that Manley's founding 1938 statement, made months after the May worker rebellion, was remarkable both for what it revealed and for its silences.

Similar to the first phase of Caribbean studies, which I referred to earlier, there was the absence in Manley's political text of any developed analysis of colonial rule and the functioning of its political economy. Missing as well was any discussion on slavery, and its meanings for and legacies in Jamaican society.<sup>28</sup> This peculiar silence (it was 100 years since the final abolition of slavery) would mean the following. First, that any discussion or public analysis of race, class and color in Jamaica was blissfully ignored or downplayed. Second, that by ignoring slavery, Manley established a pattern in which Creole nationalism would pay attention only to one historical component of Jamaican society—colonialism. But Jamaica was a society in which colonialism reinforced racial slavery. Thus any nationalist struggle that downplayed or ignored slavery could not tap into all the complex imaginings required for the new nation. In this regard Manley's note on the arrest of W. A. Domingo<sup>29</sup> tells the tale. In a letter to an English journalist discussing the detention of party members, Manley wrote, "Most Jamaican detainees were shortly released, but Domingo and a party streetworker whose offence was the undue emphasis in speech of color issues (contrary to party orders)."<sup>30</sup> This statement is illustrative of the party's decision to eschew the issue of race in Jamaican society. These blind spots in Manley's political thought meant that the frame for Jamaican Creole nationalist politics was flawed. Manley relied heavily on late-nineteenth-century English political thinking, in particular that of John Stuart Mill and a strain of "social

democratic liberalism,"<sup>31</sup> developed by Green and L. T. Hobhouse. Manley accepted the view that the colonial peoples were lacking but was adamant that they had the potential to become fully human and that the time had come for all obstacles to be cleared so that this potential could be realized.

Mill had made it clear in his writings that politics and representative government were markers of civilization. Mill writes, "Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians. But as soon as mankind have attained the capacity of being guided to their own improvement by conviction or persuasion... compulsion... [it] is no longer admissible."<sup>32</sup> This linear evolutionary model of the political, focusing on tutelage, firmly fixed Manley's political gaze and shaped the character of the party's political education program. The party's early political education program was akin to a civilizing mission. In early PNP political education programs there were no references to the party learning from the "masses," although there was the recognition that the party should ground itself in the interest of the common person.<sup>33</sup> In elaborating his conception of the role of political education, Manley states:

If this party is to succeed it will only succeed if it is based on the foundations of a... widespread educational campaign among the people of this country ... They want to be taught what the constitution of this country is; they want to be taught what is the sort of Jamaica they should aim for.<sup>34</sup>

This assumption that the ordinary Jamaican needed to be taught what to strive for ignored the lived experiences and historical political struggles that the ordinary Jamaican had for hundreds of years participated in. What is fascinating about Manley's political thought is that unlike many other native anticolonial intellectuals, he never attempted to reorganize elements of English political discourse and remained firmly entrenched within the orthodoxies of English social-democratic liberalism. Perhaps part of the explanation for this resides in the character of the liberalism to which he subscribed. During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, British liberalism was also inscribed within a discursive frame of the nature and practice of virtue. In this sense liberalism was not only a political ideology but also a moral stance and manners. Civilities were social practices of a civilized society-practices that did not ignore the common good. Manley's political practice was the epitome of this form of social democratic liberalism.

The final demonstration of Manley's preoccupation with politics as the business of institutional government reforms and political equality can be gleaned from his two resignation speeches made after the visible emergence of the Black Power

movement in Jamaica. In his July 1968 farewell speech to the party, in which he announced his departure from the post of party leader, Manley celebrated what he considered to be his main achievement:

We have achieved, really achieved, a stabilized, a valid and viable two party system ... it is slowly being learnt that the two party system is the business of the survival of true freedom, and of hope for dynamic evolution of change rather than a basis of bureaucratic self-perpetuation.<sup>35</sup>

In historic political terms Manley identified this achievement as a "political revolution" that realized political power, "the final power for the black masses of my country from which I spring."<sup>36</sup> It is clear that Manley equated the consolidation of the "clientistic" Jamaican political system with a historic transfer of political power. In his final speech to the PNP annual conference, he reflected on the country's social inequities within the confines of the political and called upon the party to rectify them. But by then the "clientistic" political system had created conceptions and practices of the political, which spawned political violence, a system of patronage, and left in its wake many wasted lives. The political had turned into "politicks/politricks."

There is one final dimension of Manley's political thought that we should address. The study of nationalism illustrates that integral to the formation of the nation are historical narratives. Manley was very aware of this and argued that "those who are daring to attempt to talk about creating a national being must never forget that the history is the living garment of a nation; the culture and traditions that are embedded in the history of the people are the very soul and life of nations."<sup>37</sup> We know that traditions and the historical narratives that illustrate them are inventions. And certainly, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot remarks, "History ... changes with time . . . history reveals itself through the production of specific narratives."<sup>38</sup> The key questions in the nationalist construction of history and the nation are: What is the nature of the decolonized nation state? In whose image is the state now being constructed? The history of the Jamaican nation was invented by the Creole nationalist, who silenced the voices and archives of groups who articulated alternative versions of nationhood. Thus, one problematic of Manley's concern with the creation of Jamaican historical narratives resides in the weight he assigned to the powerful struggles of the classes and social groups who were not enchanted with a Creole nation-state constructed as an imitation of the mother country.

Franz Fanon powerfully indicts the reformist nationalism of Creole nationalist movements as a hollow one. For Fanon, the success of decolonization was its

program of "complete disorder," which led to social revolution and transformation.<sup>39</sup> Rooted in his radical African anticolonial experiences, Fanon argues that the anticolonial process required political parties and political education. However, for him political education had an organic function and was linked to both the consciousness and praxis of the population in the anticolonial struggle. He declares, "All this taking of stock of the situation, this enlightening of consciousness, and this advance in the knowledge of the histories of societies are only possible within the frame work of an organization and inside [emphasis mine] the structure of the people."<sup>40</sup> Obviously this is a different conception of both politics and political education. For the Caribbean Creole nationalist, politics was about state substitution and thus in the moment of decolonization, the Creole nationalist impulses became the brake on social transformation. To deepen my arguments about subject formation, politics and the state, I now want to turn to a brief engagement with radical theories about Caribbean state formation.

## NATION AND COLONIAL STATE-FORMATION

Radical theorization about the state in the Caribbean reached its apex with the 1984 publication of C. Y. Thomas's *The Rise of the Authoritarian State in Peripheral Societies*. At the time, Thomas's primary theoretical aim was to develop a Marxist theory of Caribbean state formation. His immediate political objective was to de-mask the Forbes Burnham regime. In his theorization about the Caribbean state, Thomas periodized the emergence of the Caribbean state into four stages.<sup>41</sup> However, both Thomas's periodization and his general analysis, while opening up spaces within the Caribbean intellectual tradition, were undergirded by instrumental and institutional conceptions of power. Absent from the analysis are questions about subjects, hegemony and the character of the political rationalities of various state forms. Thomas's text was successful in illustrating the nature of the Burnham regime and the political necessity of linking socialism to practices of radical democracy. However, the present rethinking about Caribbean politics requires us to widen the field of our theorization on the state.

