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AT THE RENDEZVOUS OF VICTORY

Also by C.L.R. James
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The Future in the Present (Selected Writings Volume 1)

Spheres of Existence (Selected Writings Volume 2)

Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution

Notes on Dialectics

The Black Jacobins

C.L.R. James

AT THE RENDEZVOUS
OF VICTORY

Selected Writings

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... For it is not true that the work of man is finished
that we have nothing more to do
but be parasites in the world
that all we need do now is keep in step with the world.
The work of man is only just beginning
and it remains to conquer
all the violence entrenched
in the recesses of his passion.
No race holds the monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of strength
and there is a place for all at the rendezvous of victory....

Aimé Césaire, *Return to My Native Land*
(*Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*)

C.L.R. James: A Biographical Introduction

C.L.R. James — the author of historical studies, a novel, short stories, a play; early Pan-Africanist and a seminal figure in black politics on three continents; writer on Hegel and philosophy, political visionary and a major innovator in marxist theory and working-class organisation; literary critic and commentator on art and sport; prolific correspondent, and above all a participant, teacher and activist in the events of his time — was born on 4 January 1901 in Tunapuna, near Port of Spain, Trinidad. His father was head of a teachers' training school and a sportsman, his mother was a voracious reader: "She read perpetually and as she put the books down I picked them up" (see "The Old World and the New", pages 202-17). He attended Queen's Royal College, the island's outstanding government secondary school, as an exhibition scholar from 1910-18, and in the 1920s taught English and History there himself. During this time he distinguished himself as a club cricketer and an athlete (he held the Trinidad high-jump record at 5 feet 9 inches from 1918-22), and began writing fiction. With a small group of intellectuals and writers, including Alfred Mendes, Albert Gomes and Ralph de Boissière, he was closely connected with the two magazines of the early 1930s which heralded the emergence of an indigenous West Indian literature. *Trinidad*, edited by James and Mendes, appeared only twice (Christmas 1929 and Easter 1930), and it was in the first issue that James's then controversial story "Triumph" — probably the earliest depiction of "barrack yard" or slum life in Port of Spain — was published, with charges of obscenity being levelled against it. *The Beacon*, edited by Gomes, appeared for twenty-eight issues between March 1931 and November 1933, and James made frequent contributions, including short fiction (see "Revolution" and "The Star that Would Not Shine", pages 1-12) and book reviews.

In 1932 he came to England with the encouragement of an old acquaintance and cricketing opponent, Learie Constantine, whom he was to help to write his autobiography (*Cricket and I*, 1932), and for a while James lived in Constantine's adopted town of Nelson, Lancashire. He had brought with him his first political book, *The Life of Captain Cipriani*, a pioneer work arguing the case for West Indian self-government which was published that year in Nelson with Constantine's assistance, and later in a shortened version by Leonard Woolf's Hogarth Press in London.

An article by James on cricket in the *Daily Telegraph* brought him to the attention of Neville Cardus, and as a result of this meeting James began to write as cricket correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*. This, followed by similar employment with the *Glasgow Herald*, was to provide him with a living throughout his first stay in the country. Meanwhile he had become active in British politics and society. Until 1936 he was a member of the Independent Labour Party and chairman

of its Finchley branch, and he wrote regularly for the ILP papers *Controversy* and the *New Leader* (edited by Fenner Brockway). In that year he left to help form the Revolutionary Socialist League, along with other trotskysts who had left the ILP, and he was editor of its newspaper *Fight*. In 1937 he became editor of *International African Opinion*, the journal of the International African Service Bureau; the members of this organisation included Jomo Kenyatta, and its founder and chairman was George Padmore, whom James had known from childhood (see "George Padmore: Black Marxist Revolutionary", pages 251-63) and whom he was later to introduce to Kwame Nkrumah. (James was to write in a letter to Padmore in 1945: "George, this young man [Nkrumah] is coming to you ... do what you can for him because he's determined to throw the Europeans out of Africa.") It was under the auspices of the Bureau that Nkrumah was to go from London to the Gold Coast in 1947 to begin his preparations for the revolution which was to initiate a new Africa.) James participated in the movement of the unemployed, and made speaking tours in England, Scotland and Wales. He was chairman of the International African Friends of Abyssinia during the Italian invasion, writing many articles on this issue for *The Keys* (the journal of the League of Coloured Peoples), as well as for the *New Leader* (see "Is This Worth a War?", pages 13-16), and agitating among British workers for solidarity actions. He also played a part in the growth of the trotskyst movement in France, and was one of the British delegates to the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938. During this period he wrote his famous history of the Haitian revolution, *The Black Jacobins* (1938), an extensive history of the Third International, *World Revolution* (1937; see extract on pages 17-32), and *A History of Negro Revolt* (1938), as well as publishing his only novel, *Minty Alley* (1936). He translated Boris Souvarine's *Stalin* (1939), the first major exposé of its subject, from the French. He also wrote and acted in a play, *Toussaint L'Ouverture* (1936), in which he and Paul Robeson appeared together at the Westminster Theatre.

At the end of 1938 James went to the United States of America on a lecture tour, and stayed there for the next fifteen years. In this period his activity developed in two main directions. First of all, he pioneered the idea of an autonomous black movement which would be socialist but not subject to control by the leaderships of white-majority parties and trade unions. The record of his 1938 discussions with Trotsky (see pages 33-64), in which he laid the basis of this principle, is still one of the fundamental texts establishing a black marxism. James took part in wartime sharecroppers' strikes in the South, and agitated among blacks to oppose the world war. In the course of this activity he came to the conclusion that not only did the black movement have autonomy, it was also more advanced than the rest of the labour movement and would act as its detonator: this view is summed up in the programme entitled *The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the US* (1948). His other main activity (and in fact they interacted) was in the Socialist Workers' Party, where together with

Raya Dunayevskaya he led a tendency (the Johnson-Forest Tendency) that gradually elaborated an independent marxism, breaking with its trotskyst background. It extended to women and youth its idea of the special role of the black movement (this was still the 1940s) and later began to criticise the traditional “democratic centralist” version of the marxist organisation. This rethinking is recorded in various political documents of the tendency and in articles in *The New International* during the 1940s; it culminates in two full-length works, *Notes on Dialectics* (written in 1948), a study of Hegel’s *Science of Logic* and the development of the dialectic in Marx and his continuators, and *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (1950). During this period, James had also helped to initiate the first English translation of Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (see pages 65-72). In 1952 he was interned on Ellis Island, and was expelled from the USA in the following year. It was during his internment that he wrote *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, a study of the work of Herman Melville.

James spent the next five years in England. He continued to contribute to the political debate in the US through the pages of the Detroit-based journal *Correspondence*. In 1958 he published *Facing Reality* (see extract on pages 73-84), which presented the ideas worked through in the forties in the light of the Hungarian revolution and the growth of rank-and-file shop stewards’-type movements in Europe and North America. But at the same time he embarked upon a long programme of writing in which he was to re-examine the basis of his assumptions about human culture, and it was with this purpose that on his return to England he began his now classic book on cricket, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963).

The struggle for colonial emancipation in which James had continuously been involved was by now showing some results. In the years before the second world war he had been among the very few who not only foresaw but worked for the independence of Africa, and he maintained and strengthened his links with the Pan-Africanist movement, and with Nkrumah — whom he first met in America in the early 1940s (Nkrumah recalled in his autobiography that through James he learned “how an underground movement worked”) — during his visits to Ghana in the early years of the new régime. *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (1977) chronicles the events that led up to and ensued from Ghana becoming the first African country to win independence in 1957, and James has frequently written of Nkrumah’s importance in the history of Africa (see pages 172-85).

In 1958 James returned to Trinidad, in the run-up to the West Indian independence which he had already been advocating when he left a quarter of a century earlier. He became Secretary of the Federal Labour Party, the governing party of the embryonic West Indies Federation which he supported (see pages 85-128), and he worked with Dr Eric Williams in the Trinidad People’s National Movement, editing and contributing copiously to its newspaper *The Nation*. In the next three years he published two books, *Modern Politics* and *Party Politics in the*

West Indies, as well as writing and lecturing on Caribbean culture. His partnership with his former student and friend Williams came to an end as a result of the break-up of the West Indies Federation, and more particularly as a result of Williams's rejection of a non-aligned position in favour of the USA and its retention of the Chaguaramas Naval Base. *Modern Politics* (see extracts on pages 129-42) was banned, and James returned to England in 1962, a few days before Trinidad's independence. He continued to publish from a distance in the Trinidadian press, and returned in 1965 as a cricket correspondent to report the Test series. He was immediately put under house arrest, but his status as one of the founding fathers of West Indian independence ensured an outcry that led to his release. He stayed for several months, during which he founded and edited a newspaper, *We the People*, and initiated the formation of the Workers' and Farmers' Party.

From 1966 his residence alternated between England and the USA, with occasional visits to the Caribbean, lecturing and writing prolifically on the variety of matters which have concerned him throughout his life. He initiated the 6th Pan-African Congress in Dar-es-Salaam in 1974, but because of a decision to exclude certain dissident Caribbean movements he declined to attend himself; his views are expressed in "Towards the Seventh: the Pan-African Congress — Past, Present and Future" (see pages 236-50). He has contributed to a number of journals spanning three continents, as well as inspiring various publications and dissertations (see Bibliography). During the 1970s he taught and lectured extensively in the USA — at Howard University, as Visiting Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University, Illinois, as Professor of Humanities at Federal City College, Washington, at Harvard, Yale, Princeton — making important contributions in particular to Black Studies (see "Black Studies and the Contemporary Student", pages 186-201). The honorary doctorates he has received include one from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica in 1971.

He now lives in Brixton, London, continues to write, with a regular cricket column in *Race Today*, gives occasional public talks and is completing his autobiography. Also in preparation is a book on Shakespeare. In July 1983 a Penumbra Productions series of talks entitled *The Best of C.L.R. James*, on America, the Caribbean, Cricket, and Solidarity in Poland (which he has hailed as a crucial political phenomenon and a part of "the organic movement of the working class in capitalist society"; see pages 271-3), was screened on Channel 4 Television, and another television film, *Talking History*, recording a conversation between James and E.P. Thompson, was produced. Thompson has said of James: "Tom Mann and C.L.R. James have one thing in common. On his eightieth birthday, Tom said, 'I hope to grow *more* dangerous as I grow older.' C.L.R. has already shown that he intends to do the same. What an extraordinary man he is! It is not a question of whether one agrees with everything he has said or done: but everything has had the mark of originality, of his own flexible, sensitive and deeply cultured intelligence. That intelligence has always

been matched by a warm and outgoing personality. He has always conveyed not a rigid doctrine but a delight and curiosity in all the manifestations of life. I'm afraid that American theorists will not understand this, but the clue to everything lies in his proper appreciation of the game of cricket."

MARGARET BUSBY

1

Revolution

[This was first published in May 1931 in The Beacon, one of the two Trinidadian magazines closely related to the emergence of West Indian fiction in the early 1930s (the other was Trinidad, edited by Alfred Mendes and C.L.R. James, which appeared only twice, at Christmas 1929 and Easter 1930). The Beacon, edited by Albert Gomes, ran uninterruptedly for 28 issues from March 1931 to November 1933 and became, as Gomes said, "much more than just a literary magazine and mouthpiece of a clique. Indeed, it became the focus of a movement of enlightenment spearheaded by Trinidad's angry young men of the Thirties".]

All during the week there had been talk in Port-of-Spain about the insurrection in Venezuela, and about the S.S.—, a German vessel, which, it was said, had carried the invading insurrectionists and their ammunitions into the harbour at Cumana. The Trinidad government had detained the ship and was making investigations or something of the sort. I did not take much interest, but stopping to talk to a friend of mine I told him how I had a vivid memory of ex-President Castro being pointed out to me in the street some fifteen years before when, deposed and unable to land in Venezuela, he lived an exile in Trinidad.

"He died in extreme poverty here, you know, in a single room in Charlotte Street."

"I don't know. When I saw him he did not look extremely poor."

"I may be wrong, but I think he went absolutely to nothing. Wait a bit. I know someone who can tell me. Look here. I'll try and get him to come and talk to us." X—— seemed a little excited.

He walked up the street, went into an office and came back.

"Just now. He is coming." And he whispered to me.

"Really?"

"I am absolutely certain of what I am telling you. Look!"

And a man, bareheaded, walked down the road to us. But I am not going to describe him except to say that he was obviously a Venezuelan.

I was introduced as a person wishing to know something about Castro and he started to talk at once in free and fluent English full of idiom without the slightest trace of an accent, but using his hands in the Latin manner. He told us about President Castro, knew all about him. Castro, in full power in Venezuela, left for Germany to undergo an operation. His wife persuaded him to leave General Gomez, his Vice-President, in charge. The idea was that Gomez, a farmer without much education, would keep things going quietly until Castro returned. But Castro had barely reached Trinidad, twenty-four hours later, when he learnt that he had been deposed by Gomez. Castro, so late a ruling President, was immediately asked to leave Trinidad; left, came back, was sent away again, and was only allowed to live here in peace the third time.

"And the Gomez party has been in power since then?" I asked.

"Since then, sir," he said and he looked away down the street and shook his head.

"What about this vessel, the ——?" I asked him.

"The vessel is all right," he replied quickly. "The captain is in no trouble. All he will say is that he signed bills of lading, but he didn't know the contents of the cases. A captain signs a bill of lading for a piano, but no captain in the world is supposed to know what each case in his cargo contains. He had a lot of men on board; they were booked to land at a certain town. But he saw that they were going to fight. He found out that he had rifles on board instead of ordinary cargo. So when he got the chance he dumped them and sailed away. He landed some of the fighters who remained in Grenada and came on here. Nothing can happen to the captain.... It's those poor boys who got shot down for nothing."

"The General was killed?"

"Chalbaud, a good man, a valuable man to lose."

"But what was the use of making an open attack on Cumana like that? If Gomez has anything, he has soldiers at least. The insurrectionists were sure to be beaten."

"I don't think so.... They weren't many, no more than a hundred or so, but if they had landed and taken the city and shown they had guns, they would have had a big following at once. All the people would have been with them. All the people are with us. They are against Gomez. But the Venezuelan is not going to leave his cattle and his wife and children any more until he sees something is really happening. For too many years the revolutionary party in Venezuela has been fooling the people. Every time it is: 'Get ready such and such a day. You get your men at such a spot. You get yours. You, you, you, meet at so and so with swords and revolvers and whatever guns you have.' Good. When you meet, you hear 'Nothing doing'. Something always happens to upset the plans and Gomez's soldiers want to know what is the cause of this military gathering. After that, the only thing for you is to leave wife and children and run here to Trinidad, to Martinique, or somewhere.... If those boys under Chalbaud had had fair play, they would have taken Cumana and then the whole thing would have started."

"How do you mean 'fair play'?"

"Gomez knew, man, that they were coming. He had received previous information."

"From where?"

"From Germany where the steamer came from. Treachery. So he was prepared.... But Delgado Chalbaud is the man whom I am thinking of! He was a man we couldn't spare."

"You have no other Generals as good as he?"

"Yes, we have one. Aribálo Cedeño. He is a wonderful fighter, but a mad fool. For the last two years, he and his men have been marching up and down Venezuela giving Gomez's troops beans. And they can't catch him."

"Another Hannibal," I ventured. He gave me a quick understanding smile and nod.

"Cedeño shouldn't do that," he continued. "He is a man we will

want. And what he is doing can't last. He is a brave man, a grand fellow, but it can't go on. Four or five months ago we heard that Gomez had him at last. He was in a corner where he couldn't come out. No mountain or so where he was, you know. Only the savannahs. Nowhere to hide. We thought he was gone. Two months afterwards we heard that he had escaped with ten men."

"Where is he now?"

"Still somewhere in Venezuela."

"Why doesn't he try to get away to another country? He can't?"

"Of course he can."

"Peculiar fellow," I said, but in my heart I knew that it wasn't so. This gallant soldier was merely a man born out of his time. What a crusader he would have made! Or what damage he would have done to Aztecs and Incas! It was men of that breed who helped Wellington to wear down the French in Spain.

But our informant could see it only from the point of the ultimate loss to the cause of a fine fighter.

"The kind of life the man has to lead!" he continued. "He can't sleep for ten minutes at a time. Always on the look-out. I know. You see, anybody can kill him. And if he can go to the authorities and say: 'This is the body of Aribálo Cedeño,' then he will be all right for life."

"For life?"

"Yes. That is one thing with Gomez. He is taking the money but, by Jingo, he is letting you have yours too. He will call you—"

Here he hunched his shoulders, turned his head away so that X—— and I could see only his neck and one ear.

"This is what he will do," (patting X—— benevolently on the back): "My son," he will tell you, 'you have done well. You have done very well. I am very pleased with you. Go with that gentleman there to the bank. He will give you a hundred thousand dollars. Buy a little estate and make yourself happy. All you have to do is to keep me well posted on whatever disturbance you see is going on against my government. Goodbye.' "

He straightened himself.

"That is the Gomez régime, sir. He does not allow you to say a word. He tells you what he wants and then tells you goodbye."

His shoulders hunched again, he assumed the same attitude as before, and began his derisive mimicry of the parting.

"He will send for another man: 'My friend, I want you to fix up this finance for me. I don't know anything about it but it don't look good to me. I hear you are a good man at this sort of thing. Fix it for me. You are Minister of Finance now. Your salary will be so and so. Go with that gentleman. He will give you all the papers. Goodbye.' Not a word he allows you to say. If you come to him to make a report he will listen to you. But otherwise only Gomez must speak. That is Venezuela today."

"What does Gomez do — apart from governing, I mean?"

"Nothing. He only goes round looking at his bulls."

Our friend put his hands in his pockets, threw his head back, and

squeezed up his eyes like an old fellow who cannot trust his first glance and has to look carefully.

" 'Ah,' he will say, 'this is a good bull — a fine bull.' He has a memory like a notebook for bulls. That's all the old beggar is good for."

I was not convinced. Gomez had been in power for twenty years, and it takes more than an interest in bulls to hold a turbulent country for that length of time.

"If there is nothing good in the Gomez government, how has it lasted so long?"

"Nobody can say a word. As soon as you say anything, the irons on your foot! My brother was suspected of being connected with revolutionaries and he wore them for thirteen years."

I was startled to see quick tears in his eyes. They were so unexpected.

"He hadn't done anything?"

"Nothing. He was living and working in Caracas like an ordinary citizen." (It flashed across my mind that it was not the brother but the brother's relations who had brought suspicion.) "Thirteen years! And then when they saw he was dying they released him. If you had seen the boy, all his clothes hanging on him too big for him, he was so thin. His face puffy and like chalk. I tell you, when they handed him to me in Cristobal Colon I felt like drawing my revolver and shooting somebody."

"Where is he now?" I asked, the words slipping out before I had time to think.

"Dead." The answer was a rebuke. "He couldn't live. He lived only a few months.... Chalbaud, the leader of this party, who got shot, had them on for eighteen years. He only got away a year or two ago. He went to Europe; he and his people are very wealthy, you know. He spent some time in Switzerland and he picked up well, got quite fit again. That's how he came to lead this expedition."

"And the people in Venezuela are quite satisfied with all this? There are no leaders?"

"You don't know the Gomez spy system. You can't turn, he knows all about it. And each man knows that he alone can't do anything. So, rather than risk the irons, he keeps quiet. And Gomez is no fool. All the brilliant men, he sends to represent him abroad. He is well represented in every capital. He will send them to Paris, Berlin, London, at his salaries of five to six thousand dollars a month. Well, they go. The Consul at — (naming one of the greatest cities in the world) is a brilliant man, cultured, a far better man than Gomez himself. But.... Even in Venezuela he gets them to work for him although they hate him. He has all the power. You see, my friends, insurrection to be successful must have guns. Guns is what we wanted, guns."

"You have money?"

"All the money we want. All those rich Venezuelan families that live in Europe and America in exile all these years, they have money. They've been living on their money all the time. And all of them are willing to subscribe. And the great business firms in Caracas. And the rich men. They are willing too. They give us their cheque for ten

thousand dollars. Of course they have to be careful. They have to send it through this man, to that man and then to another before it reaches. But we get the money."

"And why can't you get the guns?"

"Nobody will sell us. You go to any town and say that you want a hundred Winchesters. They tell you, 'Sorry, we can't sell you.' For all you know, the Venezuelan Consul will hear — these fellows have their spies everywhere — and next thing the government wants to deport you back to Venezuela. Which means the irons."

"But your party managed to get some?"

"Five to six thousand guns. First-class rifles, slowly got together during all these years. And that captain dumped them in the harbour at Cumana."

He said it without a tremor.

"And this was the time," he continued, "Urbina is fighting. He has captured a thousand guns, and is harrying the Federal troops in ——." (I did not catch the name. Tucuro or some place like that.)

"Who is Urbina?" I asked.

"You have not heard of Urbina?" said X——. "He is the man of the Curaçao raid."

I had not heard of the Curaçao raid either.

"Urbina is a splendid fellow," said the Venezuelan. "He is young, about thirty-seven, and men and women all fall for him as soon as they see him."

And with great relish he told of the desperate but successful attempt of Urbina to get guns from the Dutch garrison at Curaçao to fight against Gomez. Urbina went to Curaçao and was arrested at the instigation of the Venezuelan Consul, who (so —— said) was very thick with the Governor. Deportation would mean chains for the rest of his life, for of course he would be deported back to Venezuela, where Gomez's soldiers would be waiting for such a noted revolutionary. His countrymen in Curaçao struck work in office, factory and field. They sent a telegram of protest direct to Queen Wilhelmina in Holland, and a favourable reply came. Urbina was released and went to Cristobal Colon. Three or four months after, he returned disguised as a priest. He organised a small party of forty who, armed only with cutlasses and revolvers, took the garrison. They got a thousand guns and all the ammunition they wanted. They commandeered an American vessel in the harbour to take them to a port in Venezuela, carrying the Governor and the Chief of Police as hostages to prevent the soldiers firing at them. All this —— told us in realistic fashion. He must have got the facts by word of mouth from a participator in the events. Either that or his imagination was very vivid. He described to us exactly and with much illustrative gesticulation with what characteristic Spanish ceremony and politeness Urbina and his fellows thanked the captain of the vessel for transport and apologised to the Governor and Captain of Police for the inconvenience to which they had been put.

"Urbina is now giving the Federal troops hell," he concluded triumphantly.

"But if even you all depose Gomez, where is all this going to end? It will be a never-ending business of revolution following revolution. Has Venezuela ever had stable government?"

"For about twelve years. Presidents were elected every four years. Of course there was a lot of trickery and so on, as there is today in America, but at least people used to go about in the streets with banners. Vote for this person! Vote for that! There were rival candidates. You see, there was an illusion of liberty at any rate. But now! Nothing of the sort. You cannot even dare to mention another name beside Gomez. Year after year there is only one candidate, Gomez. Next thing his son is going to take over from him and the country will go the same way for another forty years."

There was a pause in the conversation. I noticed now that whenever he was not speaking there was an expectant air about him — the air of a man constantly on the look-out for news. I, however, was avid for information or, rather, extremely interested in the man, and wanted to hear him talk. So I questioned him again.

"What broke this twelve-year period of regular government?"

"Castro," he replied.

"And nobody could put him down?"

"He missed it from General Mattos. You never heard of General Mattos?" He had answered the enquiring look on my face.

"Mattos was a great governor in Trinidad, a swell. He used to live at the Queen's Park Hotel and was always dining with His Excellency the Governor and His Lordship this (the Bishop, I expect) and all the big people here. He used to wear a coat, and, what you call them — those things on your boots?"

"Spats?"

"Spats and so on. He was good with everybody here — Governor, Chief of Police, and everybody else. To show you the difference between those days and now, the *Van Righ* came here in this harbour loaded with guns deep in the water. Nobody asked her anything. Night after night sloops used to leave the harbour at about seven going to Cristobal Colon, going here, going there. As they reach a mile or two they used to come back, load up, and take the guns to Venezuela. And the *Van Righ* that was so deep in the water rose up and up and up as they took away the guns. On the same night the last load was shipped, Mattos left here in an open boat and slipped across to Venezuela. And we beat Castro right and left."

"We?"

"Yes. I was one of the revolutionary soldiers. I was a young man then."

"And what happened that you all didn't depose him?"

"Bad luck, that's all; we had beaten Castro's troops in every part of Venezuela and we were marching on to Caracas, seven thousand strong. Castro had about two thousand men to stop us. And we had cut him off from all supplies and reinforcements. But on the last stages, the General in command took dysentery and died. As soon as the General died then the pulling between the other Generals started. Some

wanted to march straight on Caracas and invest the city, some wanted to turn aside to destroy Castro, this one wanted to be leader, that one wanted to be leader. You see, every General had his own one or two thousand men whom he had brought. And each one was threatening to take his men and go home. They sent a Colonel with 150 men to hold the train line. Instead of ripping up the line he stayed there guarding. Castro found out who he was and sent a false message to him ordering him to report to headquarters for orders. He left this post and when he reached us found that it was a false message. By the time he could attempt to go back, the train had passed carrying guns and men and everything to Castro. That finished us. So Castro remained in power.

"But it was a nice life. A revolutionary soldier!"

His dry hard face was alight with enthusiasm.

"A nice life!" I said, in pretended surprise. "I thought it was all privation and hardship."

He continued to smile.

"A little, yes. But the life, man, the life. When you march into a town, a new place you never saw before, everybody is out to see you, all the women are out, waving flags and cheering. All of them are for the revolutionaries, of course. Then you get a night off duty. You get a shave and a clean shirt, and you go out. You feel — you feel fine. Perhaps they might give a little dance for the officers. You never enjoy an ordinary dance as you enjoy that one when you know that next week a bullet might do for you. After a few days you march off to a new place."

He shook his head in regretful but happy reminiscence.

"Well, I must be going," he said. "I am pleased to have met you."

"Goodbye," I said. "And good luck," I added, shaking hands. "But, by the way, you didn't tell me what happened to Mattos when that rebellion broke up."

He laughed.

"Mattos escaped. He died the other day, over eighty years old. Mattos! He wasn't a soldier, you know, he was a diplomat. He used to be following up behind the army in shiny boots and the spats, with a crease in his pants, and a big pair of field-glasses just as if he was at races or something. Yes, he got away, all right."

Since then I have read one of the most able and trustworthy of local journalists writing of the many benefits that the Gomez government has conferred on Venezuela. Also the S.S. — has been declared a pirate ship. So the captain didn't find it so easy to explain things. I have heard, too, contrary to what was broadcast earlier in the week, that Chalbaud is not killed but dangerously wounded, though this is as strenuously denied. All sorts of rumours are afloat. But I don't pay much attention to them. I feel that I know more than most, having got my information from the fountainhead. I passed by his office the other day. He was sitting inside smoking a cigarette calmly and with real grace. He gave me a smile and a bow.

I could see that he was still waiting for something — news of the success of Urbina, I expect, for they are still fighting vigorously in

Venezuela. All is not at all quiet on that front.

But I am not really concerned with Gomez and his rebels. What I want is to manage another interview with my Venezuelan friend.

1931

The Star that Would Not Shine

[This story appeared in The Beacon in June 1931.]

The airplane fluttered down and Douglas Fairbanks stepped out. Mary Pickford, who was waiting for him, threw herself into his arms, and Maurice Chevalier came up and started to talk to Fairbanks in French. The scene shifted to another part of Hollywood.

"His own aeroplane, don't you think?" said my neighbour.

"I have no doubt," I said.

"These fellows make a pile of money," he told me, "a pile. Up to now Jackie Coogan has made—" he reeled off some bewildering figures.

From what I could remember of his appearance before the lights went out, he seemed far from being a friend of any kind. It was surprising though in what unlikely corpses flamed scorching enthusiasms. I hoped that he was not one of those pests who whisper to you about the picture and dig you in the ribs at exciting parts. Even that I might put up with, but one thing I positively would not stand. If he had seen the picture before I would move.

But my fears were groundless. He sat quietly through, seemed to take less than ordinary interest in fact. We came out together and I looked at him again in the lobby, Spanish type, about forty-five, under medium height and thin, with a dry, uneasy face, dressed tidily but shabbily, the cheap material and neat unobtrusive patching of a man who knows the world and realises the long way his little money has to carry him. The only article of splendour was an American striped shirt, faded, but showing evidence of quality.

Perhaps in his quiet way he nourished a secret passion for Gloria Swanson, the star we had just seen. Or — but what nonsense was I getting on with! — perhaps the man came to the cinema to while away a tedious hour.

"You liked it?" I said as we walked down the steps together.

"It was good," he replied without enthusiasm. "But I like the comics — Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd."

He looked like a man who needed laughter in his life. I thought I had placed him at last. But, most surprisingly, he continued.

"Charlie Chaplin had to pay nearly two million dollars income tax to the British government the other day."

"You seem strong on the money they make," I ventured. He gave a sad smile.

"I missed my chance, you see. God put the thing in my hand and then He snatched it away."

I stole a glance at him. He seemed quite sane.

"In a hurry?" I asked him. "Let's sit here for a minute." We were in Lord Harris's Square by now. "My name is James."

"Mine's Gonzales," he said. We shook hands and sat down. Without any further invitation or preliminary he began.

"Yes, sir, I missed my chance. If things had worked well, I would have been all right today."

"You were on the films once?" I said, in as matter-of-fact a way as possible.

"Me! No. But my son nearly was. You see it was this way. He was born at Santa Cruz, and he was a very sickly baby, always had a little cold and cough. We took him to the doctor, who told us to feed him up on cod-liver oil, Glaxo and Nestlé's Food. He was the only child and my wife bought up a lot of this medicine and started to feed him. In about a month the cold was gone for good. But she kept on feeding it, and suddenly it began to get fat. If you happen to pass by home any day I'll show you some photographs. In two years, the boy weighed more than any child four years of age. When he was five years he weighed fifty-six pounds, fourteen ounces. We were frightened at first. But the doctor told us not to worry, the boy was all right."

"He ate a lot?"

"Ordinary. Nothing was wrong with him except that he was fat. He was a good height for his age, but not over tall. He used to roll, like a sailor, you know, when he was walking, and if the weather was very hot, he used to suffer a lot, but otherwise he was just like any other boy."

"His mother was — er, stouter than usual?"

"No. The doctor asked us about our father and our grandfather. We had some fat relatives, but none extra-fat, except one old aunt I had who used to suffer from water. But she was dead a long time.

"Anyway, sir, this boy kept on getting fatter and fatter. When he was eleven we went down one day to an old-time sugar-mill near Caroni and I and his mother stood in one part of a big balance and the boy in the other, and the boy weighed us down.

"Well, we went to America. Things were bad. We lost the little place we had. Everybody was going to America those days and we went. I got work and my wife got work and though it was hard work we got on well and were saving some money."

"The boy went with you?"

"The boy's mother worshipped the dirt he walked on and wouldn't let him out of her sight. When they used to go to town and people said how the boy was fat, she used to be mad. But the boy was no mean fat, and to me, America seemed to make him bigger than ever. We used to leave him in charge of a neighbour when we went to work, but of course he went to school.

"Well, sir, one midday he was coming home from school and a reporter with a camera saw him and start to talk to him. Ask him how old he is, where he live, take his photograph and give him five dollars. A day or two after in all the papers Johnny's photograph, and a lot of writing. Boy prodigy, they call him, youthful Colossus, and a lot of things like that. Some people came to see him, gave him money, said he was a fine boy and so on, and that passed. Johnny didn't seem to mind.

"But not long after, one Sunday morning, a big motor-car brings two

fellows, real American swells, who come up and ask for Mr Gonzales. Each fellow had a paper in his hand, and as soon as I see the paper I know it's the one with Johnny's picture.

"Well, sir, what they wanted was for Johnny to go on the films. They said he was the fattest boy in the country and would suit them to the ground. They wanted a boy to show Fatty Arbuckle when he was young, and have it all connected up. And Johnny would do. They say that they will start right away. They have a contract for one year at two hundred dollars a week to start but the boy will have to work so many weeks for the year. Arrangements to be made for his education and so on. Everything in order. First week's salary to be paid in advance, and travelling expenses to Hollywood paid. I lost my head. The thing was so sudden. But my wife say that she will have to think it over and get advice.

" 'We'll come in the morning,' said one.

" 'No. Come on Tuesday,' said my wife.

"When they went I told her she had made a mistake. Perhaps they might not come back.

" 'Not come back? They'll come without fail. They wouldn't get a boy as fat as Johnny outside Heaven.'

"She went to a lawyer. She asked all about what Johnny would have to do, if he would have to ride horses and jump through windows and stay out in the snow. She said she didn't want that. Anyway the lawyer made a new agreement, he said to ask for two hundred and fifty dollars and so much on every picture. There was a lot of talk. Anyway when the fellows come on Tuesday — Johnny was at school — we all went round to the lawyer. There was a lot of talk again. The fellows said no, they wouldn't give so much on every picture. But instead they would give three hundred dollars a week, and at the end of the year they would make a better contract if the pictures did well. We put on stamps, signed, and the fellow gave a cheque to the lawyer and put three hundred warm dollars in our hand. He told us to go home and get ready for travelling and we'd hear from them soon."

"What about Johnny? What did he say?"

"Sir, whenever I am telling anybody this thing and I reach here, I don't know how to go on."

"He got ill?"

"Ill! Not for a day. Yes. As a matter of fact he got ill. I'll tell you. We hadn't spoken to him about it much. He was a sensitive child, and my wife said we would fix up things first and tell him after, to avoid disappointing him. Well, sir, when we come back that day, we sat down and call Johnny. We tell him, how he will just have to act a little bit every day and how he will get all this money, and how Hollywood is a place like Trinidad and so on. He listened all right. Then I said, 'You will be a little Fatty Arbuckle.' It's those words that did the mischief. It seemed all his little friends used to trouble him 'Fatty Arbuckle' and he couldn't bear even the name. As he heard me say 'Fatty Arbuckle', he set up one crying. And he was so fat that when he cried he used to shake the place. He cried the whole day and he said straight he wasn't

going. We tried to pet him. No, sir, Mr Johnny wouldn't listen to a word. Anyway we packed and late in the afternoon he stopped crying. But first thing next morning in comes the agent, sees Johnny in the passage, goes up to him, puts his hand on his shoulder and says, 'Well, how is young Fatty Arbuckle?'

"After that, sir, no one ever had any chance of persuading him. He cried for two days. You should have seen his face — all that fat. We quieted him down in time. But he merely heard the voice of the fellow outside and he started to cry again. We agreed not to mention a word of it for a week. He got better and things were as before. The agent told us not to tell him anything at all but merely to pack, say we were all going on a journey and carry him off to Hollywood. Once we got him there they'd know how to manage him. But as soon as Johnny came home and saw the trunks packed his face changed.

" 'Well, Johnny, we are going on a little holiday—,' my wife began.

" 'No, no, no,' he screamed out. 'You are carrying me to Hollywood to play Fatty Arbuckle. I don't want to be any Fatty Arbuckle. No, no, no, no, no!' He threw himself on the floor almost in a fit.

" 'Better I lose three hundred dollars a week than lose my child,' said my wife. 'This is the end.'

"It was the end, sir.

"We offered to give back the fellow the money that remained. He said not to bother. He was a very nice fellow, real Yankee, you know, quick about everything and very free with the money. He gave us his name and address and told us if Johnny ever changed his mind to let him know. I could see the man was sorry for us. That was about thirteen years ago. Then my wife died in the influenza epidemic after the war, and Johnny and I came home. The last thing she asked me before she died, she said she knew I would be a good father to the boy, but never to tell him anything about acting on the films."

"Where is Johnny, now?" I asked him.

"He went back to New York, two or three years ago. He is doing well."

"He is still fat?"

"As fat as ever. But he has a good head, that boy. He is studying engineering, and makes a little money where he works. He sends me money and things. He sent me this shirt. And you wouldn't believe it, sir," Gonzales rose.

"From the time we told him about acting on the films he has never been inside a cinema to this very minute."

Is This Worth a War?

The League's Scheme to Rob Abyssinia of its Independence

[This analysis of the League of Nations Report on Abyssinia was probably the first article written by James for the New Leader, weekly newspaper of the Independent Labour Party, edited by Fenner Brockway. It appeared in the issue of 4 October 1935, with a photograph of the author and a brief introduction of him as: "a Negro and Socialist. He is chairman of the Finchley ILP. He writes fiercely. He says that it is 'a brazen lie' that the British Government is defending the independence of Abyssinia, and passionately warns British workers against being led to support League sanctions in order to put a 'stranglehold' on the Ethiopian people. Only independent and united action by the British and African workers can overthrow Imperialism."]

"Gallant little Belgium" was bad enough, but "the independence of Ethiopia" is worse. It is the greatest swindle in all the living history of Imperialism. The British government, having mobilised world opinion and many of its own workers behind it, has put a stranglehold on Ethiopia, as tight as anything Italian Imperialism ever intended.

The proposals of the Committee of Five expose the brazen lie that any independence is being defended. The document is short and concise.

The public services of Ethiopia will be divided into four departments: Police and Gendarmerie, Economic Development, Finance, and Other Public Services. As usual with Imperialist banditry masquerading under the name of law, the means of repression stand first on the list.

Foreign specialists will organise a corps of police and gendarmerie, which will be responsible for "strictly regulating the carrying of arms by persons not belonging to the regular army or to the police or gendarmerie forces", in other words, disarming the people.

This group of specialists will be responsible for "policing centres in which Europeans reside", and "ensuring security in agricultural areas where Europeans may be numerous and where the local administration may not be sufficiently developed to provide them with adequate protection". Thus the local population being disarmed will be taught the proper respect due by black men to white in Imperialist Africa.

Mussolini was going to do the same. But he rather stupidly demanded the disbandment of the army. These foreign specialists will not disband the army. The army will be allowed to carry arms. Egypt, which is also independent, has an army of only 10,000 men, so ill-equipped that they are useless for anything except to show how independent Egypt is!

The regular army of Ethiopia has never been large. The strength of the country has always been in the fact that the whole population was the army.

Once the gendarmerie has done its work, Imperialism can go safely

ahead with civilisation. Under Section II, Economic Development, foreigners will "participate in land tenure, mining regulations, exercise of commercial and industrial activities"; also public works, telegraphs, etc., all the things Imperialism needs for its trade. It will be the same old exploitation that is going on in every part of Africa today.

First, the Imperialists called the exploited areas colonies; next, protectorates; then, mandates. Now it is "helping a sister nation".

The name will make little difference to the native deprived of his arms, herded into compounds, working in mines at a few shillings a week without trade-union protection, with special police and gendarmerie to teach him the way he should go. He has preferred his feudal slavery. He will look back to it in years to come as to a golden age.

Section III, Finance, shows that the League advisers will also be responsible for "assessment and collection of taxes, fees and dues". How they will revel in it! Loans also (from which the City will grow fat), and "control of pledges assigned to the service of the loans". This means that, as in China and other parts where Imperialism has been "helping" the native ruler, customs and similar dues will be collected by the Imperialists at once and sent to investors in Europe. Britain can default, but Ethiopia, like India, will have to pay if the native sweats blood.

After the service of the loans will come the paying of salaries, money for the gendarmerie, telegraphs, roads, railways, etc. The balance will then go to education, etc. — as we can see in India after over two hundred years of British Rule, where the percentage of illiterates is over 90.

Section IV deals with justice. The mixed courts which try cases between foreigners and Europeans will be "reorganised". Also there will be a reorganisation of "native justice". We recommend in this connection the study of the report published last year on native justice in British East Africa.

Who will apply all this assistance to the long-lost sister nation of Ethiopia, so happily found at last? First, the police and gendarmerie. Wherever European settlers live in great numbers, and on the frontiers, the gendarmerie "will participate in general administration to an extent varying according to the standard reached by the local authorities and the nature of the problems to be solved". Carte blanche.

But even elsewhere the Imperialists will not leave anything to the Ethiopian Government at all. Each of these four sections will have at its head a "principal adviser", sent by the League. These four will have above them a chief, who will be a delegate of the League of Nations accredited to the Emperor. If this League Emperor is not specially appointed, then the four advisers will themselves elect a chief.

These gentlemen, in addition to controlling police and gendarmerie, finance, commerce, and justice, also "must be able to rely on the effective co-operation of the Ethiopian authorities", and this even where they have not got special powers. Better still, there is going to be a central organisation both to co-ordinate the work of the assistance

services and to secure for them "the necessary support of the Ethiopian government". The League Emperor and his advisers will thus do as they like in the country and have the full support of the Ethiopian government.

The delegate and the principal advisers will, of course, be appointed by the Council of the League," with the agreement of the Emperor". Thus he can choose between British Imperialist No.1 or No.2 or French Imperialist No.3 or No.4, or Swedish No.1 or Belgian No.2. How much choice will he have?

But more than that. The Emperor will not be able to appoint freely a single one of the staffs of these advisers. The advisers will submit names to him from which he can choose, or even if he appoints some agents the League adviser will have to give his endorsement "according to the nature and importance of their functions".

Finally, what control, even nominal, will the Ethiopian people, or even the Emperor, have over all this? None whatever. These advisers, will "make reports which will be communicated to the Emperor at the same time as they are addressed to the Council of the League". Thus, the advisers are not to be bothered with the Ethiopian government at all, which, however, will be able to "submit to the Council any observations it may wish to formulate in regard to these reports".

At the end of five years, the plan is to be reviewed. But, by this time, Imperialism will have sunk its teeth and claws so deep into the country that nothing but a revolution by the Ethiopian masses will ever hack them out.

The Imperialists have been after Ethiopia for a long time, and they have got it at last. All that Italy gets, however, is a promise of her predominant interests to be recognised. It isn't good enough. Musso the Monkey put his fingers into the fire, but the British lion has snatched the nut. No wonder Garvin, in Sunday's *Observer*, shouts that it isn't fair, that Mussolini should have some, enough at least to show Italy that Fascism is not all bluff and does bring home the goods some time. If war is averted this way, then Eden and Laval can go back home, carrying peace with honour, and enough of Ethiopia to keep the home fires burning a little longer.

Now is there any British worker, any Negro in Africa, who, having understood this infamous document, is prepared to urge League sanctions and follow the Imperialists in their defence of the "Independence of Ethiopia"?

Having got the Emperor to agree to all they wanted, the Imperialists have now remembered their treaty obligations and begun to allow arms to go in. A shipment from Belgium has arrived; also anti-aircraft guns from Switzerland. The French are getting ready to protect the railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa. This is to ensure the little sister nation Ethiopia getting arms and supplies during the war.

The British worker, the Negro anxious to help Ethiopia, should keep himself far from this slime, which may so soon become blood.

Workers of Europe, peasants and workers of Africa and of India, sufferers from Imperialism all over the world, all anxious to help the

Ethiopian people, organise yourselves independently, and by your own sanctions, the use of your own power, assist the Ethiopian people. Their struggle is only now beginning.

Let us fight against not only Italian Imperialism, but the other robbers and oppressors, French and British Imperialism. Do not let them drag you in. To come within the orbit of Imperialist politics is to be debilitated by the stench, to be drowned in the morass of lies and hypocrisy.

Workers of Britain, peasants and workers of Africa, get closer together for this and for other fights. But keep far from the Imperialists and their Leagues and covenants and sanctions. Do not play the fly to their spider.

Now, as always, let us stand for independent organisation and independent action. We have to break our own chains. Who is the fool that expects our gaolers to break them?

1935

4

The Revolution Abandoned

[This extract is taken from World Revolution, 1917-1936, James's major history of the Third International — described by Trotsky as "a very good book" — which was first published in 1937.]

The crisis seized France late. There was a steady decline but relative stability in French economy up to 1932, but by that time the country was in the throes and set out on the roach which leads either to the Fascist dictatorship or the dictatorship of the proletariat. One by one every European country falls in line behind Russia, Italy and Germany. The French struggle was the last opportunity that the International would have on the continent. The odds were against it. The German defeat and a Fascist Germany were an almost irreparable blow. But France is a country with a great revolutionary tradition, and in addition the French workers had before their eyes the example of what had happened to the German workers. Success or failure, however, lies with the revolutionary party, and for one year the French Communist Party continued with the theory of Social Fascism. The International was tactically bankrupt. It had nothing to say. In the spring of 1933 it had made one hysterical effort to form the United Front. Without intense previous preparation such an effort is doomed to failure. It failed, and the Social Democracy was again proclaimed the enemy.

Trotsky, in this period of ebb, called for a programme based on a demand for a single chamber, lowering of the voting age to eighteen, and full political rights for the army. He was abused as a counter-revolutionary. And all through 1933, while the class-conflict in France sharpened, the French Communist Party remained blind as only the functionaries of the Third International can be blind. On 6 February 1934, the French bourgeoisie, using the Stavisky frauds as a pretext, struck for power, aiming at taking the working-class by surprise. Daladier, the Radical, was at the head of the government, supported by Socialist votes. The bourgeoisie wanted to break not Daladier but parliament altogether. "Down with the thieves," shouted the Fascists. If they could succeed in entering the Chamber and murdering some of the deputies, parliamentary government in France was finished, and a Fascist régime would have the chance to rivet itself in the offices of government and destroy the French working-class movement. The utter imbecility of all Stalinists was never more completely shown than in the actions of the Communist Party of France in this grave crisis.

The Jeunesses Patriotes, the Croix-de-Feu, the Solidarité Française, all the Fascist bands were preparing for the event by demonstrations in the Place de la Concorde and the Champs Elysées. Their aim was to set fire to the Palais Bourbon. High officers in the government and the police knew. The Fascists demonstrated for one solid month, building up their forces and preparing the public. The revolutionary party must see and prepare. But the Communist Party, with its eyes on the Social

Fascists and its ears cocked towards Moscow, ridiculed all warnings. André Marty, a member of the Political Bureau, told the French workers to be calm and not to concern themselves about the Fascist demonstrations. Stoppage in a factory for a few minutes or leaving it in a body before the closing hour, wrote Marty in *Humanité*, have for the workers an importance a thousand times greater than constant impulsive manifestations in a bourgeois neighbourhood.

He wrote this on 3 February. Three days after, on the morning of the 6th, the day of the attack, the Communist Party suddenly called on the workers to demonstrate in the Champs Élysées, not, however, against the Fascists, but with them. The UNC, the Union Nationale des Combattants, is a Fascist organisation. The ARAC, the Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, is an auxiliary ex-servicemen's organisation controlled by the Stalinists. Let us quote verbatim. Said *Humanité*: "The war veterans of the UNC will be at the side of the veterans of the ARAC to defend their lawful rights and arrest all the corrupt, all the robbers." *Humanité* therefore called on the workers to demonstrate and attack with the Fascists against the Daladier government.

The Daladier government, trembling in its shoes, shot down the demonstrators and, after one of the most critical street clashes in modern European history, beat them back. But the Fascists were only checked, not defeated. They raised the slogan, "Down with the shooters," striving to get rid of the Daladier government. *Humanité* joined them again, calling on the workers to demonstrate and to demand the arrest of Daladier and Frot, and the downfall of their government for shooting Fascists. The Social Democrats will always fight behind a bourgeois. Blum offered to stand by Daladier and sought a United Front with the Communists. The CGTU, the Red Trade Union, refused. The Communists referred the Socialists to the Amsterdam-Pleyel committees, some vague offshoots of the Anti-war Conference under Barbusse in 1932. For the struggle against Fascism Stalin's theory still held good, and condemned the Socialists as Social Fascist outcasts. God only knows what was in the minds of Cachin, Thorez and the other Stalinist heroes of the Central Committee in those few fateful February days. It is clear that when Stalin conceived the idea of "After Hitler, our turn", he had no idea of what Fascism in an industrialised country really meant. But by February 1934, the whole world knew. It is possible that the French Stalinists had Stalin's orders to down the Daladier government, for Daladier was known to be favourable to a rapprochement with Germany. It is, on the other hand, possible that they had said Social Fascism and adopted the revolutionary pose so long that they instinctively acted on the absurdities they had so often repeated. Whatever the reason, *Humanité* for the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th February and the directives of the Communist leaders are convincing testimony of the malignant influence which Stalin's monolithic methods, especially since 1929, had been exercising over the whole International. Bureaucratic stupidity, enthroned in the Kremlin, now has its little counterparts in every national Communist Party.

On the 8th, Cachin and Thorez woke up to what was happening, and called for a Communist demonstration for the 9th at the Place de la République. There could not have been a more criminal blunder. For the Communists by themselves were too few to fight. They had rejected the Socialist offer of the United Front. If the advance-guard of the workers demonstrated without sufficient support the police could break them and decapitate the working-class movement at a stroke. Their own workers had not been prepared for struggle; not a week before, these revolutionaries had been preaching that there was no need for alarm. It was the sure instinct of the Paris workers which saved them. There was fierce fighting that night and men were killed. The proletariat, the stock of 1789 and 10 August 1792, of 1830, of 1848 and 1871, came out in their thousands, whether Socialist or Communist. It was in the streets that French parliamentarism was saved. The coup had failed.

Marshal Lyautey threatened to march on the Chamber with troops if Daladier did not resign, and Daladier crumpled. Doumergue took office to screen the preparations for the second assault. But the masses were on the alert. On 12 August Socialists and Communists called for a one-day protest strike, and got, all things considered, superb response. But instead of building on this, the Communists once more withdrew into Social Fascism. The Stalinists claim today that after 6 February they began to fight for the United Front. Never was such a lie. Stalinists never see anything until Stalin tells them. As late as 13 April 1934, in the *International Press Correspondence* Thorez, oblivious to what was happening under his very nose, was as fierce an opponent of Social Fascism as in the days before Hitler. "At this moment some opportunists of the CP of France are proposing to the Party that it abandon its policy of the United Front from below and carry out a policy of a bloc with the Social Democracy. At this moment there are forces demanding that the CP of France shall finally abandon the positions of Bolshevism in order to return to the Social Democratic rubbish heap," etc., etc. They might have gone on with it to this day. The terrible blunder of it was that the Social Democracy had had its eyes opened by what Fascism had done in Germany. Its workers were on the alert to fight. After 6 February, they formed thousands of United Front Committees, in spite of both Communist and Socialist leaders. Blum and Jouhaux were in a position from which they could not extricate themselves if a revolutionary party had put itself at the head of the mass desire to struggle on a programme of action. What the Stalinists did was to form a pact with Blum and restrain the masses, so as to facilitate the new foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Suddenly in the middle of the year the French Communist leaders set out with a will to fight for the United Front. It was a United Front against the Fascist danger. Today, when they are offering friendship to sincere Fascists, the French masses can see how scurvy a trick has been played upon them. But for two years the Communist Party raged against Fascism. In June 1934, the National Conference of the Communist party officially announced the new turn, began to work for

it below in the ranks of the Socialist Party, and above by offers to the Socialist leadership. The French masses, now growing more militant day by day, responded. Ultimately on 27 July 1934, the Pact for Unity of Action was signed. But those who in March 1934 considered the Social Fascists the chief enemy now displayed a suspicious friendliness. The Socialists, those incorrigible word-mongers, wanted the word Socialism put into the agreement. The Communists refused. They proposed also that there should be no criticism by either side, breaking an unalterable principle of Leninism. The Socialists, who had not expected this, agreed. Léon Blum was not deceived by them, and wrote in his paper that he could see what they were after — they were preparing mass-support for Russia's new non-revolutionary foreign policy. Herriot went to see Stalin that summer; Pierre Cot the air-expert visited Stalin, the Franco-Soviet Pact had been discussed, and Russia's foreign policy was now the Social Democratic foreign policy, and the Communists were therefore ready to embrace Blum, and Blum had no objection since they obviously would now be as devoted servants of French Capitalism as any Social Democrat. The Communists had insisted on Socialism being left out of the joint pact. They were after bigger game than mere Socialists. They wanted the Radicals, particularly Herriot, who was the sponsor of the Franco-Soviet Pact. Still making the masses believe that they were fighting Fascism, they launched the slogan of the People's Front. And while they were looking to the Radical bourgeois the masses began to turn to them. Against the flagrant arming of the Fascist Croix-de-Feu and the savage decree-laws passed by the Laval government, the proletariat, drawing hundreds of thousands of the petty-bourgeoisie in its train, began to turn to the Communist Party, that is to say, to look to direct action instead of parliamentary manœuvring. Demonstration after demonstration showed the rising temper of the French people. But though the strength and influence of the Communist Party grew and grew, Cachin and Thorez, faithful to Stalin, were fighting to rope in the Radicals.