From my perspective the evolution of the Caribbean colonial state revolves around the following vectors. The first is the early phase of Caribbean colonialism-the period in which the Caribbean colonies were considered conquered settlements. So, for example, six years after Jamaica was captured from the Spanish in 1655, the English colonial proclamation of 1661 stipulated that the island's white subjects were "free citizens of England and shall have the same privileges to all intents and purposes as our free born subjects of England .<sup>42</sup> It

is important to observe that the first phase of British imperial ideology circulated around John Locke's outpourings on property rights in what has been called an "agriculturalist argument."<sup>43</sup> These arguments made it clear that lands conquered and wrested as prizes from other colonial powers were spaces where the rights of the white male population should be secured as the rights of Englishmen. The Jamaican case was complicated by the nature of conquest and the debate about the viability of the territory adhering to Spanish law. However, the subsequent development of sugar plantations and racial slavery on the island consolidated the foundations of colonial polity to that of command order.<sup>44</sup> This command order created a colonial, racial, slave state that rested upon and was dominated by brute coercion. Thus, conceptions of a legitimate political and national community did not exist for the vast majority of the population and were oftentimes highly problematic for the white settlers. Evidence of this shift in the colonial conception of Jamaica can be seen from the study of some of the early maps of Jamaica. The Blathwayt Atlas of the late 1700s configured Jamaica with twelve parishes. However, a keen observer would note that absent from the map are names of towns. Instead, the map highlights all the major plantations (large and small), thus representing the Jamaican colonial settlement as primarily an extractive one.<sup>45</sup> In such a colonial settlement, liberal political forms were of little value to the ruling order. The "art of government" was about brute force and, in the words of David Scott, the "shaping of bodies."<sup>46</sup> Thus, in the Caribbean colony the issues of legitimacy, accumulation and representation were primarily structured around brute force and command. Part of the reason for Edward Long's advocacy of Lockean contractual rights for the white settlers in Jamaica and for the local white assembly was his recognition of this shift in "colonial governmentality."<sup>47</sup> Long was animated by this issue-how were the colonies now to be governed given the shift from settlement to plantation racial slavery?

The second phase of Caribbean state formation begins with the emancipation experiment. This experiment shifted some of the overarching grounds for the structures of command order. In this phase the colonial "art of government" shifted its attention to subject formation-the creation of a unitary subject who spoke the language of Western rationality, lived a Christian life, and enjoyed wage labor. This subject was to be a Christian black.<sup>48</sup> Such a subject, in the words of Lord Howick, would "undergo the regular and continuous labor which is indispensable in carrying on the production of sugar."<sup>49</sup> This subject was not a citizen. In this new colonial context, colonial violence was now structured around how to make the ex-slave an industrious subject while maintaining colonial rule. This process of establishing a pattern of "regulative" behavior was

not a smooth one. On one side stood the abolitionists, the missionaries and Henry Taylor from the colonial office, on the other stood the local planters and their allies. Thomas Holt, who has ably documented this process, noted that after the initial blush of emancipation the "idea of cultural reformation had a harder edge."<sup>50</sup> It is dear that part of the basis for this shift in colonial governmentality resided in the consolidation of the Western bourgeois view that the prime life-force of human beings was the virtue of work.,' Human beings as homo economicus dominated the mental framework of the bourgeois, and one question that faced the late-nineteenth-century British ruling class was the possibility of Creole Africans in the Caribbean becoming civilized through this process.

I have already noted that in the late nineteenth century J. S. Mill placed some emphasis upon what some writers have called a "benevolent despotism."<sup>52</sup> This form of despotism held that all races had the potential for development and progress, and that the abolition of slavery was "the best and greatest achievement yet performed by mankind."<sup>53</sup> Unfolding history, for Mill, was about human improvement; once black slaves were freed, the next critical step on the ladder was the creation of a certain kind of subject. The objective of colonialism in the Caribbean during the post-emancipation period was to make this happen, because in the words of Mill colonialism created "new ideas ... new wants, increased ambition and greater thought for the future."<sup>54</sup> In such a context there arose the possibility for black colonials (Creole Negroes, in the language of Anthony Trollope) to undergo tutelage. This conception of tutelage and the possibilities of civilization on a near horizon profoundly marked the Caribbean native intellectuals in the early twentieth century. Listen to C. L. R. James arguing for self-government in 1932:

The bulk of the population of these West Indian islands ... cut off from Africa for a century and a quarter, . . . present today the extraordinary spectacle of a people who, in language and social customs ... are essentially western ... far more advanced in Western culture than many a European community ... Into this community comes the Englishman to govern ... [who] of late years has wide experience in dealing with primitive peoples in Africa.<sup>55</sup>

We are ready for self-government because we are Western. The Creole segment of the anticolonial movement in the Caribbean never abandoned this discursive ground and would carry it into the period of the postcolony. Thus in the post-independence period the population was to be educated about particular norms of citizenship. A certain kind of citizen was to be created, one who would be Caribbean, who would be Creole, who would accept middle class leadership and values, who would wear respectability like a Sunday-best outfit, who would

develop a nuclear family, labor in the factory or on the banana and sugar plantations, vote in elections, speak properly and softly, listen to good music, comport themselves with proper gestures, respect authority and uphold Christian values. Listen again to James describing his grandfather in *Beyond a Boundary*: "My grandfather went to Church every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock wearing in the broiling sun a frock-coast, striped trousers and top-hat, with his walking-stick. ... Respectability was not an ideal, it was an armour."<sup>56</sup> This model of citizenship, a reinvented version of an imaginary late-nineteenth-century Victorian model of the civilized male human, was the grist of the "modular" national community in the Caribbean. Such a constructed subject could gain membership into the new national community, becoming its corner stone. The Christian black would now be the respectable black. The Moyne Commission, which investigated the 1937-38 rebellions in the region, argued in its final report, after bemoaning what it called "improvidence, theft, sexual promiscuity, social evils that block West Indian progress,"<sup>57</sup> that "the material betterment of the West Indies must be accompanied and is to a large extent conditioned on a moral resurgence among the peoples themselves."<sup>58</sup> These conceptions over time became the foundations for the discursive practices of Creole anticolonialism, as in due course the Christian black was replaced by the broad umbrella of a citizen who was respectable. Diane J. Austin has demonstrated how this umbrella of respectability functioned in the language and symbols of Jamaica. She makes the point that "the dominant middle-class ideology suggests that an unbroken blood line from slavery times imbues the culture of the working class. This is the basis for a middle class view that workers are a deculturated class outside society."<sup>59</sup> In the third phase of Jamaican state formation this idea of a citizen's distance from slavery and respectability became the ground for the type of Jamaican native person who was now ready for nation building.<sup>60</sup> It is this project of citizenship wrought, refined and appropriated by the mid-twentieth-century anti-colonial struggle and by Creole nationalism that is presently collapsing against the background of violence, corruption, and moral bankruptcy in the region. But that is only one leg of the crisis. To understand the crisis fully we now have to turn to the other story, that of the ways in which twentieth-century subaltern Afro-Jamaicans attempted to construct an alternative version of their life.