In May 1935, they succeeded and welcomed everybody except the Fascists. The invitation to the Fascists was to come later. But so little were they concerned with the class-struggle that they offered the alliance to Flandin in his capacity as President of the Alliance Démocratique. Flandin, however, refused. Then in May Laval went to Moscow to cement the one-sided alliance, and he and Stalin issued the famous declaration: "M. Stalin understands and fully approves the measures of national defence taken by France to raise its armaments to the level of its security." It was the end of the Communist struggle against capitalism. For if France was to be strong against the foreign enemy, the class-war at home could only weaken it. Henceforward the French workers were to be fed with propaganda, but carefully restrained from action.

It is the belief that this came like a bolt from the blue to the Communists in France. The confusion they were in for a few days was lamentable. But the declaration was a surprise only in the sense that Stalin had not informed them that it was coming so soon, and they had

not made their ideological preparations for deceiving the masses. Months before they had been laying the foundations. The first move came late in March, and it seems that the Communist rank-and-file (perhaps the leaders themselves) did not know the reason for the new turn. In early March the Stalinist youth signed a pact with the French Socialist youth, which under the leadership of Fred Zeller was very much to the Left. They agreed to form a United Front to fight against the Doumergue government, against the sacred union of the nation, and the whole military apparatus of the bourgeois State. Both declared that the Soviet Union was to be defended by the revolutionary action of the international proletariat. To win the Socialist youth of Paris and the Seine district to a revolutionary policy was a great victory for the Stalinists. For in this very month of March Léon Blum, like all Social Democrats in this uncertain age, not being able to risk his workers having any illusions about his internationalism, was making his own pro-war policy unmistakable. "In case of Hitlerite aggression," he told the Chamber, "the workers will rush to the frontiers." Against these and similar declarations Socialists and Stalinists organised a campaign. But before that month was ended the Stalinist youth began to draw out of the pact. The French Communist Party ceased to struggle against the two-year military service law and Circular 3084, also dealing with military service. They refused to demonstrate in front of the barracks, they refused to fight the Fascists by independent working-class action. The Stalinist youth declared that it was not necessary to fight the Fascists. In the 3rd and 4th arrondissements they made pacts with the Fascist youth and the Jeunesse Patriotes. They formed the Grand Youth Community, "in order to struggle against war". They abandoned Turn Imperialist War into Civil War.

Early in April came Kossarev and Chemodanov, President and Secretary of the Russian Communist youth, sent to Paris by Stalin to turn the Socialist youth against the pact they had signed a month before. Chemodanov, a typical product of official Stalinist Russia, impudent, brazen and with specious arguments to prove his policies true Leninism, argued as follows: "If there is a war it will undoubtedly be against the USSR. This will not be a war between classes.... If Hitlerite Fascism wages war against the USSR it will be a war of Fascism against Communism. Your duty, comrades, is at the front. If in this period you make your revolution in France you are traitors." Kossarev warned the French Socialists against the Trotskyists, "whose policy is at the present moment of great danger for the international proletariat". Léon Blum and the hardened Social Democratic schemers could accept all this. It made their own position much easier. But the French Socialist youth rejected Chemodanov's advances. "If in this period you make your revolution in France, you are traitors," was for them counter-revolution, and they repelled this Stalinist interpretation of Leninism. All this took place weeks before the Stalin-Laval communiqué, showing that Chemodanov had not been making any mistakes but knew quite well what he was about. Before a few months had passed Zeller and his followers had joined the Trotskyists.

The Communist Party now had its People's Front against Fascism. In Czechoslovakia there was no Fascist danger, but there was need for a pact with Russia. There, too, the Communists* became ardent lovers of their country, and having tied the revolutionary proletariat to the bourgeois war-machine, Stalin called the Seventh Congress in August 1935.

Seven years had passed since the previous Congress. The German proletariat had gone down, and Stalin had called no congress. But the obedient fools turned up in Moscow, and the new policy was consecrated in a series of resolutions with which we shall not weary the reader. By great good fortune Dmitrov, the hero of the Reichstag trial, was available for the post of secretary. Sufficient to say that henceforth monopoly Capitalism did not lead inevitably to imperialist war, war could be prevented, the world was divided into peace-loving democratic Capitalisms like France and Czechoslovakia, and war-making Capitalisms like Japan and Germany, Russia's enemies. The Congress, without debate, unanimously passed a resolution which declared the final and irrevocable victory of Socialism achieved in the Soviet Union according to the Bolshevik theses of Lenin and Stalin against the counter-revolutionary theses of Trotsky and Zinoviev. There was method behind this madness. For while previously a Communist had to fight to turn imperialist war into civil war, now the circumstances had changed. Socialism was achieved in Russia, it was a Communist duty to save this curious Socialism, even at the cost of sacrificing his own revolution. "The defence of the USSR" had reached its apotheosis.

It would be diverting but useless to follow the confusion into which this transparent stupidity threw the International. Italy for attacking Abyssinia was a war-making Fascism, but when Italy was being sounded as to whether she would join with France and Britain to guarantee Locarno there was for a few weeks a possibility of her becoming a peace-loving Fascism. But she joined Germany and it seems has now become a definite war-loving Fascism. Britain was a war-loving country under Baldwin. But she might become a peace-loving country under Eden. Sir Samuel Hoare came out for sanctions against Italy, and the French Communists greeted this with joy and called upon Laval to do likewise, so that in France the International hailed Britain as a peace-loving country. But the British Communists did not trust Sir Samuel, and were carrying on a campaign against the national government. They put their faith in Eden whom they thought would fight for a League policy. Then Eden came out for a Western pact with Germany, omitting Russia. The Communists dropped him and Britain has remained a war-making country. Only thoughtful revolutionaries, however, realise how the International, following Stalin, missed the greatest opportunity in years of at best striking a powerful blow against the colonial policy of imperialism, and at worst rallying round itself the

* It is obvious that these people are Communists no longer. The reader does not need inverted commas to remind him of that.

vanguard of the working-class movement in preparation for the coming war. Nothing was more certain than that the capitalists would ultimately do a deal at the expense, large or small, of Abyssinia. Liberals and Social Democrats will always follow Anthony Eden or any glib Conservative behind whose words they can shelter and then claim to have been deceived. Communists have nothing to gain by such practices. The International from the first moment could have pointed out that nothing but working-class action could have saved Abyssinia, and as the whole dirty record of lies and greed and hypocrisy unfolded itself could have driven home nail after nail into the coffin of the League. The Liberals, Social Democrats (particularly the Social Democrats) and pacifists, with their desires to help, could have been challenged every time they opened their mouths with proposals for supporting action by the working class. Every day that the League further exposed itself the emptiness of their words would have been made more manifest. Abyssinia might not have been saved — Abyssinia is not saved today — but the International would have had a chance to build up around itself a mass-resistance to wars for collective security and international law and democracy and all the shibboleths, new and old, which would have given it a firm base for the internal class-struggle and the international complications that were bound to ensue. Instead they followed the new line, driven by the Russian bureaucracy's hope that a successful sanctions policy might be a useful precedent against Germany for Russia in the future.

Could short-sightedness go further than to expect a British government to impose sanctions against Germany on behalf of Russia? The whole adventure ended in ignominious failure. The Communists, however, retain unchecked their faith in the League. But there is one important episode, not generally known, which shows the Soviet bureaucracy approaching the end of the road which leads to the counter-revolution. In August at Brussels the International Federation of Trade Unions was holding a congress. The Abyssinian question filled all minds. Eugen Jagot, of the War Resisters' International, determined to make an effort to persuade these Social Democrats to make this last attempt to stop war, by calling on their own workers instead of continually begging capitalist governments. He found sympathetic response among the lower ranks of trade-union officials, but men like Citrine, Jouhaux and the other leaders were, of course, scared of doing anything which their capitalists did not approve of. Still Jagot was making some progress. Soviet Russia might have turned the scale. If the Soviet Union, the Workers' State, had come out clearly for a boycott against all war-material to Italy or any other country which interfered in Abyssinian affairs, the hand of those working at Brussels would have been strengthened, and Soviet Russia would have been in an immensely powerful position, the centre of the whole anti-imperialist struggle. As in the General Strike of 1926, while the Soviet government maintained the formal diplomatic proprieties, the Russian trade unions could have expressed solidarity with the Reformist trade unions, collected millions and offered concrete proposals to stop imperialist intervention by

international workers' action. The Soviet workers could have put an instant embargo on the oil that Russia sent steadily to Italy all through the dispute. The mass feeling that had been aroused all over the world would have been directed into a single channel under the direction of the Third International. It was that pressure alone which could have checked Mussolini and weakened him at home, while the self-motivated protests of British imperialism could only strengthen him. It would then have been an urgent matter for British and French imperialism, and French imperialism in particular owing to the internal situation, to press for a solution, in order to quiet the unrest at home. Abyssinia might have escaped with a certain loss of territory. At worst the International would have doubled its influence for revolutionary struggle and the Soviet Union would have stood higher than ever as a basis for the struggle against Imperialism. But a workers' bureaucracy cannot think in this way.

Jagot and those others who were striving at Brussels for international working-class action counted on Soviet support. The Third International in good Stalinist fashion had been clamouring for unity of the workers, of the two Internationals, etc., etc. Now when there seemed a possibility of its realisation, Stalin showed the real nature of the government he represented. From Moscow came categorical instructions to the Communist delegates under no circumstances to support any kind of action except sanctions by the League of Nations. The scheme collapsed. Socialism in a single country had reached the stage where the leader of the international proletariat was as nervous of the action of the world proletariat as any Fascist dictator. Stalin cannot stop now. The day is near when the Stalinists will join reactionary governments in shooting revolutionary workers. They cannot avoid it. For in the great crises of imperialist war there is only one choice, with capitalism or with the revolutionary workers. There is and can be no middle way.

The revolutionary wave in France mounted steadily. The French workers, believing in the Communist Party tradition of action, determined to fight Fascism, and ready for a large-scale offensive against the decrees of the Laval government, rallied around the Communist Party, followed the Communist Party line, joined the Communist Party. Following 6 February the membership tripled in the course of two years, rising from 30,000 to over 150,000 in the middle of 1936. The Young Communist League, 4,000 in February 1934, was nearly 100,000 two years later. The circulation of *Humanité* reached a quarter of a million copies daily. The Communists gave currency to the slogan, "The Soviets everywhere." It became the most popular slogan in the whole of working-class France, and for all workers Soviets meant the direct challenge to the bourgeois State. One feature of the workers' meetings which told an unmistakable tale was that the workers were ready for Soviets, they had come out for the general strike as on 12 February, they were ready always to pour out in hundreds of thousands to make a counter-demonstration against the Fascists. But

they would not respond to any talk about immediate demands or partial strikes. They were worn out, they had no resources, strikes for higher wages would mean long-drawn out struggles when they might be defeated in sections, or win small victories at great cost. They felt that they must move together in a united effort. It is such mass feeling that produces a revolutionary situation.

Not that these millions were thinking in terms of revolution, millions of workers rarely do, but a revolution is made on the slogan of the day, and when the millions of workers are determined, if they feel above them the correct leadership, they will go to the end. But the Communists were not thinking of revolution. They complained that both Radicals and Socialists would not support extraparlimentary action against the decree laws. Herriot and Léon Blum were quite prepared to attend peaceful demonstrations, however. So the Communists organised demonstration after demonstration, but in all their propaganda and agitation were strictly subordinated to the policy and ideology of the Radicals, chiefly Herriot, the supporter of the Franco-Soviet pact. The Communists sang the "Marseillaise", they carried the Tricolour, they became ardent defenders of the Republic, that very republic which was allowing La Rocque's armoured cars and aeroplanes openly to prepare for the assault on the workers. In addition to the fight against Fascism they were supposed to be fighting the decree laws. But Herriot was a member of the government which had passed those laws. In the conflict between Herriot and the decree laws Herriot was easily victorious. The Communists grovelled before the Radicals. For the great demonstration on 14 July the Socialist Youth decided to march in their uniforms of a workers' militia. At the co-ordination committee of the Socialist Youth and the Young Communist League, Ancelle, secretary of the Paris district of the YCL, threatened them: "If on 14 July you insult the Radical leaders, the Tricolour and the 'Marseillaise', we'll break your necks." In the typical style of Stalinist polemic, perfected in the many campaigns against Trotskyism, they called all who insulted the Tricolour and the "Marseillaise" agents of the bourgeoisie, traitors, criminals and counter-revolutionaries. The Socialist Youth, under Trotskyist influence, would not give way. The matter went to the Organising Committee, where the Stalinists complained. The Radical leaders, quite astonished at this zeal on their behalf, replied, "How can these young men marching in uniform affect us? Not at all. It's quite all right with us and does not embarrass us at all." The Socialist Youth marched in uniform, shouting revolutionary slogans, and had a great reception. Late in 1935 the Fascist leagues were dissolved by parliamentary decree, a hollow fiction which deceived nobody. Meanwhile the ferment among the masses continued. Negotiations were set on foot for the unity of the Communist and Reformist Unions, the Communists making all the concessions. Under the slogan of unity, every principle of the United Front was being broken. Whereas the United Front is designed to stimulate action, this Stalinist manœuvre aimed at exactly the opposite.

How great the temper of the French workers was is proved by their

reaction to Hitler's marching into the Rhineland. The Communists raised the loudest scares, "The Defence of the country," "Collective security through the League." But so indifferent were the French workers that Flandin and Sarraut did not feel themselves able to take the counter-measures that they otherwise might have done. The Right tried to exploit the Hitler scare at the elections. The workers, intent on the class-struggle at home, ignored them. But despite the loud acclaims over the victory of the Popular Front, the elections were a serious blow to the Communists. The results were too good. They had not wanted so many Socialist votes. They did not want Blum as premier. They wanted Herriot, nailed irremediably to the Franco-Soviet Pact. Blum they knew was favourable to an agreement with Germany, every Social Democrat being always ready to make an agreement with capitalists. So was Daladier, the Radical of the Left. Had the Radicals gained enough votes to be the dominating influence in the government, the Communists might have gone into it, but they did not trust Blum and Daladier. That was their first disappointment. The second was what no one except a revolutionary of years of theoretical learning and practical experience could have foreseen in the years that had elapsed since 6 February — the sudden, mighty explosion of the revolutionary force that had been generated in the masses of France. With that instinctive discipline which any revolutionary knows is always to be found in the organised masses at the moment when they decide to act, the French workers went into the factories, refused to come out until their demands were satisfied, and by so doing challenged the whole force and pretensions of the bourgeois State.

It was not yet revolution, but it was a revolutionary act of the highest importance. The government, the Communist bureaucrats in France, practically the entire world except Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition, were taken entirely off their guard. For over two solid years Trotsky and the Left Opposition had been warning the Communist Party that France was approaching the revolutionary stage, that they should build a workers' militia, and ideologically and organisationally prepare the workers for the inevitable armed struggle. The Communists called all this Trotskyist provocation, and continued with their pro-Herriot demonstrations and complaints in parliament about the Fascist leagues. Now the workers were in the factories, and the suddenness, the cohesion and the mass-weight of the movement, paralysed the government.

The workers received reinforcement. As always happens when the workers show courageous and decisive action, large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, the bank-clerks, insurance-clerks, waiters, the girls in the Galeries Lafayette, all the "Yes, sir" and "No, madam" elements of the population who are, from the very circumstances of their employment, strongly subjected to the whole bourgeois régime, followed the proletariat and joined in the strike. "The Soviets everywhere." The words shouted at meetings for years now acquired an immediate practical significance. On the countryside the agricultural workers began to invest the farms. A Communist Party

that had used the two previous years in adequate preparation would have been master of the situation with all its potentialities. The stay-in strike was spontaneous only in a limited sense. It was the produce of the whole previous historical period which began on 6 February. If a Communist Party had placed openly before the workers the ultimate necessity of armed struggle, had prepared for it, but had at the same time given critical support to a Popular Front, their votes would have been no less and, though the suddenness of the workers' movement might have surprised them, the Soviets so thoroughly popularised would have been formed at once, and workers and State would have faced each other with the workers holding the initiative. Even as it was, despite all the previous misdeeds and treacheries, the Communist Party of France had the leadership of the nation in its hands. The revolutionary impulse of the united masses, always stronger on the day than all but the greatest of revolutionaries can hope for, had transformed the relationship of forces in a day. Breaking at once with the Popular Front the Communist Party could have even then called for the formation of Soviets. The response would have been instantaneous. "*Les Soviets partout.*" The words were ringing through all France as "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*" had resounded in the days of July 1789.

Still more easy would it have been to demand the expulsion of the bourgeois from the government. The Soviets could have dealt with the economic demands as a whole, and linked with them political demands, the immediate arrest of the leaders and the disarming of the Fascist leagues, the dismissal of the most reactionary officers, the improvement of the living conditions of the soldiers, and the democratisation of the army, which would have split it for and against the workers at one stroke. The government was powerless. So it was on 14 July 1789, so it was in the early days of 1848, so it was when the Commune began, in the great strike in the revolution of 1905, in the March days of 1917, in Germany in November 1918, in Germany on 11 August 1923, in Spain in August 1931, as it always is in the first spontaneous outburst of the masses in a revolutionary period. The masses act and create a situation. Revolutionary leaders must recognise it and act on it, for such chances come very, very rarely in history. In France in June 1936, the particular method of attack chosen by the workers, seizure of the factories, had made the situation absolutely impossible for the bourgeois. They could not send the soldiers into the factories to shoot a million workers out of them. How many factories would have survived the wreck? And in such circumstances no army can be trusted. It was not only the million and a half men in the factories and the middle-class strikers. The whole working class of France was supporting the strike. We have statistical evidence of that, for a few weeks after the trade-union membership had moved from less than two million to over five million, "joining up for the class-war", as they told each other. Any movement so vast as to affect over six million of the population would inevitably have serious repercussions in the army, which would only show itself, however, when the army had been called upon to shoot the masses and these had refused to give way.

The petty-bourgeoisie could have been bound to the movement by linking the demands of their strikers to the workers' demands and refusing to treat separately. Blum, not to say Daladier, would have had to make an early choice, with the workers or with the bourgeoisie, and either supported the Soviets or exposed himself at once to all his followers. The bourgeois Press, frightened at what it saw, lied voluminously about the strike. The workers were polite to the employers, but in many factories always had one of them as hostages. In the warehouses for perishable foodstuffs, the food rotted while they went out and bought what little they could afford, such was their scorn and contempt for the class they were fighting. And how ready for drastic action the men in the basic industries were can be judged from the following. On 9 June, 537 factory delegates in the steel industry, representing 243 factories, met at Mathierin-Jaureau Avenue, discussed the situation with great passion, and sharply rebuked the trades-union leaders who had negotiated the settlement of 7 June. These delegates passed a resolution in which they specified that they could not accept the application of the agreement without a real upward readjustment of their salaries. They gave the owners forty-eight hours to accede, failing which they would demand the nationalisation of the factories.* On 12 June the general settlement for the steel industry all over France was to be signed. The factory delegates had entrusted the agreement to trade-union delegates, nearly all Communists. When they saw the terms, however, they refused to sign and immediately four evacuated factories were re-occupied. From there to revolution is but a single step. The bourgeois gave in. They had to, for this was a very different thing from a British Labour parliamentarian threatening the Tories in the House of Commons with nationalisation of this or that industry unless the employers do this or that.

To have led this movement towards revolution would need enormous courage, audacity and fortitude. But how else was any revolution ever led? And Thorez, Cachin, Marty and the rest were fortunate in that they were not unknown, shabby men who had been to prison, as were Lenin and his band of Bolsheviks. All France knew them. They had a journal which was widely distributed and whose circulation would have doubled or trebled itself if they had taken the lead. Outside of France there was Hitler, but every modern revolution will have to face the possibilities of intervention, and the Spanish Revolution was waiting to help them; the proletariat of Belgium was to follow the French almost overnight. If a general European war were ultimately to develop, then it could not begin under better conditions for the Soviet Union and Socialism than with the international proletariat in actual conflict with its bourgeoisie in three countries so closely linked as France, Spain and Belgium. Lenin, in 1917, worked on just such a scale, and because of that was successful. For Marxists the Permanent Revolution and international Socialism are not propaganda phrases. They must form the basis of all revolutionary

* "Que Faire," *Communist Review*, July 1936, p.15.

strategy. That is the reason for the existence of an international. Otherwise the revolutionary words are not only meaningless; they are a positive danger. Only the actual development of events under the whip of their activity and their slogans could have told the French Communists how far they could have gone. Agitation, says Trotsky, is always a dialogue with the masses. The party gives the slogans, and according to the response of the masses knows how far it can go. Such were the possibilities of the situation which developed in June. Ultimate conflict is inevitable, and whether it comes soon or late, the workers' leaders should have taken the initiative at once. But what they actually did, these infamous scoundrels, was to carry out to the letter the commands of their counter-revolutionary leader in Moscow and fight their hardest to break the strike and demoralise the masses. They did not want the workers to act, and they and the trade-union leaders sabotaged from the first day.

Humanité of 2 June came out with: "The trade-union militants, as they have indicated, are using all their strength to achieve a rapid and reasonable solution of the conflicts that are in progress." What this meant the bourgeois knew. Powerless before the masses, they received unexpected help from these renegades. *Paris Soir* on the same day wrote: "Will they be able to stop the development of events? Those responsible for the trade-union movement are undertaking this task with the hope of succeeding in it." The Communists and the trade-union leaders were not responsible for the movement. It had come from the rank-and-file, but thus early the bourgeoisie could see what they were after. When some eager workers began to run their factories themselves, the Industrial Editor of *Humanité*, for merely reporting it in the paper, was publicly dismissed from his post. But the strike continued, and on 6 June *Humanité* began to fear a possible insurrection. "It is a question neither of demagoguery nor of insurrection," they pleaded. "It is simply a question of making the bosses give back a little of their purchasing power to the men who have for four years lost up to thirty per cent of their purchasing power, and in some cases even more." They knew that at any moment the movement might overflow from economic into political channels and the struggle for State-power begin. They fought to prevent it. "It is in the interests of the entire nation," said Vaillant-Coturier in the same issue. Thorez, the general secretary, raised the slogan, "One must know when to end a strike." Every word weakened the workers and strengthened the frightened bourgeoisie. By 7 June they were almost frantic, seeking to drown the class-struggle in the whole nation, Fascists and all. Vaillant-Coturier, in *Humanité* of that date, said: "What is outstanding in this movement, which grows from hour to hour, is ... the reconciliation of the opinions and religious beliefs from the Communist and Socialist to the national volunteer, from the Catholic to the unbeliever, and the speed which characterises the work taken up again after victory." The national volunteers are Fascists. Even the bourgeoisie were laughing at them: "The inspirers of the People's Front," said *Paris Soir* of 7 June, "suddenly in the face of the fire that has broken out have adopted the rôle of extinguishers."

But nothing could hold back the French workers from the satisfaction of their immediate demands. Blum, more active in those few days than any Social Democratic minister has been in all its life, passed bills hastily through parliament, and, peace being restored, the capitalists began quietly to sabotage by raising prices and at the same time preparing for the second clash which they knew must come. But to the Communists the strike was a warning. The workers' movement was certain to break out again. Stalin did not want that. He wanted a strong, free and happy France to fight against Hitler. The French workers might go down, but Stalin does not pay the expenses of the International for the benefit of the French workers. The Communists therefore began to find the Popular Front too narrow, and to look beyond Radicals to those on the Right, who were unalterably anti-German. Since January 1936 they had thrown out the slogan, "The unification of the French nation." Now they began to fight for it. Blum and Daladier were sympathetic to an understanding with Germany, and in opposition to them, Communist propaganda and agitation became one long incitement to hostility between France and Germany. They put forward the new slogan of a Front of Frenchmen. "Unity, unity, unity! It is on this unity that the future of our country depends," wrote Vaillant-Coturier on 12 July.* On 15 July they hailed the army: "It is to the honour of the people of Paris to have, in dignity, saluted its soldiers and its army." They paid tribute to the Senate: "The Communist Party does not intend any more to yield to the popular custom of attacking the Republican Senate." And on 29 July these anti-Fascists, who had all these years so exploited the French workers' desire to fight against Fascism, offered the Fascists the United Front. "We shake hands with the sincere Croix-de-Feu and with the sincere National Volunteers, with all those who really wish the well-being of the people." They began to attack the Socialist Party. It was Germany and the Red Referendum and "After Hitler, our turn" all over again.

The workers had followed with trust and confidence all the way. The advance-guard had begun to recognise, immediately after the strike when prices had begun to rise again, that capitalism offered them no way out. Next time they would go further. They had submitted restlessly to the class-collaboration policy, and accepted the explanation that it was only a manoeuvre to gain the sympathy of the middle classes. But the hand of friendship to the Fascists began to open the eyes of some. For the moment the Spanish Revolution had carried the Communist Party to its peak. But the Communist Party did not want independent action by workers. It could have armed a battalion of thousands of men, organised public subscriptions for guns and ammunition, and marched them to Spain. The Blum government dared not ask the army to shoot civilians who were going to fight against anti-Fascists in defence of a Popular Front government. At that time any attempt at a Fascist coup d'état would have been met by the full force of the workers, and the revolution would have been on the order of the

* All the quotations are from *Humanité*.

day. The Communist Party, however, wanted the Blum government to intervene so as to provoke the conflict with Germany at once if possible. Blum stuck to neutrality, the inevitable Social Democratic policy. Then in late August Dr Schacht visited France, bringing Hitler's proposals for getting a free hand against Russia. The Communist leaders, now frantically anti-German, threatened to break the Popular Front if Blum and Daladier so much as sat down to discuss with Schacht. It was becoming clear to more and more workers what were the real motives behind their policy. They continued to invite all who were anti-German, Fascists and all, to their Front of Frenchmen. The current of dissatisfaction began to flow more strongly, and on 4 September Léon Blum moved openly against them. On that day the Permanent Administrative Committee of the French Socialist Party passed a unanimous resolution:

Roused by the campaign undertaken by the Communist Party in favour of a "French Front", which would be none other than an attempt at a National Government, it declares that the Socialist Party has never been called upon to give an opinion upon such a formation.... As a class-party the Socialist Party never hesitated to help in the constitution and success of the People's Front.

The Commission believes that it would be dangerous for the very aim thus sought after to seek alliance with the groups that fought and are still fighting democracy and peace, the defence of which constitutes the reason for the existence of the Popular Front.

It calls upon all parties and organisations of this Popular Front to maintain their union and their confidence in a form of action which is far from having exhausted the results that it should yield.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, despite all its clamour for the unity of the workers, was ready to make the International destroy this unity for the sake of its foreign policy.

Fascism in France has not developed for three reasons. First the bourgeoisie made a bad choice. Colonel La Rocque and Sir Oswald Mosley are aristocrats, and can never build a mass movement in the way that Hitler and Mussolini, sprung from the people, could do. Secondly, when the French Communist Party abandoned the revolutionary struggle, the initial cause of Fascism, the threat to bourgeois property was temporarily removed. Thirdly, the French bourgeois, always sensitive to the international situation, know that war may break out at any minute. The Popular Front government, or some variant either to the left or to the right, will lead the masses into the war more easily than a Right government. A Fascist attempt would bring civil war, and they would rather not risk that now. The Stalinist version of the United Front is not unity for action, but unity to lead all workers into imperialist war.

The politically-minded of the workers at this moment when the situation is so tense have been thrown into confusion. The petty-bourgeoisies, without even the nominal gain of the rise in wages, are disillusioned. Doriot, an ex-member of the Communist Party, has turned Fascist and with the support of the whole bourgeois Press is

seeking to pull the petty-bourgeoisie away from the Left to the Right. Trained in the Stalinist school of mendacious propaganda, and knowing the cesspool of corruption which the International is, he can supplement his attacks with documents, and is a formidable opponent. With the Stalinists sacrificing everything to anti-German agitation, with Doriot pulling at the petty-bourgeoisie and La Rocque and his armoured cars and planes waiting their chance to strike, the French workers are in serious danger. If they fight a defensive battle for democracy, they will lose. But organised for the Socialist revolution they can win a great victory. Will they reform their ranks in time? There is an even chance that they may. That the chance exists is due to Trotsky and a band of followers, young, inexperienced, with all the odds against them, but fighting the most difficult and critical revolutionary battle of our time. It is not only the bourgeoisie they are arrayed against. Stalin is using all the forces of the Soviet State and the Third International to crush them and their leader. He hopes to conciliate the bourgeoisie, but these implacable revolutionaries he knows he cannot conciliate. And he knows that if they succeed it is the end of him and his régime.

1937

Discussions with Trotsky

[In April 1939, James was the principal member of the Socialist Workers Party delegation which visited Trotsky in Coyoacan, Mexico, where he had received asylum in 1937. The following discussions which took place then were published as rough, uncorrected transcripts in the SWP's Internal Bulletin later that year and in 1940, using the pseudonyms "J.R. Johnson" for James, "Crux" for Trotsky and "Carlos" for Charles Curtiss, the Fourth International's representative in Mexico. At the time of the discussions James had been in the USA for some five months.]

Self-Determination for the American Negroes

TROTSKY: Comrade James proposes that we discuss the Negro question in three parts, the first to be devoted to the programmatic question of self-determination for the Negroes.

[Some statistical material was introduced which was not included in the report.]

JAMES: The basic proposals for the Negro question have already been distributed, and here it is only necessary to deal with the question of self-determination. No one denies the Negroes' right to self-determination. It is a question of whether we should advocate it. In Africa and in the West Indies we advocate self-determination because a large majority of the people want it. In Africa the great masses of the people look upon self-determination as a restoration of their independence. In the West Indies, where we have a population similar in origin to the Negroes in America, there has been developing a national sentiment. The Negroes are a majority. Already we hear ideas, among the more advanced, of a West Indian nation, and it is highly probably that, even let us suppose that the Negroes were offered full and free rights as citizens of the British Empire, they would probably oppose it and wish to be absolutely free and independent. Therefore, both in Africa and in the West Indies, the International African Service Bureau advocates self-determination. It is progressive. It is a step in the right direction. We weaken the enemy. It puts the workers in a position to make great progress toward socialism.

In America the situation is different. The Negro desperately wants to be an American citizen. He says, "I have been here from the beginning; I did all the work here in the early days. Jews, Poles, Italians, Swedes, and others come here and have all the privileges. You say that some of the Germans are spies. I will never spy. I have nobody for whom to spy. And yet you exclude me from the army and from the rights of citizenship."

In Poland and Catalonia there is a tradition of language, literature and history to add to the economic and political oppression and to help weld the population in its progressive demand for self-determination. In America it is not so. Let us look at certain historic events in the development of the Negro in America.

Garvey raised the slogan "Back to Africa", but the Negroes who followed him did not believe for the most part that they were really going back to Africa. We know that those in the West Indies who were following him had not the slightest intention of going back to Africa, but they were glad to follow a militant leadership. And there is the case of the black woman who was pushed by a white woman in a street car and said to her, "You wait until Marcus gets into power and all you people will be treated in the way you deserve." Obviously she was not thinking of Africa.

There was, however, this concentration on the Negroes' problems simply because the white workers in 1919 were not developed. There was no political organisation of any power calling upon the blacks and the whites to unite. The Negroes were just back from the war — militant and having no offer of assistance, they naturally concentrated on their own particular affairs.

In addition, however, we should note that in Chicago, where a race riot took place, the riot was deliberately provoked by the employers. Some time before it actually broke out, the black and white meatpackers had struck and had paraded through the Negro quarter in Chicago with the black population cheering the whites in the same way that they cheered the blacks. For the capitalists this was a very dangerous thing and they set themselves to creating race friction. At one stage, motor cars with white people in them sped through the Negro quarter shooting at all whom they saw. The capitalist press played up the differences and thus set the stage and initiated the riots that took place for dividing the population and driving the Negro back upon himself.

During the period of the crisis there was a rebirth of these nationalist movements. There was a movement toward the forty-ninth state [for Negroes], and the movement concentrated around Liberia was developing. These movements assumed fairly large proportions up to at least 1934.

Then in 1936 came the organisation of the CIO [Committee for Industrial Organisation]. John L. Lewis appointed a special Negro department. The New Deal made gestures to the Negroes. Blacks and whites fought together in various struggles. These nationalist movements have tended to disappear as the Negro saw the opportunity to fight with the organised workers and to gain something.

The danger of our advocating and injecting a policy of self-determination is that it is the surest way to divide and confuse the workers in the South. The white workers have centuries of prejudice to overcome, but at the present time many of them are working with the Negroes in the Southern sharecroppers' union, and with the rise of the struggle there is every possibility that they will be able to overcome their age-long prejudices. But for us to propose that the Negro have this black state for himself is asking too much from the white workers, especially when the Negro himself is not making the same demand. The slogans of abolition of debts, confiscation of large properties, etc., are quite sufficient to lead them both to fight together and on the basis of

economic struggle to make a united fight for the abolition of social discrimination.

I therefore propose concretely: (1) That we are for the right of self-determination. (2) If some demand should arise among the Negroes for the right of self-determination we should support it. (3) We do not go out of our way to raise this slogan and place an unnecessary barrier between ourselves and socialism. (4) An investigation should be made into these movements — the one led by Garvey, the movement for the forty-ninth state, the movement centering on Liberia. Find out what groups of the population supported them and on this basis come to some opinion as to how far there is any demand among the Negroes for self-determination.

CURTISS: It seems to me that the problem can be divided into a number of different phases:

On the question of self-determination, I think it is clear that while we are for self-determination, even to the point of independence, it does not necessarily mean that we favour independence. What we are in favour of is that in a certain case, in a certain locality, they have the right to decide for themselves whether or not they should be independent or what particular governmental arrangements they should have with the majority of the country.

On the question of self-determination being necessarily reactionary — I believe that is a little far-fetched. Self-determination for various nations and groups is not opposed to a future socialist world. I think the question was handled in a polemic between Lenin and Pyatakoff from the point of view of Russia — of self-determination for the various peoples of Russia while still building a united country. There is not necessarily a contradiction between the two. The socialist society will not be built upon subjugated people, but from a free people. The reactionary or progressive character of self-determination is determined by whether or not it will advance the social revolution. That is the criterion.

As to the point which was made, that we should not advocate a thing if the masses do not want it, that is not correct. We do not advocate things just because the masses want them. The basic question of socialism would come under that category. In the United States only a small percentage of the people want socialism, but still we advocate it. They may want war, but we oppose it. The questions we have to solve are as follows: Will it help in the destruction of American imperialism? If such a movement arises, will the people want it as the situation develops?

I take it that these nationalist movements of which you speak were carried on for years, and the struggle was carried on by a handful of people in each case, but in the moment of social crisis the masses rallied to such movements. The same can possibly happen in connection with self-determination of the Negroes.

It seems to me that the so-called Black Belt is a super-exploited section of the American economy. It has all the characteristics of a

subjugated section of an empire. It has all the extreme poverty and political inequality. It has the same financial structure — Wall Street exploits the petty-bourgeois elements and in turn the poor workers. It represents simply a field for investment and a source of profits. It has the characteristics of part of a colonial empire. It is also essentially a regional matter, for the whites have also been forced to feel a reaction against finance capital.

It would also be interesting to study the possible future development of the Negro question. We saw that when the Negroes were brought to the South they stayed there for many decades. When the war came, many emigrated to the North and there formed a part of the proletariat. That tendency can no longer operate. Capitalism is no longer expanding as it was before. As a matter of fact, during the depression many of them went back to the farms. It is possible that instead of a tendency to emigrate, there will now be a tendency for the Negro to stay in the South.

And there are other factors. The question of the cotton-picking machine, which means that the workers will be thrown out of work by the thousands.

To get back to the question of self-determination. There is the possibility that in the midst of the social crisis the manifestation of radicalism takes a double phase: Along with the struggle for economic and social equality, there may be found the demand for the control of their own state. Even in Russia, when the Bolsheviks came to power, the Polish people were not satisfied that this would mean the end of oppression for them. They demanded the right to control their own destiny in their own way. Such a development is possible in the South.

The other questions are important, but I do not think they are basic — that a nation must have its own language, culture and tradition. To a certain extent they have been developing a culture of their own. In any public library can be found books — fiction, anthologies, etc. — expressing a new racial feeling.

Now from the point of view of the United States, the withdrawal of the Black Belt means the weakening of American imperialism by the withdrawal of a big field of investment. That is a blow in favour of the American working class.

It seems to me that self-determination is not opposed to the struggle for social and political and economic equality. In the North such a struggle is immediate and the need is acute. In the North the slogan for economic and political equality is an agitational slogan — an immediate question. From the practical angle, no one suggests that we raise the slogan of self-determination as an agitational one, but as a programmatic one which may become agitational in the future.

There is another factor which might be called the psychological one. If the Negroes think that this is an attempt to segregate them, then it would be best to withhold the slogan until they are convinced that this is not the case.

TROTSKY: I do not quite understand whether Comrade James proposes

to eliminate the slogan of self-determination for the Negroes from our programme, or is it that we do not say that we are ready to do everything possible for the self-determination of the Negroes if they want it themselves? It is a question for the party as a whole, if we eliminate it or not. We are ready to help them if they want it. As a party we can remain absolutely neutral on this. We cannot say it will be reactionary. It is not reactionary. We cannot tell them to set up a state because that will weaken imperialism and so will be good for us, the white workers. That would be against internationalism itself. We cannot say to them, "Stay here, even at the price of economic progress." We can say, "It is for you to decide. If you wish to take a part of the country, it is all right, but we do not wish to make the decision for you."

I believe that the differences between the West Indies, Catalonia, Poland, and the situation of the Negroes in the States are not so decisive. Rosa Luxemburg was against self-determination for Poland. She felt that it was reactionary and fantastic, as fantastic as demanding the right to fly. It shows that she did not possess the necessary historic imagination in this case. The landlords and representatives of the Polish ruling class were also opposed to self-determination, for their own reasons.

Comrade James used three verbs: "support", "advocate" and "inject" the idea of self-determination. I do not propose for the party to advocate. I do not propose to inject, but only to proclaim our obligation to support the struggle for self-determination if the Negroes themselves want it. It is not a question of our Negro comrades. It is a question of thirteen or fourteen million Negroes. The majority of them are very backward. They are not very clear as to what they wish now, and we must give them a credit for the future. They will decide then.

What you said about the Garvey movement is interesting — but it proves that we must be cautious and broad and not base ourselves upon the status quo. The black woman who said to the white woman, "Wait until Marcus is in power. We will know how to treat you then," was simply expressing her desire for her own state. The American Negroes gathered under the banner of the "Back to Africa" movement because it seemed a possible fulfilment of their wish for their own home. They did not want actually to go to Africa. It was the expression of a mystic desire for a home in which they would be free of the domination of the whites, in which they themselves could control their own fate. That also was a wish for self-determination. It was once expressed by some in a religious form, and now it takes the form of a dream of an independent state. Here in the United States the whites are so powerful, so cruel, and so rich that the poor Negro sharecropper does not say, even to himself, that he will take a part of this country for himself. Garvey spoke in glowing terms, that it was beautiful and that here all would be wonderful. Any psychoanalyst will say that the real content of this dream was to have their own home. It is not an argument in favour of injecting the idea. It is only an argument by which we can foresee the possibility of their giving their dream a more realistic form.

Under the condition that Japan invades the United States and the

Negroes are called upon to fight — they may come to feel themselves threatened first from one side and then from the other, and finally awakened, may say, “We have nothing to do with either of you. We will have our own state.”

But the black state could enter into a federation. If the American Negroes succeeded in creating their own state, I am sure that after a few years of the satisfaction and pride of independence, they would feel the need of entering into a federation. Even if Catalonia, which is a very industrialised and highly developed province, had realised its independence, it would have been just a step to federation.

The Jews in Germany and Austria wanted nothing more than to be the best German chauvinists. The most miserable of all was the Social Democrat Austerlitz, the editor of the *Arbeiterzeitung*. But now, with the turn of events, Hitler does not permit them to be German chauvinists. Now many of them have become Zionists and are Palestinian nationalists and anti-German. I saw a disgusting picture recently of a Jewish actor, arriving in America, bending down to kiss the soil of the United States. Then they will get a few blows from the fascist fists in the United States, and they will go to kiss the soil of Palestine.

There is another alternative to the successful revolutionary one. It is possible that fascism will come to power with its racial delirium and oppression, and the reaction of the Negro will be toward racial independence. Fascism in the United States will be directed against the Jews and the Negroes, but against the Negroes particularly, and in a most terrible manner. A “privileged” condition will be created for the American white workers on the backs of the Negroes. The Negroes have done everything possible to become an integral part of the United States, in a psychological as well as a political sense. We must foresee that their reaction will show its power during the revolution. They will enter with a great distrust of the whites. We must remain neutral in the matter and hold the door open for both possibilities and promise our full support if they wish to create their own independent state.

So far as I am informed, it seems to me that the CP’s attitude of making an imperative slogan of it was false. It was a case of the whites saying to the Negroes, “You must create a ghetto for yourselves.” It is tactless and false and can only serve to repulse the Negroes. Their only interpretation can be that the whites want to be separated from them. Our Negro comrades, of course, have the right to participate more intimately in such developments. Our Negro comrades can say, “The Fourth International says that if it is our wish to be independent, it will help us in every way possible, but that the choice is ours. However, I, as a Negro member of the Fourth, hold a view that we must remain in the same state as the whites,” and so on. He can participate in the formation of the political and racial ideology of the Negroes.

JAMES: I am very glad that we have had this discussion, because I agree with you entirely. It seems to be the idea in America that we should advocate it as the CP has done. You seem to think that there is a greater

possibility of the Negroes wanting self-determination than I think is probable. But we have a 100 per cent agreement on the idea which you have put forward that we should be neutral in the development.

TROTSKY: It is the word "reactionary" that bothered me.

JAMES: Let me quote from the document: "If he wanted self-determination, then however reactionary it might be in every other respect, it would be the business of the revolutionary party to raise that slogan." I consider the idea of separating as a step backward so far as a socialist society is concerned. If the white workers extend a hand to the Negro, he will not want self-determination.

TROTSKY: It is too abstract, because the realisation of this slogan can be reached only as the thirteen or fourteen million Negroes feel that the domination by the whites is terminated. To fight for the possibility of realising an independent state is a sign of great moral and political awakening. It would be a tremendous revolutionary step. This ascendancy would immediately have the best economic consequences.

CURTISS: I think that an analogy could be made in connection with the collectives and the distribution of large estates. One might consider the breaking up of large estates into small plots as reactionary, but it is not necessarily so. But this question is up to the peasants, whether they want to operate the estates collectively or individually. We advise the peasants, but we do not force them — it is up to them. Some would say that the breaking up of the large estates into small plots would be economically reactionary, but that is not so.

TROTSKY: This was also the position of Rosa Luxemburg. She maintained that self-determination would be as reactionary as the breaking up of the large estates.

CURTISS: The question of self-determination is also tied up with the question of land and must be looked upon not only in its political but also in its economic manifestations.

5 April 1939

A Negro Organisation

[James's manuscript was read prior to the meeting.]

TROTSKY: It is very important whether it is advisable and whether it is possible to create such an organisation on our own initiative. Our movement is familiar with such forms as the party, the trade union, the educational organisation, the co-operative; but this is a new type of organisation which does not coincide with the traditional forms. We must consider the question from all sides as to whether it is advisable or not and what the form of our participation in this organisation should be.

If another party had organised such a mass movement, we would surely participate as a fraction, providing that it included workers, poor petty-bourgeois, poor farmers, and so on. We would enter for the purpose of educating the best elements and winning them for our party. But this is another thing. What is proposed here is that we take the

initiative. Even without knowing the concrete situation in Negro circles in the United States, I believe we can admit that no one but our party is capable of forming such a movement on a realistic basis. Of course, the movements guided by the improvisatorial Negro leaders, as we saw them in the past, more or less expressed the unwillingness or the incapacity, the perfidy of all the existing parties.

None of the parties can now assume such a task because they are either pro-Roosevelt imperialists or anti-Roosevelt imperialists. Such an organisation of the oppressed Negroes signifies to them the weakening of "democracy" and of big business. This is also true of the Stalinists. Thus, the only party capable of beginning such an action is our own party.

But the question remains as to whether we can take upon ourselves the initiative of forming such an organisation of Negroes as Negroes — not for the purpose of winning some elements of our party but for the purpose of doing systematic educational work in order to elevate them politically. What should be the form — what the correct line of our party? That is our question.

CURTISS: As I have already said to Comrade James, the Communist Party organised the American Negro Labor Congress and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. Neither one had great success. Both were very poorly organised. I personally think that such an organisation should be organised, but I think it should be done carefully and only after a study of all the factors involved and also of the causes of the breakdown of the two organisations mentioned. We must be sure of a mass base. To create a shadow of ourselves would serve only to discredit the idea and would benefit no one.

TROTSKY: Who were the leaders of these organisations?

CURTISS: Fort-Whiteman, Owen, Haywood, Ford, Patterson; Bob Minor was the leader of the CP's Negro work.

TROTSKY: Who are the leaders now?

CURTISS: Most of them are in the CP, so far as I know. Some have dropped out of the movement.

OWEN: Comrade James seems to have the idea that there is a good chance of building such an organisation in the immediate future. I would like to have him elaborate.

JAMES: I think that it should be a success because on my arrival in New York I met great numbers of Negroes and spoke to many Negro organisations. I brought forward the point of view of the Fourth International, particularly on the war question, and in every case there was great applause and a very enthuasiatic reception of the ideas. Great numbers of these Negroes hated the Communist Party, agreed entirely with the programme put forward by the International African Service Bureau, and were extremely interested in the journal *International African Opinion*. Up to the last convention, 79 per cent of the Negro membership of the CP in New York State, 1,579 people, had left the CP. I met many of the representative ones, and they were now willing

to form a Negro organisation but did not wish to join the Fourth International. I had come to the conclusion that there was this possibility of a Negro organisation before I left New York, but waited until I had gone through various towns in the States and got into contact with the Negro population there. And I found that the impressions that I had gathered in New York corresponded to those that I found on the tour.

In Boston, for instance, I went to a Barbados organisation and there found about twenty or thirty people who had some sort of free society, but after having spoken to them for five or ten minutes they became very much interested in the political questions that I raised; and the chairman told me that if I wanted to come back to Boston he could arrange a Negro meeting for me at which we would have about seven hundred people. I do not think that it is too much to say that that was characteristic of the general attitude of the Negroes in the various places at which I had meetings.

TROTSKY: I have not formed an opinion about the question because I do not have enough information. What Comrade James tells us now is very important. It shows that we can have some elements for co-operation in this field, but at the same time this information limits the immediate perspective of the organisation. Who are those elements? The majority are Negro intellectuals, former Stalinist functionaries and sympathisers. We know that now large strata of the intellectuals are turning back to the Stalinists in every country. We have observed such people who were very sympathetic to us: Eastman, Solow, Hook, and others. They were very sympathetic to us in so far as they considered us an object for their protection. They abandoned the Stalinists and looked for a new field of action, especially during the Moscow trials, and so for the period they were our friends. Now since we have begun a vigorous campaign, they are hostile to us.

Many of them are returning to all sorts of vague things — humanism, etc. In France, Plisnier, the famous author, went back to God as well as to democracy. But when the white intellectuals went back to Roosevelt and democracy, the disappointed Negro intellectuals looked for a new field on the basis of the Negro question. Of course we must utilise them, but they are not a basis for a large mass movement. They can be used only when there is a clear programme and good slogans.

The real question is whether or not it is possible to organise a mass movement. You know for such disappointed elements we created FIARI [International Federation of Revolutionary Writers and Artists]. It is not only for artists; anyone may enter. It is something of a moral or political "resort" for the disappointed intellectuals. Of course, it can also be used at times to protect us in certain ways, for money, to influence petty-bourgeois public opinion, and so on. That is one thing; but you consider these Negro intellectuals for the directing of a mass movement.

Your project would create something like a pre-political school. What determines the necessity? Two fundamental facts: that the large

masses of the Negroes are backward and oppressed and this oppression is so strong that they must feel it every moment; that they feel it as Negroes. We must find the possibility of giving this feeling a political organisational expression. You may say that in Germany or in England we do not organise such semi-political, semi-trade union, or semi-cultural organisations: we reply that we must adapt ourselves to the genuine Negro masses in the United States.

I will give you another example. We are terribly against the "French turn" [entryism]. We abandoned our independence in order to penetrate into a centrist organisation. You see that this Negro woman writes that they will not adhere to a Trotskyist organisation. It is the result of the disappointments that they have had from the Stalinist organisations and also the propaganda of the Stalinists against us. They say, "We are already persecuted, just because we are Negroes. Now if we adhere to the Trotskyists, we will be even more oppressed."

Why did we penetrate into the Socialist Party and into the PSOP [Workers and Peasants Socialist Party of France]? If we were not the left wing, subject to the most severe blows, our powers of attraction would be ten or a hundred times greater; the people would come to us. But now we must penetrate into other organisations, keeping our heads on our shoulders and telling them that we are not as bad as they say.

There is a certain analogy with the Negroes. They were enslaved by the whites. They were liberated by the whites (so-called liberation). They were led and misled by the whites, and they did not have their own political independence. They were in need of a pre-political activity as Negroes. Theoretically it seems to me absolutely clear that a special organisation should be created for a special situation. The danger is only that it will become a game for the intellectuals. This organisation can justify itself only by winning workers, sharecroppers, and so on. If it does not succeed, we will have to confess that it was a failure. If it does succeed we will be very happy, because we will have a mass organisation of Negroes. In that case I fully agree with Comrade James, except of course with some reservations on the question of self-determination, as was stated in our other discussion.

The task is not one of simply passing through the organisation for a few weeks. It is a question of awakening the Negro masses. It does not exclude recruitment. I believe that success is quite possible; I am not sure. But it is clear for us all that our comrades in such an organisation should be organised into a group. We should take the initiative. I believe it is necessary. This supposes the adaptation of our transitional programme to the Negro problems in the States — a very carefully elaborated programme with genuine civil rights, political rights, cultural interests, economic interests, and so on. It should be done.

I believe that there are two strata: the intellectuals and the masses. I believe that it is among the intellectuals that you find this opposition to self-determination. Why? Because they keep themselves separated from the masses, always with the desire to take on the Anglo-Saxon life. The majority are opportunists and reformists. Many of them continue to imagine that by the improvement of the mentality, and so on, the

discrimination will disappear. That is why they are against any kind of sharp slogan.