## HENRY REVOLT AND THE POLITICS OF DREAD

If the construction of the Christian black subject of a particular kind was the objective of the colonial power at the moment of emancipation, then by the late nineteenth century, certainly in Jamaica, the project was in trouble. According to Phillip Curtin, the Great Christian Revival of 1861 turned African.<sup>61</sup> Curtin informs us that religion attracted "the Negroes['] greatest interest."<sup>62</sup> I wish to

put it another way by suggesting that by the late nineteenth century it was clear that Afro-Caribbean subjects had staked out their humanity on the terrain of cultural-religious practices. As the rulership practices of "colonial governmentality" in the post-emancipation period consolidated itself, Afro-Jamaican subjects engaged in a process of symbolic construction in which texts, signs and myths were intentionally reordered. This made the symbolic universe of colonial rule the site of everyday struggle for the subaltern subject. During the period of slavery, many countersymbolic practices occurred, but their public intensity was muted. During the post-emancipation period, as public spaces were opened up, the intentional actions of countersymbolic construction created fertile forms. Witness the formation in the late nineteenth century of Myalism, Bedwardism, Zionism, and the plethora of prophets who populated the Jamaican public space.<sup>63</sup> Rastafari as a practice belongs very much to these sets of Afro-Caribbean practices that challenged "colonial governmentality." In the case of Claudius Henry, these practices reached their clearest political significance in colonial Jamaica. As such, if we wish to pose an alternative view of the political, of the way in which the Jamaican subaltern engaged in practices of signification that openly contested the colonial polity of modified command order,<sup>64</sup> then it will be useful to briefly examine the politics of dread of this movement.<sup>65</sup>

The biography of Claudius Henry is fairly well known so I will only rehearse here its barest outline.<sup>66</sup> Henry was born in the parish of Manchester in 1903, and at an early age claims to have had visions. At twenty-six he was arrested and sent to the mental asylum.<sup>67</sup> He was released after medical officers declared him well. Following the well-trodden path of many other Afro-Caribbeans from rural areas, he migrated to the United States. He lived there for thirteen years, becoming a preacher. He returned to Jamaica in 1957, made contact with sections of the Rastafari movement, in particular with Prince Emmanuel,<sup>68</sup> and finally ended up in the parish of St. Andrew working with a small group then led by Edna Fisher. The meeting with Fisher was propitious. She had a small prayer circle that met regularly, and in 1958 he joined it. He claimed that he believed "Haile Selassie was earth's returned messiah [and that] his people should accept him."<sup>69</sup> He also felt that he had a mission to instruct "Black people in particular to go back to Africa and to reform."<sup>70</sup> With these conceptions, Henry had incorporated into his doctrine two key elements of Rastafari's ideas—the divinity of Haile Selassie and African repatriation. Henry and Fisher worked assiduously to build the African Reform Church, developing new rituals of the Rastafari faith, such as strict observance of the Sabbath and regular church attendance. In this way the doctrinal practices of the African Reform Church became a complex dialectic between the codes of the "Christian black" and its radical subversion. Some of

the distinguishing marks of Rastafari were often absent from Henry's church members, and, as a "bald-head," he was ostracized by many of the brethren.

However, Henry held forth, and his congregation grew as he revealed that a "miraculous repatriation" would soon occur. Thousands of Jamaicans left their belongings and gathered for this miraculous event, which failed to happen. For our purposes the key is not that this event did not occur but Henry's arguments for repatriation. These arguments can be found in the pamphlet published for the occasion: "Standing in the Gap with Unquestionable Truth, Pioneering Israel Back Home to Africa." This pamphlet spells out Henry's view of himself as a prophet. It called for, among other things, a mass meeting on the anniversary date of slave emancipation and promised the population that this would be the last emancipation celebration held away from Africa. It proclaimed that in Africa there was "God's Righteous Government of Everlasting Peace on earth" and that Jamaicans should not give up such a government for the colonial government or for the promised self-government. It asked:

Should we sacrifice such a righteous government for Jamaican self-government ... shall we sacrifice the continent of Africa for the island of Jamaica? Shall we refuse God's offer for repatriation back home to Africa and a life of everlasting peace and freedom ... and go back to slavery under these wicked, unrighteous and oppressive rulers of Jamaica ... they have nothing to offer us! All their sweet promises and what they hope to obtain out of self-government under British colonial rule can only lead us into destruction and captivity.<sup>71</sup>

Now, we should recall the context of this political text. First, the PNP had a generally a troubled relationship with Rastafari. In 1943, W. A. Domingo wrote a hostile article about repatriation.<sup>72</sup> And, if the truth be told, there was a consistent, general hostility from educated blacks toward the cultural and religious expressions of the Jamaican subaltern. The PNP was infected with this hostility. Second, the PNP government, led by N. W. Manley, was in office and negotiating for political independence. Third, the ideology of Creole nationalism had by then marginalized the memory of slavery and the relationship of the Afro-Jamaican population to Africa. Fourth, in spite of years of universal adult suffrage, from 1944 until the late 1950s, the social condition of the vast majority of the Jamaican population had not greatly improved—a point Manley himself noted in 1969. If we contrast the main lines of Henry's political text with the elements of the core ideology of the Creole nationalist movement, we would note that Henry breaks the silences of the Creole nationalist movement. Also, we should observe that while the Creole nationalist movement opened no utopian political space, Henry did. Within the trajectory of the black redemptive political

tradition in Afro-Caribbean political thought, this particular political text synthesizes the currents of repatriation and utopia while critiquing Creole nationalism.

Although the miraculous event did not occur, Henry was now in the public eye and the Jamaican colonial state, with its nationalist elite, took note. Soon the Jamaican colonial state was jittery as it increasingly became clear that Henry had modified his focus and was now seeking its overthrow. In this shift, Henry developed a three-pronged approach to anticolonial struggle: successful guerilla warfare in Jamaica was to be followed by the liberation of the other British colonies in the Caribbean and finally by a national anticolonial war on the African continent against British colonialism. Henry's major anticolonial objective was thus a Pan-African one and a form of black internationalism against British colonial domination. Such a political perspective was in a different mold from Creole nationalism, since black internationalism could not be contained inside the creation of a single nation-state.<sup>73</sup>

On 7 April 1960 the Jamaican police raided the headquarters of the African Reform Church. A newspaper report of the raid states that "over 2,500 electrical detonators, 1,800 ordinary detonators, a shot gun, a .32 revolver, about 70 machetes and several sticks of dynamite," were found. Arguably this was not sufficient weaponry to mount a massive military campaign against the state, but it was enough to make both the Jamaican colonial state and the US government worried about the possibilities of a Castro-type revolution on the island. The Jamaican colonial state became even more fretful when it discovered a letter addressed to Fidel Castro signed by twelve members of Henry's organization, including Edna Fisher. There was also a proclamation, which had clearly been drafted to be read after the successful insurrection, signed by seven members of the organization. Finally, Henry's son Ronald was leading guerilla activity in the Red Hills.