JAMES: They will maintain an intellectual interest because the Marxist analysis of Negro history and the problems of the day will give them an insight into the development of the Negroes which nothing else can. Also they are very much isolated from the white bourgeoisie, and the social discrimination makes them therefore less easily corrupted, as, for example, the Negro intellectuals in the West Indies. Furthermore, they are a very small section of the Negro population and on the whole are far less dangerous than the corresponding section of the petty-bourgeoisie in any other group or community. Also what has happened to the Jews in Germany has made the Negro intellectuals think twice. They will raise enough money to start the thing off. After that we do not have to bother in particular. Some, however, would maintain an intellectual interest and continue to give money.

5 April 1939

Plans for the Negro Organisation

JAMES: The suggestions for the party work are in the documents and there is no need to go over them. I propose that they should be considered by the [SWP] Political Committee immediately, together with Comrade Trotsky's idea for a special number of the *New International* on the Negro question. Urgently needed is a pamphlet written by someone familiar with the dealings of the CP on the Negro question and relating these to the Communist International and its degeneration. This would be an indispensable theoretical preliminary to the organisation of the Negro movement and the party's own work among the Negroes. What is not needed is a general pamphlet dealing in a general way with the difficulties of the Negro and stating that in general black and white must unite. It would be another of a long list.

The Negro Organisation:

Theoretical:

1. The study of Negro history and historic propaganda should be:

(a) Emancipation of the Negroes in San Domingo linked with the French revolution.

(b) Emancipation of the slaves in the British Empire linked with the British Reform Bill of 1832.

(c) Emancipation of the Negroes in the United States linked with the Civil War in America.

This leads easily up to the conclusion that the emancipation of the Negro in the United States and abroad is linked with the emancipation of the white working class.

(d) The economic roots of racial discrimination.

(e) Fascism.

(f) The necessity for self-determination for Negro peoples in Africa and a similar policy in China, India, etc.

N.B.: The party should produce a theoretical study of the permanent revolution and the Negro peoples. This should be very different in style

from the pamphlet previously suggested. It should not be a controversy with the CP, but a positive economic and political analysis showing that socialism is the only way out and definitely treating the theory on a high level. This however should come from the party.

2. A scrupulous analysis and exposure of the economic situation of the poorest Negroes and the way this retards not only the Negroes themselves, but the whole community. This, the bringing to the Negroes themselves of a formulated account of their own conditions by means of simple diagrams, illustrations, charts, etc., is of the utmost importance.

Theory — organisational means:

1. Weekly paper and pamphlets of the Negro organisation.

2. To establish the *International African Opinion* as a monthly theoretical journal, financed to some degree from America, make it twice its present size and after a few months enter boldly upon a discussion of international socialism, emphasising the right of self-determination, taking care to show that socialism will be the decision of the Negro states themselves on the basis of their own experience. Invite an international participation of all organisations in the labour movement, Negro intellectuals, etc. It is to be hoped that Comrade Trotsky will be able to participate in this. This discussion on socialism should have no part in the weekly agitational paper.

Organisational:

1. Summon a small group of Negroes and whites if possible: Fourth Internationalists, Lovestoneites [group headed by Jay Lovestone], unattached revolutionaries — this group must be clear on (a) the war question and (b) socialism. We cannot begin by placing an abstract question like socialism before Negro workers. It seems to me that we cannot afford to have confusion on this question in the leadership; for it is on this question that hangs the whole direction of our day-to-day politics. Are we going to attempt to patch up capitalism or to break it? On the war question there can be no compromise. The Bureau has a position and that must be the basis of the new organisation.

Programme:

1. A careful adaptation of the programme of the transitional demands with emphasis on the demands for equality. This is as much as can be said at present.

Practical steps:

1. Choose, after careful investigation, some trade union where there is discrimination affecting a large number of Negroes and where there is a possibility of success. Mobilise a national campaign with every conceivable means of united front: AFL, CIO, SP, SWP, Negro churches, bourgeois organisations and all, in an attempt to break down this discrimination. This should be the *first campaign*, to show clearly that the organisation is fighting as a Negro organisation, but has nothing to do with Garveyism.

2. To seek to build a nationwide organisation on Negro housing and high rents, attempting to draw the women in for militant action.

3. Discrimination in restaurants should be fought by a campaign. A

number of Negroes in any area go into a restaurant all together, ordering for instance some coffee, and refuse to come out until they are served. It would be possible to sit there for a whole day in a very orderly manner and throw upon the police the necessity of removing these Negroes. A campaign to be built around such action.

4. The question of the organisation of domestic servants is very important and though very difficult a thorough investigation should be made.

5. Negro unemployment — though here great care will have to be taken to avoid duplicating organisations; and this is probably the role of the party.

6. The Negro organisation must take the sharecroppers' organisation in the South as its own. It must make it one of the bases of the solution of the Negro question in the South; popularise its work, its aims, its possibilities in the East and West; try to influence it in a more militant direction; invite speakers from it; urge it to take action against lynching; and make the whole Negro community and the whites aware of its importance in the regional and national struggle.

Political orientation:

1. To initiate a militant struggle against fascism and to see to it that Negroes are always in the forefront of any demonstration or activity against fascism.

2. To inculcate the impossibility of any assistance being gained from the Republican and Democratic parties. Negroes must put up their own candidates on a working-class programme and form a united front only with those candidates whose programme approximates theirs.

Internal organisation:

The local units will devote themselves to these questions in accordance with the urgency of the local situation and the national campaigns planned by the centre. These can only be decided upon by investigation.

(a) Begin with a large-scale campaign for funds to establish a paper and at least two headquarters — one in New York and one in a town like St Louis, within striking distance of the South.

(b) A weekly agitational paper costing two cents.

(c) The aim should be to have as soon as possible at least five professional revolutionists — two in New York, two in St Louis (?) and one constantly travelling from the centre. A national tour in the fall after the paper has been established and a draft programme and aims established. A national conference in the early summer.

(d) Seek to get a Negro militant from South Africa to make a tour here as soon as possible. There is a little doubt that this can easily be arranged.

The party members in the organisation will form a fraction, and all important documents submitted by the fraction of the Negro organisation must be ratified either by the Political Committee or its appointed representatives.

CURTISS: About opening the discussion of socialism in the bulletin [the

proposed theoretical journal], but excluding it, at least for a time, from the weekly paper: it seems to me that this is dangerous. This is falling into the idea that socialism is for intellectuals and the élite, but that the people on the bottom should be interested only in the common, day-to-day things. The method should be different in both places, but I think that there should at least be a drive in the direction of socialism in the weekly paper not only from the point of view of daily matters but also in what we call abstract discussion. It is a contradiction — the mass paper would have to take a clear position on the war question, but not on socialism. It is impossible to do the first without the second. It is a form of economism [that] the workers should interest themselves in the everyday affairs, but not in the theories of socialism.

JAMES: I see the difficulties and the contradiction, but there is something else that I cannot quite see — if we want to build a mass movement we cannot plunge into a discussion of socialism, because I think that it would cause more confusion than it would gain support. The Negro is not interested in socialism. He can be brought to socialism on the basis of his concrete experiences. Otherwise we would have to form a Negro socialist organisation. I think we must put forth a minimal, concrete programme. I agree that we should not put socialism too far in the future, but I am trying to avoid lengthy discussions on Marxism, the Second International, the Third International, etc.

LANKIN: * Would this organisation throw its doors open to all classes of Negroes?

JAMES: Yes, on the basis of its programme. The bourgeois Negro can come in to help, but only on the basis of the organisation's programme.

LANKIN: I cannot see how the Negro bourgeoisie can help the Negro proletariat fight for its economic advancement.

JAMES: In our own movement some of us are petty-bourgeois. If a bourgeois Negro is excluded from a university because of his colour, this organisation will probably mobilise the masses to fight for the rights of the bourgeois Negro student. Help for the organisation will be mobilised on the basis of its programme, and we will not be able to exclude any Negro from it if he is willing to fight for that programme.

TROTSKY: I believe that the first question is the attitude of the Socialist Workers Party toward the Negroes. It is very disquieting to find that until now the party has done almost nothing in this field. It has not published a book, a pamphlet, leaflets, nor even any articles in the *New Internationalist*. Two comrades who compiled a book on the question, a serious work [*The Negro in the U.S.* by Barney Mayes and William Bennett], remained isolated. That book is not published, nor are even quotations from it published. It is not a good sign. It is a bad sign. The characteristic thing about the American workers' parties, trade-union organisations, and so on, was their aristocratic character. It is the basis

* Sol Lankin was one of the founders of the American Left Opposition, serving as a guard in Trotsky's home in 1939.

of opportunism. The skilled workers who feel set in the capitalist society help the bourgeois class to hold the Negroes and the unskilled workers down to a very low scale. Our party is not safe from degeneration if it remains a place for intellectuals, semi-intellectuals, skilled workers, and Jewish workers who build a very close milieu which is almost isolated from the genuine masses. Under these conditions our party cannot develop — it will degenerate.

We must have this great danger before our eyes. Many times I have proposed that every member of the party, especially the intellectuals and semi-intellectuals, who, during a period of say six months, cannot each win a worker-member for the party should be demoted to the position of sympathiser. We can say the same in the Negro question. The old organisations, beginning with the AFL, are the organisations of the workers' aristocracy. Our party is a part of the same milieu, not of the basic exploited masses of whom the Negroes are the most exploited. The fact that our party until now has not turned to the Negro question is a very disquieting symptom. If the workers' aristocracy is the basis of opportunism, one of the sources of adaptation to capitalist society, then the most oppressed and discriminated are the most dynamic milieu of the working class.

We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class. What serves as the brake on the higher strata? It is the privileges, the comforts that hinder them from becoming revolutionists. It does not exist for the Negroes. What can transform a certain stratum, make it more capable of courage and sacrifice? It is concentrated in the Negroes. If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie.

In the States we now have various contests. Competition to see who will sell the most papers, and so on. That is very good. But we must also establish a more serious competition — the recruiting of workers and especially of Negro workers. To a certain degree that is independent of the creation of the special Negro organisation.

I believe the party should utilise the sojourn of Comrade James in the States (the tour was necessary to acquaint him with conditions) but now for the next six months, for a behind-the-scenes organisational and political work in order to avoid attracting too much attention from the authorities. A six months' programme can be elaborated for the Negro question, so that if James should be obliged to return to Great Britain, for personal reasons or through the pressure of the police, after a half year's work we have a base for the Negro movement and we have a serious nucleus of Negroes and whites working together on this plan. It is a question of the vitality of the party. It is an important question. It is a question of whether the party is to be transformed into a sect or if it is capable of finding its way to the most oppressed part of the working class.

Proposals taken up point by point:

1. Pamphlet on the Negro question and the Negroes in the CP, relating it to the degeneration of the Kremlin.

TROTSKY: Good. And also would it not be well perhaps to mimeograph this book, or parts of it, and send it together with other material on the question to the various sections of the party for discussion?

2. A Negro number of the *New International*.

TROTSKY: I believe that it is absolutely necessary.

OWEN: It seems to me that there is a danger of getting out the Negro number before we have a sufficient Negro organisation to assure its distribution.

JAMES: It is not intended primarily for the Negroes. It is intended for the party itself and for the other readers of the theoretical magazine.

3. The use of the history of the Negroes themselves in educating them.

General agreement.

4. A study of the permanent revolution and the Negro question.

General agreement.

5. The question of socialism — whether to bring it in through the paper or through the bulletin [the proposed theoretical journal].

TROTSKY: I do not believe that we can begin with the exclusion of socialism from the organisation. You propose a very large, somewhat heterogeneous organisation, which will also accept religious people. That would signify that if a Negro worker, or farmer, or merchant, makes a speech in the organisation to the effect that the only salvation for the Negroes is in the church, we will be too tolerant to expel him and at the same time so wise that we will not let him speak in favour of religion, but we will not speak in favour of socialism. If we understand the character of this milieu, we will adapt the presentation of our ideas to it. We will be cautious; but to tie our hands in advance — to say that we will not introduce the question of socialism because it is an abstract matter — that is not possible. It is one thing to present a general socialist programme; and another thing to be very attentive to the concrete questions of Negro life and to oppose socialism to capitalism in these questions. It is one thing to accept a heterogeneous group and to work in it, and another to be absorbed by it.

JAMES: I quite agree with what you say. What I am afraid of is the putting forth of an abstract socialism. You will recall that I said that the leading group must clearly understand what it is doing and where it is going. But the socialist education of the masses should arise from the day-to-day questions. I am only anxious to prevent the thing's developing into an endless discussion. The discussion should be free and thorough in the theoretical organ.

In regard to the question of socialism in the agitational organ, it is my view that the organisation should definitely establish itself as doing

the day-to-day work of the Negroes in such a way that the masses of Negroes can take part in it before involving itself in discussions about socialism. While it is clear that an individual can raise whatever points he wishes and point out his solution of the Negro problems, yet the question is whether those who are guiding the organisation as a whole should begin by speaking in the name of socialism. I think not. It is important to remember that those who take the initiative should have some common agreement as to the fundamentals of politics today, otherwise there will be great trouble as the organisation develops. But although these, as individuals, are entitled to put forward their particular point of view in the general discussion, yet the issue is whether they should speak as a body as socialists from the very beginning, and my personal view is no.

TROTSKY: In the theoretical organ you can have theoretical discussion, and in the mass organ you can have a mass political discussion. You say that they are contaminated by the capitalist propaganda. Say to them, "You don't believe in socialism. But you will see that in the fighting, the members of the Fourth International will not only be with you, but possibly the most militant." I would even go so far as to have every one of our speakers end his speech by saying, "My name is the Fourth International!" They will come to see that we are the fighters, while the person who preaches religion in the hall, in the critical moment, will go to the church instead of to the battlefield.

6. The organising groups and individuals of the new organisation must be in complete agreement on the war question.

TROTSKY: Yes, it is the most important and the most difficult question. The programme may be very modest, but at the same time it must leave to everyone his freedom of expression in his speeches, and so on; the programme must not be the limitation of our activity, but only our common obligation. Everyone must have the right to go further, but everyone is obliged to defend the minimum. We will see how this minimum will be crystallised as we go along in the opening steps.

7. A campaign in some industry on behalf of the Negroes.

TROTSKY: That is important. It will bring a conflict with some white workers who will not want it. It is a shift from the most aristocratic workers' elements to the lowest elements. We attracted to ourselves some of the higher strata of the intellectuals when they felt that we needed protection: Dewey, La Follette, etc. Now that we are undertaking serious work, they are leaving us. I believe that we will lose two or three more strata and go more deeply into the masses. This will be the touchstone.

8. Housing and rent campaign.

TROTSKY: It is absolutely necessary.

CURTISS: It also works in very well with our transitional demands.

9. The demonstration in the restaurant.

TROTSKY: Yes, and give it an even more militant character. There could be a picket line outside to attract attention and explain something of what is going on.

10. Domestic servants.

TROTSKY: Yes, I believe it is very important; but I believe that there is the *a priori* consideration that many of these Negroes are servants for rich people and are demoralised and have been transformed into moral lackeys. But there are others, a larger stratum, and the question is to win those who are not so privileged.

OWEN: That is a point that I wished to present. Some years ago I was living in Los Angeles near a Negro section — one set aside from the others. The Negroes there were more prosperous. I inquired as to their work and was told by the Negroes themselves that they were better off because they were servants — many of them in the houses of the movie colony. I was surprised to find the servants in the higher strata. This colony of Negroes was not small — it consisted of several thousand people.

JAMES: That is true. But if you are serious, it is not difficult to get to the Negro masses. They live together and they feel together. This stratum of privileged Negroes is smaller than any other privileged stratum. The whites treat them with such contempt that in spite of themselves they are closer to the other Negroes than you would think. In the West Indies, for example, there are great divisions among the Negroes — certain classes of Negroes do not fraternise with other classes. But that is not true here. Here they are kept in the ghetto.

11. Mobilise the Negroes against fascism.

General agreement.

12. The relationship of the Negroes to the Republican and Democratic parties.

TROTSKY: How many Negroes are there in Congress? One. There are 440 members in the House of Representatives and 96 in the Senate. Then if the Negroes have almost 10 per cent of the population, they are entitled to 50 members, but they have only one. It is a clear picture of political inequality. We can often oppose a Negro candidate to a white candidate. This Negro organisation can always say, "We want a Negro who knows our problems." It can have important consequences.

OWEN: It seems to me that Comrade James has ignored a very important part of our programme — the labour party.

JAMES: The Negro section wants to put up a Negro candidate. We tell them they must not stand just as Negroes, but they must have a programme suitable to the masses of poor Negroes. They are not stupid and they can understand that and it is to be encouraged. The white workers put up a labour candidate in another section. Then we say to the Negroes in the white section, "Support that candidate, because his

demands are good workers' demands." And we say to the white workers in the Negro area, "You should support the Negro candidate, because although he is a Negro you will notice that his demands are good for the whole working class." This means that the Negroes have the satisfaction of having their own candidates in areas where they predominate and at the same time we build labour solidarity. It fits into the labour party programme.

CURTISS: Isn't that coming close to the People's Front, to vote for a Negro just because he is a Negro?

JAMES: This organisation has a programme. When the Democrats put up a Negro candidate, we say, "Not at all. It must be a candidate with a programme we can support."

TROTSKY: It is a question of another organisation for which we are not responsible, just as they are not responsible for us. If this organisation puts up a certain candidate, and we find as a party that we must put up our own candidate in opposition, we have the full right to do so. If we are weak and cannot get the organisation to choose a revolutionist, and they choose a Negro Democrat, we might even withdraw our candidate with a concrete declaration that we abstain from fighting, not the Democrat, but the Negro. We consider that the Negro's candidacy as opposed to the white's candidacy, even if both are of the same party, is an important factor in the struggle of the Negroes for their equality; and in this case we can critically support them. I believe that it can be done in certain instances.

13. A Negro from South or West Africa to tour the States.

TROTSKY: What will he teach?

JAMES: I have in mind several young Negroes, any one of whom can give a clear anti-imperialist, anti-war picture. I think it would be very important in building up an understanding of internationalism.

14. Submit documents and plans to the Political Committee. General agreement.

JAMES: I agree with your attitude on the party work in connection with the Negroes. They are a tremendous force and they will dominate the whole of the Southern states. If the party gets a hold here, the revolution is won in America. Nothing can stop it.

11 April 1939

The Fourth International in Europe

JAMES: (1) I should very much like to hear what Comrade Trotsky thinks about the tremendous rise in the fighting temper of the French workers and the actual decline of our movement in that period. At the founding conference there were six sessions devoted to the French question and at the very end there was a dispute about the nature of the resolution to be drawn up. This gives some idea of the difficulty. C. and S. [James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman] thought that it was almost entirely a question of leadership and organisation. Blasco

[Pietro Tresso] thought that the comrades could analyse the political situation but lacked the capacity to intervene actively in the struggle of the masses. My personal view is that it is due to the social composition of the group, its concentration in Paris and its predominant interest in politics rather than in industry, although I noticed in the middle of 1937 a great change in that direction. I still believe, however, that this is a question that demands careful thought and analysis.

(2) *The Spanish question.* I believe that it is not too late to initiate, from all possible sources, an investigation into the organisational activity of our comrades in Spain, beginning in 1936. From all that I have heard, five hundred well-organised comrades inside the POUM would have been able at least to make an attempt at the seizure of power in May 1937. I believe that we have a great deal to learn from the methods of work pursued by our comrades inside the POUM and outside. And inasmuch as in France, and perhaps in Holland and in Britain, where there are centrist parties between us and the Social Democracy and where it is likely that we may have to work as our comrades had to work in the POUM in Spain, for all those reasons I believe it is important that some work should be done on the actual experiences of our comrades in Spain.

(3) *The British section.* You are familiar with the history of the section: the split in 1936 and the formation of two groups, one consolidated in the Labour Party and one outside. When C. arrived in the summer of 1938, both groups were about seventy strong. The Labour Party was more stable. The RSL [Revolutionary Socialist League] consisted of a fusion between the old Marxist League, which split with Groves, and the Marxist Group, and was in contact with about twenty admirable comrades from Edinburgh. The pact for unity and peace stipulated that each group was to continue its own activity and after six months a balance was to be drawn. The last news is the friction has continued and that the Labour Party group is now dominant.

There is also another group — Lee's group in the Labour Party — which refused to have anything to do with fusion, saying that it was bound to fail. The Lee group is very active.

I told Comrade C. that I had ultimately arrived at the conclusion (a) that I had no objection to even the larger part of the comrades of the fusion group being in the Labour Party; (b) but that the independent group with its paper should continue. In the last analysis, the fraction in the Labour Party would not gain any large numbers under the present circumstances, and our independence as a group with a paper was absolutely necessary. Wicks, Sumner, Sara and others of the old Marxist League, who had worked in the Labour Party for four years and were still in it, thoroughly agreed with us that an independent voice was needed. The Labour Party comrades wanted a theoretical paper like the *New International*. We said no; we wanted a paper like the old *Militant*, part theoretical and part agitational. There is not much further to discuss about the English question as one has had time to consider it at a distance. It is clear that no advice or policy can perform miracles.

The position of the ILP, however, is important for us. Organisationally it is weak, but it has four MPs, its paper sells between twenty-five and thirty thousand copies per week, its conferences and statements are published in the bourgeois newspapers, it gets enough financial support to run fifteen candidates in an election (most of them lose their deposit of \$750 per candidate). In general, it says much the same sort of thing that we say and it takes away all that moral and financial support which, for instance, is ours in the United States where there is nothing between us and the Social Democracy, such as it is. Furthermore, the ILP is always opening and then closing, but we are unable to take advantage of the consistent splits and general dissatisfaction of the left wing. If we could split the ILP and, as Maxton has threatened to do of his own accord, drive the Scottish members into Scotland and leave the field in England open, we would be able not to create a great party leading the masses immediately, but we would make extraordinary progress.

I believe that the 1936 resolution on the centrist parties, which stated that the ILP would soon descend into Stalinism, was an error and disoriented the English section. At the present time it would seem that our future progress in Britain in regard to the ILP would depend largely on whether our French section is successful in attracting to itself the best elements in the PSOP. Nevertheless, I propose that our British section should not neglect the ILP in any way and by means of pamphlets, in our press and articles, should make a concentrated drive at its weaknesses and divergences and do its best to accentuate the splits which are constantly opening up in it so as to facilitate its destruction.

Finally there is the question of the comrades going into industry as has been done in one or two districts in America where intellectuals, in their determination to get into contact with the masses, have entered the food industry and other industries wherever that was possible; in certain places with great success. It seems to me in France and most certainly in Britain this is a means which could very well be attempted in order to strengthen that contact with the masses which is one of the great weaknesses of our party in great cities like London, Paris and to some extent New York; whereas the Belgian party, based on a working-class area in the provinces, is extremely well organised, and despite certain political weakness during the past period shows that in any upheaval such as had taken place in France, it is likely to play a far more powerful part and at least to show infinitely greater progress than our French section has shown.

TROTSKY: Yes, the question is why we are not progressing in correspondence with the value of our conceptions, which are not so meaningless as some friends believe. We are not progressing politically. Yes, it is a fact, which is an expression of a general decay of the workers' movements in the last fifteen years. It is the more general cause. When the revolutionary movement in general is declining, when one defeat follows another, when fascism is spreading over the world, when the official "Marxism" is the most powerful organisation of deception of

the workers, and so on, it is an inevitable situation that the revolutionary elements must work against the general historic current, even if our ideas, our explanations, are as exact and wise as one can demand.

But the masses are not educated by prognostic theoretical conception, but by general experiences of their lives. It is the most general explanation — the whole situation is against us. There must be a turn in the class realisation, in the sentiments, in the feelings of the masses; a turn which will give us the opportunity for a large political success.

I remember some discussions in 1927 in Moscow after Chiang Kai-shek stilled the Chinese workers. We predicted this ten days before and Stalin opposed us with the argument that Borodin was vigilant, that Chiang Kai-shek would not have the chance to betray us, etc. I believe that it was eight or ten days later that the tragedy occurred,* and our comrades expressed optimism because our analysis was so clear that everyone would see it and we would be sure to win the party. I answered that the strangulation of the Chinese revolution is a thousand times more important for the masses than our predictions. Our predictions can win some few intellectuals who take an interest in such things, but not the masses. The military victory of Chiang Kai-shek will inevitably provoke a depression and this is not conducive to the growth of a revolutionary faction.

Since 1927 we have had a long series of defeats. We are similar to a group who attempt to climb a mountain and who must suffer again and again a downfall of stone, snow, etc. In Asia and Europe is created a new desperate mood of the masses. They heard something analogous to what we say ten or fifteen years ago from the Communist Party and they are pessimistic. That is the general mood of the workers. It is the most general reason. We cannot withdraw from the general historic current — from the general constellation of the forces. The current is against us, that is clear. I remember the period between 1908 and 1913 in Russia. There was also a reaction. In 1905 we had the workers with us — in 1908 and even in 1907 began the great reaction.

Everybody invented slogans and methods to win the masses and nobody won them — they were desperate. In this time the only thing we could do was to educate the cadres and they were melting away. There was a series of splits to the right or to the left or to syndicalism and so on. Lenin remained with a small group, a sect, in Paris, but with confidence that there would be new possibilities of a rise. It came in 1913. We had a new tide, but then came the war to interrupt this development. During the war there was a silence as of death among the workers. The Zimmerwald conference was a conference of very confused elements in its majority. In the deep recesses of the masses, in the trenches and so on, there was a new mood, but it was so deep and terrorised that we could not reach it and give it an expression. That

* On 12 April 1927, three weeks after the uprising of the Shanghai workers, Chiang Kai-shek ordered a massacre in which tens of thousands were killed.

is why the movement seemed to itself to be very poor and even this element that met in Zimmerwald, in its majority, moved to the right in the next year, in the next month. I will not liberate them from their personal responsibility, but still the general explanation is that the movement had to swim against the current.

Our situation now is incomparably more difficult than that of any other organisation in any other time, because we have the terrible betrayal of the Communist International, which arose from the betrayal of the Second International. The degeneration of the Third International developed so quickly and so unexpectedly that the same generation which heard its formation now hears us, and they say, "But we have already heard this once!"

Then there is the defeat of the Left Opposition in Russia. The Fourth International is connected genetically to the Left Opposition; the masses call us Trotskyists. "Trotsky wishes to conquer power, but why did he lose power?" It is an elementary question. We must begin to explain this by the dialectic of history, by the conflict of classes, that even a revolution produces a reaction.

Max Eastman wrote that Trotsky places too much value on doctrine and if he had more common sense he would not have lost power. Nothing in the world is so convincing as success and nothing so repelling as defeat for the large masses.

You have also the degeneration of the Third International on the one side and the terrible defeat of the Left Opposition with the extermination of the whole group. These facts are a thousand times more convincing for the working class than our poor paper with even the tremendous circulation of 5,000 like the *Socialist Appeal*.

We are in a small boat in a tremendous current. There are five or ten boats and one goes down and we say it was due to bad helmsmanship. But that was not the reason — it was because the current was too strong. It is the most general explanation and we would never forget this explanation in order not to become pessimistic — we, the vanguard of the vanguard. Then this environment creates special groups of elements around our banner. There are courageous elements who do not like to swim with the current — it is their character. Then there are intelligent elements of bad character who were never disciplined, who always looked for a more radical or more independent tendency and found our tendency, but all of them are more or less outsiders from the general current of the workers' movement. Their value inevitably has its negative side. He who swims against the current is not connected with the masses. Also, the social composition of every revolutionary movement in the beginning is not of workers. It is the intellectuals, semi-intellectuals, or workers connected with the intellectuals who are dissatisfied with the existing organisations. You find in every country a lot of foreigners who are not so easily involved in the labour movement of the country. A Czech in America or in Mexico would more easily become a member of the Fourth International than in Czechoslovakia. The same for a Frenchman in the U.S. The national atmosphere has a tremendous power over individuals.

The Jews in many countries represent the semi-foreigners, not totally assimilated, and they adhere to any new critical, revolutionary, or semi-revolutionary tendency in politics, in art, literature and so on. A new radical tendency directed against the general current of history in this period crystallises around the elements more or less separated from the national life of any country and for them it is more difficult to penetrate into the masses. We are all very critical toward the social composition of our organisation and we must change; but we must understand that this social composition did not fall from heaven, but was determined by the objective situation and by our historic mission in this period.

It does not signify that we must be satisfied with the situation. In so far as it concerns France, it is a long tradition of the French movement connected with the social composition of the country. Especially in the past the petty-bourgeois mentality — individualism on the one side, and on the other an *élan*, a tremendous capacity for improvising.

If you compare in the classic time of the Second International you will find that the French Socialist Party and the German Social Democratic Party had the same number of representatives in parliament. But if you compare the organisations, you will find they are incomparable. The French could only collect 25,000 francs with the greatest difficulty but in Germany to send half a million was nothing. The Germans had in the trade unions some millions of workers and the French had some millions who did not pay their dues. Engels once wrote a letter in which he characterised the French organisations and finished with, "and as always, the dues do not arrive".

Our organisation suffers from the same illness, the traditional French sickness: this incapacity to organise and at the same time lack of conditions for improvisation. Even so far as we now had a tide in France, it was connected with the People's Front. In this situation the defeat of the People's Front was the proof of the correctness of our conceptions, just as was the extermination of the Chinese workers. But the defeat was a defeat and it is directed against revolutionary tendencies until a new tide on a higher level will appear in the new time. We must wait and prepare — a new element, a new factor, in this constellation.

We have comrades who came to us, like Naville and others, fifteen or sixteen or more years ago when they were young boys. Now they are mature people and their whole conscious life they have had only blows, defeats, and terrible defeats on an international scale and they are more or less acquainted with this situation. They appreciate very highly the correctness of their conceptions and they can analyse, but they never had the capacity to penetrate, to work with the masses, and they have not acquired it. There is a tremendous necessity to look at what the masses are doing. We have such people in France. I know much less about the British situation, but I believe that we have such people there also.

Why have we lost people? After terrible international defeats we had in France a movement on a very primitive and a very low political level under the leadership of the People's Front. The People's Front — I

think this whole period — is a kind of caricature of our February revolution. It is shameful in a country like France, which 150 years ago passed through the greatest bourgeois revolution in the world, that the workers' movement should pass through a caricature of the Russian Revolution.

JAMES: You would not throw the whole responsibility on the Communist Party?

TROTSKY: It is a tremendous factor in producing the mentality of the masses. The active factor was the degeneration of the Communist Party.

In 1914 the Bolsheviks were absolutely dominating the workers' movement. It was on the threshold of the war. The most exact statistics show that the Bolsheviks represented not less than three-fourths of the proletarian vanguard. But beginning with the February revolution, the most backward people — peasants, soldiers, even former Bolshevik workers — were attracted toward this People's Front current and the Bolshevik Party became isolated and very weak. The general current was on a very low level, but powerful, and moved toward the October Revolution. It is a question of tempo. In France, after all the defeats, the People's Front attracted elements that sympathised with us theoretically but were involved with the movement of the masses and we became for some time more isolated than before. You can combine all these elements. I can even affirm that many (but not all) of our leading comrades, especially in old sections, by a new turn of situation would be rejected by the revolutionary mass movement and new leaders, fresh leadership, will arise in the revolutionary current.

In France the regeneration began with the entry into the Socialist Party. The policy of the Socialist Party was not clear, but it won many new members. These new members were accustomed to a large milieu. After the split they became a little discouraged. They were not so steeled. Then they lost their not-so-steeled interest and were regained by the current of the People's Front. It is regrettable, but it is explainable.

In Spain the same reasons played the same role with the supplementary factor of the deplorable conduct of the Nin group. He was in Spain as [a] representative of the Russian Left Opposition, and during the first year he did not try to mobilise, to organise our independent elements. We hoped that we would win Nin for the correct conception, and so on. Publicly the Left Opposition gave him its support. In private correspondence we tried to win him and push him forward, but without success. We lost time. Was it correct? It is difficult to say.

If in Spain we had had an experienced comrade, our situation would be incomparably more favourable, but we did not have one. We put all our hopes on Nin, and his policy consisted of personal manoeuvres in order to avoid responsibility. He played with the revolution. He was sincere, but his whole mentality was that of a Menshevik. It was a tremendous handicap, and to fight against this handicap only with

correct formulas falsified by our own representatives in the first period, the Nins, made it very difficult.

Do not forget that we lost the first revolution in 1905. Before our first revolution we had the tradition of high courage, self-sacrifice, etc. Then we were pushed back to a position of a miserable minority of thirty or forty men. Then came the war.

JAMES: How many were there in the Bolshevik Party?

TROTSKY: In 1910 in the whole country there were a few dozen people. Some were in Siberia. But they were not organised. The people whom Lenin could reach by correspondence or by an agent numbered about thirty or forty at most. However, the tradition and the ideas among the more advanced workers was a tremendous capital, which was used later during the revolution, but practically, at this time, we were absolutely isolated.

Yes, history has its own laws which are very powerful — more powerful than our theoretical conceptions of history. Now you have in Europe a catastrophe — the decline of Europe, the extermination of countries. It has a tremendous influence on the workers when they observe these movements of diplomacy, of the armies, and so on, and on the other side a small group with a small paper which makes explanations. But it is a question of his being mobilised tomorrow and of his children being killed. There is a terrible disproportion between the task and the means.

If the war begins now, and it seems that it will begin, then in the first month we will lose two-thirds of what we now have in France. They will be dispersed. They are young and will be mobilised. Subjectively many will remain true to our movement. Those who will not be arrested and who will remain — there may be three or five — I do not know how many, but they will be absolutely isolated.

Only after some months will the criticism and the disgust begin to show on a large scale and everywhere our isolated comrades — in a hospital, in a trench, a woman in a village — will find a changed atmosphere and will say a courageous word. And the same comrade who was unknown in some section of Paris will become a leader of a regiment, of a division, and will feel himself to be a powerful revolutionary leader. This change is in the character of our period.

I do not wish to say that we must reconcile ourselves with the impotence of our French organisation. I believe that with the help of the American comrades we can win the PSOP and make a great leap forward. The situation is ripening and it says to us, "You must utilise this opportunity." And if our comrades turn their backs the situation will change. It is absolutely necessary that your American comrades go to Europe again and that they do not simply give advice, but together with the International Secretariat decide that our section should enter the PSOP. It has some thousands. From the point of view of a revolution it is not a big difference, but from the point of view of working it is a tremendous difference. With fresh elements we can make a tremendous leap forward.

Now in the United States we have a new character of work and I believe we can be very optimistic without illusions and exaggerations. In the United States we have a larger credit of time. The situation is not so immediate, so acute. That is important.

Then I agree with Comrade Stanley who writes that we can now have very important successes in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. We have a very important movement in Indochina. I agree absolutely with Comrade James that we can have a very important Negro movement, because these people have not passed through the history of the last two decades so intimately. As a mass they did not know about the Russian Revolution and the Third International. They can begin history as from the beginning. It is absolutely necessary for us to have fresh blood. That is why we have more success among the youth. In so far as we have been capable of approaching them, we have had good results. They are very attentive to a clear and honest revolutionary programme.

Great Britain and the ILP? It is also a special task. I followed it a bit more closely when I was in Norway. It seems to me that our comrades who entered the ILP had the same experience with the ILP that our American comrades had with the Socialist Party. But not all our comrades entered the ILP, and they developed an opportunistic policy so far as I could observe, and that is why their experience in the ILP was not so good. The ILP remained almost as it was before while the Socialist Party is now empty. I do not know how to approach it now. It is now a Glasgow organisation. It is a local machine and they have influence in the municipal machine, and I have heard that it is very corrupt. It is a separate job of Maxton.

Rebellions of the rank and file are a familiar thing in the ILP. In preparing for a new convention Fenner Brockway becomes a patron of the rebellious section and secures a majority. Then Maxton says he will resign. Then Fenner Brockway says, "No, we will abandon our victory. We can give up our principles, but not our Maxton." I believe that the most important thing is to compromise them — to put them in the mud — the Maxtons and the Brockways. We must identify them with class enemies. We must compromise the ILP with tremendous and pitiless attacks on Maxton. He is the sacrificial goat for all the sins of the British movement and especially the ILP. By such concentrated attacks on Maxton, systematic attacks in our press, we can expedite the split in the ILP. At the same time we must point out that if Maxton is the lackey of Chamberlain, then Fenner Brockway is the lackey of Maxton.

JAMES: What do you think of an independent paper for the work of slashing at Maxton, etc.?

TROTSKY: It is a practical question. In France, if our section enters the PSOP I believe that the International Secretariat should publish the *Quatrième Internationale* for all French-speaking countries twice-monthly. It is simply a question of the juridical possibility. I believe that even if we work inside the Labour Party we must have an independent

paper, not as opposed to our comrades within it, but rather to be outside the control of the ILP.

April 1939

On the History of the Left Opposition

TROTSKY: Comrade James has studied this subject with the greatest attention and the numerous annotations I have made are evidence of the care with which I have read his memorandum. It is important for all our comrades to see our past with insistence on revolutionary clarity. In parts the manuscript is very perspicacious, but I have noticed here the same fault that I have noticed in *World Revolution* — a very good book — and that is a lack of dialectical approach, Anglo-Saxon empiricism, and formalism which is only the reverse of empiricism.

C.L.R. James makes his whole approach to the subject depend on one date — the appearance of Stalin's theory of socialism in a single country — April 1924. But the theory appeared in October 1924. This makes the whole structure false.

In April 1924 it was not clear whether the German revolution was going forward or back. In November '23 I asked that all the Russian comrades in Germany should be recalled. New strata *might* lift the revolution to a higher stage. On the other hand, the revolution might decline. If it declined, the first step of the reaction would be to arrest the Russians as foreign agents of disorder. Stalin opposed me: "You are always too hasty. In August you said the revolution was near; now you say that it is over already." I didn't say that it was over, but suggested that this precautionary step should be taken. By the summer of 1924 Stalin had convinced himself that the German revolution was defeated. He then asked the Red professors to find him something from Lenin to tell the people. They searched and found two or three quotations and Stalin changed the passage in his book. The German revolution had more influence on Stalin than Stalin on the German revolution. In 1923 the whole party was in a fever over the coming revolution. Stalin would not have dared to oppose me on this question at the Central Committee. The Left Opposition was very much to the fore on this question.

JAMES: Brandler went to Moscow convinced of the success of the revolution. What changed him?

TROTSKY: I had many interviews with Brandler. He told me that what was troubling him was not the seizure of power, but what to do after. I told him, "Look here, Brandler, you say the prospects are good, but the bourgeoisie is in power, in control of the state, the army, police, etc. The question is to break that power...." Brandler took many notes during many discussions with me. But this very boldness of his was only a cover for his secret fears. It is not easy to lead a struggle against bourgeois society. He went to Chemnitz and there met the leaders of the Social Democracy, a collection of little Brandlers. He communicated to them in his speech his secret fears by the very way he spoke to them. Naturally they drew back and this mood of defeatism permeated to the workers.

In the 1905 Russian revolution there was a dispute in the soviet as to whether we should challenge the tsarist power with a demonstration on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. To this day I do not know for certain whether it was the correct thing to do at that time or not. The committee could not decide, so we consulted the soviet. I made the speech, putting the two alternatives in an objective manner, and the soviet decided by an overwhelming majority not to demonstrate. But I am certain that if I had said it was necessary to demonstrate and spoken accordingly we would have had a great majority in favour. It was the same with Brandler. What was wanted in Germany in 1923 was a revolutionary party....

You accuse me also of degeneration when you quote Fischer. But why did I give that interview? In revolution it is always wise to throw on the enemy the responsibility. Thus in 1917 they asked me at the soviet: "Are the Bolsheviks preparing an insurrection?" What could I say? I said, "No, we are defending the revolution, but if you provoke us....!" It was the same thing here. Poland and France were using the Russian Bolsheviks as a pretext for preparing intervention and reactionary moves. With the full consent of the German comrades I gave this interview, while the German comrades explained the situation to the German workers. Meanwhile I had a cavalry detachment under Dybenko ready on the Polish border.

JAMES: You would not agree with Victor Serge that the bureaucracy sabotaged the Chinese revolution; in other words, that its attitude to the Chinese revolution was the same as its attitude toward the Spanish?

TROTSKY: Not at all. Why should they sabotage it? I was on a committee (with Chicherin, Voroshilov, and some others) on the Chinese revolution. They were even opposed to my attitude, which was considered pessimistic. They were anxious for its success.

JAMES: For the success of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Wasn't their opposition to the proletarian revolution the opposition of a bureaucracy which was quite prepared to support a bourgeois democratic revolution, but from the fact of its being a bureaucracy could not support a proletarian revolution?

TROTSKY: Formalism. We had the greatest revolutionary party in the world in 1917. In 1936 it strangled the revolution in Spain. How did it develop from 1917 to 1936? That is the question. According to your argument, the degeneration would have started in October 1917. In my view it started in the first years of the New Economic Policy. But even in 1927 the whole party was eagerly awaiting the issue of the Chinese revolution. What happened was that the bureaucracy acquired certain bureaucratic habits of thinking. It proposed to restrain the peasants today so as not to frighten the generals. It thought it would push the bourgeoisie to the left. It saw the Kuomintang as a body of officeholders and thought it could put Communists into the offices and so change the direction of events.... And how would you account for the change which demanded a Canton Commune?

JAMES: Victor Serge says that it was only for the sake of the Sixth World Congress that they wanted the Commune "if only for a quarter of an hour".

TROTSKY: It was more for the party internally than for the International. The party was excited over the Chinese revolution. Only during 1923 had it reached a higher pitch of intensity.

No, you want to begin with the degeneration complete. Stalin and Company genuinely believed that the Chinese revolution was a bourgeois democratic revolution and sought to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

JAMES: You mean that Stalin, Bukharin, Tomskey, Rykov and the rest did not understand the course of the Russian Revolution?

TROTSKY: They did not. They took part and events overwhelmed them. Their position on China was the same they had in March 1917 until Lenin came. In different writings of theirs you will see passages that show that they never understood. A different form of existence, their bureaucratic habits affected their thinking and they reverted to their previous position. They even enshrined it in the programme of the Comintern: proletarian revolution for Germany, dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry for semicolonial countries, etc. [*Trotsky here asks Van to get a copy of the Draft Programme and the extract is read.*] I condemned it in my critique of the Draft Programme [of the Communist International].

JAMES: What about Bukharin's statement in 1925 that if war came revolutionists should support the bourgeois-Soviet bloc?

TROTSKY: After Lenin's testament Bukharin wanted to show that he was a real dialectician. He studied Hegel and on every occasion tried to show that he was a realist. Hence, "Enrich yourselves," "Socialism at a snail's pace," etc. And not only Bukharin, but I and all of us at various times wrote absurd things. I will grant you that.

JAMES: And Germany 1930-33?

TROTSKY: I cannot agree that the policy of the International was only a materialisation of the commands of Moscow. It is necessary to see the policy as a whole, from the internal and the international points of view, from all sides. The foreign policy of Moscow, and the orientation of the Social Democracy to Geneva could play a role. But there was also the necessity of a turn owing to the disastrous effect of the previous policy on the party inside Russia. After all the bureaucracy is dealing with 160 million people who have been through three revolutions. What they are saying and thinking is collected and classified. Stalin wanted to show that he was no Menshevik. Hence this violent turn to the left. We must see it as a whole, in all its aspects.

JAMES: But the British Stalinist, Campbell, writes that when the British delegation in 1928 was presented with the theory of social fascism it opposed the idea, but soon was convinced that it was correct. ...

[*It was agreed to continue the discussion. During the interval James submitted a document.*]

TROTSKY: I have read your document claiming to clarify the position, but it does not clarify it. You state that you accept my view of 1923, but later in the document I see that you do not really accept it.... I find it strange that on the Negro question you should be so realistic and on this be so undialectical. (I suspect that you are just a *little* opportunistic on the Negro question, but I am not quite sure.)

In 1924, Stalin's slogan (socialism in a single country) corresponded to the mood of the young intellectuals, without training, without tradition....

But despite that, when Stalin wanted to strangle the Spanish revolution openly, he had to wipe out thousands of Old Bolsheviks. The first struggle started on the permanent revolution, the bureaucracy seeking peace and quiet. Then into this came the German revolution of 1923. Stalin dared not even oppose me openly then. We never knew until afterwards that he had secretly written the letter to Bukharin saying that the revolution should be held back. Then, after the German defeat, came the struggle over equality. It was in defence of the privileges of the bureaucracy that Stalin became its undisputed leader....

Russia was a backward country. These leaders had Marxist conceptions, but after October they soon returned to their old ideas. Voroshilov and others used to ask me: "But how do you think it possible that the Chinese masses, so backward, could establish the dictatorship of the proletariat?"

In Germany they hoped now for a miracle to break the backbone of the Social Democracy; their politics had failed utterly to detach the masses from it. Hence this new attempt to get rid of it.... Stalin hoped that the German Communist Party would win a victory and to think that he had a "plan" to allow fascism to come into power is absurd. It is a deification of Stalin.

JAMES: He made them cease their opposition to the Red Referendum; he made Remmele say "After Hitler, our turn"; he made them stop fighting the fascists in the streets.

TROTSKY: "After Hitler, our turn" was a boast, a confession of bankruptcy. You pay too much attention to it.

SCHUESSLER: They stopped fighting in the streets because their detachments were small CP detachments. Good comrades were constantly being shot, and inasmuch as workers as a whole were not taking part, they called it off. It was a part of their zigzags.

TROTSKY: There you are! They did all sorts of things. They even offered the united front sometimes.

JAMES: Duranty [*New York Times* correspondent in Moscow] said in 1931 that they did not want the revolution in Spain.

TROTSKY: Do not take what Duranty says at face value. Litvinov wanted to say that they were not responsible for what was happening in Spain. He could not say that himself so he said it through Duranty. Perhaps even they did not want to be bothered about Spain, being in difficulties

at home.... But I would say that Stalin sincerely wished the triumph of the German Communist Party in Germany 1930-33....

Also you cannot think of the Comintern as being merely an instrument of Stalin's foreign policy. In France in 1934 the Communist Party had declined from 80,000 to 30,000. It was necessary to have a new policy. We do not know the archives of the Comintern, what correspondence passed, etc. At the same time Stalin was seeking a new foreign policy. From one side and the other we have these tendencies which go to make the new turn. They are different sides of the same process.... The French Communist Party is not only an agency of Moscow, but a national organisation with members of parliament, etc.

All that, however, is not very dangerous, although it shows a great lack of proportion to say that our whole propaganda has been meaningless. If that is so, we are bankrupt. What is much more dangerous is the sectarian approach to the Labour Party.

You say that I put forward the slogan of Blum-Cachin without reservations. Then you remember, "All power to the soviet!" and you say that the united front was no soviet. It is the same sectarian approach.

JAMES: We have had difficulty in England with advocating a Labour government with the necessary reservations.

TROTSKY: In France in all our press, in our archives and propaganda, we regularly made all the necessary reservations. Your failure in England is due to lack of ability; also lack of flexibility, due to the long domination of bourgeois thought in England. I would say to the English workers, "You refuse to accept my point of view. Well, perhaps I did not explain well enough. Perhaps you are stupid. Anyway I have failed. But now, you believe in your party. Why allow Chamberlain to hold the power? Put your party in power. I will help you all I can. I know that they will not do what you think, but as you don't agree with me and we are small, I will help you to put them in." But it is very important to bring up these questions periodically. I would suggest that you write an article discussing these points and publish it in our press. [*James agreed that he would.*]

April 1939

On Marx's Essays from the Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts

[The three essays by Karl Marx to which this was an introduction in 1947 were "Alienated Labour", "Private Property and Communism" and "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic". James comments: "This is an important document in the development of what is known today as the Johnson-Forest theory. It is worthwhile noting that when we translated this now celebrated document by Marx it had not been translated into English before by anybody. We were studying Marxism and felt that it was necessary."]

The three essays here presented have been selected and translated from the economic-philosophical manuscripts written by Marx in 1844 and collected in the Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1, Abt. 3 Berlin, 1932.

We do not publish these translations as archives. Far from it. They are far more alive today than when they were written. We publish a selection in this modest form because we are determined to break through the vast conspiracy of silence which surrounds them.

Marx in his student years had mastered the Hegelian philosophy. Here we see the first fruits of his studies of political economy. It was not only Hegel whom Marx stood on his head. He at once put his finger on the philosophical weakness of the classical school of economists — their limited and superficial concept of private property.

The essay on alienated labour shows Marx making his philosophic concepts concrete, in the relation between wage labour and capital in the process of production. With an amazing certainty and confidence he drives home what is essentially new in his discoveries. What distinguishes him from Smith and Ricardo is that he understands private property whereas they do not. Only his own words must speak for him.

We have, indeed, obtained the concept of estranged labour (of estranged life) from political economy as the result of the movement of private property. But in analysing this concept, it is revealed that even if private property appears as the basis, as the cause of estranged labour, it is rather a consequence of it. In the same way, the gods are not originally the cause but the effect of human confusion in understanding. Later this relationship becomes interchanged.

There he broke once and for all with the classical economists. His problem, the Marxian problem, became the analysis of the labour process. As he says triumphantly, "For when man speaks of private property, he believes he has only to deal with a fact outside man. Where man speaks of labour, he has to deal directly with man. This new posing of the question already includes its resolution."

Twenty years later Marx was to begin *Capital* by saying that the pivot of the understanding of political economy was the fact that, like commodities in general, labour itself possessed a two-fold nature,

abstract labour and concrete labour. Here, in 1844, already, he had not only isolated labour from property. He was seeking the contradiction in labour itself. The worker was dominated by the objective results of his labour. It became the private property of someone other than the labourer. Why? Marx leaps generations ahead with his answer. It was because the very type of labour activity that the modern worker carried out was of such a kind that the appropriation of the result by others was inevitable. Smith and Ricardo took the activity for granted and dealt only with the results of the activity. Marx claimed that in the activity itself the result was already contained. The abstract labour of Capital is the labour for value production. The concrete labour is the production of use-value. Value could only take bodily form in use-value but value dominated. When use-value dominated we would have a new society. Many Marxists still see the domination of use-values in a mere multitude of use-values for consumption. They are unaware that they are merely repeating the mistake of Ricardo on a higher scale, substituting results for activity. The substitution of use-value for value must take place in labour itself. Where, under capitalism, the labourer was valued at his consumption, a new society demands that the use-value of labour itself become the dominant form in production — the full development of the labourer's natural and acquired powers. The labourer must become a fully-developed individual, freedom is an economic necessity and proletarian democracy an economic category. This is no longer a theoretical problem. From one end of the world to the other, today man faces one problem — increased productivity. The rulers of production are helpless before it. Modern man revolts against the very conditions of labour. Except by the forces of men released from capitalist production, there is no solution to the economic and social crisis. All the lamentations and moaning about Bolshevism being a new means of dominating the workers have no meaning for those who grasp the essence of Marx's social ideas of which his philosophy and economics are only a constituent part.

Lenin of all modern men saw this to its last and ultimate conclusion. He took just this and made it revolutionary policy for the masses. He could lead the October Revolution because he saw mobilisation of oppressed humanity as the only solution to the crisis. In *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power* (and *The Threatening Catastrophe*) he said openly to millions what Marx was writing in the study in 1844:

The most important thing is to inspire the oppressed and the toilers with confidence in their own strength, to show in practice that they can and must themselves undertake a *correct*, strictly orderly and organised distribution of bread, food, milk, clothing, dwellings, and so forth, *in the interests of the poor*. Without this, Russia *cannot* be saved from collapse and ruin; whereas an honest, courageous and universal move to hand over the administration to the proletarians and semi-proletarians will arouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the masses, will so multiply the forces of the people in combatting their miseries, that much that seemed impossible to our old, narrow, bureaucratic forces will become practicable for the forces of the millions and millions of the masses when they *begin to work for themselves*, and not under the whip, for the capitalist, the master, the official

This was not to come afterwards. This was the revolution itself. Lenin continued without a pause.

Only then shall we be able to see what untapped forces of resistance are latent in the people; only then will what Engels calls "latent socialism" be made apparent; only then shall we find that for every *ten thousand* open or concealed enemies of the power of the working class, who manifest themselves either by action or by passive resistance, a *million* new fighters will arise, who until then had been politically dormant, languishing in poverty and despair, having lost faith in themselves as human beings, in their right to live, in the possibility that they too might be served by the whole force of the modern centralised state and that *their* detachment of proletarian militia might be fully trusted and called upon to take part in the immediate, direct, day-to-day work of administration of the state.

The only slogan he could find to express it was, "Workers' control of Production" but what he meant by that was an uncoiling of creative forces imbedded in the senses of modern man and implanted there by the productive forces and the productive process. Lenin's concept of the party, his insistence on a rigid discipline, democratic centralism, more than ever necessary today, cannot be for a single moment separated from Marx's economic-philosophic concept of the destiny of the modern proletariat.

That is what Marx began with. His philosophy was a philosophy of the activity of man, of man as active in the labour process. The free individual was he whose labour by its very nature ensured his freedom. If he was not free in his labour he could not be free in any sense. Lenin grasped this not as theory but as practice. The Mensheviks in 1917 saw what he saw but trembled to say that the only force which could save the country was the "latent socialism", the suppressed capacities of the masses. Today the Stalinists have carried the Menshevik politics to a stage further. That they are tools of the Kremlin and therefore oppose the proletarian revolution is true, but, as with so much that is true, is only a form of appearance. In essence, terrified at the crisis around them and incapable of placing the solution of all economic and political problems upon the powers of the workers, they are thereby driven to cling to the Kremlin with its established state and its established army and its established apparatus of power. That it is the creative power of millions of men which alone can solve the problems of modern society is not only a philosophical concept. It is the very ruin of society which makes it a revolutionary reality.

The proletariat does not make the revolution and then wait for some "plan" to create a new type of economy. To think in those terms is to make a divorce between economics and politics, the repudiation of which was the midwife of Marxism. The difference between the proletarian revolution and all others is that the revolution itself releases the new economic forces, the creative power of the people, the greatest productive force history has known. The beginning, middle and end of Marx's scientific analysis of capitalist economy is the conflict between dead capital and living labour. On this hangs the falling rate of profit, the industrial reserve army and the revolution. Without this, one falls

into the trap of market economics, underconsumptionism and ultimately, the deepest confusion as to the role of the party. The Mensheviks trembled in 1917 because, among other reasons, they could see neither the economic nor the military forces which could develop and protect Russia after the socialist revolution. Lenin did not tremble because he saw that the socialist revolution in ruined Russia was the creator of forces undreamt of by the bourgeoisie. Thus the most profound philosophical and abstract theories of Marx became the most practical concrete revolutionary policy.

Even the bourgeoisie can babble about the creative powers of atomic energy. Marxism is concerned first and foremost with the creative powers of the masses. That is not Marxian politics and sociology and philosophy. It is Marxian economics. The degeneration of the Russian revolution has obscured this truth. The revolutionary regeneration of the world proletariat will make it the foundation of every aspect of modern life and thought. Without it there is no escape from barbarism.

How deeply ingrained was this conception in Marx's thought is proved by that masterpiece of social philosophy, the essay on "Private Property and Communism".

For Marx, private property was the material expression of that wealth which alienated men from human living. Its movement is production and consumption. Religion, family, state, law, morals, science, art, follow the "movement" of production and consumption. In a society where private property is transcended, religion, family, state, law, morals, dissolve in the corporate life of the community.

Such fundamental questions Marx never separated from his analysis of capitalist production. Take the question of the family and the relations between the sexes. In his chapter on "Machinery and Modern Industry" (*Capital*, Volume I, page 536), he gives, almost in passing, a superb example of his method.

However terrible and disgusting the dissolution, under the capitalist system, of the old family ties may appear, nevertheless, modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economical foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together, form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalist form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery.

A few pages before, he drew the dialectical opposition between education under capitalism and as it would be in the new society.

Though the Factory Act, that first and meagre concession wrung from

capital, is limited to combining elementary education with work in the factory, there can be no doubt that when the working class comes to power, as inevitably it must, technical instruction, both theoretical and practical, will take its proper place in the working-class schools. (*Capital*, Volume I, page 534)

Family, education, relations between the sexes, religion, all would lose their destructive alienated quality in a new mode of production in which the universality of the individual would be the starting point and source of all progress, beginning with economic progress.

The passage in which Marx poses and develops the idea that the cultivation of the five senses is the work of the whole history of the world to date, blows up from below the frenzied fantasies of those who, from the psychoanalysts to the Existentialists, cannot understand that the problem of the modern personality is the problem of modern capitalist production. Man's capacity for seeing, touching, hearing, talking, feeling, exist in the multitude of objects of productive wealth and the achievements of science which surround him. The masses of men must appropriate these or perish.

The personality of the modern worker is assailed upon all sides from morning till night (and even in his dreams) by such stimuli that his needs as a modern human being make him and his class the most highly civilised social force humanity has ever known. But the greater the needs of social living, inherent in the socialised nature of modern production, the greater the need for individual self-expression, the more it becomes necessary for the masters of society, themselves slaves of capital, to repress this social expression which is no more and no less than complete democracy. Production which should be man's most natural expression of his powers, becomes one long murderous class conflict in which each protagonist can rest not for a single minute. Political government assumes totalitarian forms and government by executive decree masquerades as democracy. The officer worker, with black coat and white collar, is transformed into a mere cog in a machine. If the worker is deprived of all the intellectual potentialities of the labour process to the extent that science is incorporated in it as an independent power, the intellectual absorbs knowledge and ideas but is as impotent in the intellectual process as is the worker in the labour process. The intellectual is cut off from the world of physical production and the social organisation of labour. The divorce between physical and mental labour is complete. The individual, worker or intellectual, is no more than the sport of vast forces over which he has no control. The senses of each are stimulated without possibility of realisation. The resentments, the passions of frustrated social existence take revenge in the wildest of individual aberrations. Before these forces psychoanalysis is powerless, and voting every few years becomes a ghastly mockery. Facing the disintegration of society, capital mobilises all available forces for the suppression of what is its own creation — the need for social expression that the modern productive forces instils into every living human being. The explosion of this suppression is the motive force of revolution. This is Marxism. These essays will, we

hope, remind us of what Marx stood for.

Vulgar Communism as the *mere* transcendence of private property is denounced by Marx. He had in mind the communism of Weitling but the analysis is permanently valid. This communism is not a new form of "appropriation". The level of productivity is so low that in grasping the wealth of society such as it is, the workers do not appropriate a higher stage of culture. In these circumstances, private property is transcended only in form. This kind of communism "is only a form of appearance of the destruction of private property". In a passage which reads as if it is a contribution to the contemporary debate instead of having been written over a hundred years ago, Marx says that this type of communism, whatever its form, "is already recognised" as man once more finding his true place in the social order. But to the degree that it has not yet grasped "the positive essence" of private property in the shape of "human needs" it is still "a prisoner" of property and "infected" by it. The analysis of alienated labour which is the precursor of *Capital* merely expresses in economic categories the conception of private property and human relations treated in this essay. Realistic observers of the relations between the sexes today, those who stubbornly refuse to be hypnotised by phrases as they probe into the future of the relations between whites and Negroes in the United States, will see in Marx's conception of human needs the only basis for emancipation and equality.

All this may seem to the wilfully blind as mere theorising. They are unable to see what is under their eyes: that as modern society develops, religion, education, the state family, morals, lose their separate identity and become fused with the necessity for the mastery of society. This is the totalitarian state. Marx, a master of dialectical logic, saw this ultimate development from the very beginning and posed the abolition of these separate forms of alienation in the complete flowering of all the capabilities of the individual, in all forms of social endeavour. The enemy of this was private property. Later he called it capital. But the economic analysis from start to finish is the material supplement of the philosophical concept. The two are in inextricable unity. The only proof he knew was the objective development of society. Despite the modifications that he introduced later in the working-out of the theory, the original structure, even as a bare outline, stands out today as the sole tenable explanation and solution to the collapsing barbarism of modern civilisation.

The psychological appeal of totalitarianism, of Fascism in particular, is to transcend all social and individual frustration in the nation, the state, the leader. It cannot be done. In one of these essays Marx says: "We should especially avoid re-establishing 'society' as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual is the social essence." A quarter of a century later in *Capital* he writes the chapter on "Machinery and Modern Industry":

Modern Industry indeed compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-power of today, crippled by lifelong repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man,

by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers.

It is a terrible emasculation, in fact a denial of Marx to believe that there was some science called economics and upon this, for decoration, Marx grafted humanistic sentiments. Every fundamental feature of his economic analysis is based upon the worker in the labour process and holds no perspective of solution except the emancipation of the labourer. It is a strange reflection of our times that this conception, that the solution of the economic contradictions of capitalism is the human solution, is opposed nowhere so bitterly as in the movement itself. Where it is accepted, it is accepted as Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin accepted the necessity for the October insurrection — in some distant future.

The last essay, Marx's settling of accounts with the Hegelian dialectic, is very difficult. Our translator, Ria Stone, hopes on a future occasion to give the notes and other material to the complete essays, which would guide the average reader who seriously tries to master this essay. In fact it is because so much of this work and its associated aspects are crying to be done that we publish this. Our resources are limited, we have tried in vain to awaken particular interests. We hope, we are confident, that somewhere there is a response waiting for us.

But the critique can be read and understood as it is. If the two early essays are grasped, then a working knowledge of philosophy will suffice. What Marx is saying over and over again is that Hegel saw the alienation. He saw its root in the mode of labour. What baffled him was that he could not see in the labour process itself the positive, creative elements which would overcome the alienation. Few moments in the history of thought are more dramatic than that related by Marcuse (*Reason and Revolution*) when the young Hegel, working out his ideas, wrote down the conditions of the workers in capitalist production, and seeing no way out for them broke off the manuscript which forever after remained unfinished.

Yet alienation had to be overcome or the outlook for man was hopeless. Hegel solved it by making thinking man, the philosopher, overcome it in thought. Instead of getting rid of religion, the state, family, etc., he smuggled them all in again under the guise of philosophy. But to grasp the fact of alienation and the need for reintegration was Hegel's great discovery and his method was the dialectic method. Man was striving for full self-consciousness and for Marx full self-consciousness was not the insight of a few philosophers, but the active participation of all men in social life, beginning with production, and expressing and developing their natural and acquired powers. That is the essence of the "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic". It is to be noted that one of the three basic books which Lenin studied when preparing *State and Revolution* was Hegel's *Phenomenology* in which the critical attitude of Hegel, the driving necessity to negate the existing order and the existing consciousness by a new order and a new

consciousness, receives its most vigorous expression. Later Hegel, by his inability to transcend, to negate the existing order by an actual social force, would leave the road open for the re-introduction not only of religion but of uncritical idealism and positivism which are running wild in modern philosophical thought. But he who grapples with these first two essays and then seriously applies himself to Marx's Critique of the Dialectic, will get an insight not only into Marxism, but into all the various currents of social and political as well as literary and philosophical nostrums that bounce their heads in vain against the problems of contemporary society.

We who introduce these writings owe to them a special debt. It is our belief that precisely because of the unbearably acute nature of the modern crisis, theory and practice are linked in a way that was not thought possible in less urgent times. The most profound of the philosophical concepts of Marx of 1844, abstract clarification for the initiator of a theory, now become the imperative needs of hundreds of millions of people. No other generation could understand this writing as we can. For us practical politics today consist in using the phenomena of contemporary society as a means of illustrating these truths, urging the actions that are demanded for their realisation. For us, as dialecticians, the social requirements of the age exist in the needs and aspirations of the masses. That is Marx's historical contribution to the dialectical method, to have demonstrated the affirmations of a new society in the negations imposed upon the proletariat by the old. To believe that these affirmations exist only in the heads of a few is merely to repeat Hegel over again, substituting for Hegel's few philosophers, the few conscious revolutionaries. Every political line that we have written has been fertilised by the concepts contained in these translations and the others we are unable to reprint. We have been stimulated to find that those of our colleagues who work in factories and who share our ideas have found that the great masses of the American workers feel and think in a way that invest these century-old essays with a meaning and significance that they could never have had, however assiduously they were merely read and merely studied. Backward in politics, the American workers constantly manifest a range of social aspiration and depths of creative power which in the not very distant future will shake the world. If these essays have helped us to understand Marxism and them, they too have helped us to understand these essays and Marxism. The political tendency which we represent has therefore a great pride and satisfaction in making available for the first time to American readers these precious antecedents of revolutionary Marxism. We are convinced that nowhere would they have been more warmly welcomed than by Trotsky.

New Society: New People

[This is a chapter from Facing Reality, first published in Detroit in 1958. Taking the focal point of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, it poses "the fundamental political question of the day: The government of workers' councils, which sprang so fully and completely from the revolutionary crisis of Hungary, was it only a historical accident, peculiar to totalitarianism, or is it the road to the future for all society?" James contends that the new society already exists and that we have to recognise and record the facts of its existence.]

Yet it is in ageing, creaking, conservative Britain that there flourishes as solid, as cohesive and as powerful a national concentration of the new society as exists anywhere on the face of the globe. It is composed of millions of men, with ideals and loyalties of their own. Here is one of the rare descriptions of them, as profound and brilliant a description of British life as has appeared for years. From it newspaper editors, book publishers and directors of radio stations would recoil as if stung (as indeed they would be). But millions of workers would recognise it at once, and it is the kind of information that the masses of people everywhere need and never get. It is an account of shop stewards, not only as a social force, but as human beings.

It would be impossible concretely and in detail to show, in the space of a few pages, how the growth in power of the shop committees in turn enabled the most advanced socialist to begin to see the growing up of a new way of life and organisation (I think that is what *State Capitalism and World Revolution* means by human relations). But one concrete example is in the very centre of the clash of classes, at the negotiating committees between the shop stewards and the managements. It can be a shattering and highly formative experience, to observe, week in and week out, that there are two different ways of life on either side of that table, and that the overwhelming preponderance of all the classic human virtues is on the side of the shop stewards. In an average works committee meeting, the managing director is in the chair at the head of the table. On one side of the table will be the convenor of the shop stewards, and five or six other stewards elected to represent the shop stewards' committee and through them every worker in the plant. On the other side will be, say, the works manager, production manager, a chief of the planning department and deputy of the works manager, the head of the drawing office, and the sales manager. An amazing dialectical revolution takes place.

The shop stewards, workers to a man, all of them, fitters, turners, production-line workers, are no longer employees; they are no longer under the orders of the managers or even the managing director; they are the equals of the managing director. But the managerial side of the negotiations, they the managers, are the employees. The shop stewards are free and equal men, deriving their authority from the workers they represent. The managers are mere employers hired and fired by the managing director. The policy of the manager's side is set by the free discussion and free vote by the shop stewards' committee. It is usual that there is, as there is always, a majority and a minority, in the shop stewards' debates; always a spokesman

of the minority is included in the negotiations to see that the majority, in negotiating with management, is not unfair to the minority. No minority in a shop stewards' committee ever feels oppressed, there is free discussion, and democratic decision. The management knows there are divisions always on the workers' side, and always try to use that knowledge. But never, in all the negotiations with employers at which I have assisted, or which I ever heard of, has the workers' side ever shown the employers anything but a completely united front.

These are loyalties of the new age. These are indeed the classic human virtues.

On the employers' side, there is the unanimity of bankruptcy, because with them they have a boss who alone ultimately tells them what to do. If the advice of a works manager and his policy over weeks or months is accepted by the managing director, the boss, and it turns out wrong, he is sacked. Every individual manager is always under this strain. But the shop steward negotiators are free men, who are never penalised in this way. There are no bosses, no sackings in the shop stewards' committee. The average shop steward glories in the battle in the negotiations, he gives of his best always; there is no boss breathing down his neck. It is a matter of common knowledge that the shop stewards in negotiations are ruthless, never to be satisfied, and can always drive wedges into the artificial monolithism of the management. If a works manager is a reasonable man, you praise him to the director, and make him suspect. If he is a harsh disciplinarian, you accuse him of provoking strikes. All these things are difficult to detail; but the total result is that the shop stewards' method of organisation, with everything that it involves, proves itself in every way superior to the way of the management's. The shop steward who thinks, who is a revolutionary, values highly the system which has made him what he is.

These are new men, new types of human beings. It is in them that are to be found all the traditional virtues of the English nation, not in decay as they are in official society, but in full flower because these men have perspective. Note particularly that they glory in the struggle. They are not demoralised or defeated or despairing persons. Wages is the least of their problems. They are animated by broad far-reaching social purposes. They are leaders but they are rooted deep among those they lead. As is inevitable, they have in them many of the national prejudices, but this is due to the grip on education and mass publication of the decaying official society. They are getting rid of these hangovers and replacing them by virtues and qualities their ancestors never knew. Careful study of the national communities of advanced Western civilisation will show that despite wide variations, all are based on the same fundamental relations of the classes that exist in England today.

In the working classes of the world, in production relations and personal relations, there are being posed, and foundations laid, for solution of gigantic problems which have baffled the world for centuries. We can only touch briefly on one of them — the place of women in society.

Capitalist society has by slow and grudging degrees given equality to women. But it is the same abstract type of equality that an individual welder or maintenance man has with another individual who employs

10,000 men. Both are able to cast a vote and are therefore equal. Just as parliamentary democracy ignores, and in fact increases, the real inequality of different classes of men in capitalist society, so women found that equality before the law rid them of certain oppressive and offensive feudal limitations, only to bring before them more starkly the handicaps of child-bearing and child-rearing in a competitive society, reinforced by the accumulated prejudices of centuries of class society. It is in the United States, where women are abstractly most free, that there is taking place a colossal struggle for the establishment of truly human relations between men and women. Among the professional classes, as part of the general reactionary trend, most women at marriage give up the unequal contest and compromise with their most dearly-cherished aspirations for equality. The result is the mounting divorce statistics and, where divorce does not take place, an antagonism in sex and personal relations. For years this aspect of American society was regarded with astonishment and often with distaste, not only by men, but by women, in other countries. But the modern economy draws into co-operative labour or related activities all sections of the population, including women. Official society itself can no longer defend the shams and vulgarity and cruelty of bourgeois morality. The result is that women everywhere are beginning to recognise that the hitherto notorious sex war in American life is in reality one of the advanced positions of the new society seeking to make official abstractions into human reality.

But as usual, though the middle classes often pose in advance the fundamental questions of the day, they cannot solve them. The United States more than any other country produces a number of exceptional women, career women, usually viragos who by use of their intellectual and other gifts transform themselves as far as is humanly possible into feminine counterparts of men and believe that thereby they have solved the "woman question". Others have only to go and do likewise. This is no more than rationalist individualism in skirts.

The real battle for new relations between the sexes is being fought above all in the American working class. During the war millions of women went into industry and many have remained there. They have no money for the elaborate home organisation of the successful career woman. They retain the desire themselves to make a home and rear a family. But they have no intention of once more becoming an adjunct to the male wage-earner so that he can adequately fulfil the needs of capitalist production. In the age-long struggles of human beings to remould their world nearer to their heart's desire, rarely have such heroic efforts, such courage, such resource, such ingenuity been shown as in the efforts of American working women to live a complete life, a life corresponding to the technical achievements and social relations of their highly developed society. As long as official society lasts, they cannot win a complete victory, but positions have been gained and if some have been lost, many have been held. This, one of the greatest social struggles of our time, goes unrecorded! What have Congress or the *New York Times* or Alastair Cooke to do with all this?

The working class in every country lives its own life, makes its own experiences, seeking always to create forms and realise values which may originate directly from its organic opposition to official society, but are shaped by its experiences in co-operative labour. Nowhere is this more marked than in the United States where the raucous rowdiness of Republicans and Democrats obscures and drowns out the mass search for a way of life; not a new way but simply a way, the famous "American Way" being strictly an export commodity. Quite often, the reaction is for the time being merely negative, but none the less indicative of the future. In the American plant the shop steward, or shop committeeman, although elected, is a functionary of the union, whose main business is to see that the company's contract is carried out. Millions of American workers will not accept any position of authority in the plant, neither as committeeman nor foreman, nor lead girl. In the United States, so jealously democratic and egalitarian in its social practices, these workers shun like the plague any position which, as they have seen so often, will transform them into bureaucratic tools of the capitalist mechanism. They sometimes go farther and deliberately elect or propel to these unhealthy positions persons whom they recognise as being naturally inclined to them. For militant Negro workers this poses a specially difficult problem. As workers they share the revulsion of their fellows to being drawn out of the rank-and-file shop-floor organisations. As Negroes they are dedicated to seeing that Negroes are represented in every layer of American society, particularly in the plant. To accept or not to accept. Often the decision is difficult. Such is but one example of the social dramas, individualism and collectivism fused, that are being posed and worked out by trial and error in that pulsing mass of working-class humanity that seeks no escape from the real conditions of life in existentialism (France) or psychoanalysis (the United States) or playing with words and meanings (Great Britain).

There is no mystery about what is taking place in our society. Our age is the most barbarous, the most cruel, the most sadistic, the most callous history has ever known precisely because of the civilisation, culture, and high aspirations of the great masses of the people. Nothing but the most unlicensed, unrestrained, carefully cultivated brutality can keep them down. These are not slaves of imperial Rome or peasants in ancient Assyria. A modern working man, whether he is in the plant or mine with his co-workers, lives by the ideas of universal secondary education, religious toleration, care of children and of the aged, freedom of speech and assembly, mastery of technical processes and self-government in industry, world peace — elevated conceptions which would stun into awed silence the most gifted minds of Western civilisation from Plato and Aristotle to Kant and Hegel. There is no more dramatic moment in the history of philosophy than that in which the young Hegel, after describing the disorder and torment inflicted on society by capitalist production, came face to face with the fact that only the proletariat could resolve it. Leaving the page forever unfinished, he turned to idealism. Marx completed it for him. At the

other end of the scale it was the ineffable Joseph Stalin who decreed that the more socialism was established in Russia, the fiercer would become the class struggle. Thereby in his own cabalistic manner, he declared the need either for an oppression which would grow along with the economic development — or the government of workers' councils. Official society seeks to excuse itself for the horrors and abominations perpetrated by Hitler and Stalin. The mud and blood are on their own hands and faces. The triumph of Western civilisation are common to all its members and common to all of them are its disasters and its decline. There is not a single national concentration of power and privilege in official society which would not mutilate and torture its own population in the Hitler-Stalin manner if it needed to, and could. Repeatedly we see in the Press that a hydrogen bomb would kill so many million people and render uninhabitable for some period undefined so many hundred square miles. This in defence of "our liberties" and "our high standard of living". It is a criminal self-deception to presume that any home population is safe from these defenders of the law, order, family, morals, religion, culture and propriety of official society against the new.

The new nations

The world proletariat, with those of Russia and the United States at the head, constitutes a minority even in the advanced countries. In these countries its concentration and cohesion are sufficient to make it the guiding force and motive power of the new society. But the vast majority of the world's population lives in the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The abiding impudence of imperialism continues to see them as objects of profit and of use; at the present time as prospective allies of one or the other power bloc. The truth is that vast millions of these people are new human beings, ready for the new society in that they have uncompromisingly, often violently, rejected the status of national humiliation and social misery in which they were kept by official society.

The Russian revolution shattered the structure of official Europe. The Chinese revolution shattered the structure of official Asia. The revolution in Ghana has forever destroyed the structure which official society had imposed upon tropical Africa. This should be a truism, yet it is impossible to approach any sphere of even contemporary history without using bulldozers and gas masks to clear the barriers and survive the fumes with which it is surrounded by the propaganda corps of official society. Ireland won, it was not given its freedom. Gandhi introduced a new dimension into the technique of mass struggle for national independence and perhaps for more. His political genius, one of the greatest of our times, is obscured by the inflation of Lord Mountbatten. The latest, and perhaps the most dangerous, addition to official mythology is that the new state of Ghana was given its independence by the British government as the conclusion to a period of careful training and preparation — dangerous because large areas in Africa are still fighting for their freedom.

The truth, which is undergoing a systematic obliteration, is quite different. Nkrumah reached the Gold Coast in November 1947, uncertain whether he would be allowed to land or not. In one of the most remarkable episodes in revolutionary history he singlehandedly outlined a programme, based on the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Gandhi, for expelling British Imperialism from the Gold Coast. Under his guidance, in little over two years, the people of the Gold Coast brought the economy and social life of the Gold Coast to a standstill in a general strike over the whole country whose slogan was: Self-Government Now. The British government jailed the leaders and sought to crush the movement. But when an election showed that the revolutionary spirit of the population was determined and could only be suppressed by wholesale massacre, it decided that such a massacre would, among other dangers and possibilities, certainly drive India out of the Commonwealth. It therefore retreated, putting the best possible face on the matter, and giving as gracefully as it could what it had already lost.

We rectify this falsification, not to discredit British imperialism — that it does today more efficiently than it does anything else. We wish to draw attention to one of the great social forces of the day, the spirit of renaissance which now animates the vast millions everywhere in the globe, and the creative handling of modern political techniques by their leaders. The creation of the republic of India, the brushing aside of Nizams, Maharajas, Gaekwars and Nawabs (feudal relics maintained solely by British power), the organisation of the provincial regions, the setting up of parliament, the consolidation of the Congress Party and the universal suffrage in a vast population largely illiterate, and all with a minimum of violence and disturbance, this is one of the greatest political achievements of our own or any other age. Similarly it is organisation of the Convention People's Party of Ghana which is the outstanding political achievement so far carried out in tropical Africa since the beginning of its direct subordination to European imperialism. That it is not an accident is proved by the fact that it is paralleled by the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (Democratic Movement of Africans), a party organised by Africans in the French colonies. If less dynamic than the Convention People's Party, it exceeds it in scope, being the leading party in several colonies, comprising many millions of French West Africans spread over many tens of thousands of square miles. Compared to these purely African creations, French imperialism masquerading as Pygmalion, determined to make Frenchmen out of Africans, and the British Colonial Office, with its perpetual checkers game of shifting black and white in executive councils, would be comic spectacles if they did not enforce their foolishness with machine guns and planes. Both in the spirit of their populations and the manner in which they utilise for new purposes and in new ways the older political forms now outmoded in the West, the undeveloped countries are part of the new society, not of the old. In a few years there will not be a colony left in the world except those areas which Russia and the United States are colonising in their different ways.

We cannot here go into any details of the expulsion of imperialism from China. It is customary to say that the Chiang Kai-shek régime fell apart from its own rottenness, and the Chinese Communists had only to take over. This is true but only in the last stages.

In the years 1929-1939 Chiang Kai-shek exhausted the resources of his régime in the greatest effort it ever made — the effort to crush the Chinese Communists. Cut off from contact with Moscow, Mao Tse-tung and his fellow revolutionists built a party and an army in strict relation to their objective environment and the need of self-preservation. Their resistance to the attempt of Chiang Kai-shek to exterminate them is one of the great epics of revolutionary struggle. They were sustained by peasant support of the most heroic bravery and endurance. The Long March of 6,000 miles from the south to the north of China takes its place among the greatest actions in history and is unsurpassed in the military history of the twentieth century.

Stalinism had little to do with this. It is now common knowledge that Stalin opposed the seizure of power by the Chinese Communists. If China has gone the way of Stalinist totalitarianism, it is because faced with the implacable hostility of United States imperialism, and even more poverty-stricken than the Russia of the October Revolution, it has had no choice but to follow the pattern of its Russian ally. But China will not need forty years to begin the process of detotalitarianisation. The dictum of Stalin holds good. The more "socialism", the fiercer the class struggle. The shocks which the Russian empire is experiencing already, the still more violent upheavals which await it, will be felt no more powerfully than in China. It is true to say that the genuine mass revolution, the twentieth-century uprising of the people, has not yet taken place in China and history has decreed that when it does take place, it will take place against the totalitarian régime.

The people of China made their first modern attempt at self-realisation in 1925-7. Stalinism ruined it. They supported the party and army of Mao Tse-tung. But they themselves have not yet come independently upon the stage as the Russian people did in 1905 and then in 1917. They will. The whole history of the twentieth century shows that they will. The idea that a party and a bureaucracy can shape the destinies of a people of 600 millions and a great historical past, by means of plans and secret police, breed them, arrange their lives and build factories as Texas ranchers breed cattle or Egyptian Pharaohs breed slaves and built pyramids, that is a characteristic stupidity of the twentieth-century official mind. All its own past history teaches it to see the hundreds of millions of Chinese people as pure masses, the object of politics, disciplined by some superior force, themselves, the Kuomintang and now the Chinese Communists. They bewail the anachronistic illusions of Chiang Kai-shek. Their own are infinitely greater, and when twentieth-century humanity comes out into the streets of China and raises its voice, many eardrums hitherto impenetrable may at last be pierced.

But despite their numbers, their revolutionary spirit and their demonstrated political capacity, the hopes and prospects of these newly

independent nations are blighted, not by the power but by the weaknesses of the advanced nations. From the earliest days new nations have depended upon the older, more settled communities for economic aid and political and philosophical ideas. Despite all the trumpeting in the Press, the plain fact is that capitalism today neither in Russia nor the United States can produce sufficient surplus capital to assist the underdeveloped nations in building modern economies. Only a socialist economy without the overhead burdens and incompetence of official society, and the immense increase in the productivity of labour which it will rapidly develop, can produce the surplus wealth necessary for the development of world economy as a whole. Still worse, the political and ethical practices and ideas of both the communist world and the free world, if taken over by these new nations, would be equivalent to the injection of syphilis into a young man who has reached his maturity, in order to prepare him to assume all his responsibilities. The new nations know this and, even where they pay lip service to free institutions and parliamentary democracy, are actually living through a period of waiting to see which of the two rival blocs will emerge triumphant. They believe that their ultimate fate is bound up with the fate of the world.

This is true, but not in the commonly accepted sense. There is an America which is not Dulles, the Pentagon, and the Southern Negro-haters; a Russia which is not Khrushchev (or whoever may be ruling when this is read) and the Secret Police. If we have not written about, for example, Germany, it is because we here aim to indicate only broad lines of development with chosen concrete instances. The German proletariat is one of the greatest social forces in the world, with a theoretical and practical tradition behind it, in ideas, politics and labour second to none in the history of Western civilisation. That it was not allowed itself to settle accounts with Hitlerism is one of the twin crimes of Russia and the United States. Similarly in Japan, but for the American military occupation wearing the ceremonial robes of the emasculated emperor, the Japanese proletariat would have made Japan into a modern community. It is here, and not in the decadent official society of Europe and the United States or totalitarian tyranny in China, that the new nations have to educate themselves. It is on this new basis that they will have to develop their perspectives. The imperialist mentality of official society sees them always as poor relations, charitable receptacles for economic aid, for technical assistance, for ideas. It is false, false as every other idea by which official society lives and which it spreads in the world. The underdeveloped countries need to be helped, but they have their own powerful contributions to make to the new society. Already they have assisted it by the great blows they have given to official society. Today by their persistent neutralism they impede, if they cannot prevent, the drive to global suicide.

But there is more. Many of these countries have ancient cultures of their own, with social values, formerly despised, which now often show surprising affinity with the latest discoveries of modern science and the

practical creativeness of the advanced proletariat. Further, their lack of economic development is not wholly negative. It enables them to begin, without being burdened by the centuries of accumulated rubbish in advanced countries, most of which is fit only for demolition squads but is preserved by privilege and sheer inertia. On this virgin terrain beginnings of world-historical significance can be made in economic, social and ideological life. But most of all, they have the revolutionary spirit of their peoples and the political genius which always accompanies it. They cannot solve their problems except in a global context. But to the extent that they envisage their own future as part of a new world-order, every step that they take to solve their own needs can at the same time serve as inspiration and example to the advanced proletarians hacking their way through the jungle of official society. Such a mutual relation between advanced and underdeveloped countries is beyond the conceited ossification of official mentality. Only its removal will allow the dammed-down currents to flow, and to flow both ways.

What is the relation of the middle classes to the people of the new society? Some of them whose clerical employment approximates to that of the proletariat see themselves as essentially proletarians and follow the proletarian road. All are to one degree or another shaped in character and outlook by the co-operative character of modern life. What they lack is what they think they more than all others possess. It is information of the new world a-building which the middle classes and the peoples of the underdeveloped countries lack. It is understandable in the case of the people in distant Asia and Africa. But in countries like the United States, Britain and France, the middle classes are as ignorant of the social structure, aims and purposes of the industrial proletariat as they are of the inhabitants of the moon. Every day their ancestral prejudices and links to the bourgeois order receive loosening shock after loosening shock. They have to accommodate themselves to the rejection of their claim to inherent superiority by colonial peoples, to the incompetence and dishonesty of their political leaders and to the apparently unending demands of the proletariat. Even in the United States, where their financial position for the time being is still easy, the old gods of the national mythology are tumbling down and there is nothing to take their place. Some of the publicists whose special function is to keep the middle classes away from the proletariat like to paint horrible pictures of socialism as a prison for the educated on the stalinist model. They do not get very far with that. Time and again in recent history the middle classes have shown that they are ready to follow any powerful lead which will take them out of the morass of official society. Dominated by rationalist ideas, the middle classes, even when sympathetic to labour, judge the proletariat by the fanfaronades and sycophancy of its official leaders. In generations to come, men will marvel at the almost pathological inability of educated society in the middle of the twentieth century to recognise the new society which surrounded it on all sides. Yet so universal a phenomenon must have some deep connection with the

essential character of the two societies.

In previous periods of transition, the new society always announced itself in innumerable ways, not least in the literature and art of the day. The greatest names in Western art and literature, Dante, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Goethe, Herman Melville, Tolstoy, Giotto, Michelangelo and Rembrandt, to name only a few, were all men of the transition from one age to another, and we may be sure that the people of their day understood them. But whereas for a century the finest minds in the arts have devoted themselves to destroying the intellectual and moral foundations of bourgeois society, they have been incapable of putting into the concentrated, illuminating and exhilarating forms of art either the general contours or the individual personalities of the new society. Even in the hectic period of the 1930s, writers and artists either portrayed the wasteland of official society or explored new realms of technique. You will search in vain the writings of even pro-Communist writers like Koestler and Malraux for any glimmer of understanding that socialism, or communism in the sense in which Marx used the word, was first of all a society of a new mode of labour, of new social relations of production, of workers' councils in every branch of the national activity. For all of them the new society was the society of the Party and the Plan.

Today the cry rises for writers to be "committed", which is only another way of saying that they must attach themselves to one of the great bureaucratic social and political machines: these cannot bear even to contemplate any activity anywhere which does not subscribe to their plans and formulae. As if a man like Dostoevsky, politically a reactionary of the most extreme kind, was not committed, as few have been committed, to the task of showing men what they were and how they lived, so that in the end they understood themselves better than before.

If the middle classes are not helped by modern art to understand the new society, if the Hungarian revolution had to create without the stimulus and explosive clarification of art, it is because of the very unprecedented character of the new society. All previous social transitions were from one class society to another. The present transition is from class society to a society without classes. And that is no simple matter. Marx was not throwing in a phrase when he said that then the real history of humanity would begin.

The idea of a classless society is a drug that official society takes whenever it is feeling particularly low. In the United States it uses the concept as a stimulus — they are supposed to have it. In older parts of the world it is a tranquilliser — the thing is impossible — Utopia. In the Communist countries it is periodically injected into the population to deaden the pain and to summon up more energy for the Plan. Yet it is precisely here that there is a bridge which the artistic life of official society cannot cross and wastes itself in frustration and despair. Capitalist society has carried to a dead end the traditional division between art, culture, learning, on the one hand, and the mass of the people on the other. This has previously characterised all societies. Yet

in previous centuries the Greek dramatists, the Spanish dramatists, the Elizabethan dramatists, the builders of cathedrals, and the painters and sculptors who decorated them, were still close enough to the people to include them in all that they did. But today the artists are so removed from the people that their talents can express themselves only in pure negativity.

But the proletariat also cannot create an art in its own image. A society based on workers' councils in every branch of the national activity is not a proletarian society. It is an entirely new dimension in human living, and its art also will assume new dimensions. The great gap between the actualities of life and the human need for order and completeness which could only be satisfied in the abstractions of philosophy, art and religion will disappear. It will disappear because for the first time men, all men, will understand that their future will be shaped by themselves, is in their own hands. Man will become the undisputed centre of his universe. Great art always has been and will always be the work of individuals. But they shape their work in accordance with new frames of reference, which their work in turn helps to define. The new frames of reference are, so far, beyond the comprehension of men trained in the bourgeois-rationalist tradition. The proletariat trains, and can train, no one in its own social traditions, traditions which are not even established except as they are passed from generation to generation for strictly practical purposes. Even the greatest artists of our century, Chaplin, D.W. Griffith and the early Eisenstein, men who worked for the populace and were recognised and welcomed by it, were confined to ridicule of official society and the reaffirmation of old values. But the film, jazz and comic-strip, where the common people welcomed what seemed to be arts of their own, were rapidly corrupted by official society as it corrupts everything it touches.

In official society the popular arts, television in particular, are already exhausted. Ed Murrow has declared his weariness of its limitations. No one has denounced it with more withering ferocity than Milton Berle. Thus the new, as well as the old organisations of official society, for example, television and monarchy, begin to fall apart, not only from the pressure without but from the revolt of royalty itself, uncrowned as well as crowned.

So it is that at this stage of our society art is either the contemporary abortions which rasp the nerves and stimulate without satisfying; or it is a retreat to the accepted classics which are only half-understood because they are being used as a bomb shelter, whereas they were originally explosives. There is no help for it. We have to do without and are so much the poorer, incomplete human beings, less fit for life, either social or individual. It is not merely the reorganisation of production and political relations which will give their stamp to the new society and complete the individualities of new people. The democracy of Ancient Greece made the greatest step forward that has ever been made in literature when it invented the tragic drama. The reorganisation now of society on classless lines by the proletariat will release immense

energies in an uninhibited environment. It is a miserable, cringing mentality, confined to the "higher standard of living for our people", striving to hold on to what it has and to keep people where they are, which does not understand that the only way out is to give people new visions of themselves, so that they will find new ways to express them and to create new ties, new bonds and new understanding between those who are now so divided.

1958

On Federation

[The first of these pieces was a lecture delivered in June 1958 at Queen's College, Demerara, in then British Guiana. It was issued as a pamphlet the following year with a foreword by Burnham, leader of the People's National Congress, who said of James: "A special invitee to the opening of the first Federal Parliament in Trinidad last April, he took the opportunity of visiting British Guiana, and his public lectures on 'Federation', 'Literature and the Common Man', 'Political Institutions in the advanced and underdeveloped countries and the relations between them' were a source of controversy and education for many Guianese. Many of the latter for the first time recognised the possibilities and scope of our national movement and its intimate relation to that in the Caribbean in particular and the colonial world in general."]

The remaining pieces are edited from a pamphlet published in Trinidad in 1961 under the title "Federation — 'We failed miserably' — How and why", including: a Message to the People of Jamaica and a Foreword; a letter James wrote in 1960 to Jamaica's then premier, Norman Manley, foreseeing the break-up of the Federation; and the text of a lecture delivered to the Caribbean Society in Kingston, Jamaica, in November 1959.

Today James says: "I continue to believe that the West Indies can only make progress by federation, and not merely a federation in the political sense in the joining together of governments but a social change in which these diminutive Caribbean islands become at last a complete whole."]

Lecture on Federation (West Indies and British Guiana)

Mr Chairman and friends,

I must begin by noting one or two criticisms that have been made not only about Federation but about my presence in British Guiana. It has been said that I, a stranger, have no right to come here to discuss with the people of British Guiana the question of Federation. I am not in the least offended by the remark. My welcome in many quarters has been very warm, even enthusiastic, and I think I detect in the critic's remarks not so much an objection to my presence here, as a means of indicating in a disguised manner his opposition to federation.

It shows the strength of the case for federation that those who are opposed to it distract themselves to find ways and means by which they can indicate their opposition without coming out openly and saying so. After all, federation proposed unity, a unity between the British West Indies, which have federated themselves, and British Guiana. What conception does anyone have of federation or of discussions about federation when he objects to one member of the proposed unity discussing with other members? Where does he expect us to meet? On neutral ground? In the sea midway between British Guiana and Trinidad? Such criticism is absurd. I have noticed that Mr Gajraj, who acted as observer for British Guiana on some of the discussions which took place between representatives of the various islands, has stated in the Legislative Council that although he was only an observer at these discussions he was given every opportunity to express his views and to

register his opinions. I believe that is the only way in which the matter can be safely settled. I believe that Messrs Burnham and Carter in inviting me here, and Mr Gajraj in taking the chair at the last meeting, acted in the true spirit of federation itself, no matter what may be the legislative position at the present time. I do not think we should worry very much about that kind of criticism. That sort of attitude has never been present where I have lived in recent years, in London.

As you know I was invited to attend the celebrations surrounding the inauguration of the Federal Parliament in Trinidad. This invitation came from the Governor-General of the West Indies. I cannot consider that the invitation was due to any personal merit of my own. I think it rather due to the fact that the federal government and the governor-General recognised the pioneer work that has been done by West Indians in London at a time when to advocate self-government was almost equivalent to treason. But what is treason in one period is often respectable twenty years afterwards. I want here to associate with that work the name of an illustrious West Indian, George Padmore. I refer to this among other reasons because it has a bearing on what I have to say this evening. At that time most of us West Indians lived in London, which was for long one of the great centres of imperialism. But being one of the great centres of imperialism, it follows that now it is one of the great centres of the passing of colonialism. To London came and have come through the years a steady stream of colonials, newly emancipated, half-emancipated, demanding emancipation, about to be emancipated, all types. We the West Indians in London meet them, discuss with them, take part in their political meetings and demonstrations. They take part in ours. We thus get a total view of the whole movement which it is difficult to get elsewhere. We are also in the political centre of Britain. We are able to follow closely the actions (and reaction) of imperialism in its parliament and other state institutions, in its political parties, in its great organs of the Press and other means of communication. After a time we begin to understand better the attitudes of the British people themselves to imperialism and colonialism.

We are not very far from Paris, another great centre of imperialism. We have more or less constant communication with colonials of the French empire.

Thus we are in a position to see the general trends of development, to mark the stages, to see each problem as part of a whole. This is the point of view that I shall be placing before you this evening. Doubtless you on the spot experience and see much that escapes us who live abroad. There will be a time for questions, when you will be able to raise some of these points and I shall deal with them to the extent that I am able. But I believe that what I shall have to say is for the reasons that I have given, valid and valuable.

Now in Europe and the United States we discussed federation for years before World War II and I cannot remember a single occasion in which it ever crossed our minds or the issue was raised that British Guiana would not join the Federation. We always took that for

granted. The Trade Commission in London includes British Guiana and British Honduras. The West Indian Students' Union includes British Guiana and British Honduras. The West Indies cricket teams always include British Guiana. You were always one of us. But after the war, and especially during recent years, there began to be sounded a note which has grown in intensity. We heard that the East Indians in British Guiana were opposed to federation and these were the reasons given. They had a numerical majority over the other races, they hoped to establish an Indian domination of the colony; federation would bring thousands of Africans (or people of African descent) from the smaller islands to British Guiana. These knew how to work land and how to build up from small beginnings. They would place the Indians in British Guiana in an inferior position. Therefore the Indians were against federation.

We heard also that the African population of British Guiana was now eager for federation particularly for the reason that it would bring this reinforcement from the smaller islands, once more establish African numerical superiority, and so check the East Indians. Since I have come to the West Indies, and particularly since I have come to British Guiana, I have heard these arguments constantly repeated. That is to reduce the great issue of federation to a very low level.

Worse still, in British Guiana racial rivalry and even racial tension have thrust themselves into the federation discussion. There is undoubtedly racial tension, racial rivalry in British Guiana (also in Trinidad). To what degree it has reached, what are the likely consequences, whether it will increase and go to extremes of one kind or another, that I do not know. I do not know British Guiana sufficiently to express an opinion which would be of value or carry any weight. But I believe I have something to say which would assist all parties to view the situation in a balanced perspective.

It has been observed that when a colonial country is approaching national independence, there are two distinct phases. First, all the progressive elements in the country begin by supporting the national independence movement. Then, when this is well under way, you have the second stage. Each section of the nationalist movement begins to interpret the coming freedom in terms of its own interests, its own perspectives, its own desires. Thus the accentuation of racial rivalry at this time is not peculiar to British Guiana or to Trinidad. It takes place everywhere during the period of intense political excitement due to the national awakening. This political excitement, however, carries with it certain dangers. It is those I wish to warn you against, and we have an example, of world-wide historical significance, in what has happened to the former British colony of India.

It is an established fact that before Indian independence in 1947, tens of millions of Hindu and Moslem workers and peasants lived side by side in peace without conflict. It is an equally established fact that since the independence great numbers of these continue to do so. Yet in the days before World War II there sprang up the movement for a Moslem state which finally succeeded and resulted in the formation of Pakistan.

I do not wish to say that there were not honest and sincere elements in the movement. But in it there were three types against whom I want to warn you here in British Guiana — fanatical racialists, scheming and ambitious politicians, and businessmen anxious to corner for themselves a section of industrial and commercial possibilities. The movement succeeded. Pakistan was formed.

What is the result today after less than twelve years? The party which led the struggle for the national independence has never been able to get more than a few seats in the legislative assemblies. The people have no use for it. More important. In East Bengal, Hindus and Moslems have decided that they do not any longer want communal elections, that is to say separate Hindu lists and Moslem lists. They now vote as one people. Finally, I am reliably informed that there are now elements in East Bengal who want to form a third state, East Bengal to join with West Bengal to form a Bengal state. But West Bengal is a part of India. In other words they are ready to throw aside the Hindu-Moslem differences which in a moment of exceptional political excitement prompted them to support the formation of a Moslem state. Many, however, believe that this talk of a third state is only a shamefaced way of admitting that they wish once more to be part of India and regret that they allowed themselves to be rushed into the formation of a new state. And this before twelve years have passed.

We have seen a similar move in Ghana by the Ashantis. Prime Minister Nkrumah was able to keep it in check. I suggest then that you see the undoubted racial tension in British Guiana as a part of the inevitable political upheavals always associated with a national struggle. It has to be watched, it may run to extremes, but all should be on guard against that trio I mentioned earlier: fanatical racialists, scheming and ambitious politicians and greedy businessmen. They can help to lead the people into courses which, a few years later, when the excitement has died down, the people can bitterly regret.

Under this pressure, many pro-federationists have been driven into a defensive position. They feel, for example, compelled to advocate federation on the ground that it will provide a market for the surplus rice of British Guiana. Now this question of the sale of rice, and the price that the West Indies will pay for British Guiana rice, is undoubtedly a very important one and may indeed play a great role between British Guiana and the Federation. But in my view it is wrong and very misleading to base the whole great issue of federation on a market for rice. British Guiana has been selling rice to the West Indies for years without being federated. Again under pressure from the anti-federationists, some federationists proceed to argue that if the British Guiana plan of economic development is to succeed it will need a market larger than the half-million local population. Federation offers a way out. They tie themselves into knots over freedom of movement of people from island to island. And finally, the greatest obstacle of all, the Great Barrier Reef — the fact that British Guiana had been offered only six seats in the Federal Parliament.

Now we absolutely have to get these problems in their proper

perspective. *All of them are matters of bargaining and negotiation.* It is so in the West Indies and it is so in every country including the most advanced countries in the world today. Do not pay too much attention to the speeches of politicians before a conference or to their speeches when the conference is over. They utter beautiful sentiments (often with an eye to what the Opposition at home will say) and as soon as that is over and the doors are closed, they take off their jackets, roll up their sleeves and get down to business.

Take Customs Union. One politician representing Jamaica (let us say) will declare that Jamaica is for complete Customs Union but owing to special circumstances Jamaica must exclude 35 per cent of its production from such a union. Another politician (say from Barbados) will say that this is absolutely impermissible, but he is ready to allow Jamaica 25 per cent. They argue for days. Then I can imagine Sir Grantley Adams in the chair (having kept quiet most of the time) proposing a compromise: "*You say 35 per cent; you say 25 per cent; I propose 30 per cent.*" The Jamaica representative says, "No, 32 per cent." Finally, they agree on 31 per cent for five years only — after that they will see.

That is the way it goes. *Always.* I want to emphasise that, because otherwise these problems are elevated into insuperable obstacles. In Europe they have been working for years on creating a common market (I shall refer to this later). The other day I was much amused to read that the agreements were in danger, over the question of what? The nature of ham. Some claimed that ham was dairy produce, others claimed that it was manufactured goods — ham was something you had to make. Obviously, if ham was dairy produce, it came under one set of customs duties, taxes, etc.; if ham, on the other hand, was classified as manufactured goods it would come under another set of customs dues, etc. They argued, they quarrelled, they threatened, but they came to an agreement in the end.

It is the same among us. Take the question of freedom of movement of populations. To listen to some of the anti-federationists you would believe that half the people of the West Indies are sitting by the seashore with their bags packed, just waiting for the news that British Guiana has joined the Federation, to descend on it like a swarm of locusts. It is not so. (Some people in Trinidad have the same fears.) It is not so, it cannot be so. What has actually happened is this. Two years ago, representatives of the islands met to discuss this very question of freedom of movement between the islands. Trinidad allowed entry to some fifty types of persons who had formerly been excluded. But the important decision was that for five years each territory could make its own laws as to how many it would admit and under what conditions. After the five years were up, each territory would still have the right to make its own laws about admission of immigrants, only now these laws would have to be ratified by the Federal Parliament. That is the way all these problems can and will be settled.

No such problem can be a serious obstacle to federation. The idea that all the islands would gang up together to force unreasonable and

oppressive conditions on British Guiana is out of the question — for one thing it would be political stupidity.

I have dealt with these problems in order that they should be kept in perspective and not allowed to obscure the fundamental issues.

What are these fundamental issues? Every generation has its own ideas of federation, usually an idea that is related to the particular ideas of that particular day.

I was reading recently in a lecture on federation by Dr Eric Williams that in 1876 a colonial official advocated federation, among other grounds, because it would facilitate freedom of movement for lunatics, for lepers, for criminals and for policemen. What particular ideas of the day this particular kind of federation was related to I do not know. It is interesting but not important.

Then there was Dr Meikle. When I was a small boy living in Arima in Trinidad, before World War I, I knew Dr Meikle, a tall, quiet man. He had very advanced ideas for his time, his book on Federation is a good book and holds a place in our history. But his conception of federation cannot be ours.