Using the Jamaican state archives Brian Meeks has opened new lines of enquiry on this rebellion. He has framed the rebellion and Henry's activities in a narrative of black Atlantic subaltern rebellion.<sup>74</sup> This is a useful way to understand this particular moment in Jamaican and Caribbean political history, and I share some of its political sympathies. But I wish to suggest that there are other meanings to this rebellion that can be discerned only if we follow closely the political ideas of the rebellion itself and examine keenly its diasporic organization. Such a procedure will allow us to further locate the rebellion not as a hidden text but as part of a prophetic redemptive tradition within the black radical political tradition. On this ground the explicit political countersymbolic practices are themselves

pregnant with political ideas, because indeed the subaltern does speak. In other words, from these intentional activities, the religious and political practices of Henry's movement are performative political actions of the subaltern rooted in a prophetic political imagination. In such practices of politics there exists what V. Y. Mudimbe calls a "memory text" in which the subaltern attempts to actualize itself both as subject and reality.<sup>75</sup> This memory text offers an alternative gaze on the story of the nation, on the questions of slavery and the political. It also offers interpretations of history and displacement while defining utopia. The emergence of this memory text is located at the different points of New World blacks' engagement with colonial governmentality. In the case of the Caribbean, its rich practices move in different directions from those of the Creole nationalist project of political modernity. For Henry and his movement we now have sufficient information to begin the attempt to lay bare the key elements of his political ideas and thus to begin our investigation of the meanings of the politics of dread.

#### THE POLITICAL IDEAS OF HENRY

Beginning at the level of organization, Henry's movement had three layers. First was the mass organization of the African Reform Church itself. At his trial, Henry claimed that his organization had about twenty thousand members. Using the elite archives of the period we note the following statement in a confidential memorandum to the US Department of State by US Consul-General Robert McGregor:

One of the avowed Rasta objectives (and perhaps the only commonly held among their various grouping) is to go to Africa. So much is this so that one is led to believe that if the 20,000 hard core were loaded on ships and set down on an African shore, Jamaica would be freed of this cancer.<sup>76</sup>

In another memo, McGregor reports to the State Department his conversation about the Henry movement and about general security matters with Governor Kenneth Blackburne. He writes, "the police put the figures of Rastafarians at 50,000."<sup>77</sup> All of this suggests that Henry perhaps operated on the assumption that the majority of Rastafarians would join his revolt, hence his figure of twenty thousand.

The second layer of Henry's organization was its diasporic dimension. This part of the organization was based in the Bronx, New York, and was composed of both African Americans and Jamaican migrants. It had about fifty members and met regularly at the "hut," which was located at 332 Beckman Street.<sup>78</sup> This section of the organization was led by Henry's son Ronald and called itself the

First African Corps. The New York police arrested some members of the group after Henry's arrest in Jamaica. The most prominent of those arrested was a New York police officer, Noel J. Agard. The New York Times account of Agard's arrest states, "An African nationalist group that plotted revolt in the West Indies and holdups in this city to finance its operations was disclosed yesterday."<sup>79</sup> The district attorney alleged that six persons were involved in a series of holdups and that Agard was the "undercover person responsible for the organization's security." It was also alleged that they had secured over US\$6000 by this method. Two of the six persons accused were reported to be in Jamaica, standing trial with Henry.

The third layer of the organization was its local Jamaican leadership, which seems to have been divided into military and political wings. While there was some overlap between the two, distinctions were made. The letter to Fidel Castro was written on the letterhead of an organization called "The Ethiopia Coptic Training Center" and signed by self-styled commanders and brigadiers. Importantly, Henry's name was absent from this letter. The proclamation of the rebellion, however, was signed by Henry and six others, including Beckford (Henry's second-in-command, who was executed by the guerillas) and D. S. Jarrett, both of whom signed the Castro letter. This proclamation carried the title Henry used when he enunciated the miraculous event, "Pioneering Israel Back Home to Africa." None of the documents implicated the ordinary members of the African Reform Church, suggesting a careful set of discussions about the relationship of the full church members and the planned revolt. I have spent some time outlining what I think the organizational structure of Henry's movement was, because historical writers and scholars, in discussing subaltern movements, pay little attention to these details. This oversight is perhaps the result of two things. First is the epistemological assumption that subaltern political practices are often "prepolitical" and incoherent, and thus we are not able to discuss in political language the features of these movements. Second, there tends to be a profound hierarchical dichotomy in the study of political thought. Rarely are political organizations examined as a site of ideas and practices. It would seem to me, though, that any idea of politics as a practice means that we should pay keen attention to the political ideas about organization.

## LETTER TO FIDEL CASTRO

We now turn to the matter of the political conceptions that sustained the movement's leadership. Two texts are of importance here: the letter to Castro and the proclamation. In the letter to Castro, the movement announces that it is a "back to Africa" one and is involved in preparing a "Lepers' government." The

notion of a lepers' government caused consternation at Henry's trial. Asked by his defense lawyer, Peter Evans, why his name was "Repairer of the Breach," Henry responded that he had gotten the name from the Isaiah chapter in the Bible and that it was revealed to him in a vision. He also said that the idea of a lepers' government was given to him by a messenger and was taken from the biblical story of the cleansing of lepers.<sup>80</sup> These two examples are expressions of the way in which the prophetic political imagination works. Mudimbe has argued that revelation in the political prophetic tradition is a political performance. He writes, "The procedures of God's revelation are part of, and strictly derive from, human events."<sup>81</sup> In the case of Henry I suggest that he does not operate a conception of God in history as a form of "providential design" but instead, since God is already human in the form of Haile Selassie, there is a new relationship at work; in Mudimbe's phrase, "God anthropologizes himself."<sup>82</sup> The making of God into a human is a distinctive moment in the black redemptive tradition.<sup>83</sup> For Henry it meant that biblical texts served only as codes, as referents and sources for his human agency, not as commands. In regard to lepers' government it is obvious that Henry felt he had a political and religious responsibility to clean up what he saw as an immoral political and social system.