My own conception of federation before World War II is not the same that I have today. Today, 1958, in the second half of the twentieth century, this is how I see federation. *Federation is the means and the only means whereby the West Indies and British Guiana can accomplish the transition from colonialism to national independence, can create the basis of a new nation; and by reorganising the economic system and the national life give us our place in the modern community of nations.*

The only conception of federation which I think worthy of consideration, the only conception which I believe can make federation a success in the age in which we live, is the conception that sees federation as the West Indian method of taking part in that general reorganisation of industrial production, commercial relations and political systems which is the outstanding feature of our world. Federation for the West Indies is the means by which it will claim independence, modernise itself and, although small in numbers, be able to take its place as one of the modern communities living a modern civilised existence. Without federation, I do not think this can be done. It *has* to be done or the consequences for these islands would be dreadful. I see federation therefore (and I am not alone) as the process by which the West Indies, in common with the rest of the world, seeks to leave one stage of its existence which has lasted for some 300 years, and move into a new sphere, with all the privileges, the responsibilities, the difficulties and the opportunities which the transitional stage of existence offers to all who are able to take part in it.

That is what federation means and it will mean that or it will mean nothing. This is my conception of West Indian Federation at this stage of history, and everything that I say will revolve around this. The times we live in are a time of transition, the world we live in, the world in which we have lived for three centuries as colonial possessions of imperialist powers, is falling apart. The chief imperialist powers,

Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Holland and Belgium, are all states of Western Europe. The important thing, the thing that is new about them, the thing that concerns us is that they are no longer world powers. The world in which they ruled and shaped our destinies according to their will, imposed upon us their ideas of the economics and the politics that they thought suitable for us, that world is gone. We shall enter as a free people into a world that we never knew and which our masters never knew until recently. If they were merely losing their colonies and *continuing as before* that would be one thing not only for them but for us. What is happening is something entirely different, and, as I believe that most of the shortcomings in our thinking of our future spring from an inadequate grasp of this central fact, I shall spend some time on it.

The period in which our masters ruled as imperialist states has a definite beginning and, historically speaking, is not very long. It is only 300 years. It begins at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. It began to come to an end with World War I. I shall deal briefly with four aspects — their economic foundations, their political institutions, their foreign relations and their social thought. These more or less constitute the whole and I shall use that classification again when we come to the West Indies Federation.

The beginning of their history as imperialist states is marked by a new economic system — the system of wage-labour. Before that time workers were attached to the land or worked as artisans in the guilds. Wage-labour, workers divorced from the means of production and working only for wages, marked the beginning of an economic development such as the world had never seen before. This was capitalism. It nourished and was nourished by imperialism. What is the situation today?

The wage-labourers of the imperialist powers have organised themselves into massive trade unions, Labour Parties, Communist Parties. They have declared openly that they intend to transform the capitalist economy into a socialist economy. One result you can see in England. The Labour Party nationalises the steel industry. The Tory Party denationalises the steel industry. The Labour Party declares that when it comes into power it will renationalise the steel industry. That is not any form of economy — it is chaos. Today the economies of these imperialist powers are not classic wage-labour; they are not socialism. They are bastard systems, neither one thing nor the other, in continuous crisis and disorder, not knowing which way they are going. The economic power which sustained the imperialist domination is gone.

Politically it is the same. These powers came into existence and were able to thrive on imperialist exploitation because they established the national, independent state. Previously they were ruled by royal families, dynasties with real power, who were tied up with one another in marriages, alliances, petty wars, etc. The famous Hundred Years War between England and France was little more than a series of raids by the British across the Channel seeking loot. For long periods the Pope exercised not only religious but political domination over large

areas of Europe. The national state put an end to that. Whoever might rule, the state was now independent, devoted exclusively to the national interest, independent of all other states.

Today that independence is gone. China and India which, fifteen years ago, were a semi-colonial and a colonial state, today have more independence than Britain, France or any other of the imperialist states of Western Europe. You remember no doubt the brutality with which the Moscow régime under Mr Khrushchev crushed the uprising of the Hungarian workers in the Hungarian Revolution. But we should remember too that at about much the same time Sir Anthony Eden and the French Prime Minister thought that they could indulge in some old-fashioned imperialism by staging a raid on Egypt. This did not suit the foreign policy of the United States. President Eisenhower told them to get out and to get out at once. And they got out fast enough. The European imperialist states, which formerly conducted their own affairs and the affairs of their vast empires, today as far as foreign policy is concerned, are not more than satellites of the United States.

Closely connected with the independence of the state is the question of foreign relations. Some of your students will have read, and may still be reading in your history books, all sorts of fanciful reasons as to why this or that European war was fought. In nearly every case the reasons given are a lot of nonsense. I think it safe to say that ever since the religious wars of the middle of the seventeenth century, nearly every great war between the European powers has been fought over the colonial question. Either they were fighting to get colonial territory, or to prevent a rival getting colonial territory, or they were seeking to occupy strategic positions on the road to colonial territories. This is their history right up to the war of 1914, covering some 250 years. Their armies, their navies, their strategic conceptions, even their conceptions of themselves, were governed and shaped by these necessities of empire. Today that is finished. The only war, the only serious war that we face is the war for world domination, not for colonial territory; and the powers of Western Europe are pawns of the United States in its conflict with Russia for world domination. These two are going to fight for domination of all the land, and all the seas, and of the air above, and now for outer space. They are trying to reach the moon and if they do get there they will fight as bitterly over moon domination as they are fighting over world domination. We can do very little about that. But wars for colonial territories are finished, and with that is finished the particular relation that existed between imperialist powers and colonies on a world scale.

And that I may say is the reason why the colonial countries (ourselves included) are gaining our freedom with such comparative ease. If these powers had the economic basis, the political independence and the world-wide domination which they exercised for so many centuries, you can be sure that they would not have tolerated these demands for independence and the attitude of the colonial peoples today.

There is another reason for the decline and decay of these powers of imperialist powers. The national unity is broken and they no longer

have confidence in themselves. There are many millions of people in these European states who are hostile to imperialism and wish nothing better than to be rid of the burdens and the strains of colonialism.

And finally social thought. In the days of their power these European states undoubtedly laid the basis for and helped to develop democratic political institutions. By the end of the nineteenth century, democracy was at least an ideal, and on a world scale nations were judged by the extent to which they had achieved it or were in process of doing so. Not only in social thought but in art, literature and other important phases of civilisation, the imperialist powers undoubtedly made some splendid achievements. But all that today is gone. Over the last forty years we have seen the rise of a new system, the system of totalitarianism. Today almost a billion people are living under this new system. It is the sworn enemy of democracy. It has its adherents in the very heart of the democratic régime itself, as in France where there are 140 Communist Deputies in the French Parliament. For some time it seemed as if the Russian system did offer a way out of the present world crisis.

But over the last years there has been evidence that Russia is as much a prey to economic disorder, rebellion among its subjects and permanent political crisis as is the Western world. So that democracy is not only challenged, but is challenged by a new system which more and more shows that it too offers no way out. The result is a complete moral and political crisis in the imperialist powers. There is no perspective by which the individual can orient himself either to the state or to other individuals.

That is the condition of the imperialist powers today. The connection between them and their former colonies is being broken. But the connection is not one between states which have their former power and colonies which are newly independent. No. We are becoming free in a world of chaos and disorder. That imposes enormous difficulties upon us, and in order to understand ourselves and our relations with what are still the advanced countries of Western Europe, we have to get the new relation clear *and bear it constantly in mind*.

The first point is that these powers recognise what has happened to them. They know that they are in a different world. We too must recognise that we are in a new world. And the first thing that we must do is to see the method by which they are attempting to meet the challenge of the changed conditions. I can sum up their method in one word — Federation.

First, there was Benelux. This was the recognition by Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg that, small countries as they were, it was necessary for them to unite in order to meet the changed conditions. Benelux is the name given to their organisation for customs union and special arrangements in regard to market, movement of populations, etc. Secondly, there is the arrangement among the iron and steel producers of Western Europe to unify their production on a continental scale. These iron and steel producers of Europe have fought each other bitterly for centuries. They are divided by all sorts of national prejudices and national peculiarities of production. But they have

systematically struggled for unity until they have arrived at some common ground. What is the word for that? The only word is — Federation. Still more important. The European countries as a whole have worked for years and now have established the basis of a European Common Market. They hope that it will be complete in twelve years. By that time they hope that production and distribution will be as free among the countries of Europe as it is among the different states of the United States of America. What is the only word for this? Federation.

I have been asked by certain anti-federationists: if those people can unite economically without actually federating, why can't British Guiana do the same with the West Indies? The answer will give them more than they bargained for. It is this: those countries cannot federate because of language differences, methods of production, of social organisation, and of government which have separated them from each other for centuries, including many bitter wars. It is a tragedy for them that their past history and their social and political organisations prevent them from uniting in a more complete federation. Substantial numbers of them bitterly regret that these barriers exist. It is to our advantage, it is our good fortune that we have no such difficulties. There are many people in Europe who profoundly wish that it was as easy for Western Europe to federate as for example it is for the West Indies to federate with British Guiana.

The changed conditions of the modern world have produced the most fantastic idea of a federation that I have ever read or heard of anywhere. France has as you know many millions of colonial subjects in Africa. These people, like the rest of the colonial world, have already reached the stage where they are no longer prepared to accept colonial status. Yet some of them are not anxious to break what they consider the valuable connection with metropolitan France. France, on the other hand, has been thrown out of Indo-China, has been thrown out of Tunis, has been thrown out of Morocco, and will most certainly be thrown out of Algeria. Without African colonies, France faces the prospect of being an insignificant territory on the coast of Europe. Yet it is clear that freedom for the African colonies cannot be long delayed. Out of this situation has arisen the proposal for a Franco-African Confederation in which Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Senegal, all the French African colonies will participate in a federation with France on the basis of complete equality. Now African civilisation, despite the fact that it has been so brutally maltreated by imperialism, still preserves great virtues of its own. But nevertheless the African civilisation is profoundly different from the highly sophisticated civilisation of metropolitan France. Yet the fact remains that there is this movement on each side to attempt to work out what would undoubtedly be the strangest federation that history has ever known.

The second method they are using is a desperate attempt to reorganise their economies. These formerly proud and powerful states are now continuously dependent upon all sorts of aid, economic, financial, military, from the United States. We want aid, yes. But

without the United States *they* would have collapsed long ago. And also they seek to reconstruct the economy. Take Great Britain. The British realised that they were falling behind, had fallen behind. They therefore took a jump ahead. They saw atomic energy as the key to the industrial future, and they planned and have succeeded in being foremost in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

I want to make one thing clear. European Common Market, Franco-African Federation, use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes as the salvation of the British economy, these conceptions and plans are challenged. I do not want to go into that at all except to say that those who challenge them do not challenge the principles of federation and reorganisation of the economy: they say that these imperialist states *cannot carry them out successfully*. To discuss that would take us too far. It is enough that the principles themselves are challenged by nobody, are agreed upon by everybody. Does *anybody* seriously propose that British Guiana can reorganise its economy on its own, by going it alone? Isn't it a commonplace that loans, plans and technical assistance are far easier to get and far easier to handle by larger, integrated territories than by small isolated ones? Who denies it? Nobody. To do so would make him a laughing stock. It is expansion and development that raise the level and perspective of the whole society, not counting how many Africans and how many Indians. That way, all will be struggling at the same low level in a world that at every step would be leaving us further and further behind.

It is not only the countries in Western Europe that are doing it. Mr Nehru is establishing a steel industry in India at tremendous cost. The Germans are building a steel mill for India. The Russians are building another. The English are building one and I think the Americans one. Some people I know with knowledge and experience of steel have challenged the value of this enormous expenditure and the general dislocation of the economy which it will cost. And India undoubtedly has been in great trouble with its foreign exchange over the steel mills and similar expenditures. I have no doubt that the economists and the engineers have calculated the costs and advantages, that is, as far as they are able. But today there are no purely economic questions. Freedom from colonialism is not merely a legal independence, the right to run up a national flag and to compose and sing a national anthem. It is necessary also to break down the economic colonial systems under which the colonial areas have been compelled to live for centuries as hinterlands, sources of raw material, back yards to the industries of the advanced countries. Independence is independence, but when you continue to live in territories which still bear the shape of the old colonial territories, it is extremely difficult to free yourself from the colonial *mentality*. And most of the best colonial statesmen are determined to put an end to that. Despite the fact that they cannot hope in a decade or two to reach anywhere near to the level of the advanced countries, they are taking the necessary steps which will enable not only foreigners but their own populations to *see* that they have laid the basis of a balanced economy, and of an economy which is not a hinterland,

a mere periphery, to the great centres of civilisation. That is what the colonial areas are doing. That is what the West Indies will have to do. And I suggest that it can be done only by federation, and it is certain that British Guiana will be able to gain very, very few inches indeed if it attempts to do it by itself.

It is not only Mr Nehru who is doing that. There is Colonel Nasser. The whole Middle East situation has been turned upside-down because of Colonel Nasser's determination to put a dam in Egypt and to lay some visible, obvious symbol of the modernisation of Egypt. These men have no illusions that they will modernise their country in one step. But they know they have to make some dramatic step in order for it to be understood that colonialism is left behind, not only in form, but in the economic and social conditions in which the people live.

The same motive animates Nkrumah who has stated that his greatest aim at the present time is to establish the Volta Dam. It is a huge project which will cause the transference of thousands of people, the destruction of ancient villages, the reorganisation of hundreds of square miles, in order to bring the modern world right into Ghana so that everyone will be able to see that the transition from colonialism, not only to freedom, but to modernisation has been made.

I say that this is the task, that is what federation means in the middle of the twentieth century, whatever it meant in 1912. That is why we believe that British Guiana should come in with the other islands for their own benefit and also for the benefit of British Guiana. I have heard a few arguments which seem to believe that there was an attempt to lure British Guiana into the Federation for some purposes unknown. It is nothing of the kind. Now it is true that the West Indian Federation is not a very exciting federation, nor did it come into the world with vigorous screams as a healthy baby should. But nevertheless it has got one advantage. It is the only federation I know which has come into existence with the specific charge (at the head of all its tasks) to unify, diversify and develop the economy. That is what the Federation is for. In that it bears the stamp of the age in which we live. I cannot conceive of these tasks which are being carried out in the other colonial territories, to whatever degree their economic resources allow, I cannot conceive of these tasks being carried out except by means of a federation. They will be difficult enough under any circumstances.

I want you to understand that this is not a question of an ideal. This is not a question of something we *ought* to have. It is not something which we can choose to have, or take up according to the way we feel at any particular moment. In my opinion (and in the opinion of others who think the same but do not speak openly about it as I do), these countries, unless they develop themselves along the lines that other new colonial countries are doing, are bound to experience tremendous difficulties, not only economic but social and political.

Democracy is not a tree that seems to thrive very easily in the tropical soils of Latin-America. When you look at Latin-America over the last 130 years of its freedom, the picture is one of almost continual political instability. When you look at the curve of the West Indian islands, the

picture is not too different. Look at Cuba. Look at Haiti. Look at Santo Domingo. There you have one of the cruellest dictatorships in these parts. When I was a small boy in Trinidad and Castro and Gomez were fighting it out in Venezuela, it used to be said that this instability was due to the poverty of the people of Venezuela. Today, there is no longer poverty. Four hundred million dollars a year, I think, is the sum that Venezuela gets from oil royalties. The political disorders have increased in scope with the increase of wealth.

There are many reasons for this. One of them is the absence of a stable middle class which has got solid economic roots in the country, touching on the one hand the upper ranks of the working class and, on the other hand, the ruling classes. None of these countries have such a class and it makes democracy a problem.

It is a problem in these Latin-American countries as a whole and it is my opinion that it is doubly a problem in the British and French West Indies where the populations are in some respects the most peculiar in all the colonial territories. I do not know of any population that has the specific historical qualities of the populations of the British West Indies. In Indo-China, in India, in Ceylon, in Ghana, in Africa, the native populations have got a background and a basis of civilisation which are their own. They have a native language, they have a native religion, they have a native culture. These exist to a substantial degree and from this culture they make the transition or they are making the transition to the modern world. Anthropologists today are discovering more and more the values of these civilisations. They were ridiculed simply by the ignorance and arrogance of the imperialist powers. These people have got this basis and they move from this to something else.

The populations in the British West Indies have no native civilisation at all.... These populations are essentially Westernised and they have been Westernised for centuries. The percentage of literacy is extremely high. In little islands like Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica and even in your own British Guiana, the population is so concentrated that with the development of motor transport, nobody is very far from the centre of things. There is an immense concentration of knowledge, learning and information. People live modern lives. They read modern cheap newspapers, they listen to the radio, they go to the movies. The modern world is pressing upon them from every side, giving rise to modern desires and aspirations. There is no national background to mitigate or even to influence the impact of these ideas upon the social personality of these islands. The result is that you have what I call a £500-a-year mentality among the masses of the West Indian countries. The difficulty is that the territories in which they live have a cash *per capita* income of only about £50 a year. The difference between the mentality, the desires, the needs, which are the result of the kind of life the people live, and the limited resources of the economy is a very serious one. It is not only an economic question. It is developing and in a few years can become the source of the gravest political disorders. It is no use blinding our eyes to that. At inaugural celebrations we make hopeful speeches and everybody applauds. We hope for the best. But when that is over

you must look at things with a certain realism. When the British flag goes down and the national flag goes up and there will be no more cruisers and soldiers to come, and all authority depends upon what is native and rests upon the attitude of the people, then these islands are going to test for themselves how far it is possible for them to achieve the democracy which has evaded so many other territories in these parts.

Now I am not an economic commission and I don't want to pretend for a second to tackle its problems. It is sufficient for me to emphasise that the organisers and the planners of the economy of the Federation must have a clear conception of what they are organising and planning, and why. They must know and the people must know and constantly bear in mind the world in which we live.

This evening, however, I wish to draw your attention to two points only in connection with economic reconstruction. The first is the matter of technical and scientific institutions. The second is the matter of technical *personnel* from Britain and other countries abroad. First, technical and scientific institutions. *We have to get rid of the colonial mentality.* Scientific discoveries and processes are making industry less and less tied to specific sources of raw material and climate. That tendency will doubtlessly increase. We have to develop our own institutions. To a limited degree, for we are not and for a long time will not be one of the industrially advanced areas of the world. But we have to develop our own institutions outside of the conception that we are merely West Indian. The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture is in Trinidad. It is not a West Indian institution. It is an institution that serves the needs of people concerned with tropical agriculture the world over. I hope, I look forward to seeing the West Indian University in Jamaica become a centre not only of general studies but of specialised learning which will serve to advance and add to the accumulation of knowledge which is taking place all over the civilised world.

I believe that, to the extent of our limited resources, some of the institutions that we are planning and will plan must be conceived in terms of our playing a role in the general scientific advance of modern society and not be confined to the limited interests of a purely West Indian perspective. The West Indian people need to see such institutions. The people outside need to know that such institutions are being developed in the former colonial territories of the West Indies. Can British Guiana do this by going it alone? It will be difficult enough under any circumstances. But it is not only an economic but a social and a political necessity.

The question of personnel from abroad to give us technical assistance is more immediate. We are sending our boys and girls away to learn and they are doing very well. But we must make up our minds to the fact that for a long time we shall need technical assistance from abroad in our efforts to modernise ourselves. We are breaking the old connections between us and the advanced countries. We have to finish away with the old type of colonial official and the old type of technical assistant who came here to rule and to command people whom he

considered his inferiors. *But if we are breaking the old connections we have to establish new ones.* Today in England and in Europe there are many young men and women who have a very different attitude towards us than their parents had. Much of the arrogance and sense of superiority have been stripped away from them by the troubles and trials through which Europe has passed over the last years. Many of them have been through the war and have learnt to judge men as men. Numbers of them have a sense of guilt and of shame now that the realities of imperialism and colonialism have been exposed. They are anxious to do what they can to help restore some historical balance in the accounts of imperialism and the colonial peoples. Finally, they want to do a good job. They want to be paid but they want to feel that their work is helping people who need it and that in any case it will not be destroyed by some atomic or hydrogen bomb. (With the advent of Sputnik, I don't know that anywhere today is safe. But that is by the way.) I know many of these people. *We are breaking the old connections, we have to establish new ones.* These people come to work but they are looking at us. We have to show them that though limited in our material resources, we are in thought at any rate and in aspiration citizens of the modern world. Some of them I am sure will be ready to identify themselves with us completely. We should be on the lookout to welcome them. I have met one or two in Trinidad and in British Guiana since I have come here. They have ideas that are far more advanced than the ideas of many West Indians in high places who still suffer from the colonial mentality to an astonishing degree. Above all, let us not repel them by showing them when they come that we are governed by the same narrow nationalist and particularist conceptions which have caused so much mischief in Europe and elsewhere, and which some of them are running away from. We need all the help that we can get and help of this particular kind is precious and is far from being a purely economic question. This also is a social and political necessity. Industrial expansion is not merely a question of material forces but of human relations. There are other issues of infinitely greater scope, but this evening I confine myself to these two.

I want now to pass from economic relations to the political sphere. I can assure you that I will not, in dealing with these, spend so long as I did on the economic question. Otherwise we shall not be able to get away from here at all. However, in regard to the political issues I have to come a little closer to home. I have to deal with Dr Jagan. Now I have to treat Dr Jagan's views with a certain respect. First of all, he is the head of the majority party of this country.

It is very important at this time in particular that the authorities of the country based upon local elections should be treated with a certain respect. The old authority is going. The new authority is not yet firmly established. It is necessary as I say to treat its representatives always with respect. (If you do not like them, then remove them.) The second thing is that Dr Jagan is no petty racist, not at all. I am unalterably opposed to the political philosophy which he accepts. I am unalterably opposed to its methods. I have told him so in person. And therefore

there is no reason why I should not say so in public. He has not hidden his views, there is no reason for me to hide mine. But in regard to his aims for British Guiana, and for the West Indies as a whole, they are those of an enlightened modern person. He is not counting up how many Indians, and how many Africans and how many acres of land, and basing the future of British Guiana on that. Some of his supporters might be doing that, but his general view is not that at all. However there are one or two aspects of Dr Jagan's attitude which demand serious examination.

The first of them is this question of the plebiscite. Now I read a day or two ago in the accounts of the debate in the Legislature (you will help me, Mr Chairman, if I am wrong) that Mr Stephen Campbell said he had been here sixty years, he said he was against self-government and he said that if there was a plebiscite, he was sure that the majority of the people in British Guiana would vote against it. Now that would be an excellent type of plebiscite. He begins by saying, "I am against and I ask you to vote and show that you are against too." Maybe he is totally wrong but that is not what is at issue here. I am thinking of a certain type of political activity, the *method* of the plebiscite or referendum.

Now if Dr Jagan says that there must be a plebiscite to decide Federation here, all I have to say is this: Trinidad didn't need a plebiscite, Barbados didn't need one, Jamaica didn't need one, none of the other islands needed one. Yet Dr Jagan says that for certain special internal reasons British Guiana needs one. That is a matter for Messrs Carter and Burnham and the others to discuss. Mr Burnham says it is a lot of nonsense, but I cannot say that. If I did I would be told: you are a stranger, you do not know the country, and I am not going to put myself in any position where that attack can be made against me. But there is one thing which I know of all plebiscites in whatever country they are. And that is this: *the political leader must say precisely where he stands and ask the people to decide on clear political positions.* A plebiscite must *not* say: "On this issue I have no opinion exactly. I don't know whether it is good or bad and therefore we must have a plebiscite and I leave you to decide." That would be absolutely intolerable and a complete abdication of the responsibilities of political leadership in a critical situation. That I hope is clear. I do not know how Dr Jagan is going to develop his ideas on the plebiscite. I want to insist that you haven't to know British Guiana to know what is a proper plebiscite and what is a plebiscite that is most improper. I want to add this: the question of the plebiscite or the question of Federation is not an abstract question or a political question which can be left hanging in the air too long. Racial rivalry is involved. To what extent I do not know, and I have given reasons for not coming to extreme conclusions about it. But it undoubtedly exists. It also exists in Trinidad. The only way to meet such a difficulty is to present arguments and distinctive political positions so that the rivalry, the emotionalism, are met with reason and ideas. You counter one thing with the other and you place reasonable clear-cut decisions before the people to decide. But if you

do not do that, if you say that on this issue the people must decide, then what you are doing is to give the racial rivalries free play. And then they can run to extremes which they could not possibly have run to if they had been met in the first place by the proper political actions of responsible political parties and leading individuals. The question of a plebiscite is not a theoretical question. It is not a question of "letting the people decide". In the last analysis, the people have to decide everything in a democracy. But no one ever holds an election in which everybody walks around and tells the people: "Well, choose some people." No, people come forward in political parties and they say, "This is our programme, this is what we wish to do and I am the person to be chosen. I and my colleagues are able to carry out this policy." They offer the people *definite choices*. But what is now taking place is that Dr Jagan and his political associates say in effect, "We came forward to you to ask you to elect us to the leadership of the country. We are ready to tell you how to fight the British government on the question of the Constitution. We are able to tell you how much money is needed to develop the country and how much we should borrow in order to develop an economic plan. We are able to tell you how much should go for education and what should be the type of education. We not only know these things, but we are able to denounce and expose in argument those who dare to oppose us. We are able to undertake the government of the country on a national and international scale. We are ready to become independent and have Dominion Status. But on the all-important question of Federation, here we confess we have no definite opinion. We leave it to you to decide."

No, it wouldn't do. Plebiscite or no plebiscite is an internal affair. But *the kind* of plebiscite is a strictly political matter on which anybody can take position without having put a foot in British Guiana. I have given you my view and I hope you bear it in mind to deal with persons who hide behind the idea of a plebiscite to avoid taking a definite decision. You know, it is a very hard thing for an honest, intelligent man at this stage to say, "I am against federation." And that's why they say, "James has no right to come here as a stranger to talk about federation." What he's saying is that he is against but he doesn't want to say it so openly. That's why he says, "It is necessary to have a plebiscite for the people to decide." What he is really saying is: "I am against, but I haven't the nerve to say so." I am not saying Dr Jagan is that way at all. I'm speaking of the ideas that he puts forward. His ideas have to be examined. A leader is responsible not only for what he says but for what interpretation his followers give to what he says. All sorts of reasons are given by people who, in face of the massive arguments that have existed over so many years and which have been so intensified in recent years, have not got the nerve and the courage to come forward and say plainly, "We are against." They seek all sorts of ways and means by which they give the impression without committing themselves. Don't let them get away with that.

The second political question is one on which Dr Jagan undoubtedly has a certain amount of right on his side. He says that the West Indian

leaders have not supported British Guiana in its struggles with the British government over the Constitution. So far he is absolutely correct. If West Indian political leaders claim that British Guiana is a part of the Federation and all that is needed is the legal step, if they feel as they undoubtedly feel that we are all one people, then any attack upon the liberties of the people of British Guiana, the taking away of the Constitution, should have been met by the united forces of the West Indian people. The Federation should have begun there and then. They have not done it. They have got themselves entangled in and confused by Dr Jagan's political beliefs. I believe that Dr Jagan has a serious responsibility to express and clarify his political ideas to the people of the West Indies. When he says he is not going to make any confessions to the Colonial Office, in my opinion he is absolutely right. I don't see why he should make any explanations to them. I certainly wouldn't and I wouldn't ask anybody to do anything which I wouldn't do. But he owes it to *the West Indian people* to make all his political ideas clear. Not to do that is to make a mockery of democracy.

The West Indian leaders have kept away. They have left British Guiana more or less to itself. Dr Jagan says that is what they have done. He has a sense of grievance which is justified. I have told the West Indian leaders my opinion on this matter. I have repeated it to them in private. I shall continue to repeat it in public. But you can't continue to do only that. It is necessary to take some steps forward. I believe that if Dr Jagan were to declare (and his declaration would just clinch it) that he is ready to enter the Federation, the attitude of the West Indian leaders, whatever reasons they may have had for it in the past, will have to undergo a change. Dr Jagan will come with outstretched hands. "Well, here I am, boys, I have joined you, I am one of you now. We are all one *except on the matter of the Constitution*. All of you have internal self-government. Here I am. Are you willing to join with me in order to request internal self-government for British Guiana?" I believe his position would be unassailable, and whatever weakness and feebleness there was, the West Indian leadership would have to begin the struggle for a West Indian attitude to the problem of British Guiana there and then. But if on the other hand he says, "No Federation without Dominion Status," Federation then becomes something which you are bargaining about. "To get Dominion Status *we* are prepared to give *you* Federation." Those may not be the ideas that Dr Jagan has. But a political leader is not only responsible for what he says, but for the interpretations which intelligent people can read into his words. And "No Federation without Dominion Status" places federation in a light which I think is harmful to the very idea of federation.

The final point in regard to the political ideas is this. Dr Jagan in my opinion has the opportunity not only of assisting the people of British Guiana but of assisting the whole of the West Indies by going into the Federation and demanding, not in two years or one year, but immediately, on behalf of the people of the West Indies, a *Constituent Assembly*, by which the Dominion Status will be made concrete. The best way is by means of a Constituent Assembly. This is the only

proposal I have made in West Indian politics. It is the only one I intend to make and I am ready to give all the services I am able to give in order to get this idea accepted from end to end of the West Indies and British Guiana. A Constituent Assembly means (allow me to go into it in some detail) an election, most probably according to proportional representation. That is to say, no party is going to be allowed to win all five seats in Georgetown. You elect on a national scale. All the votes are going to be added up nationally and the seats are going to be divided according to the number of votes each party has. In this way you are certain to have representation of every type of political thought in the country because that is needed when a constitution is being discussed. The Constituent Assembly then discusses various constitutions. After two or three months it comes to some conclusions and then the constitution which gains the majority of votes is taken back to the people for ratification. They say whether they approve of it or not, not voting by parties but by each individual giving his opinion. It is possible that they may reject it and say to the Constituent Assembly: "You go and make another one." That is their right because this is something in which the whole nation has to express itself. It is the beginning of its national existence. After the constitution has been decided upon, then an election takes place in the ordinary way according to parties, the legislative chamber is constituted and politics continues under the new conditions.

I state that a Constituent Assembly is the only possible means *now* by which the masses of the people in the West Indies may be brought to participate and take their role in the establishment of a federal constitution not only for a federation but for an independent West Indies. The last Constitution came like a thief in the night. Some people went abroad and some experts wrote and then suddenly the people were told. "This is the Federal Constitution." It is no wonder that they were not particularly interested and have not been enthusiastic to this day although they are generally in favour of the Federation.

I propose a Constituent Assembly as a means whereby all parties in the West Indies, including British Guiana, will be able to take part in the formation of the Constitution and the establishment of the new state. I take the liberty of saying to Dr Jagan and to his supporters: does this not meet both the demand for Federation *and* for Dominion Status at the same time? I put the idea forward. It has met with some approval in various places. I know there are politicians in the West Indies who are very sympathetic to it. I hope that you will discuss it among yourselves and perhaps a movement in favour of it will start among you. That, however, is for you and your political leaders.

There are only two points remaining and I will be brief on each of them. There is the question of the foreign relations of the state. You know, I have a sympathy for those people who think of British Guiana as having a continental destiny. I have a sympathy for them. But I believe they are lacking in political sense. At any rate they do not commit the abysmal folly of thinking in terms of British Guiana going it alone. There is no reason why British Guiana, placed as it is on the

South American continent, should not be able to form associations of one kind or another with the other two Guianas. I understand some people there already have made overtures. There is absolutely no reason why something of that kind should not take place. No question of loyalty to any metropolitan country is involved. Today Great Britain is a member of the Commonwealth. It is also a prominent leader in the Sterling area. Canada, which is a member of the Commonwealth, is not a member of the Sterling area. It is a member of the Dollar area. Holland, which is not a member of the Commonwealth, is I believe a member of the Sterling area. Great Britain, which is a member of the Commonwealth, and a member of the Sterling area, is now seeking to join the European Common Market. All these permutations and combinations are perfectly feasible in the modern world. There is absolutely no reason at all why British Guiana should not be able to form some sort of association with the other two Guianas and go even further. Methods of communication are developing so rapidly that Brazil and Venezuela, moving in one direction, British Guiana, moving in another, in a few years might even be able to form associations which at the present time are not within the compass of our ideas. There is no reason why British Guiana should not take advantage of its situation to be able in time to pioneer in these directions. There is every reason why it should. There is only one thing to be noted. If it attempts to do this by itself, it is going like a babe in the woods and the Latin American woods are very big and very dark. It can attempt these connections only if it is firmly associated with the West Indian islands, with people who speak the same language, who have more or less the same type of historical experience, who have had the same European association. That is the *natural* unity. Upon that basis, while on the one hand Jamaica and these others can make their experiments for association with Cuba and Haiti, at that end of the curve, British Guiana can pioneer into these areas at this end. But always upon the basis at both ends of a solid unity which is the result of a natural historical evolution. That is what I think the foreign relations of a country like British Guiana should be.

My last word is in regard to social thought which as I have said includes artistic as well as political ideas. I have said economic conditions, political conditions, foreign relations and social thought. In reality they are one. They are not to be separated. But you cannot speak about everything at the same time, so for the sake of convenience I divided them. In regard to this I want as a final word to draw one or two things to your attention, one or two points relating to literature in the West Indies. I shall take two writers now before the public in the West Indies and in England. One is [Samuel] Selvon. The other is V.S. Naipaul. They are Indians and that is why I choose them. Selvon first. I was lunching in London a year ago with Dr Williams and Mr John Lehmann, the editor of the *London Magazine*. Dr Williams was discussing with Mr Lehmann ways and means of developing literary and artistic talent in the West Indies. Selvon's name happened to come up and I said that I didn't think that his work had the vital quality that

some other West Indian writers had. (Williams, I think, differed with me.) Mr Lehmann said he didn't agree, he was very much interested in Selvon. My remark had been made because Mr Lehmann had been writing enthusiastically about Selvon. I said, "Well, that is my view, but one thing I have noted: Selvon has a remarkable ear for dialogue. He catches the rhythms and cadences of West Indian speech and he is able to reproduce them in his writing." Then Mr Lehmann said something which I have never forgotten and which I want you to remember. He said, "That is precisely why I am so much interested in Selvon. I am very much interested in what the colonial writers are going to do to the English language."

Now here is this Englishman recognising that with increasing freedom and increasing capacity for self-expression we and the other colonial peoples, particularly those who have no other language but English, or use English as their literary language, our writing is going to affect the form and content of the English language. He is not afraid of it. The English language has a history and a literature — it is one of the great languages and literatures of the world — which can stand the individual turns which colonial writers will give to it. The language and the literature will even benefit by it. It is a point that I had missed entirely. Now Selvon is Indian, but if I am not mistaken he is part African too. One of the books of his that I have read dealt chiefly with the Indian population of Trinidad and contained a great deal of English dialogue as spoken by the poorer class of Indians. But the *Evening Standard* of London not so long ago published with great fanfare some stories by Selvon describing the lives of West Indians in England. And the most noticeable thing about those stories, and what I believe chiefly attracted the English reader, was the way the West Indians spoke. Selvon is equally at home with the Indian population and the African population of the West Indies. In other words he is a *West Indian*. Are we going to close ourselves in narrow compartments, whereby we shall be limiting our writers and our artists to the free expression of only one aspect of our community? Writers, and artists of all kinds, are of particular importance at this transitional stage of our development. They interpret us to ourselves and interpret us to the world abroad which is anxious to know about us. These highly gifted people are able in a few thousand words to illuminate aspects of our social and personal lives which otherwise would have taken us years and great pain and trouble to find out. We have to give them all the help we can, create the conditions in which they can best perform their work for our society. Above all we must beware of limiting them in any way. In doing so we limit ourselves.

The second writer I wish to take is Naipaul. He also is an Indian from Trinidad and there is no question in anybody's mind about his literary quality. He is obviously a born man of letters. Naipaul has written a novel called *The Mystic Masseur*. This novel is very funny indeed. Naipaul describes an Indian politician. First of all he used to massage people. Then he thought he would like to write books. He bought encyclopaedias and copied out a lot of information in order to publish

books of his own on subjects which he knew nothing about. He decided to go into politics, he was elected a member of the Legislative Council and his political career is as absurd as the early part of his life. Naipaul makes no bones about showing up this politician as a charlatan and an ignoramus. This politician, please note, is an Indian and obviously Naipaul describes him because as an Indian himself he is most familiar with the Indian community. But as you read the book you see that when Naipaul makes reference to African politicians he has no more respect for them than he has for his Indian hero. And on finishing the book, I at least am left with the impression that Naipaul has an attitude which is ready to pour ridicule on politicians of all kinds, Indian, African, colonial or European. I have no objection (and I hope that Messrs Burnham and Carter have none) to seeing politicians held up to the light by a brilliant and satirical pen. It should do them some good.

Now it would be terrible if Naipaul were prevented from writing freely about Indians because by doing so he would be giving ammunition to African people or people of other races to attack the people of his own race. Or for that matter if a young African writer were prevented from writing freely about Africans for thereby he would be harming the cause of the Africans in the eyes of the Indians, etc. *You know what I mean.* We have not got that kind of thing among us at present. Both these young men have written freely. Very soon now the young novelists of British Guiana are going to be bursting out. Let us see to it that we maintain that freedom of conditions which will enable our young writers to develop freely. You should invite Naipaul here. I am a little concerned because he is really so clever that he may be adopted by the English literary world. I think you should bring him here so that he could renew his contacts with the native roots. And I do not mean that the Indians of British Guiana should bring him here. I mean those people in British Guiana who are interested in literature. I am not going to refer to other West Indian writers. Personally I believe that George Lamming the Barbadian is the best of them so far. There are others. I have preferred this evening to concentrate on these two.

In conclusion let me say this. I have spoken as a member of the West Indian Federation, thinking of the interest, the goodwill and the solidarity of the West Indian people. Please believe that I have been thinking in the same way of the interest, goodwill and solidarity of the people of British Guiana.

1958

To the People of Jamaica

Jamaicans and Fellow West Indians:

I spent many months with you in 1961 both before and after the Referendum. I know that you did not vote against federation with other West Indians, that you were as anxious as any for all of us to unite as one. What you voted against was a particular Federation of which you had had some experience, which had promised you little enough and given you less. I for one do not blame you. That does not mean that

you did not make great mistakes. You did. So did we. I repeat, all, not only Jamaicans, bear the fullest responsibility for the collapse of the Federation. But while limited men can make unlimited mischief with a limited federation, what they cannot destroy is the West Indian nation. The nation has already made its impact on the world in places far removed from the dog-eat-dog of West Indian politics. The West Indian nation, with Jamaicans as an inseparable part of it, will continue to live, as many another nation has lived, sometimes for generations, even in the shadow of guns and bayonets.

A son of the people, the most gifted individual I have met in the West Indies, and one of our sharpest political minds, has said what badly needed to be said: **WE FAILED MISERABLY.**

And he paints the equally miserable future:

Federation boil down to simply this:
It's dog eat dog, survival of the fittest.

But, fellow West Indians, we will be together again because at this period of the twentieth century for us there is no other way.

I saw a mess coming from the first weeks I returned to the West Indies in 1958. I not only spoke but wrote about it many times. The politicians, every one of them, were incapable of understanding me. This lecture was one such effort to turn them from the disastrous road they were travelling.

What I feared and now fear more than ever is the blood of innocent people running down the streets of Port of Spain, San Fernando, Kingston and Bridgetown. Our political pundits are heading for this as confidently and as blindly as they smashed up the Federation.

This shambles we may escape only by becoming a people of self-centred individualists without any sense of national identity, concerned with nothing but money and personal position. Acute observers have noted that we are travelling fast along that dusty road.

Rough times are ahead. But the nation exists. History moves very fast these days, with violent twists, turns and returns upon itself. If any of you in Jamaica, devoted to the concept of a West Indian nation, should make your voices heard, be assured that in the Eastern Caribbean there will be many responding voices and outstretched hands.

The Federal Disaster was Foreseen – a Letter to Mr Manley

Port-of-Spain, Trinidad,
4 June 1960.

The Hon. Norman Manley, W.C., Premier,
Kingston,
JAMAICA.

My dear Manley,

Your letter says that you are confident of the outcome of this referendum. I sincerely hope that you are right. But you ask me to speak in the same spirit to our friends here. First of all, I do not believe it. Secondly, no one, not a soul will believe me.

I think you should know what the situation is in Trinidad and why it is that way. I have refrained from spelling it out for you in the past, leaving it all to you, but you have to know now.

1. Busta exploded in the March elections. You had said you would not come as Premier. People understood and accepted it.

2. The explosion over what Grantley said about taxation looked to many people here as an occasion seized and exploited. Your reaction surprised many of us here. We attributed it to the situation in Jamaica.

3. In May 1959, you made the demands on representation by population, removal of industry from Federal Government, etc. I have never told you of the anger and bitterness it aroused here in *Federal circles*. But everybody decided to say nothing and wait.

4. Then came the conference here. I am dealing with facts. The attitude of the Jamaica delegation at the conference penetrated into the general population for the first time. But in time the opinion grew: "If they want it so badly, let them have it," from *every* island. Busta and his band would have been isolated.

5. However, free talk about secession began to come from you and the PNP. *Everybody* found this quite shocking. Still, to a substantial degree owing to the restraint of Bill and *The Nation* and many of PNM (the anti-federationists merely said: "You will see"), not too much harm was done.

6. Your visit to the Colonial Office went down very badly here. However, it had one good effect. Many of us believed that the reception of the Jamaica delegation in England both official and unofficial gave no encouragement to the idea of secession.

7. I have not mentioned your first election victory. People here felt it was a great victory but they were not quite sure how much it helped on Federation. When the Municipal victory came it was felt that you had been fortified. You spoke hopefully of Federation. You and Bill spoke together often, people got to know of it and most people were very hopeful.

8. Busta said he would refuse to contest a seat. Please accept this as a most objective view — people saw a fight ahead but felt that it would be a good fight. It was freely said that the anti-federationists had the edge but that you were never in so good a position as now.

9. Then came the news of your decision for a referendum. Manley, you have to know this, although what you can do about it now, I don't know. Trinidad and others here view it as opening the gate to Busta. If you wish I could send you the local press. Bitter as it is, it is mild to what people really think. What they expect now, and they say so quite openly, is that you will now come over here and make demands on the Inter-Governmental Committees, using the threat of the referendum. I do not think you can legitimately blame them. I have detailed for you the shock upon shock which they have received from you. This is the final blow. People recognised Busta's anti-federationist strength but they trusted you. They do not do so any longer. As far as I can see, there is now an open movement to rally around Williams (some of his bitterest enemies are in it) as the only hope of saving anything of a

federation. That is the situation as far as I can judge it.

I now have to tell you what I think. I have never obtruded my views on you or anybody else. But this is a time for everyone to speak. My general views on Federation are, luckily for me, on record, in the *West Indies*, long before any dispute arose.

But this is a specific situation. This is my view of how to meet it.

(a) Representation by population would never have made me raise my voice. I would not fight over that.

(b) If Jamaicans feel that their economy is in danger, if there is powerful national feeling against surrendering any sovereignty then:

(i) The integration should be phased over ten years by consultation and common agreement.

(ii) You or your nominee should be unanimously agreed upon as Premier. It is common knowledge that Grantley is a very sick man. I shall never under any circumstances be a part to any hounding or tarring of Grantley. He has done his share and if that were suitably recognised I do not believe he would stand in the way of a *solution* to the Jamaica problem — but it must be a *solution*.

(iii) There should be created a Ministry of Federal Development, which a Jamaican should head for the first five years.

(iv) Brown should be made head of the Federal Planning Unit.

For the first three years at least federal industrial activity will be for the most part investigation, co-ordination, plans, and *demonstration that it can win financial and industrial support*. All the units will be asked to do is not to continue existing commitments, or to enter into no new ones, lasting beyond ten years.

All the rest is bargaining, negotiation, quid pro quo, etc., etc.

I now give you my considered view. If this is not satisfactory, if Jamaica wants something else, something more, then Jamaica does not want federation. The idea that these unit economies which bear on their backs and faces the ravages of 300 years of insularity, should, at this crucial period, form a confederation, develop their economies individually, hoping at some future time to coalesce into a federation, that seems to me Utopia. If Jamaica does not want what I suggest or something like this, then my personal opinion, for what it is worth, is that this should be faced frankly, without equivocation by both sides: Jamaica does not want to stay, Jamaica will leave.

These decisions do not rest with me, and I am profoundly and always aware of that. But no one can accuse me of haste or undue meddling and I do not intend to be silent on this any longer. I shall ask the permission of the political leader of the party to advance my views and if he agrees I shall do so. (Most of the letters you and I have exchanged he has never seen.) He will decide what is permissible and what is not. I tell you what I think. I shall not precipitate matters. I shall wait until the Secretary [of State for the Colonies] comes, talks, and goes before I do anything.

June 5

I have slept twice over this letter. But here this morning is *The Guardian*

again. I have, as you know, the greatest contempt for this paper. Yet for once it is saying what people here think. I am averse to sending you any clippings — instead I shall send you the whole paper. This is the biggest blow Federation has ever received here. The distinction between Busta and you has dwindled almost to nothing.

Since I have begun I may as well finish. I think you have every right to ask me: if even that is what the people think, what do you think?

I think nothing. To this moment I do not know whether you believe in a centralised federation but are urging confederation because you are convinced that that is all Jamaica can possibly take at the present moment, and by Jamaica I include the rift widely discussed in your own party. The most sympathetic view here is that you could not possibly come here to be PM because if you did Isaacs would take the party over. It may be so, I don't know. How can I know? And in the past I have seen so many colossal blunders made on this type of speculation that I shun it like the plague. I have operated so far on these two principles:

1. Manley is a man of ability, character and personal quality so far above all the other candidates that he is the man who should be PM of the West Indies. Bill is only 48. He is in no hurry to be PM, rather the reverse. He is twenty years younger than you are.

2. Whatever you thought, or did, I stuck to this view: if Jamaica is to be part of the Federation, Manley will do it and Manley alone can do it. I shall therefore not take the slightest part, either by word or deed, in anything which might affect what he is doing or the course he is pursuing. And in any case, with the democratic movement only twenty years old, among a people without any established traditions of any kind, I am thoroughly opposed to any denigration or smearing of the men who built the movement at great personal sacrifice, risking their lives and the lives and freedom of their followers at a time when there was little profit in sight — that explains a great deal of my attitude to Grantley. I was an undeviating advocate of leaving it to you, whatever private reservations one might have about your policies — and there were plenty, I assure you.

Now I see in this morning's paper what was being rumoured all over the place last week, not only that you were not coming to the Premier's Conference but that you or your government had asked the Conference not to discuss Federation.

Something has gone wrong in Jamaica. How in the name of Heaven could any politician ask his colleagues in a federation, at a time like this, with the Federation facing two major decisions made in Jamaica without consultation with anybody, how is it possible to ask that federation, or any aspect of it, not be discussed? For over a year now except for explosions at the Inter-Governmental Conference, everyone has kept hands off Jamaican politics. What is the result?

This is the result:

There is to be a debate and campaign in Jamaica on Federation. One side says: "Federation will destroy Jamaica." The other side says: "Federation will destroy Jamaica unless they give us all the safeguards which we will try for. Otherwise we too will take Jamaica out." This

is supposed to go on until the Working Committees report in September to a Conference which will decide on the safeguards demanded. That there are benefits to be derived from federation, that there are dangers for a seceding Jamaica, all this the people of Jamaica have never heard and are not to hear. I am totally and utterly opposed to any such procedure or anything which smacks of it. In my considered view the whole question is now wide open. If Jamaica will, or is likely to, secede, that is the very reason why those who have positive views on the Federation should make them known now. What has been taking place is a steady demoralisation of the whole population. At the present time there is taking place a particularly nauseating but characteristic episode. Bousquet has tabled a motion for discussing Federation in the House. At a time when people terribly want to hear something, the news is that the federal government is frantically trying to persuade Bousquet to take the motion off the order paper — lest something be said which should “offend” Jamaica. As the federation receives these blows all we can hear is either “Terrible”, “Dangers”, “Difficulties”, or nothing. That is the road to ruin and, what is worse, irreparable ruin.

I have had many dealings directly and indirectly with bourgeois nationalist politicians and publicists. Their trump card is always: I am a practical politician, people like you are theorists. (You have used it against me more than once. I bear no malice.) My own mind is very clear as to what was the “practical” politics on this occasion, and I mean “practical” for you.

1. Busta’s latest Jack-in-the-box politics gave the opportunity for a *federal* election. There had never been grounds for this before. There was now: to finish up with this nonsense once and for all. I would have put it on the line to the federal members: an agreed programme and we ask the West Indian people and Jamaica *as part of the West Indian people* to decide. For the first time I would have made the people in Jamaica and the West Indies *see* the Federation by asking the WIFLP to wage a federal campaign. The people of Jamaica would have recognised what federation was. They would have seen and heard the federationists from *every* island. Busta and his band would have been isolated. That kind of campaign he has never had to face. I am convinced and no one will ever convince me otherwise (I know the type) that his constant appeals to the lowest prejudices would have worn thin in the face of a solid and systematic battery of propaganda and agitation. (He withdraws one? OK. Let us make him withdraw all. His West Indian party would have fallen apart as it is falling apart on this issue already. If this is not practical politics, what is practical politics?) His Jamaican representatives would be isolated. You might say that it is easy to talk about an agreed programme. If you should say so, you would be quite wrong. There would be no need to agree on everything. But it is precisely because the whole of federal politics, with the single exception of Bill, consists of nothing else but jockeying for position and petty or at best insular advantages, that there can never be any agreement. People have to be lifted out of themselves and will give up their petty preoccupations only on the prospect of a larger vision. I

wouldn't bore you with examples. That is not for everyday. But if ever the West Indies needed such politics it is now. Busta would have reeled under the blow, and the DLP would have been in the most horrible mess.

Risky? Of course it was risky. So? And I shall now make it personal. One night in the House in Kingston you told me repeatedly: "I am a free man. I have put my party where I wanted it to be. This is my last lap. I can now do what I want."

Let us suppose you had to challenge your own party on a grave issue (which is the worst fate that can befall a politician); you stand to lose little and win everything. For my part I would have challenged them if it meant taking the field alone. The whole of the West Indies, all our friends in Britain, in the USA, in the UK, in Africa, would have risen to you. Win or lose, you would have crowned your career with an imperishable gesture, and everything that matters in the West Indies would have rallied to your support. What would you have lost? You would have had the satisfaction of knowing that you had raised the whole level of principled politics in the West Indies to a pitch from which it has been steadily slipping day after day ever since the federal inauguration. Its beneficial effect would have been incalculable. But all this is predicated on one issue: that you personally believe in Federation but are compromising on Confederation because you think that is the best that is now possible. I do not know.

As I have been writing I have wondered why I have written at such length, and with such freedom (Bill, for example, hasn't the slightest idea of much that I have written here). I know now that it is because I believe a break between us to be inevitable. I deeply regret it, and I hope you believe this. But I can see what is coming, nothing can stop it now, and before public positions are taken, I thought it best to let you know exactly what I think, as far as it is possible to be exact in these matters.

Yours very sincerely,
C.L.R.

The above letter aimed at forcing Mr Manley to recognise (a) that the persistent practice of ignoring the people of the West Indies would lead to "irreparable ruin"; (b) that the only way to counter Bustamante's empty abuse of Federation was by means of a programme; (c) to put forward concrete proposals which everybody could understand and to which all would have to say "yes" or "no". The key paragraph is the last. Mr Manley was President of the West Indian Federal Labour Party. I was the Secretary. I was indicating to him that unless he accepted the general line indicated here, I intended to prepare a more complete document along the same lines, take it to the WIFLP where, if it was not accepted, I would resign and take the political differences to the public. If he had accepted it, I planned, without fanfare, slowly but systematically to outline it as the road which the Federation was travelling. Unfortunately I had to resign from the editorship of *The Nation* whereupon Federation again became a matter of intrigue

between ministers and last-minute discussion with the Colonial Office, of which the public heard only the bickering and the results.

I cannot here give evidence of what happened after this letter. However, in my letter of resignation to PNM (4 July 1960), I said the following: "We have now won internal self-government, Chaguaramas seems pretty much in the bag and the Federation problem is settled." That is what I genuinely believed at the time. But pretty soon after I left, there began again the old politics which led straight to the present "ruin and irreparable ruin".

It is my firm conviction that if the West Indian politicians had put forward to the West Indian people a programme, or even a perspective, of economic development and made the people the centre of what they were thinking and doing, Mr Manley would have won the referendum and the general election. If the premier of Trinidad and Tobago had not sold out over Chaguaramas, if he had kept to the widely publicised aims of his campaign, his voice would have been the most powerful in the West Indies for a federation. Tens of thousands in every island would have poured out to see and hear and welcome the West Indian politician who had fought and won against the all-powerful Americans. The future rests with those who, in economics and politics, art, literature and social development, begin with and have always as their centre the great body of the West Indian people. This is the outstanding lesson of the twentieth century and my experience here is that precisely because of the previous neglect they have suffered and their great need, there is no more receptive people anywhere.

1961

Federation – What Now?

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

When I was thinking over what I would say and particularly how I would begin, for a moment the thought flashed across my mind that I might say "Fellow West Indians", and then I thought perhaps that, on an occasion like this, there might be sensitive people in the audience who would feel that perhaps I was trying to gild the appeal to reason with the gloss of sentiment. Therefore I withdrew from it. Perhaps according to how it goes I may be able, before I am finished, to address you as "Fellow West Indians" and to be certain of your reception.

I am very glad to know that the Chairman thinks that a "prominent person" like myself is a good omen for the development and progress of the Caribbean Society. I believe, however, that such prominence as I may enjoy on this particular subject is to be considered not only as an omen of progress; it may be an omen of danger also. Nevertheless, my reception in Jamaica this time even more than the last time has been extremely warm. I have been able to discuss federation with many people of different types, and out of these discussions there has always come some progress, if not in agreement at least in understanding. Such difficulties as I was warned about (and such as I myself felt) in tackling

a subject of this kind, at this time, have been dissipated. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that we are living through a momentous period. There are stages in the life of nations and of peoples, as well as of individuals, when decisions are taken which result in consequences that last for many years. I am quite certain that we in the West Indies face such decisions at this time.

I have come here in the hope not only of giving you a point of view which I have held for some time and which more or less is held in the Eastern Caribbean, but also to find out, by individual conversations, from your response to this meeting, and from the questions which no doubt will be asked: what is the sentiment of the people of Jamaica as far as it can be discerned by a person in my circumstances? This in order to be able to give some sort of report back. More than that I do not propose to do. If by any chance I should make any remark which can remotely be associated with or be thought to affect the actual political relations in Jamaica, please understand that such a remark would be on my part inadvertent: there are enough politicians to deal with these matters. I am more concerned here with the presentation and interchange of ideas. Not that I separate entirely the ideas from the practical political realities, not at all. I believe that ultimately the decision as to practical political matters is governed by the basic ideas which are held by the participants. But everything in its place. This evening, as you will see, I propose to put before you certain ideas. They are associated with political parties and political organisations. That does not in any way detract from their merit or demerit as ideas.

Now I want to begin from the conference, that recent conference which we have just had in Trinidad. The conference is looked upon by some as a failure and I think I have written that myself. It was not, however, in any sense a total failure. For the first time West Indians spoke to one another not under the supervision of the Colonial Office. They faced one another independently, and if the results were what they were, at least they have been brought face to face with the reality, which has not been affected in any way by any supervision or intervention from outside. At that conference the Jamaica delegation made a certain demand about representation by population. Those of you who read *The Gleaner* will remember a despatch by Mr Ulric Simmonds, in which he said that on a certain afternoon of the conference, Dr Williams proposed what amounted to 98 per cent of the Jamaican demand. This, however, was refused by the Jamaica delegation, whereupon Dr Williams withdrew the proposal that he had made. Now it does not take, I think, too much experience to know that when one delegation to a conference makes a proposal and is offered (according to a Jamaican writer) 98 per cent of that proposal and refuses it, I don't think it takes too much experience to see that what is really at stake is not numbers of representatives but different conceptions. Different conceptions are there in presence. If it were a question purely of representatives as such, the matter I believe would have been settled without much difficulty. And here let me say what I have said in and out of Trinidad and what I have written. For anyone to believe that the

Jamaica delegation, led by Mr Norman Manley, went down to the conference in Trinidad actuated by greedy or mean motives, with the intention of bludgeoning its wishes through its fellow delegates, is not only an absurdity but shows a very high disregard for the reputation of West Indian politics and politicians. Mr Manley's reputation in West Indian politics, and, as I have good reason to know, in England, is one of the brightest features of the political developments that the West Indies have undergone during the last twenty-one years. It will take a great deal (so it seems to me) for any responsible person to accuse him and his Cabinet of actions or motives which would smear them, not only in the present but the past work that they have done, which has been of such great benefit not only to Jamaica but to the West Indies as a whole. Secondly, not only for historical reasons but also from the point of view of sheer expediency, if that is the attitude that you have to the Jamaica delegation, if Jamaica must be an integral part of any federation that is to succeed and you believe that from the very beginning that is the quality of its representatives and that is the attitude they have brought to a discussion, it means in reality that as far as you are concerned all future discussion is either hopeless or is to be governed by this mean and petty attitude. That is a horrible perspective. I have repudiated it in the paper of which I am Editor and I intend to do so under all circumstances.

However, if you agree that there are deeper motives than the mere discussions of the particular percentage of representatives, it is necessary for us to make some attempt to find out what these are. I have striven to do so and I shall give you some rough idea of the conclusions that I have arrived at.

I gather that life in Jamaica has been on the whole, as compared with life in Trinidad, difficult and hard. It has been only within recent years that you have had the benefit of a bauxite industry, while over the last fifty years we have had the exceptional advantage of the oil industry which has fertilised all parts of our economy and our social relations. I gather also that over the years there has accumulated in Jamaica a feeling of frustration and a need for reorganising the national life, which burst out in 1938 to a degree that exceeded all similar manifestations in the rest of the West Indies. Between 1938 and 1954 there was a steady progress in political development but (this is what I have been given to understand and I hope I give no offence to members of the Democratic Labour Party here), I gather that even in the period when Sir Alexander Bustamante was Premier, there still remained a powerful flavour of Colonial Office control and Colonial Office lack of initiative in the development of Jamaican life and the Jamaican economy. So that during this period, from 1938 when so much that was accumulated broke out, between 1938 and 1954, the Jamaican people never at any time felt that they were on the move in this particular field, the reorganisation of the economy, which was so important to them.

I understand, further, that you have an extraordinary unemployment problem here, far exceeding that of any West Indian island; in addition, that the people are extremely sensitive to the idea of unemployment and

therefore in 1954 when Mr Manley began what has been a most astonishing programme of economic development, the Jamaican people for the first time felt that what they had been hoping for, and perhaps despairing of, was now in process of becoming. Between 1954 and 1959 I understand the national income was doubled, progress was made in many directions, there was an opening up and a sense of development and possibility. In addition to this, many members of the middle class in particular had the opportunity to expand their personalities, to take part in activity which was not only profitable but gave them a sense that they were at last doing something that was of benefit to their country; businessmen realised that self-government could be a very profitable thing. All this I am told was the result of that tremendous drive which began in 1954 and continued unabated, progressively, right up to 1958 and 1959; for all I know it still continues. It is this time when, for the first time after many years, and as a result of a great historical development, the people of Jamaica are aware of the fact that here at last they have their lives in their own hands and there are possibilities of solving problems which have been clutching at the throat for decades; it is at this time that they are asked to take these powers, which they have only recently enjoyed and recently understood the use of, to take these powers and hand them over to an alien power, an alien federation, a federal government at a great distance, which seems to have little power of its own, and which, as Jamaicans see it, has had little connection with and understanding of Jamaica. That is what I gather, and therefore we find in all sections of the community there is not only second thoughts but a certain revulsion against the easy handing over of what perhaps in 1952 and 1953 would not have caused so much difficulty. Jamaica, therefore, looks upon the Federation (when I say Jamaica I mean people in Jamaica, to various degrees), Jamaica sees the Federation as something that has to be looked upon with a certain fear, a certain suspicion. To Jamaicans it seems that they are giving up a new and very precious and very valuable reality for something that is extremely uncertain. That is the situation as I understand it, and that accounts for the fact that both the government party and the opposition are able to present a united front to the rest of the Caribbean on this question.

I am told that such is the feeling that has developed over recent years that even in the PNP itself, which is traditionally and theoretically pro-federationist, this feeling has penetrated, not only winning over certain members of the party but also, even in those who are most powerfully pro-federationist, causing hesitations and reconsiderations — in my opinion perfectly legitimate and not at all to be deplored; it is better that we should have them now than that we should have them alter when deeper ties are tied.

When, however, you look at Trinidad you see something entirely different. The Trinidad people had their national awakening in 1956. The party was formed in January, it was in power in September. In 1956, at the formation of the party, what were the ideas which were in common circulation all over the West Indies and to some degree all

over the world? They were the ideas of national independence, a European Common Market, integration of small units and even integration of larger units into a still larger whole. Federation had already been passed by the Trinidad Legislature; it was only a question of time. Dr Williams initiated his programme, the Development Programme, and in the organisation of his party, he, being what he is, established federation and national independence as integral and fundamental parts of the outlook of the PNM and all those who supported it. It follows therefore that the people in Trinidad, and the political elements in particular, associate their national awakening, their economic programme of development, their political advance, the whole national complex of ideas and hopes which are associated with the Party, they associate it naturally with federation and national independence.

Thus it is that when Jamaica and Trinidad face each other on this matter, you have two societies, using the same terms but in different processes in different stages of evolution. As I see it, the Jamaican, let us say the average Jamaican, may be inclined to look upon federation as something which will throw him backwards to a state from which he is emerging. To the Trinidadian, whose political life began in 1956, federation is only one of the stages along which the great new development is taking place. Under these conditions it is inevitable that there are grave difficulties, suspicions and problems for resolution, even when the two parties are using the same terms. That this has taken place is undoubtedly due to the fact that the ideas of federation, the problems of federation, the conditions of federation and the perspectives were never thoroughly discussed; they were never discussed at all, they were put forward in the most general form. So that when, owing to different political developments, these two protagonists meet and begin to discuss, there is no general overriding conception in which the individual and the insular unitary ideas can be resolved. We start so to speak afresh. In fact we start, we are just starting, we federate first and then the discussion as to what constitutes federation begins. Had the development been on the same economic and political level, more or less, the difficulties would not have been so great.

Now I propose here to state my own conception of federation. I happen to be in a most fortunate position in that respect. I came here to the West Indies in April 1958 and in June or July I was invited to British Guiana to speak on Federation. I had a series of meetings and I put forward a view of federation, which (in my innocence) I believed nearly all people in the West Indies subscribed to. I had heard that there had been some anti-federationist sentiments expressed by Sir Alexander Bustamante and his party in the March elections, but I dismissed this lightly. I supposed he was looking somewhere to get some votes in order to defeat the PNP. I was quite wrong, by the way, and the pleasant sniping that I used to have constantly at Sir Alexander and his peculiar political practices I have now stopped; I do not do that any more. It has become clear that what he had been saying in March

and what he has been saying later has to be taken seriously. But when I went to British Guiana and I spoke there I had little idea of this. Fortunately what I said was printed and I have a copy of the pamphlet here and I have handed it to the Chairman to check my quotations because I do not wish to stop to read anything. There I gave my definition of federation.

Now I want you to understand and to accept that this was done before any dispute arose between one concept and another concept. I said it because I had believed it for many years, because most of my friends abroad had come to these conclusions, had helped me to come to these conclusions. We had a great deal of experience of other federations and economic development in other territories similar to ours, and I thought that I was voicing an accepted opinion. This is the opinion, that

Federation is the means and the only means whereby the West Indies and British Guiana can accomplish the transition from colonisation to national independence, can create the basis of a new nation; and by reorganising the economic system and the national life give us our place in the modern community of nations....

If the Chairman will look on the next page he will see that I wasn't satisfied with that. I went on to say that the whole world now, after 300 years of a certain type of society, was making a change, it was in process of transition to something new. The West Indies would be able to take part in that transition by means of federation. And then I used a sentence which, if I had known what the future would be, I would not have used, but there it is, and I shall not back down from it.

That is what federation means and it will mean that or it will mean nothing.

Now, I think that it is very important and necessary to this debate, this great discussion, that I at any rate make clear to you the premises on which I made what now, even to me, seem these very extreme and perhaps even provocative statements. Though I made them in good faith and I still believe them, I perhaps would not put them forward now in exactly the same way, but there it is and I am not going to back down from it. I shall try to explain what were the motives and what were the ideas that moved me to take such a position. Quite recently in this university we have had the opportunity of discussing certain aspects of national consciousness of a cultural character and various other related matters. There is no need therefore for me to go into that at the present time. This evening I shall concentrate on the economic aspects of the matter.

I am going to take Jamaica. First of all, because I am speaking to Jamaicans: secondly, because Jamaica offers an example, in a very acute form, of the particular difficulties that the West Indies are in today, and will be in tomorrow; and thirdly, because, I think this is agreed on all sides, it is in Jamaica that the most energetic and the most determined attempts are being made to correct the difficulties, what I call under different circumstances, to clean up the mess which the imperialists are leaving behind.

What is the situation in Jamaica? I assure you it is not very different from the situation in various other underdeveloped countries, though of course individual details will vary. Your problem is, as it is in all the West Indian islands (and I am not going to keep on saying that. I want you to bear it in mind), to raise the level of production in what is essentially an agricultural economy, to raise the level of production and the general standard of life of the peasant, the farmer and the large number of those who live and work in the countryside. It is one of the greatest economic and political tasks that face mankind: over 75 per cent of the world's territory and population. The Russians have been trying to do it for thirty years. They are able to make rings round the moon but they cannot make rings round their agricultural problems on the countryside. After thirty years I believe they are still in serious difficulties, though not exactly the same difficulties as before because they now have the advantage of a tremendous development of industry. We have not got that in the West Indies. We are not likely to have it. Sending out numbers of well-meaning, hardworking agricultural instructors to the countryside to tell the farmer what to plant and when to plant and how to plant, that has to be done because you have to do something. But if I read the newspapers recently and I see the ideas that Mr Burke has on the subject and then the ideas that *The Gleaner* has on the subject and various discussions that I have with various people in the countryside of Trinidad, it is clear that you face a fundamental problem. It is not to be dealt with in sections and failures are not to be attributed to lack of marketing facilities, or this or that or the other. The problem is to raise the general standard of production on the countryside, to raise the general standard of living, and this requires *in the urban centres* a force, a level of production and a standard of civilisation equivalent to that of an advanced country. That is the problem and it is a problem which has not been solved in any single part of the world today. I recommend to you, some of you doubtless know it, the report of Mr Rao, now Principal of Delhi University, on Community Projects in India, the attempt to raise the standards not only of agriculture but of general living in the Indian village. His report I find very depressing. Read what is being attempted in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya. In all of them the result is much the same: great efforts and a certain amount of progress as long as people from outside are there, carrying on the various activities. But there is a slump almost immediately after they leave, and we in the West Indies face the same problem; it is one of the great problems of modern society. That is the problem that you face in Jamaica.

In addition to that you have unemployment to a degree that is not present in the other West Indies islands. It is not only a question of unemployment, it is a question of underemployment on the countryside. There is no country in the world with a greater underemployment on the countryside than Russia, despite the enormous advances. I can sum it up this way. It takes an advanced industry to raise substantially a backward agriculture. That is what we are facing — a tremendous problem and I don't see the resources in the

West Indies at the present time, under the present conditions, which can make a serious attempt — with some hope of real progress, to change this. But let us suppose that we are able to change it. Let us suppose that by mighty efforts we do make the necessary progress, a reasonable progress because that is all we can expect. What will we be doing? In addition to the unemployment which is so pressing we will then be faced with a commonplace of economics: thousands of those whom the higher production on the countryside would have relieved from working, will then be seeking employment in the urban centres. Every student who has had one year of economics knows that this is what happens. Therefore we have the necessity of establishing industries which are able to take care of the unemployed who will be relieved from the agricultural areas. And here those people who say that an economy of 1½ million is not so very different from an economy of 3 million in regard to establishing a market for such industries are not very far wrong. In so far as they see the problems they are quite right.* We face the prospect of establishing industries not only to raise the level of life in the agricultural areas, our fundamental problem, but to establish industries to take care of all our needs, and the agricultural needs, and the overflow from the agricultural areas. That is to say, we need industries which our local markets cannot possibly satisfy. We need industries in other words for export, and that is where we find ourselves when we pose an apparently simple and for us urgent problem of raising the level of life and production in the agricultural areas.

You know it is not the habit of politicians (and I do not blame them) to put these matters in their harsh and brutal realities before the voters to whom they speak. A politician has to say what he is doing to alleviate conditions, he has to compare this with what has been done in the past, it is necessary to compare the use that it is possible to make of the resources at his disposal. All that, I think, is quite legitimate. Nevertheless at certain times, and I think this is one (and, Mr Chairman, this is the type of audience), at certain times it is necessary to say these things; and then we can ask: what are the means whereby in Jamaica (and also in Trinidad) these fierce and dangerous problems, what are the means whereby we can make decisive progress, to cut down the dangers and open out perspectives of permanent advance? I would say that I would concentrate what we are doing today under the term: the Industrial Development Corporation.

Since I have come here I have seen many excellent documents I have been able to read consecutively the issues of your fine paper, *The West Indian Economist*, and I have a clearer view of the total West Indian situation than I had before I came. I mention the Industrial Development Corporation particularly because it is very active in Trinidad at the present time, and in one of the reviews published by the Economic and Social Research Department I read an article by Mr Brown of the Government Planning Unit, presented in 1957 at a

* Only in abstract theory. In actual fact, the million and a half gained by federation is of immense practical importance.

conference that was held here. There you find the philosophy of the Industrial Development Corporation very clearly and very ably expounded. It is a philosophy of government assistance, of government encouragement, of government facilitating the entry of industrial entrepreneurs; trying also to assist in the development of local entrepreneurs, both on the large scale and a small scale. Essentially it is governed by the fact that the initiative, the actual initiative is left to those entrepreneurs, particularly from outside, who see the possibility of making some profit by introducing an industry into the particular area. And the government will assist him in every way.

It will give him what is called Pioneer Status. It will relieve him of difficulties, it will make easy his task as far as possible, but essentially the initiative is from outside and the initiative is the initiative of making profit in a particular field that the industrialist thinks could be of benefit to him and the community but primarily of course to him. I looked upon your list the other day, I have seen it before, it is much the same as in Trinidad. You have the old staples: sugar, molasses, rum, etc., and then you have new ones: you have cement, you have in Jamaica a lot of shoes; you have in Trinidad beer and cigarettes, you have in Trinidad also fertiliser and so on. I say it without offence, I am speaking also of Trinidad, a heterogeneous collection of secondary industries of great value in what they are doing in comparison to what existed before they came, but I want to say, I hope as calmly as possible but nevertheless without deviating one inch from what I think, that I defy any economist of any standing to say that this type of economic development, despite all the energy and all the devotion and the care that is put into it and has undoubtedly been put into it by the Jamaica government during the last five years, I defy any economist to say that it can possibly offer any permanent solution to the ills and problems, both economic and social, which are piling up in economies of our kind today. The Industrial Development Corporation cannot do it. Neither here, nor in Trinidad, nor in Ceylon, nor in Burma, nor in Ghana, nor in Kenya nor anywhere else. It cannot be done along those lines. That is the problem that we face. It may be of some consolation to us to know that we face it with more than 75 per cent of the world's population.

Now I have to stop here a little and take care to guard against misunderstanding and misrepresentation. I am trying to give you some idea of why, without any conception at all that any dispute was going to arise, I made those statements about the necessity of federation, made them so sharply, so pointedly and without any reservation whatever; also, you ought to understand, I ought to say, that I am not making any proposals *now* for the solution of the crisis in the Federation. What I am about to say I have never said before in the West Indies, and it will take indeed an extremely paranoiac type of mind to think that what I tell you here this evening will be considered by the committees which are to meet in two or three weeks' time. It is quite clear therefore that I am putting forward *some ideas* which have some validity, I think, and which ought to be considered....

I believe that the economic ideas which I call the ideas of the

Industrial Development Corporation are not outmoded. I cannot imagine an economy in which they will not continue. But I believe we may have to move to a new stage, the stage of the State Plan.

We can no longer, with the enormous difficulties that we face, continue to depend upon such possibilities of profit as are seen by the roving eye of the industrialist; or perhaps to invite him here, or go to see him and tell him to come; or we get a present of two ships from Canada (or three ships), of \$750,000 from the American government, or twice that amount and a little something over from Colonial Development and Welfare, etc. No. I believe that the time has come for the State Plan. So far we have been clearing up the imperialist mess. The activity of the last years has been to prepare the ground for a new stage of the economy, and that is the economy of the State Plan. I believe that the governments of these territories have got to sit down and plan and decide, in view of the general level of social life and economic life, in view of the special situation on the countryside, in view of the dangerous political pressures which the unemployment and other problems are bringing to bear upon the government, they will have to decide what industries it will be necessary to establish and to what degree, irrespective of the traditional profit motive. If we had 150 years, if we were certain that we could go through the processes that Great Britain and others went through and, by means of individual private enterprise and slow developments, carry the economy forward, there would be no need for this telescoping of economic developments. But I see no possibility of individual entrepreneurs, either inside the West Indies or from outside the West Indies, developing the economy to a pitch at which it will be possible for us to feel that the economy is now a going concern and sure to move forward, taking up the increase in population as time goes on. I cannot see it being done by private enterprise in the old sense of the term. There has to be a set plan, in which the State, taking all needs into consideration, not merely the ordinary economic demands but the social necessities of the population, will decide on a programme, aiming by stages to try to raise the general level, to satisfy the urgent needs of the people and — this is very important because this is the political issue — to make an impatient people understand that some serious, tremendous, new and sustained effort is being made to satisfy the demands which are increasing every day.

Now I may be asked what are these industries and to what extent, and I reply very cheerfully that I do not know. If you give me two or three economists and six months and a good bit of money, I would turn up with something after that. I am speaking here of an economic procedure. I have some ideas. I will not burden you with them at all; that is not necessary. But we will have to decide exactly what we want, exactly in relation to the unemployment, in relation to the possibilities of export, in relation to the raising of the social level of the community as a whole.

For example, a matter that is as important as the raising of the general level of productivity and life on the countryside involves the

reorganisation of the whole educational system in the West Indies. Modern agriculture, for a people so far behind as we are and so limited in resources and size, cannot possibly be successful without widespread scientific education. That is not something that, with the limited resources at our disposal, we can go to the countryside and try to fix by exhortation and effort.

It is the whole economy that has to be reorganised before you can tackle agriculture with any hope of reasonable success. It requires first of all a State Plan. We have not got the resources and the Industrial Development Corporation type of thinking and of economy (which has been very valuable and will continue to be valuable) is now insufficient. What is to be done and who is to do it? The government, a federal government, has got to view the situation as a whole, apply and put its case, a fundamental case, not asking for economic aid in general, or to investigate the necessities, and that or the other specific form of aid, but presenting a social problem and outlining a social solution, though fundamentally in economic terms. This it will present to the United Nations, to those international financial organisations which proliferate all over the place today, to the British government, to the United States government, to the Canadian government and very probably to other governments such as Western Germany. It has to make them understand that it is demanding economic assistance but not in terms of the old aid, a little dribble here and a little dribble there, and not in terms of the profit that the ordinary entrepreneur looks for. It is demanding collaboration for the social reorganisation and stabilisation of a whole community. It demands this because it is able to say (and here again the average politician is not able to say this so freely): "Unless we establish our economy on a solid foundation, you should have in mind that these West Indian territories, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Venezuela, show us what is the likely fate of those areas, whether poor as Haiti or rich as Venezuela, which have not in time taken the necessary measures to organise their economies and the social relations of their populations."

I do not believe that going to British universities and reading about the history of Haiti as a symbol of un-British disorder, or having a mace and prayers according to the method of the House of Commons, I do not believe that these are the fundamental bases of democracy in any part of the world and least of all in the West Indies. [*Loud applause.*] Democracy will have to be fought for, and it will have to be fought for fundamentally on economic grounds which must be the basis of the whole superstructure.

I am not proposing, when I say the State Plan, that the State itself will undertake the organisation of industry. That, at best, is a very dangerous business and we are in no position to embark upon any such experiments. My considered view is that we should make an approach to certain of the well-established firms abroad (I shall not call any names but certain automobile firms, for example, in the United States, some of the great chemical industrial organisations in Germany, firms in Great Britain and various others), and seek to establish with them

a certain method of procedure. Thereby numbers of our citizens would be trained in these organisations, they in turn will establish what is necessary here, within the objective limits, for a number of years (at the very least the prospects should be ten years). We should be able to say clearly that we are not able to return this in the form of profit in the ordinary sense of the word, but that first of all a stable society is a contribution to world economy and world politics, and, secondly, with the general raising of the industrial and social level of the community, after a number of years there is created a basis for the interchange of products and economic development far exceeding the cement, the fertiliser, the toilet paper [*voices: "Brassières"*], brassières, and similar industries [*general laughter*].

That is my conception. I cannot go into it with you further now but there is no other way. What else is there? Are we to live forever on a sugar quota, begging that our citrus be not driven from the British market by superior American citrus, bananas here today and gone tomorrow, everything dependent upon Great Britain accepting year after year thousands of our surplus population? This will have to be worked out in detail. This is no petty, empirical scheme. I notice that Myrdal and Fraenkel who take a great interest in modern economic theories say that they are looking to some of the economists in the underdeveloped countries to produce theories of economic development. The practical planning and theoretical elaboration of a proposal of this kind could be of value to planners and economists the world over. For us it is the only way, the only reasonable way.

There is another way. Yes, there is. If all of us here made up our minds to devote ourselves to the building of a Communist Party of some 20 or 30 thousand people who would march on Government House, etc., then the billions and the technical aid would come pouring in. They send them at once, the moment there are sufficient Communists around. This is an attempt to prevent us having to go to that extreme, because first of all it is likely to be expensive all round, and, secondly, there is no reason to expect that upon that basis some reasonable and rational solution of our problems can be established.

I repeat once more, this is my contribution to the great discussion, the great debate on federation. It is what I have in mind, it is inherent in my general ideas. I need not go into more detail to show why I spoke so sharply about federation as the only way because I cannot conceive of a plan of this kind being carried out by separate units or even by two units. That would mean at once competition between the two and a divided reception abroad. I have no illusions about how difficult this will be in all circumstances; to approach it as two federations is to ensure failure.

Let us now go back a little into the history of the question so that we can understand why certain things were done and why there were done in a certain way. We all believed, and I believe everybody in the West Indies believed, that we had similar ideas of federating. In April or in May this year we received information from Mr Manley, we saw in the press and it was circulated, that Jamaica was going to demand

at a coming conference parliamentary representation in proportion to population, removal of industry from the control of the federal government, removal of taxation from the control of the federal government, etc. There was no theoretical presentation, no analysis. You can understand that we were very much startled. Under these circumstances Dr Williams did what I thought he was quite right in doing. He said the basic positions of federation have never been stated at all. Nowhere is there anything else but general ideas that the federal government must unify the economies and so forth. There are some general statements in the Election Manifesto of 1958 but in the face of Jamaica's demands it is necessary for fundamental premises to be stated. He had been working on the revision of the Federal Constitution and I remember hearing him say that he wanted to speak in the Legislature for about two hours, etc., but that his Ministers were pressing him: "You say everything now, it is necessary to say it now, because in the face of what seems to be going on in the minds of the Jamaican people, it is necessary for us to state our full position. Otherwise the position will go by default because it has never been stated anywhere." That is the reason why Dr Williams's speech in the Legislature took the form that it did, and that is the reason also for the presentation of *The Economics of Nationhood*. All of us had neglected these things and as a result a spectre of division had suddenly arisen. Dr Williams was meeting a specific challenge, and it seemed to be a very serious challenge, to the very fundamentals of the ideas on federation that had hitherto been held.

I do not see why the Jamaicans could not have second thoughts on the idea of federation. I am hoping now that they will even have third thoughts. The change is a fact, and once we have seen, as I think I have seen, that it has solid economic and social reasons, it is a legitimate fact to be dealt with. But I hope you will equally look upon as absolutely legitimate our determination to maintain and expound the original position particularly in face of the assault made upon it. I do not think Dr Williams should be abused or even blamed for what he has done. I think merely by stating his position with the utmost clarity and particularly by stating figures in *The Economics of Nationhood* he has made a valuable contribution to the whole discussion, above all because it means that now the discussion is going to take place not only around theoretical grounds but on the basis of concrete proposals.

I do not believe that any of those who prepared those figures under the direction of the Doctor or the Doctor himself would stand by them absolutely. I do not think so. I have heard it said, for example, that if a centralised government is to function in the way these documents envisaged, the 143 million dollars which is suggested as a basis for the revenues of the federal government, that figure is much too small. It may be so; I do not know. I have heard it said, it has been told me by some most responsible quarters, that if you look at the figures it might seem that Trinidad and the other islands and Jamaica are being called upon to make sacrifices in a proportionate degree, but that if anyone is thoroughly aware of the realities of the different economies he would

see that the demands, the sacrifices and the dangers that are placed upon the Jamaican economy by those figures which appear to be proportionate are infinitely greater than those which are placed upon the Trinidad economy by the figures which deal with Trinidad. It may be so; I do not know. We are just beginning. What I do know is that it is necessary for us to get our fundamental positions and ideas clear and correct, for it is only then that we will be able to move forward.

And now I touch perhaps just for a moment what may be a matter which affects political thinking in Jamaica, but I think when you hear it you will agree that it is legitimate that I do so. I have spoken to many people in Jamaica since I have been here. I have heard many points of view and strange to say I have not heard, at least in private conversation, any violent denunciation of the Trinidad position. There has been disagreement, but as someone told me: "We went along all the time and suddenly we turn up with something new. If you all are startled, well, after all, it is not surprising." Nevertheless there is one thing which I have not heard and if there is one thing that I want you to take out of this hall it is this which I can say now. Dr Williams has made it absolutely clear that his immediate and undeviating demand is for a declaration of national independence on 22 April — it is not a mythical date, it is the anniversary of the inauguration of the Federation. But he goes on to say that after that declaration, the Constitution, the question of customs union, the question of fiscal problems, the questions of the powers of the centralised government, all the questions which we are debating, can then be discussed. He says that all this will take two or three years and so at the end of the five years of the present federal government we shall then be in a position fully to embark upon the new stage of our independence. I confess that I feel extremely angry that this, which puts an immediate end to all ideas of Jamaica or Barbados or anybody being rushed into some situation which throws their economic life into disorder, etc., I feel extremely angry that this is never referred to in the discussion which I have had with people here. One well known public man asked me: "Did he actually say so in so many words?" I said: "He actually said so in so many words." You see what that means. It means that the discussion has just begun and if somebody complains that he is being "rushed" into something that is to be discussed and negotiated for three years, it is obvious that he is not complaining about the rushing but he is complaining about the thing itself. You will note the very way in which I have put forward what I certainly consider fundamental ideas about federation shows that nobody, none of us in the Eastern Caribbean is moved by any terrific spirit of urgency, of any anxiety, of excitement to promulgate ideas and to push people, least of all an economy, into them. First of all that is a very difficult thing to do. In fact you cannot do it. If they say that they are not going to, what can you do? For the time being we are discussing. Let us discuss.

I want to take up now for a minute or two this question of national independence in relation to the economic procedure I have outlined to you. Is it possible for us to envisage such a plan, is it possible for us

to think about it, is it possible for us to prepare for it, is it possible for us to talk to people abroad about it without being politically independent? That, too, is an economic question. That is so far as the external approach is concerned. But what about the internal approach? Is it possible to make such a plan purely by economists sitting down in their rooms and handing blueprints to politicians to speak about? Such a plan, the reorganisation of the national economy and the reorganisation of the national life, I cannot see any such plan without the mobilisation, the education of the population as to what is being proposed. It will have to mean ultimately decisions as to where certain of the more fundamental industries will have to be placed. It will involve selection of numbers of people for training abroad and at home. It will involve transfers of population. It will involve a reversal of the roles of government and people where in the West Indies day after day the demands of the population upon the government continue to increase in size and scope. In order to reorganise ourselves that movement has to be reversed; the government must be in a position to make demands upon the population. Am I being utopian and mystical? Tell me, please. In every great national reorganisation that has taken place, either in the historical past, the French revolution, the American revolution; or today, Ghana, India, all over the world; what took place in Britain during the war, and when the war was finished the period of austerity in which they gradually rebuilt the economy; that iron restraint that was exercised by millions of workers in Western Germany in order to rebuild the shattered economy until it reached a certain stage; haven't we reached a stage in our existence, with the idea of federation and national independence, when our political leaders have to recognise the necessity of making demands upon the people, for energy, for concentration, for a greater effort and even (to some degree) for tightening up of the belt by some in the interest of consolidation and establishing a sound and stable basis for the future development of our economy and our social life? If you say no, it means that you are saying that West Indians are fundamentally different from other people, a doctrine that I have contested all my life and with great success. [*Laughter and applause.*] We have now reached such a stage for national advance; in the previous twenty-one years, from 1938 to 1959, twenty-one years, we have been clearing the way, we have been preparing ourselves for the transition from colonialism to independence.... That is what I meant when I spoke of the reorganisation of the national economy, the reorganisation of the national life and taking our place as a modern civilised community. Otherwise we have the flag and we have the national anthem and we have an enormous number of officials running up and down and in and out, but we remain essentially colonial, with the colonial mentality, because the social, geographical, economic and even the historical surroundings of colonialism remain with us on every side. We have to move out of it and I am suggesting one sure way out of it.

... It is necessary for us to have the vision and the ideas, it is necessary

for us to have the broad and the free concepts in order to be able to carry out our material tasks. Statistics of imports and exports, percentages of taxation, numbers of representatives in a House of Parliament, these things are important; but they must be the servants, not the masters, in the road to a federated nation and national independence. [*Loud applause.*] If they are masters and not servants they become burdens and obstacles. We are aware of the necessity for long debate, for bargaining, for hard negotiation. We are aware of the great difficulties and the uncharted seas which a federation, even after the most careful preparation, must face. To join a federation and to put all your resources as far as reasonable at its disposal cannot be a matter of calculation only. It must be an act of will and an act of faith and that is what I find has somewhat gone down over the past years. I am not afraid of bargaining, I am not afraid of the negotiations, I am not afraid of the conflicts; they are inevitable and necessary and indeed valuable as a means of arriving at common understanding. But unless they are governed by some general conceptions, some fundamental premises and some fundamental perspectives, they degenerate into mean and unfortunate squabbles.

It is with the idea of trying to raise the general conception, to give us a broader perspective which I perhaps have been able to have because I have not been involved in the struggles that you have been in; perhaps that is the reason, it doesn't matter. That is what I have been trying to do this evening. I am thankful, I am glad for the patience and the attention with which you have listened. It is very gratifying. I assure you that when I take back what I shall take back to Trinidad and the Eastern Caribbean it will be listened to with the same patience and attention. That may not be too much but it is a lot. It is as much as we can expect at the present time and therefore we should be satisfied with it.

1959

The Battle for Survival

[These extracts are from the fifth in a series of six lectures delivered between 8 and 25 August 1960 at the Trinidad Public Library in its Adult Education programme. James at that time was the editor of The Nation, newspaper of the Peoples National Movement. This party, founded by his old friend Eric Williams, was to lead Trinidad to national independence, but an ideological split developed between James and Williams and after these lectures were published in Trinidad in 1960 under the title Modern Politics the book was for many years suppressed by Williams. James says: "Modern Politics means a lot to me personally. I did not prepare (the lectures) but faced a home audience, so to speak, and just spoke as I felt and as they responded."]

What is the good life? I do not propose to preach any sermons here. Please get that out of your minds entirely. I am speaking about the good life from the point of view of society. It is a difficult question and it is made more difficult by the follies and inanities of statesmen. Let us presume for the sake of charity that it is political necessity (their necessity) which makes them talk so much nonsense. For example, Mr Butler, who is an able man at his own British politics, rebuilt the political perspectives of the Conservative Party after its defeat in 1945 — a thing that Mr Churchill could not possibly do; but Mr Butler has told the people in Britain that in twenty-five years' time — a quarter of a century — the standard of living will be doubled. It is the kind of inanity that I want to warn you against and I would be glad if, when you hear it, you really express yourself, not offensively, but with the necessary contempt and scorn. That statement is without meaning. This is 1960. Fifty years ago, 1910. I am sure that the amount of goods, the quantity of services that were at the disposal of the average worker in a particular country were more or less about half what they are today. You know that in your own lives: what your fathers and grandfathers lived by, the goods and services they had were small in comparison with what you have today. That is the situation in Europe and in Britain as a whole. Has that solved anything — the doubling of the standard of living, what you have at your disposal to use, the goods and services which are twice what they were fifty years ago? Has that solved any social or political problems? The social and political problems are today worse, more acute, than ever they were in 1910. But, you see, when he says in twenty-five years "we" will double the standard of living, he thinks that he will have doubled the number of votes for the Conservative Party, because, you see, his party, if left in power, will have been the one who will have done that for the workers. It is the kind of quantitative analysis, vulgar materialism — materialism of the most vulgar type — which makes absolute ruin of any attempt to form any sociological or social analysis of the development of society. People today are concerned with whether they will be able to live at all in twenty-five years' time.

The average Greek must have lived on what I expect would be today about fifteen or twenty-five cents a day. The houses in which they lived

were extremely simple; the territory of Greece was very unproductive — chiefly dried fish, olives and olive oil, dried fruits. The houses were notoriously commonplace — four or five rooms, somewhere in the back for servants. But when you walked out in the streets of Athens you could see Plato, Aristotle, Pericles, Socrates, Phidias, Aeschylus, Sophocles and many more of that stamp, all at the same time, and they were active in the daily life of the city.

The question, therefore, of what is the good life is not to be judged by quantity of goods. What I said at the beginning is the most important, that community between the individual and the state, the sense that he belongs to the state and the state belongs to him. Rousseau, if you remember, expressed it with great violence. He said, "Before we have any kind of government, we have agreed to meet together, to work together, and I take my liberty, which is mine, my property, and I give it to the government along with yours, so that when I obey that government I am in reality obeying myself." That, in my opinion, was the greatest strength of the city-state and the great strength of the Greek individual — the basis of a good life. It is hard for us to understand, but a Greek citizen could not conceive of his individuality apart from the *polis*, the city-state. It made no sense to him to think of it otherwise; and recently I have been reading a modern writer on the Greek city-state who says that even when there was no democracy, when there was an oligarchy (government of the rich) or monarchy (government of a king) or aristocracy (government of the nobles), even under these diverse régimes, the Greek had it in his head that the state was his and that the state belonged to him and he belonged to the state. If you observe their temples and their statues, it was centuries before the Greek ever put up a statue away from a temple. He would not put a statue in the middle of the square out there. The temple represented the state; and in the niches of the temple he would put statues; but the idea of a statue, i.e. an individual, somewhere else away from the building which symbolises the state was something utterly foreign to him.

There the good life for the individual citizen begins. Today we do not see much of that. We do not see that very much except in periods of revolution when people get together behind a programme and leaders. It is very rarely the state, an actual government. Sometimes it is a political party, sometimes it is a leader; and then you get an example again of what Rousseau means when he says that if the minority has to obey the majority merely because it is a majority, that is not liberty, that is not freedom. It may sound fantastic; it is not at all. Rousseau is insisting that the majority must represent the general will, and even if the minority is hostile but the majority represents the general will and the political leader or a political party most obviously represents the general will, then the minority must obey the majority because the general will is being expressed. The general will is expressed when its political form makes the individual feel himself part of the community. A mere majority vote over a minority — Rousseau and Hegel and others make it clear that when you have to obey because they have the

police; they put you in jail if you don't. But strictly speaking, from a philosophical point of view, that is not democracy; that is not liberty. I grant you that this is not easy, you have to grapple with it and discuss it and work it out. (Think of your own recent history.) A minority, that is to say a group that finds itself in opposition, can submit itself and obey when it feels that the majority represents and is building a national community. Otherwise one big gang has power over a small gang, that is all. This, I must warn you, is the philosophical approach. But without this you cannot understand politics. And what is philosophy today becomes reality tomorrow.

I am not going into Hegel's philosophical methods and what constitutes the good life, the good citizen. I cannot do it; it is too much, it would need six lectures by itself. But I will give you his conclusions. They are stated in very profound philosophical form, but I think we can make a beginning and I shall give you one or two examples.

Human society is an organism; and he says that contradiction, not harmonious increase or decrease, is the creative moving principle of history. There must be opposition, contradiction — not necessarily contradiction amounting to antagonism, but difference, obstacles to be overcome. Without that there is no movement, there is only stagnation and decay. That was why the Greek city-states moved so far and so fast, and that is my hope for the development of the West Indies too. Those states were so small that everybody had a grasp of what was going on. Nobody was backward; nobody was remote; nobody was far in the country; and people in the West Indies are even closer because we have methods of transport that bring us very rapidly together. It was within this narrow range that with great violence of conflict and so forth the Greek state leapt from social position to social position and made its marvellous discoveries and inventions. That is the moving force, the creative movement in historical development. That is the first point.

Another point. All development takes place by means of self-movement, not organisation or direction by external forces. It is within the organism itself, i.e. within the society, that there must be realised new motives, new possibilities. The citizen is alive when he feels that he himself in his own national community is overcoming difficulties. He has a sense of moving forward through the struggle of antagonisms or contradictions and difficulties within the society, not by fighting against external forces.

Let me stop for a moment and give you one sharp example of that. We as West Indians feel that in fighting for the return of Chaguaramas and for self-government against British imperialism and so forth, we are fighting real political struggles. In a sense that is true. When the British go and the Americans go and the British flag comes down and the West Indian flag goes up and all face one another — it is then you are going to see real politics. That is not to say that what has happened up to now is not real. It is very real, but it is preliminary. When all that is achieved, then the fundamental forces inside this country, as in every country, will begin to show themselves. In fact, Lenin's doctrine was, "We do not want to have imperialism; we want to get the imperialists

out in order to carry on this struggle inside, free from interference by all these people." If I may venture a prediction based on historical experience, the exhilaration based on successful anti-imperialist struggle rapidly declines and a far more solidly based new social movement begins.

Now we come to the tremendous jump that Hegel makes and that Marx and the others follow. *It is not the world of nature that faces modern man.* When Descartes, Copernicus, Bacon, the Royal Scientific Society of England, Spinoza and Hume and the rest of them, and early capitalism, early science, began, they were fighting to overcome nature and to learn to discipline nature and to turn nature to the uses of men. That was the struggle for the beginning of the modern world. But not today. Today man has not conquered nature in general (you will never be able to conquer nature), but he is able to bend it, substantial qualities of it, to his own purposes; and the problem in the world today is not what it was for many centuries. You remember our friend St John said there must be no sea because to cross the sea with their small boats was very troublesome and dangerous; also fruit trees would not bear once a year, but every month. You understand what he was driving at. The problem for centuries was to master nature. Not so today. The problem in the eyes of Hegel and in the eyes of Marx is the mass of accumulated wealth and scientific knowledge which man has built out of nature. That is the problem. It is difficult to see in the West Indies and in underdeveloped countries because we are still struggling to get some potatoes and to catch some fish and so on. But in the modern world today that is not the problem. In ten or twenty years it would be possible to feed adequately the whole population in the world. That will be no problem. The problem is how to handle, how to master the mass of accumulated wealth, the mass of accumulated scientific knowledge which exist in the world today. That knowledge is driving us to world suicide. Capital, I repeat, controls us. We do not control it.

This is so important that it is worthwhile going over once more. Capital controls man. Man does not control capital. And this has reached such a stage that the great masses of men live in fear and anxiety. The good life for a modern citizen is impossible. We feel it here, but it is the great centres of population and industry that feel it most, and every human being is affected far more than he is consciously aware of.

Let us look at the movement of capitalist production again. You remember my analysis of a national economy as being 15 to 1, capital to labour; 8 to 1; 3 to 1, etc. You remember too it is the competition to improve this ratio which is the driving force of capital. The trotskyists say Russia is a workers' state because private capital is eliminated. We say that, private capital or no private capital, this murderous competition goes on. Russia cannot ever stop to use its advance for the benefit of the people. That is subsidiary. It has to get rid of a perfectly valuable plant, etc., to keep up with America, and vice versa. And until we have international socialism, that will go on. The

mass of accumulated wealth, knowledge, science, constantly preparing the basis for new weapons, new organisation of industry, new processes, prevent men ever being able to stop. They have no choice. The good life for the citizen is in these circumstances impossible, even when he has enough to eat. Capital, the capital relation, is the relation of men who have nothing to sell but their labour-power, and men who control or own the means of production. It was not always so. In the best periods of the Middle Ages, for example, the peasant owned his land, the workman, the artisan, owned his tools. They controlled and ordered their own activity. It is interesting to note that England in those days was known as "Merrie England". Nobody would call the English today merry. Capital, you see, can transform national character.

The solution, marxists say, is to put all this wealth under the control of the men who work in it. Then, and only then, will the mass of accumulated wealth and scientific knowledge be used for the benefit of the great mass of mankind. Otherwise you have value-production. As long as the wealth and knowledge are being guided by people who are concerned with preserving their position and their managerial status, this fanatical competition will continue, and man will constantly produce more means of production, and constantly improve means of production; and now they have become means of destruction pure and simple.

I hope nobody believes that they really want to spend weekends on the moon. They are not really interested in that. You saw the other day that a satellite has been brought down in Russia with two dogs in it. Everybody is talking about the dogs; that is not in the slightest degree important. What is important is that it was brought down in a particular spot. They are frantically trying in Russia to have this thing going round and round so as to be able to bring it down when they please at a particular spot that they please; and you do not have to know too much geography to know which is the spot they wish to bring it down at. [*Laughter.*] But in the United States they are busy morning, noon and night with exactly the same; and it will not be very long, in fact I do not know if it is not happening already, that we will be living an existence in which these two will have these things going round and round; and the next thing now is not to have yours going round and to bring it down where you want, but to prevent his, to stop it and bring it down back where it came from. [*Laughter.*] That is where we are. And you get the fundamental point that Hegel makes and Marx follows. He says, "It is not the struggle with nature, it is not a struggle for food; it is not the struggle to overcome barriers, the seas, the rivers or to produce power or heat." They say that is not the problem any more. The real problem is to control this mass of machinery and scientific knowledge which is running away with us. I have indicated the marxist solution. What other is there? I know of none. Our rulers of the great and dominant states are bankrupt, with no perspective but war and destruction. Is that so or not?

What is the good life? An individual life cannot be comfortable and easy or creative unless it is in harmony to some degree with the society

in which it lives. The individual must have a sense of community with the state. That is where we began. And that today is impossible. We tend to think of the good life in terms of individual well-being, personal progress, health, love, family life, success, physical and spiritual fulfilment. The whole point is that far more than we are consciously aware of these are matters of our relation to society.

I am not saying that the individual human being is consciously striving to adjust himself to society. Not at all. Since the days of Aristotle and even long before, the philosophers have understood that man seeks happiness and seeks to avoid misery; it is as simple as that. Only that is not at all an easy thing in a complicated world. The thing to understand is that progress is not simply the increased use of goods. That is utility — utilitarianism. That was the doctrine essentially of the men of the eighteenth century. But progress is the incorporation into the social and individual personality of the stage that society as a whole has reached, which means that a man must feel that he has at his disposal education, capacity and ability to handle the discoveries of his particular age. He need not have a great deal of money to be able to do that. He need not pile up a quantity of large houses with forty rooms, and a great deal of money and drinks. What a man needs is to eat and drink, and to eat and drink satisfactorily by modern standards is very little. That is not the problem. But he must be able to use, to handle, to have at his disposal the greatest discoveries, the latest discoveries which enhance and develop a man's social personality. An individual personality cannot live a satisfactory life if he is constantly aware of great new discoveries and inventions and possibilities around him from which he is excluded, worse still, that these are threatening him with destruction. The peasant of the Middle Ages did not have very much in comparison to what a modern farmer has; the artisan in his guild did not have for his use what the modern worker has. But he understood and controlled what he was doing. We, the great majority, do not. Marxism demands a universal education of all men in the achievements of modern society. It can be done, easily, but only when the masses of men and women are in control of society. Today a minority has as its first concern the preservation of its rights and its privileges, i.e. the maintenance of the capital relation.

So you see the good life demands a feeling that you are moving, you and your children. You must have a sense of movement and of overcoming difficulties within your organism; and if you are doing that, it does not matter what your wages are as long as you have a certain elementary level of material welfare. You must have a sense of movement, the sense of activity, the sense of being able to use or be on the way towards understanding and controlling what makes your life. I do not mean gadgets the way the Americans play with things; I mean things that really matter. This is your personality; this is your social personality; and when this is taking place, although in certain countries they may have two or three times the amount of goods and utilities that you have, yet you can have the good life. You go to a country like Ghana where the general level is even lower than what it is here, but

you look at the people, you listen to them, you see what they are doing; you get a sense of movement and activity; they are going somewhere. They will have troubles, of course; that does not matter. The Greeks had plenty of troubles.

An American woman told me once that she forgot herself and told an audience of white women in the United States — she was a Negro woman — speaking to them she said, “When I look at you all, I am sorry for you because although whites are oppressing us and giving us trouble, I am actively on the move; every morning I am doing something, but you are all just sitting down there watching.” It is not the complete truth, but it is a great part of the truth. This is some idea of what I mean by what is the good life — the individual in relation to society. It is not, it never has been, merely a question of what the vulgarians call “raising the standard of living”. Men are not pigs to be fattened....

Now I don't want to give the impression in these talks that it is economic relations alone that are decisive. Life is a totality. All we say is that economic relations are the basis. You have to begin there. Why? Because for marxists economic relations are between people and people; property relations are relations between people and things. And the relations between people and people, between managers and workers in production, are for us marxists decisive. For example, there are bitter conflicts over the distribution of the product, who will get how much, the division in consumption. Marxism says that if in the process of production there is domination of one set of people, workers, by managers (or owners), then consumption, the distribution of the product, will follow the relations of production, domination of one section of society by another. And we believe that although the connection is not direct, in all aspects of social life, remote though they may be from production, the influence of production relations is felt.

That is one of the reasons why I introduce the exploitation of sex, the exploitation of class and the exploitation of race. I wish to deal very briefly with each of them from a political point of view as to the relation between the traditional society under which we live and the new society which I believe is necessary if society is not to collapse completely. For many centuries women were the most oppressed section of society and it is common knowledge, common talk, writing among philosophers, that a society was usually to be judged by the position that women occupied in it. And by the way, I would like to say that the nineteenth-century belief that the ancient Greek society treated its women very badly has now been proved to be quite false. These nineteenth-century writers had it in their heads and they transferred it to the history they were studying.