The letter to Fidel Castro drew attention to the "conditions, which confronts us today as poor underprivileged people, which were brought here from Africa by the British slave traders over 400 years ago to serve as slaves."<sup>84</sup> It reflects a major difference between Jamaican Creole nationalism and the politics of dread—the location of the historical and social memory of slavery and Africa. Slavery and its memory loom large in the political imagery of those who practice the politics of dread. The politics of dread expresses no hard distinctions between the lived experiences of a slave and the everyday life of the modern Afro-Jamaican. In this worldview slavery is a condition not yet fully eradicated and has become a profound metaphor for the contemporary oppression of New World blacks. Because slavery is responsible both for the past and present conditions of blacks in the West, then one possible remedy is repatriation. The letter to Castro continues: "We now desire to return home in peace, to live under our vine and fig tree otherwise a government like yours that give justice to the poor."<sup>85</sup> The redemption from slavery was to either return to Africa or, if that proved impossible, to live under a revolutionary government. The major political objective of Henry's insurrection was not to rule Jamaica but to turn the island over to Fidel Castro along with the other territories of the British colonial Caribbean, and then to start a war "for Africa's freedom [which would only be completed when] we her scattered children are restored."<sup>86</sup> With such a conception of politics and the nation, Creole nationalism offered no attraction to

Henry and his followers. Henry's nationalism was focused on Africa; it was not about the possession of a native geographical space. It contained the view that slavery and colonialism had disturbed the balance in the world, for which the only real solution was the return of the conquered territories to their rightful and original inhabitants. In this context Fidel Castro was perceived as racially part Amerindian, and as such the region rightfully belonged to persons like him. The letter to Castro ends by requesting Castro to meet with Henry to discuss the group's plans for the "invasion of Jamaica."

The prospect of an invasion of Jamaica by Cuban and Rastafari forces gave the Jamaican nationalist elite political nightmares. US Consul-General Robert McGregor writes, in the report of a meeting between him and Minister of Home Affairs William Seivright, that

The Rastafarian element, far from being cowed or even impressed by police measures [are] planning developments on two fronts ... one side is to secure the release of the Reverend Claudius Henry from prison by stealth and spirit him out of the country. The other is the planning for an invasion force to come from Cuba tying up with elements here to disturb public order.<sup>87</sup>

Perturbed by this possibility, Seivright requested from McGregor, "Advice as to whether the US would be willing to undertake a patrol . . . and the second thought was to secure a continual flow of aerial photographs of the island."<sup>88</sup> This meeting seems to have been the first of many regular security meetings between the McGregor and the minister. An October 1961 letter from McGregor states, "I held the first of regularly scheduled monthly meetings with the Minister of Home Affairs."<sup>89</sup> It is of interest to note that the four items discussed at that meeting were: Millard Johnson and the People's Political Party, The African Reform Church, the Rastafarians, and the communists.<sup>90</sup> It is one of the paradoxes of Jamaican Creole nationalism that having held the shadows of political power for a few years, at a moment of crisis it did two things. On the one hand it attempted to placate sections of the black redemptive movement with regular meetings, finally sponsoring a visit to Africa by a group of Rastafarians, while on the other it met regularly with the United States to seek support for its government. But let us return to Henry's political ideas.

## THE PROCLAMATION

In the second text, Henry repeats his positions about displacement, slavery and Africa. The proclamation is addressed to Jamaicans, and pledges Henry's support and that of "20,000 people" to not only defend Fidel Castro when they

handed the island back to him but to "bring freedom to Africa and everlasting peace to all her scattered slaves those at home and those abroad."<sup>91</sup> Besides the obvious paraphrasing of Marcus Garvey's clarion call, I wish to point out the way in which Africa functioned as an imaginary utopian location in the thought of the black redemptive tradition in the New World. In the history of Western political thought, the conception of utopia begins to be identified with the writings of Thomas More. For More utopia was an island of nowhere, although we now know that because he was writing in 1516, the age of early European expansion, the imaginary was the New World.<sup>92</sup> In political thought the term continues to mean an imaginary alternative life and possibilities distinct from the status quo. In the ideational system of Henry and the black redemptive current, Africa functions as this place of alternative life with new authorities and new subjectivities. Utopia, in this tradition, is a redemptive one—there is no transition, and displacement is negated. This redemptive quality is an important element in politics of dread and opens up a different political space. This political space is best understood as one created not by the "educated hope" of Ernst Bloch but by radical desire. In the former the world is in a process of becoming, and "utopia reaches towards that future and anticipates it."<sup>93</sup> In the utopia of radical desire, the future is now and can be constructed with great force of will. Redemptive politics of dread is of this order. And while the Creole nationalist project worked within the parameters of the colonial epistemic project, holding fast to the symbolic order and government rationalities bequeathed to it, Henry and others challenged these orders. In the final analysis, for the Creole nationalist the space of the political was narrow and institutional, for Henry and others it was ontological. In Henry's ideational framework, the life-world of the African human was constructed by history. For displaced African people the question was how to reorder that history and establish a new ground for African humanness. This was Henry's preoccupation and that of the discursive tradition of which he was a part. It confronted colonial nationalities at its deepest levels. Partha Chatterjee, in discussing anticolonial nationalism, makes the point that it creates two domains: "The material and the spiritual.... The spiritual .. is an inner' domain bearing the 'essential' marks of cultural identity."<sup>94</sup> Such a position still does not confront the so-called prelogical notions about the politics of the people. My examination of the Henry movement suggests that if we break up subaltern movements into discrete binary categories of secularism and religion then we will overlook their rich attempts to create new symbolic orders. We know that the 1960s Henry movement failed. After serving time in jail Henry reemerged in Jamaican public life when he supported the 1972 PNP election campaign. In the 1980s, before his death, he was known to be a supporter of the now defunct communist Workers Party of Jamaica. What the Henry movement in the 1960s represented was an

explicit moment of subaltern intervention in Jamaican national politics. We now turn to the present to see how the political as expressed in this movement is important for the period we inhabit.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

The crisis in Jamaica is a totality because the social formation constructed by the Creole nationalist attempted to build the nation on the silences of the lived experiences of the Afro-Caribbean. Politics and political modernity in the Caribbean attempted to construct a subject and a nation-state rooted in conditions of colonial governmentality. In such a situation decolonization created a postcolony rather than a postcolonial condition. In the postcolony, a modified version of command order of politics resulted in political practices that in the Jamaican political vernacular have been called "tribalism," a highly problematic term. In the sense in which it is deployed, tribalism draws from European imperial conceptions of African culture and life, conceptions in which "tribes" are premodern entities and identities that engage in barbarous irrational activity.<sup>95</sup> The present practices and effects of Jamaican politics/politricks are indeed barbarous, but they are not tribal, premodern, and thus the ghost of an African past. They are the very modern consequences of a practice of politics that focused on the creation of political parties and a command state. This practice had two effects. First, as I have argued, it operated within the confines of a conception of a certain kind of citizen-subject. Second, whenever the conception failed to create order, the rulers reverted to physical force. In the polity of the postcolony built upon the absence of procedural rights, the resort to force is swift. Evidence abounds about the nature of force during the aftermath of the collapse of the project of creating the respectable black. Stephen Vasciannie, in a recent article about human rights in Jamaica, illustrates that during the years between 1996 and 2000, civilians killed fifty-six police officers, and over seven hundred civilians were killed by the police.<sup>96</sup> This is not simply an issue of state violence but also a profound symptom of the nature of the war in which sections of the Jamaican population are engaged—a form of low intensity conflict. This conflict sporadically flares up with road blocks and regular demonstrations, and became a full-scale rebellion in April 1999. Such a state of affairs is simply not hegemonic dissolution. Let us see if we can concretely discern the present.

Typically, hegemony invokes consent procedures as the ground for social control and domination. In the concept of hegemony, domination is possible because of the manufacturing of consent. What I have attempted to show is that within the Jamaican colonial context, the manufacturing of this consent revolved

around the creation of a certain kind of subject. However, from its inception this attempt at hegemony was fractured because the Afro-Jamaican subject grappled to create a set of alternative symbolic and political orders. What I want to argue here is that not only do we have the collapse of the respectable black but that the alternative counterhegemonic symbolic orders created in the process by the subaltern have also in the main collapsed or have been marginalized.<sup>97</sup> The theory of hegemony is a one-sided theory about domination.<sup>98</sup> It was developed to explain the failure of the proletarian revolution in Europe after the success of the 1917 Russian revolution. To understand the nature of domination in the colonial and postcolony requires us to be flexible and nuanced, focusing more on the relationships between rulers and ruled on an unstable terrain.

In 1994 the PNP government, deeply troubled by what it considered to be a crisis in values, launched a conference called the "National Consultation on Values and Attitudes." The workshops focused on areas like family, media, drugs, crime, men and women, accountability, and social renewal, amongst others. Many recommendations revolved around forms of regulatory control and public education. Simon Clarke sums up much of the spirit of the conference, writing that "at the bottom of all of this was the breakdown of the family."<sup>99</sup> But perhaps the most significant perspective on the initiative came from the prime minister himself. In his opening speech, P. J. Patterson spoke of "the need to restore harmony and balance within the nation."<sup>100</sup> The view that there is a need to restore something that has been broken is a prevalent one. The controversial police figure Reneto Adams, in a recent interview, speaks of "communities [that] worked harmoniously and peacefully together, and with each other. The bare-footed boy ... walking and sitting down with his better off neighbor ... if only we could get back to those good old days."<sup>101</sup> This pervasive nostalgia for a "paradise lost" is indicative of the totality of the crisis and of the recognition that social foundations have been eroded or displaced. Any new subject, and thus polity, without fundamental reorganization of Jamaican society, cannot replace the collapse of the respectable black subject. In the Jamaican crisis what we have in some urban areas is the emergence of communities where inhabitants replace the national imaginary with local loyalties and identities. In such a context, calls for new values and attitudes, for a return to the good old days and, from some quarters, for benevolent dictatorship are simply worthless when they are not dangerous. But perhaps one way out of the crisis might be to recognize that any new dispensation needs to develop a national community with the profoundest understanding of the social memories of the lived experiences of the subaltern Afro-Caribbean as well as that of the Indo-Caribbean in the wider region. This recognition should inform our practice of politics.

Fanon called this form of politics "living inside history." It is clear that in the case of those human populations that began modernity in the West as slaves, there is no radical politics without history. Such a position now means that when we conceive of the political we should do so outside the present boundaries, which offer only versions of instrumental power, or order. A politics of "living inside history" rests upon a political that discards Hobbesian assumptions about human nature. It moves us in a totally different direction. It also takes us away from the current preoccupations of liberal politics, which swirls around issues of political authority, political obligation, consent and procedural justice. It eschews arguments about failed states. A politics of "living inside history" calls for us to think anew, to pose the hard questions that arise from the practices not only of those who have conquered the world but those who have been conquered.

In mainstream political philosophy, many central questions are still framed by late twentieth-century discourses of liberalism. One major end of liberal politics as foundational political truth is the sovereignty of the subject as a rights-bearing individual, and, since the American and French Revolutions, liberalism has promised freedom as proclaimed rights. This dimension of liberal thought grew out of the Europe's long history of absolutism, and there is no doubt about its importance and indeed fundamental contribution to political philosophy. But when we think about political ideas, we should do so through the historical experiences and contingencies that give rise to political values. Thus, one issue we face is, what political values should animate any radical alternative to the present crisis of Caribbean politics? Of course rights are important, but as the liberal political theorist Judith Shklar declares, "Rights are not this open door that allows us to reach our goals."<sup>102</sup> Also, as we are aware, one major difficulty with liberalism is that it lacks "historical memory."<sup>103</sup> If all of this is so then how do we develop a politics, which lives in history?

What the historical practices of racial slavery, colonialism and indentured labor mean is that the politics of living in history requires practices of freedom. In the postcolony, radical politics is not only about granting procedural rights. Certainly, one issue in the postcolony state is the enormous power of the state, which overshadows rights of citizens. But to argue that sovereign rights in some form of broader institutional democratic system is the sole answer, while helpful and necessary, is not sufficient. Thus we come back to the precise shape of freedom. We cannot answer this question a priori, but the contours of an answer can be gleaned when we pay some attention to the political and social ideas of ordinary persons. What is clear is that in societies with "legacies" of slavery and colonialism there are no distinctions between what has been called "negative" and "positive" freedoms. In such a context rights become enlarged, and, as

Shklar observes, "Are freedom itself .... They are the result of a history of freedom which must always be understood with slavery as its background."<sup>104</sup> How we then understand the notion of rights as part of freedom rather than freedom as rights becomes one of the critical challenges facing Caribbean and Jamaican political thought.

In all of this we would do well to remember the 1958 injunction of Gordon Lewis, when, in reporting an interview with Prince Emmanuel, he wrote, "We know little of the thought patterns of the masses, with the exception of the Anancy stories and the Maroon legends."<sup>105</sup> He continues, "For in the long run the type of Prince Emmanuel may have more to do with West Indian future than the type of Lord Hailes."<sup>106</sup> The Caribbean national community cannot be built without those thoughts and practices being at the very center of the Caribbean life-world. In June 1970, Sylvia Wynter argued that the process of "indigenization" was central to the cultural history of the region. She also stated that "history has mainly been about the European super structure of civilization. Yet in the interstices of history we see, in glimpses, evidences of a powerful and pervasive cultural process which has largely determined the unconscious springs of our being."<sup>107</sup> It is these interstices that currently demand our attention.

### Acknowledgments

Give thanks to Geri Augusto and David Scott for critical readings and comments; to Greg Graham, who collected newspapers; and to Jana Lipman, who shared her research materials.

### [Footnote]

1. Brian Meeks, *Radical Caribbean: From Black Power to Abu Baker* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1996), 134.
2. David Scott, "The Permanence of Pluralism," *Without Guarantees*, eds. Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg, and Angela McRobbie (London: Verso, 2000), 283.
3. Selwyn Ryan, *Democratic Governance and the Social Condition in the Anglophone Caribbean* (New York: Caribbean Division UNDP, 1996), iv.
4. *Daily Cleaner*, 19 June 2001.
5. For a discussion of this point see David Scott, *An Obscure Miracle of Connection: Discursive Tradition and Black Diaspora Criticism*, *Small Axe* no. I (March 1997).

### [Footnote]

6. Stuart Hall, "Through the Passage of Time," Norman Manley Memorial Lecture delivered in July 1984, published in *Norman Manley Memorial Lectures 1984 dr 1986* (London: Norman Manley Memorial Lecture Committee, n.d.).
7. Cited in Andrew Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 36.
8. For a discussion of this situation and what it means for the study of Jamaican political thought, see Anthony Bogue, "Nationalism and Jamaican Political Thought,"

Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom: History, Heritage and Culture, eds. Glen Richards and Kathleen Monteith (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2002).