Within recent years, however, particularly in the United States, women have won every conceivable legal equality that it is possible to have. Not in England. In England women are working side by side with the men in the factory; they do the same work morning and afternoon but at the end of the week he gets more pay than she and he insists upon

it. He gives some rigmarole story that women are either wife, which means they get money from their husbands, or they are not married, that means they are living at home; and he, the man, has responsibilities. Whatever the reason, that is the differentiation. In America it does not exist, legally. But when you examine it this is what happens. There are certain industries — radio, television and such like — which are practically exclusively reserved for women, and whereas a man in one of the big plants will get sixty or seventy dollars a week, the women in these plants get thirty-five dollars a week. So that the segregation is taking place and the discrimination, although not as crudely and as openly as in Great Britain. Now you must understand in the United States where the sentiment of equality is extremely powerful, this kind of discrimination breeds a fury in the women who are submitted to it of which you have little conception.

But there are even greater problems. There is the question of the relation between men and women. This society states that they are equal; middle-class women in particular go to universities and have a life of complete freedom; they have their own latchkeys; they drive motor cars about; they go to school, they take exams, they don't take exams; they go to Europe; they do exactly as they please. When they come out of the university they marry and then almost automatically — you should read the writings of Pearl Buck on this question — almost automatically from the sheer weight of the tradition of society, from the functions that men perform, from the conceptions that men still have in their minds of the relationship of men to women, they find themselves at twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, in a position of subordination to which they have not been accustomed from the time that they went to school until they left university. The result is a crisis in the relations between men and women in the United States beyond belief. Everybody knows it. It is called "the sex war". I do not know if any of you have met it before or have been reading about it. Europeans and the rest, who are more accustomed to taking things as they are, are astonished at this — at the fact that it is in the country where the women have the greatest amount of freedom; where they have all legal freedom, that the relationship between the sexes has reached the stage that it has. But there is more. A whole lot of women went into the factory during the war; the men had to go to fight and the women went into the factories and they learnt to work; they learnt freedom; they learnt association with other people; they learnt independence that comes from doing work with a great number of others, and at the end of the war they did not want to go back home. However, some of them went and even some of those who stayed have been doing their best not to be thrown back again into the narrow, circumscribed life of bringing up the children, removed from the freedoms and associations and opportunities of learning which they had during the years of the war and the years in the factory. They have acquired a tremendous sense of independence. Divorce is easy and free; practically free. There is no problem in many states. You get lodgings quire easily. The subordinations — when I was a young man, a woman

with six or eight children had to take it from a man who beat her and spent all his money on drink; that is not the situation in the United States. If a woman is determined not to put up with any ill-treatment of that kind, she can quite often get out of it. The fact is that she can discipline the man's attitude towards her. He does the best that he can. A new problem, from what I gather, has now arisen all over the United States: a man is able to have a certain attitude to a woman if he is the dominant personality and it is accepted as such; but if he grows up as the dominant personality, if in marriage his conception is that of the dominant personality, and then he meets a wife who is quite as familiar in factory business and general activities as himself, he does not know exactly where he stands; and many young men in the United States are in a serious crisis as to exactly what their attitude should be towards the women to whom they are married. Their fathers had no problem; their grandfathers had still less. A woman had to do what she was told; that was very simple. But today, as in so many other things, the old standards have gone, but new standards have not been established, with the result that now in the United States, in all spheres of society, there is a crisis such as you have never had before in the relations of male and female. And this takes place precisely because women have economic opportunities and legal freedom and even social freedom to a degree greater than in most other countries.

What is going to solve that? It is the belief of the marxists that the whole society has run down; that it is not an easy problem even to define clearly, these intimate relations, but that, in the last analysis, crises in intimate relations of this kind spring from a dislocation of society, and the attitudes that people have to the society and to the laws, regulations and values by which they live. What is there — in the society — to live by? There is nothing.

In Germany, Hitler in defence of the interests of the German national state, said: "Women should be the recreation of the tired warrior." [*Laughter.*] He said they must have as many children as possible; the state needed soldiers. In Russia, where they carry the perversion of accepted values to an astonishing degree, they say: "In Russia we have absolute equality for women, *absolute*." That, in a society of such a low economic and cultural level, is of course absurd. Look in the Soviet political leadership, there have been only two or three women. I believe, from the beginning of the Russian revolution (1917) to the present day, I can only remember three or four women who were ever in the leading committee. But when you look in heavy industry, in the mines, on the railways, in the steel works, you see any number of them working in heavy industry, in spheres which would never have been allowed in the United States or in Great Britain. In Russia they sent them in and boasted of equality; it is a complete perversion of the ideas of equality.

We have to face a fundamental fact that women in their physical and mental qualities are not inferior to men, but different. They also have the immense burden of bearing children; and women in the professions in particular and in academic studies will tell you that they go side by side with the men up to a certain point, but then they wish to bear

children (it is an instinct) and their husbands wish to have a family; the men they were keeping pace with up to this stage now go beyond. The socialist view is that child-bearing is no reason why they should be penalised, but that is the very reason why they should be given extra privileges in order to be able to maintain themselves in the work they are doing. For us child-bearing is not self-indulgence; bearing children and bringing them up is a necessary part of society.

Capitalist society does not think in those terms at all. You see, when I speak about the reorganisation of industry to stop this merciless warfare that goes on every hour of the day in the big plants, it need not necessarily be a strike. It means a human attitude to the dismissal of workers: who is to go, how many, when. It means a human attitude to the status and work of women. You have this profound dissatisfaction of women with their situation in country after country. America has shown that by giving them legal equality and stating that they have full rights to do whatever they wish, in the same way as men, does not solve the problem; it makes it worse than before. Millions of women complain that their life consists of maintaining men in industry and bearing children to work in the industry of the future. They claim that through their husbands they are as subordinated to the routines and pressures of the factory as if they were employed there. The beginning of a truly satisfactory relationship in personal lives must begin with a total reorganisation of labour relations in every department of life. And by now it is obvious that this can only be done by the workers themselves. There are other aspects of the exploitation of sex, but this is the one I wish to refer to. Despite legal freedoms, the domination and subordination of men in the capital relation leads inevitably to the domination and subordination of women, in the place of work, and in the home. It is in the most advanced of all capitalistic countries, the United States, that the conflict is at its most bitter. What is the way out?

We all know about the exploitation of class. I will give you one example — the hostility that educated people have to members of the working class is beyond belief. Not so much in the United States. There they do not understand political democracy; the American believes that if there is a vote and he has the majority then he has a right to make you do whatever he wants you to. De Tocqueville noticed that, and it is so up to today. Vote finished, I am the majority, I am the boss. Not so in Great Britain. In Great Britain if there is a room with five hundred and one people and five hundred are for and one against, for that very reason they will say, give him a hearing, hear what he has to say, and they will give him consideration. They have what I call the democratic temper which is not necessarily parliamentary. But in the United States, in social relations, they are very far advanced. I am sure if President Eisenhower at any time walked out of the White House and dropped into some tavern, they would be a little bit startled at first, but if he said, "Give me one of the old mild," or bitter, or whatever it is; then sat down and said, "Well, boys, how is it?" in five minutes they would be as thick as thieves and would be asking him, "How is Mamie?" and if he said,

“Not so well,” one would say, “My old lady too;” and they would talk away as Americans like to talk. [*Laughter.*] That is how they are. Not in Britain! They understand political democracy in Britain but not equality in social life. Nevertheless, in the United States and elsewhere — and in Russia also — the attitude against workers as uneducated, as being incapable of handling social problems, is firmly implanted in the minds of the masses of people by the very system of education. People react violently against the idea that workers, as a class, can manage anything, when in reality it is they who organise most of the work of the world. Foremen and managers are there primarily to discipline workers, to maintain the discipline of the capital relation. Remove the foremen and the managers from most large plants and the work would go on, in many cases better. That has been proved over and over again. The work of the skilled technicians can be learnt or incorporated into the general work. Apart from the fact that today it is quite possible in advanced countries to give to all a general and technical education. This is the marxist view of the future of society.

What we have to overcome are fundamental prejudices which are the heritage of previous societies and are today maintained for the power and privileges of a minority. There are people who are bitterly opposed to the way in which women are made to see after young children — babies and children up to the time they are ten or eleven. They say that instils into the mind of the child that, in regard to such matters as comfort and material needs, he must look to women for them; but for other things — to go out to play games and work, etc. — he must look to men; so that by the time he is twelve years old, his mental attitude is corrupted by a certain attitude to women. And it is much the same in regard to workers. The plain fact of the matter is that society has to produce ways and means of stopping these ceaseless conflicts in industry, in factory after factory in Great Britain, in the United States and France and everywhere else.

Those are the fundamental problems of our society and the first necessity is to put aside the prejudice against workers as workers. During the war, Lord Beaverbrook was put in charge of plane production in England and people have told me how he carried on. He would come to the plant, line up everybody and say, “Who are the shop stewards here?” They would stand out and he would ask, “What is it you want to improve production?” They would say, “We want this and this and that.” He would tell the employers, “You do what they say,” and go his way. When the pressure came and they wanted the production they knew where to go for it. But as soon as the war was over, back they went to the old capitalist way.

Among many members of the middle class, the professional men in particular, there is a sort of horror of workers and the idea of their playing a dominant role in society when in reality they run the railways; they make the steel; they produce the wheat; they grind the flour; they give us electricity; and whenever society collapses they are the ones who have to put it together.

Marxism is not an abstract ideal. It envisages change in its

examination of reality. The attitude to workers is changing. One of the most important aspects of contemporary society is the mechanisation of clerical work. I heard the other day with great interest that there are in America white-collar workers (or black-coated workers), girls with high heels, who are on the picket lines. These girls who used to do the typing and the writing find that they are becoming proletarianised. Employers bring in machines — I expect they have some of them here — and the girls are not paid by the week any more. They come into the big plants and go into the office upstairs and they are paid by the hour. Mechanisation, automation, is taking over the work that they used to do, with the result that they are joining unions and are going on picket lines with the workers whom formerly they used to despise; here we have another example of capitalism producing its own gravediggers.

These are fundamental problems of modern society. They are middle-class people here who speak of the workers as if they were some kind of manitou or lizard. [*Laughter.*] These people are hundreds of years behind the times. You have to watch the worker's function in society and the dependence of society upon the fundamental functions that he carries out and his capacity to handle his own affairs. That is what is to be examined and the professional classes in particular have nothing to lose from a socialist society. What have they got to lose? The employers have a lot to lose. People who own property. That is obvious. But what has the professional class got to lose from a socialist society? Do they believe that the workers, having come to political power, will at once begin to hate doctors and dentists and lawyers? Probably the lawyers will not have much to do but they will find something else to do, that is all. [*Laughter.*] This social prejudice is a heritage of many generations and marxism believes that only a new society will change it. It is unsuitable to the conditions of modern existence.

The last one I wish to take up is the exploitation of race. I am not going to speak about the Negro Question in Africa. You are familiar with that. I want to speak of the way in which today the race question is a great political question apart from the question of Africa. I can just outline the main points.

Number one: historically it is pretty well proved now that the ancient Greeks and the Romans knew nothing about race. They had another standard — civilised and barbarian — and you could have a white skin and be barbarian and you could be black and civilised. Those were the standards that they understood. It is said further that the conception of dividing people by race begins with the slave trade. This thing was so shocking, so opposed to all the conceptions of society which religion and philosophers and others had (despite St Paul and his "Slaves, obey your masters"), that the only justification by which humanity could face it was to divide people into races and decide that the Africans were an inferior race. That is the beginning of the modern conception of people being divided into different races. It did not exist before; it is going to take a lot of trouble before it is finished with. Anyway,

Nkrumah and others in Africa are doing a pretty good job to clean up that mess over there, and that will help. That is not all. Hitler introduced the conception of the master race. You see, the world does not make progress and stay there. Either it goes on or it goes back, and Hitler introduced into Europe the most reactionary concept of the master race which had originated in colonialism. He used it as an ideological instrument for murdering millions of people. There is another concept originating from colonialism—the alleged superiority of one system which entitles it to rule allegedly inferior systems. The imperialists used that doctrine. Today the Russians dominate half of Europe which does not belong to them. They are the masters; there is no talk there about “In future when you learn to govern,” as the British will say, “we will go and leave you.” Not with the Russians. They are there; they are going to stay there. As far as may be seen they intend to be masters of that half of Europe, and from the fuss they are making about Berlin, they mean to terrorise the other half. Their ultimate aim is to drive the Americans out of Europe with the result that, not under the name of race, but in the name of a superior society, the Russian state is steadily establishing itself as a master race in Europe. Their army and their secret police and their agents rule in the satellite countries. There are some short-sighted people who turn a blind eye to all this and claim that the Russian system is progress. To me the argument comes strangely from the mouths of those just emerging from centuries of colonialism. The Europeans have paid a terrible price for allowing these ideas to establish themselves unchecked in European thought. Let us see to it that we do not make the same mistake.

Look at race and the question of Chinese and Japanese. Before the war, on the west coast of America, California in particular, they spoke incessantly of the “yellow peril” so that as soon as the war broke out Government moved in on the Japanese, put them in concentration camps and stripped them of their property. Now the war is over, Mao Tse-tung and the Communists become masters of China, establish Chinese national independence, except for Chiang Kai-shek fooling around in Formosa. Thereupon the American attitude changes. Look at television, listen to the radio, look at movies, you see a lot of pictures of Chinese and Japanese girls marrying American men, American girls marrying Japanese men. Why this change? Why no more “yellow peril”? Because the problem now is: which way is Japan going to go? With the democratic West, or is it going to go communist and join up with China? That is the problem now: political, not racial. They are doing their best to win over the Japanese. The question of race has subsided; that is why they took Hawaii and made it an American state. The Japanese, they and all the Orient, kept on saying, “You all are taking everybody, you have all sorts of states but why don’t you take the Hawaiians; they want to come in, why don’t you take them? It is because they are not all of them white that you don’t.” And under that pressure, and with sympathetic elements inside America, they made Hawaii the fiftieth state. You see, they exploited race as long as it was

useful. Now it is dangerous and they drop it. But if tomorrow Japan goes communist or becomes a close ally of communist China, as sure as day the "yellow peril" business is going to be raised again. So that is the way, you see. Our masters exploit these fundamental relations in society: sex, class and race; they are always there to be used by reactionary elements, and Russia exploits these in her own way.

I have gone into them not as profoundly as I might if I took up each alone. But I was concerned to show you that marxism is not merely concerned with economic questions and economic production, production relations, as so many people think. It is clear that all these problems are posed in the West Indies, if not sharply today then certainly tomorrow. You will judge. I have given America as the chief example but in Britain and elsewhere they are there.

Progress is not automatic. Hitler threw Europe back. To fight him it was necessary to fight the theory of race. But that theory can rise again. These reactionary concepts can become more acute than they have ever been in the past, not because they are ineradicable from human nature, but because of the fundamental disorder in modern society. You see what the marxist solution is. Marxists envisage a total change in the basic structure of human relations. With that change these problems will not be solved overnight but we will be able to tackle them with confidence. Such are the difficulties, contradictions and antagonisms, and in the solution of them society moves forward and men and women feel they have a role in the development of their social surroundings, the individual can find a more or less satisfactory relation to the national and to the world community. It is in this movement that we have the possibility of a good life. But if, on the other hand, reaction grows and the question of the freedom of women and the question of the equality of classes and the question of differences of race begin to be used, as they are bound to be used by reactionary elements in the defence of positions which are no longer defensible, society becomes sick unto death, the individual cannot find an easy relation either to the state or to his fellow men. Not only are we affected in war, in economics, and in politics. The turmoil the world is in reacts upon our most intimate consciousness in ways we are not aware of. And every succeeding day brings us nearer and ties us closer to the decisive forces and conflicts of the modern world. What has suddenly erupted in Cuba is going to place many of the things I am talking about before you, first for your discussion, and sooner or later for your decision. We were not able to choose the mess we have to live in, this collapse of a whole society, but we can choose our way out. I am confident that these lectures will help and not hinder.

A National Purpose for Caribbean Peoples

[A talk given to the West Indian Students' Association in Edinburgh.]

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, you will excuse me for sitting down; it is the result of an accident in Jamaica some two years ago. Much to the disappointment of some of my friends, my mental faculties were not affected. They began assiduously to spread the news around that James's brain was not what it was. I am not able to stand as much as I used to; but my brain, for what it is worth, is what it always was. I am much better educated in the ways of West Indians after spending five years among them.

Now, what I want to do first tonight is to tackle an approach to the study of literature, particularly French and English literature. I do that because the subject is of value in itself and also because we of the West Indies are a people who have not got much substantial history of our own at the present time.... What I shall do first is to relate the literature of the Caribbean to the literature of France; I shall also relate the literature of France to the literature of the Caribbean. I shall do the same with English literature and the literature of the Caribbean. To illuminate the study, however, I shall have to take up the influence of foreigners as a whole, upon the literature of a particular country. We cannot avoid these questions. We are essentially an international people. We have no native civilisation of our own; we have no native language; we have no native religion — even the Rastafari when they discovered that the Emperor of Ethiopia was God had to go to the English Bible to prove it. And therefore we are particularly open, owing to our history and owing to the fact that we constitute such a great number of disparate civilisations. In language, at any rate, and in literary and political forms, the world at large is open to us. It is a difficulty, but it is also an advantage; and that is why I shall spend some time establishing what the history of a country owes to people who use its language, participate in its literature but are not members of the establishment or of those parties which are opposed to the establishment. The first example I am going to take is France.

The greatest name in French literature, at least one of the greatest (for me he is the greatest), is Jean-Jacques Rousseau. We can argue about that but the fact remains that his place in French literature is absolutely unassailable. Not only in politics, in sociology, in education, in art, but in the very handling of the French language and the sensitivity of the French people to the life around them, Rousseau's influence is beyond calculation. Note first and foremost that he was not a French citizen. He came from outside — just as our West Indian writers come from outside. He came from the city where the Calvinists were settled, Geneva. He was a citizen of Geneva; he spent most of his early years in Geneva or outside of it, and therefore you will begin to see how strange was his behaviour to an Encyclopaedist like Diderot who was

French to his bones. He could not understand how Rousseau could break with them. But Rousseau broke with them with a reverberation that lasts to this very day. He said, "You are all Encyclopaedists and followers of Reason. What you will substitute will be no better than the mess we have here now. An entirely new organisation of society is required." And he put it forward. I believe all that I can afford to say about Rousseau is that there is very strong in his work the influence of the city-state of Greece, and Geneva was the closest thing in Europe, structurally to the city-states of Greece. Rousseau began that break-up of the French classical literature which had been established by Racine and Corneille and which lasted in France from 1650 or thereabouts; Rousseau began to break it up a century after; but the French revolution substituted revolutionary activity for literary development and it was not until about 1825 that the French romantic movement began, and finished up for good and all, at least to a substantial degree, with French Classicism.

Now, you know who was the person who bears the historical responsibility for striking the first blow? A lot of people will tell you that it is Victor Hugo, and will say it was his famous *Préface du Cromwell*. It was not Hugo. It was a West Indian: the man called Alexandre Dumas. You know him as a writer of fiction (historical novels) but the first romantic play that was successfully presented in Paris was by Dumas, and it wasn't only a shot in the dark. He wrote many others, and they were quite successful too.

Dumas has another place in French literature. Nobody, not even Sir Walter Scott, carried the romantic historical novel to the extreme that Dumas carried it. Those novels, whatever you may think of them, are absolutely without any parallel in Western literature. I hope you begin to see where I am going. I believe he was able to do these things, to begin a new development and carry it to an extreme, because he was not exactly a Frenchman. He lived in France, he knew French civilisation and he participated, but he didn't quite belong.

In France the West Indian influence is very striking. The Romantic movement, around 1840, began to fade away, and a new school arose, the Parnassians. And they believed in the art of poetry and the technical perfection of the verse. The name that is usually associated with them is the name of Théophile Gautier, the man of *l'art pour l'art*, art for art's sake. But that is not quite accurate. Today we know that the two leaders of that movement, the Parnassian movement which dominated French literary history in the middle of the nineteenth century, were one poet, a man called Leconte de Lisle and another one called José Maria de Hérédia. Both were West Indians — they came from Martinique or Cuba or some such island but they were West Indians and they carried this preoccupation with the verse as the integral part of poetic structure to an extreme that no other Frenchman carried it. Today it is recognised that they were the masters of that movement.

Now I have to make a big jump (but in reality I am not going very far). The Parnassians are pushed into the corner by two men whose names you'll mention, at least I mention, with reverence. They are still

the masters of modern literature — Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Now Baudelaire established that modern bourgeois society as he knew it was rotten — it was not a place one could live in. You could not do anything worthwhile and live a tranquil existence. Sometimes you wonder if this man was writing in 1864 or if he was writing in 1964. In one of his most famous poems he says: "Death take us over. We have travelled everywhere, we can't see anything. You take us over now, we are ready to go with you to heaven or to hell, we don't care, so long as we go somewhere to find *l'inconnu*, the unknown." Another poem ends with the line: "Anywhere, anywhere, out of this world." That was Baudelaire. Jean-Paul Sartre has made a lot of savage comments on Baudelaire, more illustrative of what Sartre is than what Baudelaire is, but we can take that up in question time.

Following Baudelaire came Rimbaud. And that is a wonderful boy. That boy was about 19 — no more than 20 — when he had written perhaps the finest modern poetry that we know today. His whole attempt was to break out of French society. His most famous work is called *Une Saison en Enfer* (A Season in Hell): he intended to call the original *Livre Nègre* but he changed his mind. Though he changed his mind about the name he did something which is of the most profound significance to us today. Rimbaud was anxious to get away from the world around him. He wrote about democracy and socialism and he fought in the Paris Commune as Baudelaire had fought in 1848. They were both very sensitive men who had an exalted conception of what society should be, and Rimbaud, in *Une Saison en Enfer*, in his attempt to break away from French bourgeois society, wrote the following strange lines: "I am going to get out of here. You are all Negroes. False Negroes. you lawyer, you doctor, you merchant, you emperor, all of you are repulsive and false Negroes. I am going to be a Negro. A real Negro, to dance and sing and beat the tam-tam and the white man is going to come to Africa and destroy me, but until he does that, I will be happy." Now if you have read *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal* by Aimé Césaire of Martinique you will realise that it is merely an extension in the twentieth century of Rimbaud's famous *Une Saison en Enfer*. You see, Rimbaud wanted to go somewhere but he didn't know where to go and he travelled about Europe — Lord have mercy, the way that young man went around when he stopped writing poetry — and he finally found himself in Abyssinia. But in the days when he was writing poetry there is one of his poems in which he says: "There is going to be a great revolution — Europeans, Asians, Americans, you are not going to be in it. It's going to be made against you. But the real people who will help us in France, who want to make this revolution, will be the '*Noirs Inconnus*', the Unknown Blacks." To me, it is very strange, and very moving: he wanted to get away from European civilisation, and the only place he can think where there is an entirely new form of society is among the masses of the Negro people who are living a primitive but, as he saw it, a very natural form of life. He knew nothing about them. He knew much less about them than Césaire did when he wrote *Cahier*. But that was Rimbaud who wrote in about

1870. He definitely made the move to Africa and African civilisation — and we are going to have to refer to that again.

Now, if you ask the average Frenchman, who since 1914 or slightly before have been the greatest poets in France, he will tell you Claudel, Valéry, and St John Perse. Perse won the Nobel prize for literature in 1961: now, he came from Guadeloupe and when you read his poetry he is very clear about his Guadeloupian origins: one of the three substantial writers of France since the first world war is St John Perse who grew up as a boy in Guadeloupe. And that is very clear in his work, very clear.

And now, we have to jump a bit. In 1939 Césaire published the *Cahier*. It is the finest poem ever written about Africa, and one of the finest poems every written by any colonial. He had never seen Africa, and he had as much real knowledge about Africa as I have about Australasia. He had met some friends in Paris and they had taken him to Dalmatia, and on the sea coast in Dalmatia he wrote this poem. It was precisely — but with more confidence and certainty and knowledge of anthropology and modern history — what Rimbaud was trying to do around 1870. What Césaire says is, “I have to find somewhere to live. I cannot accept French civilisation.” It is in that poem you get the concept of *négritude*. You will allow me to say, it is not an African concept at all. It is a West Indian concept. It cannot be African. An African is a native of Africa; what is he going to do with *négritude*? That is a West Indian writer who is seeking a road out as Rimbaud and Baudelaire sought, out of the decay of Western civilisation that he feels, and he can’t find it in Guadeloupe. So he says: “At any rate, the people from Guadeloupe and Martinique, they have come from Africa, and Africa is a magnificent civilisation.” And he launches out in the world the concept of *négritude*. I don’t want to go into it. Few misunderstand it except Jean-Paul Sartre. But Sartre at least recognises that in his poetry, in the poetry of *Cahier*, this West Indian writer has succeeded in doing what the Surrealists tried to do for many years and failed. And chiefly he was merely trying to find a form of life which was different from the form of life which he and many French writers since Baudelaire had almost totally rejected.

There are others I don’t want to speak about. There is [Edouard] Glissant. I don’t want to speak about him. I want to refer to another one, not a West Indian this time; but I have said enough to show you the integral part the West Indian conceptions and West Indian literary activity have played in French literature. Everybody knows that, except us. We know everything about Socrates and Dante; but about ourselves, we don’t know our own. Nobody has ever taught us, so we don’t know. The Colonial Office has no urge to be teaching you that. That does not suit the Colonial Office at all: no. Now I am going to draw your attention to another Frenchman, one of the most striking writers of modern France, a writer by name Camus. Camus was no Frenchman. You know that he was from Algeria, and he used to say: “My cast of thought is different from yours. You all are following Marx, and Hegel and Nietzsche. I am a Mediterranean Iberian, I come

from Algeria and I belong to the civilisation that was constructed around the Mediterranean.” And you will see all along in his work, you will see his consciousness of the fact that he is not French as the rest are. He is of the same foreign tradition as Rousseau, Dumas and Césaire.

So that is what we begin to see when we look at French literature. You can’t take out from it the Caribbean literary section — the work they actually did and the influence it has had. You can’t do that.

Now when you look at English literature, it is more peculiar in a sense (although the Caribbean impact is not so strong, it is strong enough during the last twenty years). Just to say a word or two about one or two persons, the most powerful iconoclastic writer in English literature, the man most against the Establishment, you know him, an Irish clergyman named Dean Swift — he made the famous “Modest Proposal” that the way to stop the hunger in the Irish people was to eat the babies, and he said it in such detail and appeared to be so serious that he upset everybody because he wasn’t only making jokes, the man seemed serious about it. And *Gulliver’s Travels* is the most devastating attack on bourgeois society that has ever been made by somebody who had nothing to substitute. That was an Irishman.

Now we have to take a big jump. I could tell you a lot in between, but I don’t want to do that. I want to come to English literature in the twentieth century — the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century more precisely — and follow me, please: the great English drama had died for 250 years; nobody produced anything. Who began English drama again? An Irishman, Mr Bernard Shaw.

Who was the greatest political journalist in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century? An Irishman, Bernard Shaw.

Who brought something new to the novel and upset the writing of fiction right through the Western world? James Joyce, an Irishman. He wouldn’t even come to live in England. He left Dublin and went to live in Paris — as his friend Beckett today, one of the finest writers in England, is doing... James Joyce. When you go a little further the thing becomes absolutely overwhelming.

Who is the finest and most emphatically English writer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? He is a man from the colonies. He is Rudyard Kipling. The early stories that he wrote that made his reputation were written in a Punjab newspaper office. He was no member of any establishment, he came from abroad, and when he came to England and started to write here, he wrote not so well, if you ask me, but that is a matter of opinion....

Who is another of the most famous of English writers of the twentieth century? Not a colonial, an absolute foreigner, Joseph Conrad. He was a Pole. He grew up learning Polish, and he learned English on board ship and he started to write.

Who is the finest English journalist of the last twenty years? He, it is true, is an Englishman. But wait a bit, I think you know his name. He wrote a book called *The Road to Wigan Pier* but do you remember his name? He also wrote *Homage to Catalonia*. He is the finest English

journalist since the war. His name is George Orwell. You know where he came from? They will tell you Orwell went to Eton — that is undoubtedly true — the establishment of the establishment; but after that he became a policeman in Burma and after he had seen the colonial world in Burma, he came back to become the finest, most original journalist in England. You see, you have to come from outside, to be able when a civilisation is shaking to see and carry to a conclusion the things that are being developed.

Now let me give you the final proof. There are two poets in English literature during the last fifty years, absolutely at the head, nobody could say anything else about them. The name of one is T.S. Eliot, and American who came to live here, and the other is W.B. Yeats, an Irishman who lived in Dublin. There is no poetry like theirs in modern English literature. The criticism of literature, the break-up of the tradition of Wordsworth and Milton was done by two Americans, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. They reorganised the poetic language of England. When it comes to prose fiction, the writing of fiction and the criticism of fiction, it is another American — a man called Henry James. (My friend Maxwell Geismar has opened up a terrific attack on James. I rejoice, I don't like him myself — I know he has my name but there is no relation. That Geismar should have gone so far shows the influence that James had had.) Take away from English literature these names I've called from the last sixty years, and what remains? Not much. There is D.H. Lawrence who was more foreign than most of them. He couldn't live here at all. He travelled all about, met some kangaroos in Australia. Anywhere, but not here. He wouldn't live here.

The main writers are foreigners. And now I want to draw a brief and very rapid conclusion. I do not know any finer writers in English, I had better say I do not know any writers I prefer to the four writers who have come from the West Indies during the last fifteen years: there is Vic Reid who wrote a book called *The Leopard*. Poor Reid lives in the West Indies among the Jamaican middle classes, so wrote his book about Africa. He wouldn't write it about Jamaica — that is the trouble, you have to come to London to do that. Then there is George Lamming whose works are the most powerful indictment of a colonialist system you could find anywhere. And there is Vidia Naipaul whose *A House for Mr Biswas* is a great masterpiece. Recently there has been a new man, Wilson Harris, who is one of the strangest writers I can think of. This is a man who was for twenty years a land surveyor in British Guiana. He lived in the forest among the apes and the jackals — I expect they have elephants there too and kangaroos — among the naked Indians and naked blacks, people who ran away from slavery and so forth. He lived there for twenty years, and then in 1962 he came to England and he has written four books which are the strangest books that I can think of. These four writers. There is nothing like them in English literature. Pull them out, and English literature suffers tremendously.

Now I want to go a little further. In September 1962, you are all literary persons, I saw a review of Caribbean writing in *The Times*

Literary Supplement. The *Times Literary Supplement* is a very fine newspaper: I call it Old Solemnity. And this fellow was writing about Caribbean Literature. He said some things I hope some of you will look up, something which, I thought, showed that he didn't understand it very well. I wrote a letter to the Editor and I told him, the reasons for this literature in the West Indies, the reasons that have brought it are because the nation is in the process of finding itself, and in much the same way that Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Turgenev wrote a particular literature in Russia in the nineteenth century, these boys in the West Indies are now writing. He raised Cain. He said, "You have too high a view of the West Indian writers." (I thought he had too low a view, but I am not interested in exchanging compliments of that kind.) That man went so far as to tell me, "Do you find in West Indian literature a character with the insight and understanding of Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*?" I did him the honour of not replying. There are some people it is no use arguing with. I was telling him, "Look here, these boys are writing as they are writing for the same reason that the Russian novelists wrote as they did in the Russia of the nineteenth century." I believe that it is quite possible that he understood what I was saying or what I would say next and he took before, as we say in the West Indies, before before took him.

Now I want to speak for a while about Russian literature, the development of a national personality in Russia. I hope you have got the general argument clear: you have had this great body of distinguished writers in French and English literature because they came from outside and were not incorporated into the establishment or the traditional opposition to the establishment. I hope that is quite clear. And the West Indian writers (and also the West Indian cricketers) are part of this new invasion of an old society, a society which is beginning to feel the strain, and the outsiders bring something new. As I say I was very much struck by the anxiety and the hostility that our friend showed in that letter, to put me in my place, so to speak. He wasn't putting the West Indian writers in their place, it was me he was putting in my place. He will find that very hard. I've been living outside for a long time and am quite accustomed to be outside. We have to look at Russian literature because if we want to know what is the West Indian national personality we have to look at the development of other national personalities. You could sit down, of course, and think, "I know the West Indian — he likes to dance calypso, he is a calypso man, he likes to eat hot sauce, he likes the twist, he likes Carnival, he's a wild man," — and all sorts of remarks like that, which are not absurd ... but are not even worth being called absurd. They have nothing to do whatever with the question of the West Indian national personality. That is for cheap newspaper writing about the calypso boys.

One notable example of the development of a national personality is the development in Russia: now the Russian national personality begins with the birth of Pushkin in 1801. You will allow me to say that I know nothing in modern European literature, or American for that matter, which fills the place that Pushkin fills. And where did Pushkin

come from? He began to apply what the French revolution had discovered, brought it to a new backward country, and Russia was one of the most backward countries in Europe when Pushkin began. So backwardness does not necessarily mean backwardness in artistic and literary development and the emergence of the national personality. Very often it is quite the opposite. After Pushkin came Gogol, *Dead Souls*, a superb novel. Then after Gogol came three writers. There is nothing in western literature to touch them — Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Something else was going on in Russian literature at the same time. Towards the end of the century a dramatist appeared — and European literature has known nothing like him. Chekhov remains on a pedestal by himself. Then came Stanislavsky, the actor-producer who set a new standard for European and American acting; and he did it by putting on Chekhov's work. And Russia still remained the most backward country in Europe. To be backward, you see, does not necessarily mean that everything you produce will be backward. Now in other respects, Russia continued to advance further than any other European country — in music Tchaikovsky, Moussorgsky and the early Stravinsky were at the head. Modern ballet. Look up any book on ballet and the two names you will see at the head are Russian, Diaghilev and Fokine. There is nothing like them elsewhere. I could carry on the catalogue indefinitely. The Russian intellectuals moved to the head not only of Russian intellectual activity but of European intellectual activity and they remained there until Stalin started to put them in jail.

Now you see when I was talking about these West Indian writers being of a similar type to Turgenev, and Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, I was implying something else. When those Russians were writing, they were seeing things in Russian society which were not obvious to everybody but which they as men of genius could see and put into artistic fiction. The ideas were not falling from the sky. Ultimately the things they saw exploded in the Russian revolution of 1905 and two revolutions in 1917. Now you can take it or leave it but I am absolutely confident that the writings of Naipaul, Vic Reid, George Lamming and Wilson Harris are the evidence, unmistakable evidence of all sorts of currents running about in West Indian society which sooner or later are going to be expressed. I'm not talking about a revolution, I'm coming to politics later. Something is going on among us: otherwise the writers are making it up. And good writers don't simply "make up". They are working from something... they are aware of something. But in order to know what they are doing and to see how they are getting on you have to be aware of the movement of literature on the whole and its influence on society.

Now I want to give you one simple example of the development of the West Indian personality. The West Indian personality as I see it has been most sharply expressed in our cricketers and in the writers. They come to a well-established, stagnant civilisation and they bring something new. I am telling you that most of the writers who brought something emphatically new in the course of English and French

literature got it from abroad, or grew up in a different environment and we are fortunate enough (and unfortunate enough) to be born that way. The West Indian mentality is seeking to create something new of the ancient inheritance it has had. That is what is part of the West Indian personality....

I want now to speak of the West Indian people as a whole. I want to speak about Trinidad — and something that happened in Trinidad in 1958. I was in England here in 1955, when Dr Williams came to England to carry on some discussions about Chaguaramas with the British government and the American government. Williams had already said that as far as he was concerned the Americans could stay in Chaguaramas — and he said so because he was busy with other things. But he said, "That's OK." He came here, and before he left home somebody gave him these papers to read (and Williams is a great man for reading papers). I used to see him sometimes once or twice a day. He used to come down to the house or I would go up to his rooms in Central London and I began to hear this regularly from Williams: "James, listen to this." When I talked to him on the phone he said, "Boy, when I see you I'm going to show you something." And when I went he would say, "Boy, listen to this," and Williams was reading for me the most revolutionary statements about the American occupation of Chaguaramas — written by a former colonial governor.... Sir Hubert Gough, I think is his name. Gough launched an attack on the American occupation of Chaguaramas which has never been surpassed. He said, "These people want to come here? And take over this territory? Why should they?" And Williams read all this. And he kept on telling me, "Look! Listen to this. Look what Roosevelt said. Look what this fellow told Roosevelt. Look what Cipriani said. Look what O'Reilly said," till finally one night he turned to a friend of mine who was there, he said: "Grace, take this letter." And he launched a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies blowing the whole Chaguaramas issue sky high. A lot of people believe that he left Trinidad, came to England, and I told him to go and attack Chaguaramas. I never did. I wouldn't have the nerve to tell him so. To do a thing like that, you have to know your Cabinet, you have to know your ministers, you have to know your party leadership and you have to be aware of the population. Not me to sit down here and tell Williams go and start some disturbance about Chaguaramas. Williams went back to Trinidad and he stood up in the square and he said, "We have to get it back. They must give it back to us." And I tell you, the West Indies got a fire which has never burst there before. The whole population picked up itself and said, "Well, they have to give it back." I hope you know this history, some of you. I met men who told me this: "I married my wife from the money the Americans brought to Chaguaramas." "I built my home from the money the Americans brought here when they came to Chaguaramas." "I paid off my mortgage from the money they brought to Chaguaramas." "I sent my son to England to study law, and I sent my daughter to do medicine from the money the Americans brought to Chaguaramas." "But the

Doctor say they must go and therefore they must go." Williams used a tremendous phrase. He said, "I will break this Chaguaramas issue or it will break me." And the average Trinidadian said, "We can't allow Chaguaramas to break the Doctor. We must break it." He had it in his hands. I was there at the time.

I want to tell you of another aspect of the West Indian personality. There was no hostility to the Americans. There was no hostility to the British. They wanted it back. They wanted the national property back. But that antagonism which develops against the imperialist power did not develop in Trinidad. And I think I know why: you see, we are all expatriates, even the Negro ex-slaves. The country has never belonged to us. We had no national sentiment about it. So they said, "We want to get that back." But the development of a powerful nationalist sentiment and hatred of the imperialist power, that did not exist in the West Indies. And I believe that to be part of the West Indian personality. When a new nation comes into the world it brings something new, and I think those are the two things that we have brought: first, a very critical and creative attitude to intellectual and historical developments, to sport, and writing; and secondly, a tremendous passion for a sense of national development, national recognition, but without the violent imperialist hatreds which usually accompany it. I think that is part of the West Indian national consciousness.

Now I shall go into what flows naturally, from my point of view, from what I've been saying: the social and political perspectives and programme for the West Indies in the period ahead....

I have made it clear in my previous writings that the West Indies today face a future that closely relates them to the present of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, or, on the other hand, upheaval of the type of Cuba. In any case these islands, unless they pull themselves up, are in for a terrible mess. You see, anything like a bloody revolt in a West Indian island is sure to be a savage thing. The islands are so small ... the people are so jammed together ... they have such a bad history ... and nobody is telling them anything. So all the past festers below the surface, and the attempts to improve the situation in words only, only make the situation worse than it is. Now I am going to put forward three examples of a programme for the West Indian territories. It is necessary to be concrete and precise. The West Indian politicians have carried to a fine art the habit of rambling around a question and not saying anything positive. I am going to go the opposite way.

The first point I believe a West Indian political grouping has to take care of in the West Indies is the transfer of the land from the large landowners to a peasant population — a peasant population, such as exists in Denmark and in Holland, of a highly developed cultural and scientific outlook. The West Indian peasant is perfectly able to achieve what is necessary and do what he will be called upon to do. I have satisfied myself and I am willing to hear anybody who wants to challenge me — that is something I will run into with great satisfaction because opponents will be utterly destroyed. The West Indian

peasantry is perfectly able to achieve and surpass the productivity of the large estates. Work has been done at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in which this has been demonstrated to a final degree. It is not merely an economic question, it is a social question. The people of the West Indies have never felt that the country belonged to them. They do not feel responsible for it. Something happens, and they get something, and something doesn't happen and they don't get what they expect: so somebody else promises that he will get it for them — that is how they live and that is how they have been living for a hundred years. A feeling of responsibility for the country, a feeling that what is done by any section of the population concerns them, and that they have a responsibility for actions and activities, for failures and successes, that does not exist in the West Indian territories. You have to create it, and the only way that I know is by creating a landed peasantry. I am proud to be able to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that a Royal Commission, sent by Her Majesty the late Queen Victoria, also recommended the same.

Now what is the size of the land that will be given to the peasant? I don't know. Will it be co-operative in certain parts? Will certain peasant areas have government control of land and of machinery for use on the land? Will it be 20 acres in certain places and 10 in other places? I don't know. But to think that the West Indians cannot settle that, that is colonialism at its worst. The West Indian peasant and experts from elsewhere can easily work out these problems and settle the question of the land. The transfer of the land from the sugar estate owners to the people will create a popular social force in the West Indies for the first time ... a social force that feels itself totally involved in the future of the country. That is point number one....

The second point concerns the middle classes of the West Indies — and very strange people they are — very strange. They are horrified at being considered a part of that large black mass and they are excluded from being part of those who really master the economic and political life of the country. So they're in-between there, not allowed to go in here, and scared to death of going there. I wrote a book recently [*Beyond a Boundary*] in which I attacked them from the first page to the last and the response was very strange. They said, "Well, that is how we are. It is very unfortunate but what you have said is quite true." I have never in my life met people like that before. They are professional men, lawyers, doctors, nowadays administrators, small businessmen, a few adventurers — and you always find these in every political grouping. They are accustomed to receiving money for services rendered. That is the life they have lived. You have got to chance that. Every development of education in the West Indies has meant the removal of this middle class further and further away from the mass of the people engaged in agriculture. There is only one way in which that can be changed. You not only give the land to a highly developed and highly organised peasantry, you make the middle class understand that the responsibility for maintaining the level of this agricultural peasantry and of developing industry along the lines which science and

which experiment will determine rests on you, the middle class. Now that could only be a lot of talk. I think Dr Williams could get up and make a very fine speech on that. When he sits down he wouldn't do a single thing about it. He will forget before he is finished. I have a concrete proposal to put. Every member who wants a job in the government — if it is to keep the statistical records of the government, if it is to teach Latin and Greek at the secondary school — whatever the job he wants to take in the government, he is certain to receive consideration, if his certificates have got scientific qualifications with agriculture at its centre. Otherwise don't come. Once that is started by the government, the rest of the island will follow. In other words you create a landed peasantry (1) and you create a middle class and give it the scientific responsibility for the development of the economy (2).

The third question is a little more complicated, but in reality is quite easy. What has ruined the West Indies up to now is the Old Colonial System. It still exists. In 1963, it is not what it was in 1863 and in 1863 it was not what it was in 1663, but the essence of the system remains. Dr Williams said last year that 90 per cent of the economy of this country rests in the hands of two or three foreign firms. That is the Old Colonial System, in spite of the fact that Williams decorates it. That is the Old Colonial System. And the West Indies will pitch headlong towards Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the rest of the disorders in the Caribbean, unless they begin to break that system. Now the moment you establish a landed peasantry, you hit the Old Colonial System a mortal blow. You have shifted the conceptions of social responsibility. No kind of economic régime has had so demoralising an effect upon the population as the sugar estate. None. I have been reading recently some reports published about the conditions of the agricultural labourer in 1960 in Jamaica and Trinidad. You know what they reminded me of? The type of reports that were written by Wesleyans and Non-conformists saying that the slave situation in the West Indies had to be altered. After two hundred years or more, the situation is much the same. That is the nature of the sugar plantation, the sugar estate. You've got to break it up. Now you not only have the sugar estates to deal with, but you have the financial power of the banks. And something has to be done with them. This is what I will propose.... I will say to them, "Now, you have come here to make profits. We don't propose to nationalise you, not at all. For that we will wait on Britain and the US. When they nationalise, look out for us, we are coming at you at once, but until that time, that is OK, we are not going to nationalise you — have confidence. You are here to make profits, we accept that. What we want you to accept is that we with a political majority are going to say how the country is to be run. Now you could do what you like in Bolivia, you could be a big boss in India, you could be a tremendous boss in Kuwait and you could say what is to be done in Argentina, etc. That is all very well, you could say what you are going to do in Panama, you could build a bridge, you could build a new canal, you could build a canal in the air, you could do what you like; but here, you are going to do what we want you to do, what

we say. Now, take this transfer of land from the landlords to the peasantry. That is a tremendous operation. What can you do? What help will you give? Secondly, we want a lot of foreign exchange, you have a lot of foreign contacts, will you help us? We don't see why we have to appoint some little this or that to do it because he won some election somewhere in Tobago or some other backward part of the territory. (Let Tobagonians forgive me, I didn't mean to be rude to them — not to them.) There are tremendous financial activities to be carried on both at home and abroad and we are willing to talk about them with you on one condition — that you understand we are in charge of this country. If you don't like that, here are your passports and go. There are plenty others only waiting to come as you go. As you take the boat this way, they will be coming that way. But if you are ready to work with us, and do what we say, you can stay." And that is my policy. When I talk to some people, these fellows are scared stiff, you know, at having to talk up to a big International Bank. They say, "Well, it's a good policy, but the people wouldn't understand." The people will understand that better than anybody else.

With regard to federation, you have to plan the economy of these territories. In Trinidad — allow me to speak of Trinidad, not because it is more miserable than the rest, but it's the one I know best — Williams has a development programme. Everybody's talking about planning so he says, "Well, we will make a plan." The head of the Planning Commission is Williams. The assistant to Williams is the Assistant Premier, and the financial man of the Plan is the little lawyer from Tobago. What do they know about planning? That is a highly specialised business, but, you see, you only have to cross out development programme and put a large PLAN, and you say, "Well, we have a PLAN now." Planning is a very difficult business. It has its dangers as well as its possibilities, and the economy of these countries has to be planned....

I am for federation, but shall I tell you in two minutes why the old Federation broke up? People say Sir Grantley Adams did this and Manley did that and Williams did something else: Grantley Adams, Manley and Williams tried to work the Old Colonial System. That is why they failed. This is what happened. The West Indies for three hundred years has had its centre — intellectual, financial and economic — in London, so that the lines of communication ran from Port of Spain to London, from Kingston to London, from Georgetown to London and from Bridgetown to London — the economic, financial and intellectual lines ran to London. Now federation demanded that the lines of communication should run from island to island, not from island to the control body in Britain. That they all saw, I worked with them and I heard them talk. That is what the Federation needed — to break this connection and substitute another connection. But to do that, you had to break up the Old Colonial System. They preferred to break up the Federation. That's what happened.

It is not a simple matter to tackle a system on which the country has been built and which it has kept for three hundred years. You have to

be bold and very confident, you have also to be quite firm, and not go into reckless extravagance. There are some of these young men ... I talked to them ... and women too, they say they want to nationalise. I say, "What do you want to nationalise? Let me tell you a parable, a parable of a man called Mossadegh: Mossadegh had a lot of people in Iran following him. And he said, 'We have 25 per cent of the oil economy of the world, and we are going to nationalise it.' So he nationalised it. Then the oil companies of the world told him, 'Well, boy, we could manage without you. You can drink it and you can bathe in it, but we are not buying any from you.' Poor Mossadegh is in jail now. I hope they treat him well. He meant well, the old man. But he had 25 per cent of the world economy. You mean to say that somebody in Trinidad, which has 2½ per cent of the world oil economy, is going to set out to nationalise the oil? That is crazy nonsense. You cannot play these games in politics. People will lose confidence in you, not only those who are outside, but the people themselves. What are you going to nationalise? Are you going to nationalise bauxite? What for? They will just not bother with you. Besides, the moment you say you are going to nationalise in Trinidad or British Guiana, the man in Jamaica will say, 'We are not going to nationalise at all. Come here for nothing.' And vice versa. If you say you're going to nationalise in Jamaica, then British Guiana will say, 'Boy, we haven't got that in mind at all.' That is the way they carry on."

That is the programme with which I go to the West Indian people in one island. You can tackle it as much as you like, I would be glad to hear you on it. Don't tell me, for God's sake, that the people won't understand it. The problem is that they will understand it too well. Because at last they would be moving into something new. Independence will be not merely the national flag and a national anthem (and very bad national anthems they are, by the way, very bad. They should have asked Sparrow to write one). Then Independence would be something new. It is quite clear from the documents (National Economic Studies, University of the West Indies, Jamaica) there is no doubt at all in the minds of the professional economists, something can be done with the West Indian economy. But that something may be done with the West Indian economy, you have to break up the old colonial system; and that is a serious matter.

I want now to tell you only two things. I have found, I cannot give you evidence, I can't do that, but there are a lot of white people, well-established white people in the West Indies, who would be willing to come half-way towards a programme of this kind. They see the territory and they are nervous as to what is going to happen, because if the people in Barbados or the people in Trinidad or in Jamaica move and start a disturbance, it will be bloody. It is not like in Nigeria where you kill one or two in one place and then have to travel 50 miles to find some others ... no, no, no. When they move out of the sugar estate in Trinidad, after two hours they will be in Port of Spain — they have marched before. Now, the next point. These well-established white people are so disturbed at what they see going on that if you went

forward with some decent programme, and you could show that you have mass support, they wouldn't stand in your way. There is also a lot of support in Britain and the United States. The British are very guilty on the question of slavery, you will find a lot of good will still and the West Indies, they feel, are nearest to them. You see, we haven't got a different language or religion from them, like Nigerians and Kenyans: the West Indians are westernised people. The ordinary British man can talk to West Indians and get on with them. The West Indian may not go to church very often but he doesn't go to a mosque or a temple or something like that — he goes to an Anglican church or a Baptist church or one of those. There is a tremendous lot of good will in Britain for us in the West Indies but it has to be touched by the West Indian people saying something and doing something and showing that they wish to break out of this system. You know

I have to add another point. Mr Gaitskell made a famous speech on the Anti-immigration Bill. What was Mr Gaitskell concerned about? Was he concerned about the sufferings of poor West Indians? I don't think so. I don't mean to say he was a hard man. But he wasn't going to get too upset about that. What Gaitskell was concerned about was the Britain that he knew, the Britain that they were proud of, the Britain that had a tradition of entry of all persons from anywhere, that Britain was being broken up. And he said, "No! You can't do that to the country." But the West Indians had nothing to say ... they had nothing to say. They didn't even come forward and say: "You are treating us badly, you will push us in the sea." They had nothing to say. Now what is to be done?