**[Footnote]**

9. The work in this stream can be seen in the various symposia on Caribbean studies held between 1955 and early 1960s, both at UWI and at Columbia University's Research Institute for the Study of Man in the Tropics. There is a major piece of intellectual history waiting to be written about this project.

**[Footnote]**

10. There is much debate, as would be expected in political philosophy, about the meaning of the political. I suggest that in general the political is that sphere in which people generally govern their lives through a set of agreed-upon conventions, rules and understandings. There are of course two dimensions to this sphere. The first is a set of institutions, the second is what we may call political reason. At the heart of these dimensions is the question of power. The rise of the European bourgeoisie split the political into an artificial dichotomy, creating the public sphere in which the state and institutions came to dominate. As a consequence not only did freedom come to be primarily defined within the parameters of state-citizen relationships but the political morphed into instrumental understandings of power. These understandings of power limited Manley's perspectives on the nature of colonial power.

11. N. W. Manley, "This Jamaica." Speech delivered on 18 September 1938, Ward Theatre, Kingston, and published in *Founding of the People's National Party* (undated PNP conference party document).

12. *Ibid.*

**[Footnote]**

13. For an excellent discussion of this, see Louis Lindsay, "The Myth of Independence," Working Paper no. 6 (Kingston: ISER Publications, 1975).

14. Hall, "Through the Passage of Time," 12.

15. Lindsay, "Myth of Independence," 13.

16. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalism and Thought and the Colonial World.: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed, 1986), 50-51.

17. Manley, "This Jamaica."

**[Footnote]**

18. For a discussion of the development of these ideas and how they relate to racial arguments, see Joseph L. Graves Jr., *Emperors New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001). For the little known classic refutation of these arguments in the nineteenth century from inside the Caribbean intellectual tradition, see Antenor Firmin, *The Equality of the Human Races*, trans. Asselin Charles (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), originally published in 1885.

19. Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1859), 96.

20. *Ibid.*, 42.

21. For a very good discussion of some of the ideas of the nineteenth-century black Jamaican intelligentsia, see Patrick Bryan, *The Jamaican People, 1880-1902* (London: Macmillan, 1991), chapter 12.

22. T. H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (London: Longman,

1941), 22.

23. Ibid., 121-22

**[Footnote]**

24. Philip Sherlock, *Norman Manley: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 160.

25. Ken Post, *Strike the Iron*, vol. 1 (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981), 285.

26. Manley, "This Jamaica."

27. Ibid.

28. Richard Hart, the author of the seminal two-volume work *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery*, tells in an interview the way in which the party leadership would be critical of his platform speeches, which attempted to describe the

**[Footnote]**

antislavery struggles of the Jamaican population. He was allowed to continue with them only when it was clear that the audience keenly appreciated these speeches. Richard Hart, interview by author, London 1977. See *Small Axe* no. 3 (March 1998) for an extensive interview of Hart by David Scott.

29. W. A. Domingo was a leading nationalist figure in early-twentieth-century Jamaican politics and a leading political figure in the early-twentieth-century black radicalism in the United States, particularly in Harlem, New York. See Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia* (London: Verso, 1998) for an extensive discussion of this period of radicalism and the role of Domingo.

30. Sherlock, *Norman Manley*, 113.

31. For a discussion of this strain, see Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies*, chapter 2.

32. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London: Penguin Classics, 1985), 69.

**[Footnote]**

33. We should note, however, that the question of political education was always problematic in the PNP. The early Marxist left firmly believed in political education and attempted to develop programs that were Marxist in orientation while the other wing of the party perceived political education as a tool for party propaganda and subject formation.

34. Rex Nettleford, *Manley and the New Jamaica* (London: Longman, 1971), 18.

35. Nettleford, *Manley and the New Jamaica*, 364.

**[Footnote]**

36. Ibid., 380.

37. Patrick Bryan, "The Norman Washington Manley Award for Excellence 1999," *Journal of Caribbean History* 35, no. 1 (2000): 1.

38. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 25.

39. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 36.

**[Footnote]**

40. Ibid., 143.

41. These periods are: early colonization until the end of slavery, followed by emergence of "peasantry" and wage labor. The third and fourth periods are divided into the early twentieth century and the period prior to political independence. In the 1980s there was an outpouring of writings on the Caribbean state. For a summary of these works, see Bill Riviere, *State Systems in the Eastern Caribbean* (Kingston:

ISER Publications, 1990) and Patrick Emmanuel, "The Role of the State in the Commonwealth Caribbean," Working Paper no. 38 (Kingston: ISER Publications, 1990).

**[Footnote]**

42. Denis Benn, *The Growth and Development of Political Ideas in the Caribbean, 1774-1983*, 15.

43. For a discussion of this, see Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), chapter 3.

44. I take the notion of command from the work of Achille Mbembe, *The PostColony* (California: California University Press, 2001). However, I use order here as a double entendre.

45. Blathwayt Atlas, M33 reproduction in John Carter Brown Library, Brown University. Thanks to Anani Dzidzienyo for bringing this map to my attention.

46. See David Scott, *Refashioning Futures* (California: Princeton University Press, 1999), chapter 3.

47. The phrase "colonial governmentality" is taken from David Scott. See *Refashioning Futures*, chapter 1.

**[Footnote]**

48. This phrase first used by Horace Russell in "The Emergence of the Christian Black: The Making of a Stereotype," *Jamaica Journal* 16, no. 1 (1983): 51-71. Another important writing on this subject is Catherine Hall, "William Knibb and the Contestation of the New Black Subject," *Small Axe* no. 8 (September 2000). This black subject was a complex one, and, in many instances, the ex-slaves' adaptation and recasting of the subjectivities of the Christian black created the basis for figures of revolt. The most famous of these figures in nineteenth-century Jamaica was Paul Bogle. But I would also argue that the religious practices of figures like Alexander Bedward were counterhegemonic subject-formation ones.

49. Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 264.

**[Footnote]**

50. Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1992), 167. I should note the nineteenth-century, white, masculine dimensions of the Christian black that were constructed by colonial rule. For an extensive discussion, see Catherine Hall, "Gender Politics and Imperial Politics," *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, eds. Verne Shepherd, Bridget Brereton, and Barbara Bailey (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995) and Bridget Brereton, "Family Strategies, Gender and the Shift to Wage Labor in the British Caribbean," *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition*, eds. Bridget Brereton and Kevin A. Yelvington (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1999).

51. For a sharp description of this see Peter Gay, *Schnitziers Century: The Making of Middle Class Culture 1815-1914* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), chapter 7.

52. David Theo Goldberg, "Liberalism's Limits: Carlyle and Mill on the 'Negro Question,'" *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 2 (2000): 203-16.

53. *Ibid.*, 208.

**[Footnote]**

54. *Ibid.*, 210.

55. C. L. R. James, *The Case for West Indian Self-Government*, "The CLR James Reader", ed. Anna Grimshaw (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 48-52.
56. C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Kingston: Sangster's Books and Hutchinson and Co. 1963), 17-18.

**[Footnote]**

57. Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 390.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Diane J. Austin, "History and Symbols in Ideology: A Jamaican Example," *Man* 14, no. 3 (September 1979).
60. An amusing but telling incident verifies this. In the late 1960s, while in high school, I received punishment in the following manner. I was required to stay after school and write the following lines five hundred times. "Slavery has been abolished for over 100 years and therefore I must learn to conduct myself as a free and responsible citizen of Jamaica."
61. Phillip Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony, 1830-1865* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 171.
62. *Ibid.*, 163.

**[Footnote]**

63. For a description of these events and some of the key personalities involved, see the following: Diane J. Austin-- Broos, "Redefining the Moral Order," *The Meaning of Freedom*, eds. Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992); W. F. Elkins, *Street Preachers, Faith Healers and Herb Doctors in Jamaica, 1890-1925* (New York: Revisionist Press, 1977).
64. If the colonial polity in its plain form had no notion of liberal rights, in its modified form one element of liberal rights--the right to vote--becomes possible. However, other than this right, the modified command order does not entrench other rights; instead it inflates might and authority.

**[Footnote]**

65. Here I am appropriating George Beckford's phrase. However, while for Beckford the politics of dread performed a deconstructive function, unmasking false decolonization. I wish to suggest that the politics of dread posited a view of politics and African redemption from which we might discern positive elements in the reconstruction of Caribbean radical political thought. It also gives us a political language through which we might think about the meanings of utopia in Caribbean political thought. See Beckford's essay "Social Knowledge and Social Change in the Caribbean," *The George Beckford Papers*, ed. Kari Levitt (Kingston: Canoe Press, 2000), 234-38.

**[Footnote]**

66. For a treatment of Henry's life, see Barry Chevannes, "Repairer of the Breach: Reverend Claudius Henry and Jamaican Society," *Ethnicity in the Americas*, ed. Frances Henry (Hague: Mouton, 1976).
67. Nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century British colonial history is littered with cases of radical persons in the mental asylums of the colonies in Africa and the Caribbean. For a discussion of this, see Alexander Butchart, *The Anatomy of Power: European Constructions of the African Body* (London: Zed, 1998) and M. Vaughn, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford: Stanford University

Press, 1991).

**[Footnote]**

68. Prince Emmanuel is a major figure in the history of the Rastafari movement. See Barry Chevannes, *Rastafari, Roots and Ideology* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1995), 172-88.

69. *Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1960, 9.

70. *Ibid.*

**[Footnote]**

71. *Daily Gleaner*, 11 October 1960.

72. *New Negro Voice*, 16 October 1943, 1. This paper was the voice of the Jamaican UNIA, which was then sympathetic to the PNP. Domingo at the time was associated with the PNP and the editor of the paper.

73. As a political conception black internationalism raises a different set of concerns about the nature of nationalism-concerns that have yet to be explored.

**[Footnote]**

74. Brian Meeks, *Narratives of Resistance* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2000), chapter 1.

75. For a discussion of this concept and its application to African religious /political movements and moments, see V. Y. Mudimbe, *Parables and Fables: Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Central Africa* (Wisconsin: University of V. Y. Mudimbe, *Parables and Fables: Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Press*, 1991), chapter 4. Wisconsin Press, 1991), chapter 4.

**[Footnote]**

76. Classified General Records, 1956-1962, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Record Group 84 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives), hereafter referred to as US Foreign Service Dispatch.

77. *Ibid.*

78. This was the same address Castro was to use to respond to Henry.

79. *The New York Times*, 27 July 1960, 3.

**[Footnote]**

80. *Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1960.

81. Mudimbe, 20.

82. *Ibid.*, 25.

83. Here is not the place to elaborate. Suffice it to note that a discursive practice called Ethiopianism comes to the fore in the black world in the nineteenth century. This practice has many internal shifts as it is reconceptualized in the different zones of the black world. For an early discussion of some these shifts, see St. Clair Drake, *The Redemption of Africa and Black Religion* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1977). For a more recent discussion on this subject, see Anthony Bogues, *Africana Heretics and Prophets: Radical Political Intelligence* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

84. *Daily Gleaner*, 13 October 1960.

85. *Ibid.*

**[Footnote]**

86. Ibid.
87. US Foreign Service Dispatch.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.

**[Footnote]**

91. Daily Cleaner, 13 October 1960.
92. There is a noted exception to this conception of utopia in Western thought. Both Karl Mannheim and Ernst Bloch begin their discussions on utopia with Anabaptist Thomas Munzer. See Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), chapter 10.
93. Ruth Levitas, "Educated Hope: Ernst Bloch on Abstract and Concrete Utopia," *Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, eds. Jamie Owen Daniel and Tom Moylan (London: Verso, 1997), 65.

**[Footnote]**

94. Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community," *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996), 217.
95. For an excellent discussion of this issue, see *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), chapter 1.

**[Footnote]**

96. Stephen Vasciannie, "Reconsidering Human Rights," *Sunday Cleaner*, 16 December 2001, section G. I am grateful to Rupert Lewis, who brought this to my attention.
97. The names of some of the so-called gangs in inner-city Jamaica tells some of this story. Names like "Fatherless Crew" and "No Have Nothing to Live for" represent not only profound alienation from the society but the loss of the alternative symbolic order developed by ordinary Jamaicans. This order has been replaced by a nihilistic one, drawing from and reshaping the notion of the "Rude Bwoy," which developed in Kingston in 1960s. Obviously the matter is also complicated by the relationship to drugs. See the brilliant, brief article on "Rude Bwoys" by Garth White, "Rudie, oh Rudie," *Caribbean Quarterly* 13 (September 1967).
98. For the best discussion of Gramsci's formulation of this theory and its use, see Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). A more recent critique of this theory can of course be found in James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Of course, within the colonial context, Ranajit Guha's text, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) offers another possible reading.

**[Footnote]**

99. Report on the National Consultation on Values and Attitudes. Jamaica Information Service, April 1994.
100. Ibid.
101. Daily Gleaner, 4 November 2001.

**[Footnote]**

102. Judith N. Shklar, *Redeeming American Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 111.

103. The phrase is Shklar's.

**[Footnote]**

104. Shklar, *Redeeming American Political Thought*, 112.

105. Gordon Lewis, "The apathy of the masses remains untouched," *The Sunday Gleaner*, 2 March 1958.

106. *Ibid.*

107. Sylvia Wynter, "Jonkonnu in Jamaica," *Jamaica Journal* 4, no. 2 (June 1970): 35.

**[Author note]**

Anthony Bogue

**[Author note]**

ANTHONY BOGUES is an associate professor of Africana studies at Brown University, in Providence. He is the author of *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C. L. R. James* (1997) and *Africana Heretics and Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals*, which is forthcoming in 2002.