I will tell you what I am prepared to do, and I will end with that. I have just spent five years in the West Indies, my views are quite well known. I am well respected and accepted in Trinidad. They knew me years ago and I went back there and they accepted me at once. If you tell me, "You say we may go the way of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, what are *you* going to do?", I will say: "It is not what *I* am going to do, it is what *you* are going to do. If you want me, send for me. You sent for George Headley because you wanted him to play against the Englishmen. If you want me to come and enter politics, then make a public subscription and send for me. I will come. Furthermore, I don't want a seat. My people have been living in Tunapuna for 150 years in the same spot. Everybody knows them, and it would be the general opinion that if I ran in Tunapuna I am hardly likely to be defeated. I will not run in Tunapuna. If I go, I am running in the constituency that the Premier has chosen for himself — whichever one he likes, that's up to him. If he says he's going to run for this one, I will oppose him there. The whole of the West Indies will see it. I will say, 'That is how he governed the country. That is the mess he's leading it into, that is the mess that is going to take place. This is what I propose instead.' " And the whole of the West Indies will take notice. If he wins, well, he wins. I am not dying to be any minister in any West Indian island. But if I win, that is clear notice to everybody that the people want a change. And if even I lose, the alternative position would have been put before

them. And that is what I am prepared to do. I don't want anybody to send me a ticket or anybody to give me some money. Not at all. Public subscription. Put it down for everybody to see: "We want James to come back." I say if you do that, I will come.

The future of these islands is in a lot of trouble. If you ask me a question about Jamaica or about Jagan and Burnham in British Guiana, I will answer: but I think I have said enough to give you the direction in which my practical ideas are moving in relation to the analysis of social forces in the West Indies with which I began.

26 February 1964

Black Sansculottes

[This article originally appeared in Newsletter, published by the Institute of Race Relations in London, in October 1964, four months after François Duvalier was re-elected in Haiti as President for life. (On the day of his death, 21 April 1971, he was succeeded as President for life by his son, Jean Claude Duvalier.) James's intention in this piece is "to make Blacks aware that in the history of revolution Blacks have played a tremendous role, even in the history of the great French revolution".]

The Black Jacobins of the Haitian revolution of 1791 are the Black Sansculottes of 1964. This is now. The press has reverberated for more than a year with the jungle politics of President Duvalier of Haiti. Although these appear to be merely a continuation of Haitian politics during its 150 years of independence, Duvalier, unlike his predecessors, has had to add a strong-arm force — the *Tonton Macoute*. This is a body of armed gangsters who murder Duvalier's enemies and potential opposition, and hold for official ransom (and their personal gain) both Haitians and foreigners in a manner hitherto unparalleled anywhere. Before the era of the *Tonton Macoute*, Haitian politics followed a regular pattern. Independence was won in 1803 by a heroic army of black men, formerly slaves. Since independence, the Haitian brown-skinned middle class, their eyes still glued on Paris and French civilisation, have regularly filled all government and professional posts. But the political dictator has usually been a black man, who could win the support of the army, which still continues to be drawn from the impoverished black peasantry. The fact that Duvalier can no longer depend on such an army means that the black peasant is beginning to question his long martyrdom.

It was not only the disdain of the brown-skinned upper class for the black peasant that has helped to make Haiti into the most backward state in the Caribbean. The sugar estates which dominated the country in the colonial period were destroyed during the revolutionary war. The land was divided into peasant plots. The population was about half a million in 1804 when independence was won; today it is over three and a half million. The land has been constantly divided and redivided to satisfy the ever-increasing population. Today sugar constitutes only 5 per cent of the island's production. The chief product is coffee and most of the peasants produce for mere subsistence. In the fifties an attempt was made with American money to initiate large-scale schemes of development. But the light-skinned (and dark-skinned) élite who are about 5 per cent of the population continue to occupy all professional and administrative positions, monopolising such wealth as the island affords. The dark-skinned masses, about 90 per cent of the population, have the lowest *per capita* income in the Latin-American countries — about \$70 per cent (less than £25) and the lowest percentage of literacy (about 10 per cent). Yet the Haitian peasants, alone among the people of the Caribbean, have a long and vibrant historical tradition; they

proved themselves capable of resisting an American attempt to take over the island and despite the accumulated ills of decades of poverty, they have managed to retain a notable vitality.

At the time of writing (September 1964) the régime is being attacked by more than one armed group of revolutionaries. *Tonton Macoute* is said to be wavering. Long current among the incessant flood of conflicting rumours is this: that a smile from the United States on the forces opposed to Duvalier would have long ago resulted in his overthrow. But the dread alternative is ultimately a Castro-like rebellion — there are still people in the world who think that ten Duvaliers are preferable to one Castro.

As this time of renewed revolution in Haiti, it is worth looking again at the original revolution that started Haiti on her singular course. "It is not enough to have taken away Toussaint. There are 2,000 leaders to be taken away.... *We have in Europe a false idea of the country in which we fight and the men whom we fight against.*" So reported the commander of the French expedition General Leclerc, chosen by his brother-in-law, Napoleon, to lead the expedition to San Domingo.

An incredible transformation had taken place in the slave population. They not only produced a body of men (some unable to sign their names) who to this day astonish all observers by their achievements in war and the multifarious demands of government. Toussaint and his lieutenants, inspired by freedom, the concepts of French revolution and their long experience of a colonial régime, accomplished what leaders of struggles for national independence are rarely able to do. They did not take over the former colonial régime. They constructed, from the ground up, a new government based upon their own consciousness of their needs. Toussaint, however, recognised the backwardness his government had inherited, and strove to make a working arrangement with the French government (by this time Bonaparte) whereby independent Haitians would have the benefit of French culture and French capital. In pursuit of this ideal, Toussaint sapped the newly-created energies of his own followers. He made strenuous efforts to convince Napoleon that former slave-owners were not only welcome, but would be treated with dignity in the new régime. It was not to be. Toussaint was deported and imprisoned, and the independence was won by his barbaric lieutenant, Dessalines, under the slogan "Eternal hatred to France." For this divorce from Western civilisation Haiti has paid dearly.

After the establishment of independence, Haiti soon split into two states, the mulattos in the South under Pétion and the blacks in the North under Christophe, who established himself as emperor and ruled with vision but merciless despotism. After Pétion died Haiti was reunited under Boyer, who brought under his sole power the east of the island, the Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic. But this did not last. Boyer was deposed and there followed a long succession of seizures of power, assassinations of rulers and would-be rulers, during which the Dominican Republic established its independence both of Spain and Haiti, and to this day the island is divided between the two states.

American bankers entered Haiti at the beginning of the century, followed by the Marines in 1915. But although the Americans did introduce certain material advantages (roads, attempts at popular education, etc.), the tradition of independence against the foreigner is to this day strong in Haiti and in the early thirties a combination of revolt on the one hand and the "Good Neighbour" policy of President Roosevelt on the other resulted in the evacuation of the American military forces.

Recent history has shown that the dilemma of Toussaint was an elemental and primitive form of the dilemma which faces all newly-independent backward territories today. Conceptions of the method and aims of the writing of history have not stayed where they were in 1938 and their development has affected the image of Haiti. As recently as 24 July 1964, Mr Geoffrey Barraclough ended a review of books on Nazism in the *New Statesman* as follows:

The truth is that the study of Hitler and Hitlerism is in an intermediate stage where the old formulations no longer satisfy but new formulations can only be tentatively made as new evidence is sifted. The historiography of all great revolutions passes through well-defined stages, and it seems to me that the historiography of the Nazi revolution has now reached the stage Michelet referred to in that of the French Revolution when he said that the time had come to reduce to their "just proportions" the "ambitious marionettes" in whose minds and actions the motivating forces had hitherto been found, and bring out instead the role of the artisans, peasants and labourers we call "the people".

Although he had very little to say of the colonial question, many pages in Michelet are in my view the best preparations for understanding what actually happened in San Domingo and in this context I should also like to add a quotation from the works of M. George Lefebvre, for many years the doyen of the great school of French historians of the French revolution:

It is wrong to attach too much importance to any opinion that the Girondins or Robespierre might have on what needed to be done. That is not the way to approach the question. We must pay more attention to the obscure leaders and the people who listened to them in stores and the little workshops and dark streets of old Paris. It was on them that the business depended and for the moment, evidently, they followed the Girondins.... It is therefore, in the popular mentality, in the profound and incurable distrust which was born in the soul of the people, in regard to the aristocracy, beginning in 1789, and in regard to the king, from the time of the flight to Varennes, it is there that we must seek the explanation of what took place. The people and their unknown leaders knew what they wanted, they followed the Girondins and Robespierre, only to the degree that their advice appeared acceptable.

Reviewing the history of the Black Jacobins of San Domingo, I do not blame Toussaint for his attitude to his former masters, which compromised him with his followers, but have attempted to clarify the dilemma he faced. "His unrealistic attitude to the former masters, at home and abroad, sprang not from any abstract humanitarianism or

loyalty, but from a recognition that they alone had what San Domingo society needed. He believed that he could handle them. It is not impossible that he could have done it. He was in a position strictly comparable to that of the greatest of all American statesmen, Abraham Lincoln, in 1865; if the thing could be done at all, he alone could do it. Lincoln was not allowed to try. Toussaint fought desperately for the right to try."

Both in the United States and the Caribbean as a whole, the thing still remains to be done. Despite the partial substitution of French custom by African culture (an unconscious Negritude) in the 1920s the Black Sansculottes have not yet come to their own. As a Trinidadian observer, Rosa Guy, wrote recently in a special number on the Caribbean published in *Freedomways* (a quarterly review of the Negro Freedom Movement, Vol.4, No.3, Summer 1964):

The age of heroic hopes and grandiose schemes based on a grand and magnificent history is passed. The dilemma of any honest government today is the dilemma of sustaining a steadily growing population on gradually shrinking land resources. Its development is desperately urgent and can be done only with a bold and sweeping land-reform programme. The timid steps taken by Estime in the social justice concept of 1946 is woefully inadequate for the revolutionary necessities of 1964. The incipient revolution to come must come to grips with these realities by taking the bold and important measures necessary.

Haiti puts one in mind of a fragile old estate: the ghosts of great men abound, the echoes of greatness pervade but with further decay, a loud shout will bring down the ruins, burying its greatness beneath piles of useless debris. It is not true that the land is always waiting. The land dies too. For the land, like all else, if it does not progress, must retrogress. Years of abuse, of neglect bring its natural consequences as witnessed by the terrible erosion, the acres and acres laid bare by misuse and ignorance. To equivocate on the needs of the people for mere self-indulgence or for political expediency is to place the people of Haiti on the chopping block of time. The people of Haiti are waiting and they will be free.

Rastafari at Home and Abroad

[This review of Jamaican writer Orlando Patterson's first novel, *The Children of Sisyphus*, first appeared in 1964 in *New Left Review*. James says: "The Rastafari are people whose habits and behaviour and general appearance may not be very advanced politically, but the important thing about *The Children of Sisyphus* is that it made it very clear that the habits and ideas they have are the basis of an opposition to the British culture which dominated them for so many years and which they felt would continue to dominate them."]

Every West Indian novel worth notice is a tract for the times. But the test for it as for any type of novel must be: is it worth reading for the story it tells, the people it introduces, the interest of the piece of the world it restates or explores? Here Mr Patterson triumphs. His novel can take a third reading and not thereby shrink. His subject is made to order — the life of the people of the West Indies, more precisely, the people of Jamaica. A new people, new in a double sense; they came into existence only three hundred years ago, they have written about for less than 20 years. The novel gives us a comprehensive view: the poor, the ignorant, the despised, the rejected, the middle class, the officials and the more or less prosperous. And a wonderful portrait of a West Indian political premier in action — that above all will live, will live because although the portrait is particular, even a co-ordination, a tight co-ordination of incredible singularities, the total effect is that of a general type, the West Indian politician in the first years of self-government. The social scene constitutes the bones of the book and allows Mr Patterson to give free rein to his instinct for luscious writing. He is only 23 and is still a university student. Ordinarily he would begin, even if he ended by being a novelist, with a volume of verse. But in a West Indian island, class relations are so stark, the contrast between the professional ideal and the real so cruel, that Mr Patterson's prose can tremble on the verge of going over the line but can never shake free from the discipline of the social structure and the sharp concrete realities in which it expresses itself.

The novel, it is known, deals specifically with the Rastafari, the sect of Jamaican Negroes who reject the bastardised version of British society which official and educated Jamaica seeks to foist upon them. They have created for themselves a new world, in which the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, is God on earth. His kingdom in Africa is the promised Heaven to which all the Rastafari elect will go, not when they die but when they can raise the money for the passage. As an introduction to his novel, Mr Patterson places a lengthy quotation from Camus in which the theory of life as an embodiment of the absurd is militantly stated. The very title of the novel embodies this conception of the struggle of the Rastafari as a vain absurdity. The events and characterisation of the novel end in a conscious statement by a central character that life is an absurdity. But a good novel and a serious novel, and this novel is both good and serious, always tells more than the

novelist consciously puts into it. And for the critical reader *The Children of Sisyphus* is a mine of indications about certain aspects of the human condition.

First of all, as always happens, the successful concentration of Mr Patterson on Jamaica reality illumines a universal feature of contemporary life. The Rastafari are one example of the contemporary rejection of the life to which we all are submitted. The Mau-Mau of Kenya do the same. The Black Muslims of the United States are of the same brand. And for the time being we need go no further than the beatniks of the most advanced countries of Western civilisation. "Anywhere, anywhere out of the world", the world that they know.

But Rastafari and Mr Patterson are West Indian. They are both new. Their world is just beginning. They do not suffer from any form of angst. They have no deep-stated consciousness of failure, no fear of defeat. That is not in their history. Mr Patterson does not, cannot, convince the reader that the life he is describing is absurd. Horrible, horrible, most horrible it is. But it is not absurd. The prostitute who tries to lift herself out of the squalor, the filth of the Jungle is consciously impelled by "ambition". The other prostitute whose pathetic destiny equals the horrors of her existence is impelled by her passionate wish to give her daughter a secondary education. The colossal stupidities, the insanities of the Rastafari are consciously motivated by their acute consciousness of the filth in which they live, their conscious refusal to accept the fictions that pour in upon them from every side. It is the determination to get out of it that leads them to their imaginative fantasies of escape to Africa. These passions and forces are the "classic human virtues". As long as they express themselves, the form may be absurd, but the life itself is not absurd. The fate of Rastafari and Mr Patterson himself are very closely linked. And this book is one proof of their common distress and common destiny.

Mr Patterson has great gifts for writing. This first novel is evidence of that much. It is further evidence of the peculiar qualities of the West Indian school. In the whole corpus of English fiction I cannot recall three first novels which in mastery of the business in hand exceed the first novel of another 23-year-old — George Lamming of Barbados with his *In the Castle of My Skin*. Vidia Naipaul of Trinidad took a little time to produce a modern masterpiece, *A House for Mr Biswas*, but that he would was obvious from his first novel. Wilson Harris of British Guiana, beginning late, has in rapid succession produced a quartet of novels which must be unique in the history of fiction by beginners. Whence this astonishing maturity? For this burst of fiction is not yet a dozen years old.

One can venture up a flight of steps from which one may peer down into the public performances of these mysterious showmen. They are situated where Fielding, Richardson, Jane Austen were two hundred years ago. They have before them a new world, new in that it has never been described before. But they have what Fielding, Richardson and Jane Austen did not have. They have inherited — they begin with a highly developed language and have at their disposal the techniques of

fiction developed and accumulated on two continents for two centuries. Finally they have the impulses which enabled the writers and artists of Tsarist Russia to take over the discoveries of Europe and become the greatest artists of the nineteenth century. They are by a natural instinct sternly critical of the régimes they describe. They are what the great Russian artists had to be — against the Establishment. Mr Patterson — and not he alone — shows that politically they are pretty despairing of regeneration. But this is not their chief artistic obstacle — it rarely is. The writers themselves are trapped in a freedom whose walls are closing in upon them slowly but remorselessly. Thus Pushkin was sent to exile, Dostoevsky went to jail in Siberia, Tolstoy was put on the Index. Turgenev had to go abroad. But for the most part they wrote about Russia in Russia for Russians. Yeats, Joyce, O'Casey, Synge wrote in English but they wrote in Ireland for an Irish public. The West Indian novelists write thousands of miles from home, about the West Indies, for a British audience. It is unreasonable to expect a national literature to mature in such an alien environment, however auspicious the beginnings.

What is to happen to Patterson? Is he to continue creating fiction about Jamaica for a British public? Is it true that nothing can be done? Not only is it not true. Something is being done. The *same* forces that compel the Rastafari to seek refuge in a mythical Ethiopia are the *same* forces that keep Patterson the novelist away from his natural habitat. There is in the West Indies a public audience which is as eager to read (and hear) about itself as any in the world. There are ample financial resources available. But neither the economic masters nor the political inheritors (the coloured middle classes) want to have in their midst anything or anybody disturbing their precarious peace. The freedom which would enable the Rastafari to build their new Jerusalem in Jamaica's green and pleasant land would enable the Pattersons to steel and temper their weapons upon some dark and satanic mills. Their walls may appear to be very solid. But they are no more than the walls of Jericho. They would tumble at the sound of trumpets. But the trumpets must sound in Kingston, in Port of Spain, in Bridgetown and in Georgetown. From London (and in London) they are horns from an elf-land, blowing only faintly.

Kanhai: A Study in Confidence

[In 1966 James was asked by George Lamming to write two essays for the Guyana Independence issue of the journal New World: "I wrote one on the Caribbean people and politics ('Tomorrow and Today: A Vision') and another on Rohan Kanhai. The article on Kanhai was very successful. I take Kanhai as a high peak of West Indian cricketing development. West Indian cricket had reached such a stage that a fine cricketer could be adventuresome, and Kanhai was adventuresome; I try to relate that adventuresomeness of his cricket to the particular type of West Indian he was at that particular time. People felt that it was more than a mere description of how he batted: it was significant of something characteristic of us as cricketers. They felt it was not only a cricket question, because Kanhai was an East Indian, and East Indians were still somewhat looked down upon by other people in the Caribbean. But I stated that here was a cricketer who was doing things that nobody else was doing, and I was very pleased when he became captain of the West Indies side."]

Writing critically about West Indies cricket and cricketers, or any cricket for that matter, is a difficult discipline. The investigation, the analysis, even the casual historical or sociological gossip about any great cricketer should deal with his actual cricket, the way he bats or bowls or fields, does all or any of these. You may wander far from where you started, but unless you have your eyes constantly on the ball, in fact never take your eyes off it, you are soon writing not about cricket, but yourself (or other people) and psychological or literary responses to the game. This can be and has been done quite brilliantly, adding a little something to literature but practically nothing to cricket, as little as the story of Jack and the Beanstalk (a great tale) adds to our knowledge of agriculture. This is particularly relevant to the West Indies.

A great West Indies cricketer in his play should embody some essence of that crowded vagueness which passes for the history of the West Indies. If, like Kanhai, he is one of the most remarkable and individual of contemporary batsmen, then that should not make him less but more West Indian. You see what you are looking for, and in Kanhai's batting what I have found is a unique pointer of the West Indian quest for identity, for ways of expressing our potential bursting at every seam.

So now I hope we understand each other. Eyes on the ball.

The first historical innings (I prefer to call them historical now) by Kanhai was less than 50, for British Guiana against the Australians of 1956.

Kanhai had not as yet made the West Indies team. He played well but what was remarkable about the innings was not only its promise but that he was the junior in a partnership with Clyde Walcott as senior.

It is a commonplace what Clyde Walcott has done for the cricket of British Guiana. In reality, in truth and in essence, the thing should be stated this way. The tremendous tradition of Barbados batting, the

fount and origin of West Indies cricket, through Walcott had begun to fertilise another area in the Caribbean. Kanhai was the first-fruit. Some like to lay emphasis on the fact that he comes originally from the Courantyne, the home not of depressed sugar-workers but of independent rice farmers. There may be something to this. I do not know British Guiana well enough to have on this matter an opinion that is worthwhile. I prefer to remember and to remind of the fact that Christiani coached on the Courantyne. Now Christiani was one of the most brilliant of the brilliant school of West Indies batsmen. Of an innings of 107 not out that he played for the West Indies against the state of Victoria in 1951-2, A.G. Moyes said that it was the most dazzling innings of the Australian season. So that the burgeoning Kanhai inherited not only the universality of Barbados batting but was able to absorb also the individualism of one of the most brilliant of West Indies individualists.

Kanhai played effective innings which resulted in his being selected for the 1957 West Indies tour in England. I am not making a chronicle. I remember, however, the batting that he showed in all the Tests in England. West Indies was scrambling for openers and much of this responsibility was thrown to Kanhai. He bore it without disgrace, with spasms of alternate toughness and brilliance which only later we were to learn were fundamental constituents in his character.

Yet the innings in 1957 that future events caused me to remember most strongly was his last ten innings at the Oval. He faced Trueman and immediately hit him for two uninhibited fours. Gone was the restraint which held him prisoner during all the previous innings against England.

Kanhai, I know now, had made up his mind to have a final fling at the English bowlers. But either he wasn't yet good enough to play such cricket in a Test or he had not shaken off the effect of months of restraint. He was out almost at once. Altogether in 1957 it was the failure of Weekes, Worrell and Walcott to repeat the Victorian cavalry charges of 1950 which threw such burdens on Sobers, Kanhai and Collie Smith. The burden fell most heavily on Kanhai. But the future batsman was there to be discerned.

The next innings that helped to build the Kanhai personality was played as far away as Australia. It was an innings of over two hundred made in one day. Kanhai simply went to the Melbourne wicket and from the first ball hit the Victoria bowlers all over the place until he was tired at the end of the day. It is my firm belief that here again the great Barbados cricket tradition was at work.

In Australia, Frank Worrell made West Indians and the world aware of what West Indians were capable of when their talents had full play. That is Worrell's gift to the West Indian personality. We are much given to individualism (it would be a miracle if we were not). But the West Indians under Worrell could not let themselves go, be their own coruscating selves, knowing that the interest and needs, opportunities and perils of the side as a whole were being observed and calculated by one of the shrewdest minds that the game has known. They could

have complete confidence in their captain, go their own way, yet respond immediately to any premonition or request. That the smiting of Victoria was not the kind of brilliant innings which all good batsmen play at some time or other was proved by the fact that Kanhai continued to play that way all through the season. When he made a century in each innings against Australia, he was within an ace of making the second century in even time. Hunte being run out in an effort to help Kanhai towards the century, Kanhai was so upset that it was long minutes before he could make the necessary runs.

Kanhai continued to score, in the West Indies, in India, in Pakistan, but the next great landmark of his career was his innings against England at the Oval in 1963.

All through that season he had never been his new, his Australian self. In Tests he got into the nineties twice, but, while always showing himself a master batsman, something was wrong somewhere; if something was not wrong, at least everything was not right. Then at the Oval, with the fate of the match depending to a substantial degree on his batting (especially after Sobers ran himself out) in this his last test innings in England, Kanhai set off to do to English bowling what he had done to Australian.

Perhaps I should have seen its national significance, its relation to our quest for national identity. Here was a West Indian proving to himself that there was one field in which the West Indian not only was second to none, but was the creator of its own destiny. However, swept away by the brilliance and its dramatic circumstances, I floated with the stream.

1964 was a great year, perhaps the most important year in the steadily growing facts and phenomena I was automatically accumulating about the fascinating Kanhai. High on the list was an opinion which was the climax of many other opinions. All through the Tests of 1964 I sat in press boxes, most often between Sir Learie Constantine and Sir Frank Worrell. We were reporting England against Australia; there was a lot of talk about cricket and naturally about West Indian cricketers. About Kanhai, for quite a while the only thing notable said was by Worrell. He made a comparison between Kanhai and Everton Weekes as batsmen who would stand back and lash the length ball away on the off-side or to the on-boundary. Then at Leeds, Kanhai himself turned up and came and sat in the press box. Learie had a long look at him and then turned to me and said: "There is Kanhai. You know at times he goes crazy."

I never believe that an intelligent man or a man whom I know to be well informed about a subject is talking nonsense. I knew that Learie had something in mind. I waited and before long I learnt what it was. I shall try as far as I can to put it in his own words.

"Some batsmen play brilliantly sometimes and at ordinary times they go ahead as usual. That one," nodding at Kanhai, "is different from all of them. On certain days, before he goes into the wicket he makes up his mind to let them have it. And once he is that way nothing on earth can stop him. Some of his colleagues in the pavilion who have

played with him for years see strokes that they have never seen before: from him or anybody else. He carries on that way for 60 or 70 or 100 runs and then he comes back with a great innings behind him."

That was illumination indeed, coming from someone who knew all about batting which aimed at hitting bowlers all over the place. It was obvious that at times Kanhai's audacity at the wicket had earned not the usual perfunctory admiration but the deep and indeed awesome respect of Constantine. We both were thinking of the 1963 innings at the Oval. He had hit the English bowlers all over the place, he gave no chance and never looked like getting out. Yet I knew Learie was aware of something in Kanhai's batting that had escaped me. At off times I wondered what it might be.

Going crazy. That could be Greek Dionysius, the satyric passion for the expression of the natural man, bursting through the acquired restraints of disciplined necessity. I played with that idea for a while. Tentatively. I settled for a West Indian proving to himself that henceforth he was following no established pattern but would create his own.

Certainty came at the end of the 1964 season. Sir Frank Worrell led a team of West Indies players against England elevens at Scarborough and Edgbaston (a third game at Lords' was rained out). I reported both games.

Kanhai made a century in each, and what I saw no one has written about: nor have I met anyone who appears to have noticed it.

At Scarborough Kanhai was testing out something new. Anyone could see that he was trying to sweep anything near the leg-stump round to fine-leg to beat both deep square and long-leg. He missed the ball more often than he connected. That was easy enough. But I distinctly remember being vaguely aware that he was feeling his way to something. I attributed it to the fact that he had been playing league cricket all the season and this was his first first-class match. Afterwards, I was to recall his careful defence of immaculate length balls from Trevor Bailey, and, without any warning or fuss, not even a notable follow-through, he took on the rise and lifted it ten feet over mid-on's head to beat wide long-on to the boundary; he never budged from his crease, he had barely swung at the ball. Yet, as far as he was concerned, it was a four predestined.

We went to Edgbaston. Bailey's side had six bowlers who had bowled for England that season. If the wicket was not unresponsive to spin, and the atmosphere not unresponsive to swing, the rise of the ball from the pitch was fairly regular. Kanhai began by giving notice that he expected test bowlers to bowl a length; balls a trifle loose so rapidly and unerringly paid the full penalty that by the time he had made 30 or 40 everybody was on his best behaviour.

Kanhai did not go crazy. Exactly the reverse. He discovered, created a new dimension in batting. The only name I can give to it is "cat-and-mouse". The bowler would bowl a length ball. Kanhai would play a defensive stroke, preferably off the front foot, pushing the ball for one, quite often for two on the on-side — a most difficult stroke on an

uncertain pitch, demanding precision footwork and clockwork timing. The bowler, after seeing his best lengths exploited in this manner, would shift, whereupon he was unfailingly despatched to the boundary. After a time it began to look as if the whole sequence had been pre-arranged for the benefit of the spectators. Kanhai did not confine himself too rigidly to this pre-established harmony.

One bowler, to escape the remorseless billiard-like pushes, brought the ball untimely up. Kanhai hit him for six to long-on off the front foot. The bowler shortened a bit. Kanhai in the same over hit him for six in the same place, off the back foot this time. Dexter, who made a brilliant, in fact a dazzling century in the traditional style, hit a ball out of the ground over wide mid-on. Kanhai hit one out of the ground some 40 yards further on than Dexter. He made over 170 in about three hours.

Next day, Brian Johnston in the *Daily Mail*, Crawford White in the *Daily Express*, John Woodcock in *The Times* — men who have watched critically all the great players of the last thirty years — made no effort to contain themselves: they had never seen such batting. Here and there some showed that in their minds the Everest conquered by Bradman had been once more scaled.

They were wrong. Kanhai had found his way into regions Bradman never knew. It was not only the technical skill and strategic generalship that made the innings the most noteworthy I have seen. There was more to it, to be seen as well as felt. Bradman was a ruthless executioner of bowlers. All through this demanding innings Kanhai grinned with a grin that could be seen a mile away.

Now to fit his cricket into the history of the West Indies. I saw all his batting against the Australians during their tour of the West Indies in 1965. Some fine play, but nothing in the same category as Edgbaston.

At Melbourne in Australia in 1959, he had experienced a freedom in which his technique could explore roads historically charted, but to him unknown.

He had had to wait until the last Test in England in 1963 to assure himself that his conquest of Australia was not an accident. *Now in 1964 at Scarborough and Edgbaston he was again free; to create not only "a house for Mr Biswas", a house like other houses, but to sail the seas that open out before the East Indian who no longer has to prove himself to anybody or to himself. It was no longer: anything you can do, I can do better.* That had been left behind at the Kennington Oval in 1963. Now it was fresh fields and pastures new, not tomorrow but today.

At that moment, Edgbaston in 1964, the West Indian could strike from his feet the dust of centuries. The match did not impose any burdensome weight of responsibility. He was free as few West Indians have been free.

Cricket is an art, a means of national expression. Voltaire says that no one is so boring as the man who insists on saying everything. I have said enough. But I believe I owe it to the many who did not see the Edgbaston innings to say what I thought it showed of the directions that, once freed, the West Indies might take. The West Indies in my view

embody more sharply than elsewhere Nietzsche's conflict between the ebullience of Dionysius and the discipline of Apollo. Kanhai's going crazy might seem to be Dionysius in us breaking loose. It was absent from Edgbaston. Instead the phrases which go nearest to expressing what I saw and have reflected upon are those of Lytton Strachey on French Literature: "[the] mingled distinction, gaiety and grace which is one of the unique products of the mature poetical genius of France".

Distinction, gaiety, grace. Virtues of the ancient Eastern Mediterranean city-states, islands, the sea, and the sun. Long before Edgbaston I had been thinking that way. Maybe I saw only what I was looking for. Maybe.

1966

Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana

[James's association with Nkrumah began in the USA in the early 1940s and spanned some twenty years. The first of these articles, written within days of Ghana's first military coup in which Nkrumah was deposed on 24 February 1966, appeared first in the Trinidad Daily Mirror between 28 February and 4 March 1966. The second article was written for the American magazine Black World after Nkrumah's death in exile in 1972.]

The Rise and Fall of Nkrumah

The fall of Dr Kwame Nkrumah is one of the greatest catastrophes that has befallen the minds of Africans in Africa, of people of African descent, and all who are interested in the development and progress of independent Africa. His dramatic collapse is a thing that many people will find hard to understand and to place within the context of what is happening in the underdeveloped countries. It will be difficult for people who are genuinely uninstructed about Africa, like the people of the Caribbean (for example the people of Trinidad and Tobago). But those of us who have been following the developments of Africa and the criticisms of Africans in the European and American press have long been astonished at the confusion and the utter inability to understand the would-be experts on Africa.

Nkrumah's fall is a catastrophe. But it should have been foreseen. In fact, it was foreseen and before I am finished with these articles I shall make that unmistakably clear. What must not be lost sight of is that he was one of the greatest leaders of African struggles whom Africa has produced, especially during the last twenty years, the last crucial twenty years. He was not a rogue or a betrayer, or one who lost his head amid the temptations of power.

He was a splendid person, but he was overwhelmed by the economic and political problems which weigh so heavily upon the newly independent countries, particularly the independent countries of Africa. My association with Nkrumah is not only political but it has been personal, although, with him as with me, a personal relation was always governed by political beliefs and perspectives. I met him first in New York in about 1941. He saw a great deal of my friends and political associates, and we became very intimately associated. Then in 1943, he said he was going to England to study law, whereupon I wrote a letter that I believe still exists among the archives of George Padmore, and which has become quite famous among us.

Padmore was the leader of an organisation (chiefly of West Indians) devoted to propagating and organising for the emancipation of Africa. Padmore had accumulated an enormous amount of knowledge, a great library of books and papers and a wide international acquaintance of people who were devoted to the emancipation of Africa, and in fact, of the whole colonial world. I therefore wrote to Padmore telling him about Francis (Nkrumah's English name). This letter said that Nkrumah, a young African, was coming to live in England. I said that

he was not very bright but that he was determined to throw the imperialists out of Africa. I asked Padmore to see him and do his best for him, in other words, educate him politically as much as possible. I am not in the least bothered at having written that Nkrumah was "not very bright". At the time he used to talk a great deal about imperialism, leninism and similar data, with which my friends and I were very familiar. Nkrumah used to talk a lot of nonsense about these matters. As a matter of fact, he knew nothing about them. But as far as I know, Padmore met him at a London railway station. The two of them began to collaborate closely, and about a year later I read an address by Nkrumah on imperialism which was a masterpiece. In one year he had learnt what had taken us so many years to learn and prepare.

But he not only learned. He contributed a great deal of independent knowledge and constructive ideas to Padmore's organisation. And when he left London to go to work in Accra, it would have been difficult to tell of any serious distinction between the two. How Nkrumah went to the Gold Coast must be remembered, for when we come to estimate the cause of his fall this will play a not unimportant role.

A body of middle-class Africans of the Gold Coast, lawyers, doctors, retired civil servants, some chiefs, had formed a political organisation called the Convention Party. They aimed at independence, or, to be more precise, self-government. They might have been hazy about the name, but they knew what they wanted: to substitute themselves for the British colonial officials wherever possible. This was not an ignoble ambition, but the organisers of this party were too busy with their own affairs to devote themselves to the wearisome task of building the party. So, hearing that Nkrumah had taken good degrees in American universities and was actively propagating ideas of independence for Africa in London, they sent to him and asked him to come and organise their party for them. Like Caesar, Nkrumah came and saw and conquered, but the first persons he conquered were the people who had employed him.

He organised a Youth Party, built a following among the masses, then organised a leadership among the trade unionists and the lower middle class. By the time the educated middle class knew what was happening, he had the majority of the country behind him, and organised his own party — the Convention People's Party. The struggle became extremely bitter between the educated African middle classes, whom Nkrumah and his party denounced as stooges of the British government, and Nkrumah's band of leaders who were derisively labelled "veranda boys". They had no houses of their own and were compelled, so ran the propaganda, to sleep in open verandas. Having conquered the middle classes, Nkrumah went on to win Independence. It was most brilliantly done and deserves an honoured place in the history of human emancipation. But you cannot govern a backward country without the co-operation or at least the benevolent neutrality of a part of the middle classes. As I heard in London some weeks ago, the middle classes regained power in the economic and social life of the country.

Nkrumah had been balancing now to right and now to left. But as I heard it, he had become more and more dependent upon the leadership of a now huge bureaucracy. In his frantic attempt to modernise Ghana he had been compelled to concentrate more and more power into local hands. I believe that the army has acted on behalf of these. This, I hasten to say, is not similar to what happened in Nigeria. There the "veranda boys" have never been near to power. The army revolt in Nigeria was aimed at an all-powerful bureaucracy. But for the time being, and until further evidence comes to hand, we can exercise our minds on the theory that after many years in the darkness and half-light, the middle classes in Ghana are grasping at the power. That is the best we can say now. A journalist so far from the scene cannot *know* anything.

Nkrumah has committed colossal blunders and committed the final blunder of leaving his country in a state where it has to begin all over again to work out an established government. But at a time like this, the one thing observers must never forget is the tremendous political achievements of Nkrumah. If you do not bear those constantly in mind, you will never be able to understand why his government in Ghana lasted so long (fifteen years), created such a great reputation, for itself, for Nkrumah, and for Africa; and has now so ignominiously and shockingly collapsed. Nkrumah did three things: He led a great revolution. He raised the status of Africa and Africans to a pitch higher than it had ever reached before. Be prepared for a shock now, Ghana's economic policies were the most dynamic and successful of the new states in Africa.

Let us take them in order. Nkrumah did not win the independence of the Gold Coast by carrying on negotiations with the Colonial Office. He mobilised the population of Ghana and hurled them at the British colonial government. He paralysed the whole working of the state, brought everything to a standstill. This negation of normal life Nkrumah called "positive action" and his main demand was not self-government. Every politician in Ghana was for self-government. What distinguished Nkrumah's politics was the addition of a single word: "now". Thus he agitated for "self-government now" and took drastic steps to force it home. Nobody in Africa has hurled a whole population at an imperialist government.

The Gold Coast government also took a very positive action. They put Nkrumah and his body of leaders in jail. But the government was too late to halt events. Leading his movement secretly from jail, Nkrumah showed his power by an overwhelming victory of his party in elections over one-third of Ghana. He himself from jail ran for Accra and won. By this time his fearlessness, his political courage and political skill, the challenge of this minute David to the huge Goliath, had caught the attention of the world. Journalists from Europe had poured into Ghana. George Padmore, Nkrumah's official agent in London, wrote articles and books, made speeches, ceaselessly informing the world of Nkrumah's policies and events in Ghana. The British pressmen on the spot made it clear that Nkrumah had the mass of the population behind

him. And here I write what I have hitherto only said from platforms. The government in Britain was completely baffled by this new apparition of an embattled and revolutionary African population.

It anxiously debated what to do. Some proposed to send force and beat the movement down. Mr Nehru let it be known that if force were used, India would leave the Commonwealth immediately. Whereupon the British government accepted the inevitable and put in power a government headed by Nkrumah. When things began to go wrong in Ghana, some of us stuck by the Ghana government of Nkrumah almost to the very end. It was not friendship nor sentimentality. We knew what had been done and the man who had done it.

This is what Nkrumah now went on to do: It took him six years to win independence by 1957. He could have gone on to independence in 1951. He preferred to wait. But one day he told me that he didn't know whether he was right to wait, or if he should have gone forward in 1951 as George Padmore and Dorothy Padmore were urging him to do. I did not know what to think at the time but today I am of the opinion that he should have gone straight ahead. That six-year delay was one cause of the deterioration of his party and government. A revolution cannot mark time for six years.

Nkrumah followed Nehru (a great friend of his) and declared Ghana a republic, setting a pattern since followed by nearly all the African states. He sent for George Padmore and Padmore organised the first International Conference of African Independent States. He also organised the first Conference of African fighters. Banda, Nyerere, Tom Mboya, Lumumba, all were there. When Sekou Touré of Guinea defied de Gaulle and refused to be a part of the new French community, Nkrumah came to his assistance, lent him money and united the state of Ghana to the state of Guinea. He declared that only a United Independent Africa could save Africa from a new colonialism. He wrote in the constitution of Ghana that the Ghana government would subordinate its sovereignty to the government of a United Africa. But more than that, by magnificent speeches and dramatic actions he made the world see Africa and Africans as contenders for liberty, equality and if not fraternity, respect.

Nkrumah is one of the great men of our day. What then went wrong? *He attempted to do too much, particularly in his drive to make Ghana a country of an advanced economy.* That we shall go into most carefully for it brings out two things: the difficulties of all newly independent states; the vast difference between Africa and the Caribbean.

For many years no political collapse has unloosed among our people — and many others — the dismay that the fall of Nkrumah has caused. A sense of politics being an insoluble mystery has increased and that is bad for democracy: above all people must understand. We all accept, I hope, that Nkrumah was no commonplace, incompetent person, a grabber at the profits and perquisites of power, his personal degeneration at last discovered and exposed. No. His fall is deserved. He had become a disease in the blood of Ghana and of Africa. For us in the Caribbean to understand and learn the lesson of his fall we have

to appreciate the immense differences between the territory and population of Ghana and the territory and population of, for example, Trinidad and Tobago. Walk about in Accra, the capital of Ghana. A modern city, fine, concrete, American-style structures. The buildings where the trade union is housed; the party headquarters built by Nkrumah are among the finest in formerly colonial Africa. Motorcars of various styles shoot about the streets. Everywhere, activity, modernism. Outside Accra, a university; at Kumasi (inland), a scientific technological institute planned for the highest standards. Much of this was built by Nkrumah or his government.

But drive five miles from the centre of Accra. Get out and walk around. There is a mud-walled village, houses of a type that could have been there 500 years ago, an elementary school in process of being constructed by the villagers themselves. Go on for 50 miles. You meet small villages of a few score houses. After 150 miles, mainly of thick forest, with small concentrations of people living African lives and for the most part speaking one of a few tribal languages, you come to Kumasi. Kumasi is quite a modern town. But it is the capital of the Ashanti, a people different from the Africans of the coast in language, religion, tribal practices and outlook, *and very conscious of these differences*. We are not finished yet.

On our journey we have often seen walking on the road a few dozen cattle, with some cattlemen walking behind them. They are on their way to Accra, where the cattle, thin and exhausted, will be fattened up for beef. Men and beasts have come hundreds of miles from the third area of Ghana, the Mohammedan North with its centre, Tamale. When I was in Ghana in 1957 many of them went without clothes. In 1960 I enquired about them. Elementary education was fighting hard against a primitive past, bad roads, remote villages.

And the famous cocoa industry? The cocoa plantations were deep inside the forests, often miles from each other. To sum up: in a Caribbean island, "All o' we is one." In an African state, and Ghana, by and large, is the most advanced of them, "All o' we is many."

That was what Nkrumah faced. In the struggle for "self-government now" the Convention People's Party had knit the population closer together into one people than ever before. *Now, however, in Nkrumah's drive to build a modern economy and create a sense of nationhood, he found himself splitting the new nation into far more intractable divisions than the ancient tribalisms*. Let us state the problems as they developed and have finally overwhelmed him.

The first problem was a state, a government. To begin with, he had no independent African government. Like all these new African rulers, he had inherited a British colonial government organised for purposes quite different from his own. Further, in a new government, it is people, personnel, who are an urgent priority. Nkrumah had to find people to create a modern economy and run a modern government.

This put a premium on education so that the educated in every area began rapidly to develop into an aristocracy, or to use a contemporary term, a meritocracy. In this drive for modernisation, the only sure

source of discipline and loyalty to the régime was the party. The party gradually acquired enormous power and control. But, try as he would, Nkrumah could not prevent the party becoming the party of the new bureaucracy and no longer the party of the masses, as in the days of the struggle for "self-government now". Sharp and persistent conflicts and grave corruption develop in *all* (I repeat *all*) new and growing bureaucracies. Nkrumah found himself more and more having to decide between honest and dishonest; between groups and individuals fighting often with inter-tribal weapons.

In spite of himself, he had personally to assume dictatorial powers, or to give such powers to individuals whom he could trust or thought he could. In 1960 I warned him of the imminent crisis. By that time he could not understand. He had at the same time, amid these troubles, to battle with the decline in the price of tropical commodities such as cocoa. These prices had dropped fantastically all over the world. But the prices of the manufactured goods these tropical areas had to buy had risen. This was felt acutely by Ghana, dependent on the sale of cocoa, and frantically buying modern goods to modernise itself. It is within these objective practical realities that Nkrumah had to govern, to build a new state. He developed many personal weaknesses (I know quite a few).

But I know that unless you are acutely aware of the economic and social milieu in which a politician is functioning, you get mixed up resignedly in the speculation and analysis of pure personality, and end by shaking your head on the weakness of human, especially political human nature. We can now see Nkrumah the man, fighting with those problems and breaking politically (and personally) under them. As we watch him, we are seeing not merely an individual but a continent, the continent of Africa.

Nkrumah over the years committed what we can now call blunder after blunder. They may not have been seen clearly as blunders at the time, but the way in which his enemies have got rid of him show that there had been accumulating in various sections of the population a great deal of antagonism to him. Unless people are certain that the minds of the population have turned against the political leadership, they do not plot and act in the way they have acted in Nigeria and Ghana. First of all Nkrumah had the greatest contempt for what in democratic countries is known as the parliamentary opposition. A parliamentary opposition, he said, was a luxury which only wealthy and advanced countries could afford. What is needed in Ghana was that everybody should devote himself to developing the country and building the new nation. Nkrumah used to say this openly, and it was a conception of government entirely and utterly false.

Where you have around you only a lot of yes-men, the first victim is yourself. You have no means of judging and testing the information that you get and, most important of all, no means of judging the state of mind of the population. It is perfectly clear that Nkrumah hadn't the faintest idea of what was going on in the minds of the people and in the heads of his chief officials. The first victim of a dictatorship is

usually the dictator himself. He cannot govern properly and ensures only the disorder attendant on his removal. Elections were a farce. He ended with a one-party state.

Nkrumah's best known opponents were Danquah, Busia and Appiah. Busia fled. Danquah and Appiah were in and out of jail without trial. The argument that Nkrumah and his supporters used was that Danquah was in reality a city intellectual who, purely for political purposes, had formed an alliance with some of the most reactionary elements in the country, chiefly the rulers of Ashanti. That was undoubtedly true. Danquah's political manoeuvres cannot seriously stand examination. Appiah, who had been the personal representative of Nkrumah in London, was the son of one of the men very closely and officially associated with the king of Ashanti. So that when Appiah returned from England he became a leader of the opposition, strongly Ashanti, and was frequently in jail without trial.

Nkrumah's great political error was this. He believed that the question of democracy was a matter between him and Danquah and Busia and Appiah and such. He never understood that democracy was a matter in which the official leaders and an opposition were on trial before the mass of the population. It is not a question of conflict between rivals for power, as so many who shout "democracy" believe.

In reality, the concept and practice of democracy is very difficult for people who are just starting it. The new rulers believe that as long as they have a majority in Parliament they can do anything. In Britain and other countries where there is a long tradition of democracy, the politicians know that they cannot overstep certain boundaries without bringing the whole of government into discredit and unloosening dangerous currents among the people. Nkrumah was very energetic. He was not one who could point only to some roads, some schools and some foreign investments. Nkrumah was busy with his truly magnificent Volta scheme for the production of aluminium locally, with building and developing a new town, Tema. But, overwhelmed with work, Nkrumah depended more and more upon the party and less and less upon Parliament. But here his shallow concept of democracy found him out.

When I was in Ghana in 1960 he was engaged in building a special school for the training of party members. The year before he had declared that the party was the real ruler of the country. But having destroyed democracy in the Parliament, if even he wanted to, he could not establish democracy in the party. He had made the Parliament into a body of stooges and the party also became the same, a body of stooges. This dual degeneration of the Parliament and of the party had one terrible result. The ablest, the most qualified, and the intellectuals of finest character turned their backs on Nkrumah. Some of them, an astonishing number, went abroad and took jobs elsewhere. Those who stayed at home either devoted themselves to their professions, such as law and medicine, or did their work in the government, drew their pay and let Nkrumah govern or misgovern as he pleased. This abandonment of their own government and their own people by gifted,

trained intellectuals of high character is a feature of modern underdeveloped countries. Canadian, British, French, even the United States businesses will take them once their degrees and qualifications are good enough. It is a commonplace that nowhere has a country suffered from the disaffection of its ablest intellectuals as Ghana has suffered.

One strong current of opinion is that they refuse to be governed by "the party". All sorts of ignoramuses, gangster-types, only had to prove their loyalty to the régime, i.e. to Nkrumah, and they could go places in the party and in the country. A notoriously ignorant and even more flagrantly corrupt minister had to be fired. But he had influence among the Ashanti. The Ashanti were restless and he was brought back, to the scandal of the whole country.

A false policy persisted in causes a brilliant politician to deteriorate personally. Nkrumah had himself called "Osagyefo" or Saviour. He bought planes, small warships, wasted public money on prestige building, and on prestige diplomacy. He became the advocate of the policy of a United Africa, a profound and far-seeing policy, but he advocated it crudely and with an intolerance that labelled all who disagreed with him as fools or crooks. Posing as an authority on all sorts of historical and philosophical subjects, he began to publish book after book. Years ago I ceased to read them. The drive towards economic expansion continued but now with a huge and self-seeking bureaucracy and the inevitable heavy taxation of the mass of the population. Ghana began to go bankrupt.

At such times all who are not sharing in the spoils begin to draw near each other and to think in terms of a new régime. Nkrumah was shot at two or three times. I wrote to him hinting that where a head of state is threatened so often with assassination something is vitally wrong with his régime; it is the ruler's business to find out what is wrong and correct it. I told him what to do. Nkrumah replied that he was a revolutionary and had to expect that his life was in constant danger. When I read that, I knew that he was no longer the dynamic, sensitive politician of the old days.

Soon he had publicly to accuse the secretary of his party of plotting to murder him, an accusation which discredited him as much as it discredits the accused. Any politician could now divine that there was surely building up in the country a secret opposition. Then came the dismissal of the Chief Justice, for giving a decision Nkrumah did not approve of. I learnt that he was now compelled to lean heavily on heads of the civil service, police and army. They were not only in charge of governmental departments. They were seeping back into the party. The party, led by the "veranda boys", and then by those whom I call the party gangsters, was coming to an end. With its end has come Nkrumah's end. He says he will return. Maybe. I doubt it. If he does the mess will be bloody.

When he dismissed the Chief Justice, I wrote to him at once and when he did not reply I publicly broke off the relations of twenty-five years. You can poison a Chief Justice, you cannot dismiss him for a decision

from the Bench. You destroy the concept of law and order. I knew then that his régime was doomed. I sat down and prepared a book which I called *Nkrumah Then and Now*.^{*} In it I did at length what I am doing here briefly: I showed the former grandeur and present decadence of Nkrumah. I not only prophesied the end of his régime but showed the necessity for bringing it to an end.

What exactly is happening there today I don't know and can't know.... Nkrumah studied, thought and knew a lot. But one thing he never mastered: that democracy is not a matter of the rights of an opposition, but in some way or other must involve the population. Africa will find that road or continue to crash from precipice to precipice.

1966

Kwame Nkrumah: Founder of African Emancipation

Kwame Nkrumah was one of the greatest political leaders of our century. We must be on guard that his years of exile do not remove from our constant study and contemplation the remarkable achievements of the great years. That is what this article proposes to do — to indicate what is necessary to study and learn about Nkrumah and how to apply the principle he established to the situation in which we find ourselves today.

As with most of the great leaders of the twentieth century, Nkrumah's career was one of mobility from the lowest strata of society to the seat of power in Ghana. His mother was a petty trader in the British African colony of the (then) Gold Coast. But as in most of the British colonies, British imperialism had provided a small opportunity for secondary education. It needed teachers, postal clerks, sergeants of police, pharmacists, and so forth, who could not all be imported from Britain. Nkrumah was trained at one of these schools and became a teacher. But in 1935, when he was twenty-five years of age, he set sail for the United States. There he received an education, first at Lincoln University under the sympathetic and learned leadership of Horace Mann Bond (the father of Julian Bond), and later at the University of Pennsylvania. At times he had to do all sorts of hard work, once working in a shipyard in all weather, from midnight to eight the following morning.

I got to know Nkrumah in the United States in 1943, and he and I and some of my friends were very close between 1943 and 1945. We went down to Pennsylvania or to Lincoln to see him — or he would come up to New York to spend a day or two with his friends and exchange ideas with us. Even in those years, Nkrumah was noted for his acute intelligence, his intellectual energy, the elegance of his person, the charm of his manners, and his ability to establish easy relations with any company in which he found himself. But it would be a great mistake to believe that it was those qualities which led to his political success.

^{*} Now published as *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*.

We could observe that, behind his easy style, his primary concern was the independence and freedom of African people. He left America in 1945 and went to Britain to study law. But he spent his time in Britain working at politics, alongside George Padmore. Padmore was one of the most highly educated and experienced political figures in the world. He had worked with the Communist Party in the United States and with the Third International in Moscow and then founded his own organisation in London. It was with him that Nkrumah studied politics, for both of them worked together at one of the great joint political activities of the twentieth century, the emancipation of Africa.

Nkrumah came back to the Gold Coast at the request of the leaders of the Convention Party. The Convention Party at that time was a party which expressed the desires of the doctors, lawyers, the teachers, the small businessmen, the Black middle classes of the country. They did not want to be bothered with the hard work of organising a political party. But Nkrumah was active in London, everybody spoke of his intelligence and energy, so he was invited to come to the Gold Coast and be the active organiser of the Convention Party.

People do not understand the nature of political activity in the Gold Coast between 1947, the year that he returned, and 1951, when he attained power as Leader of Government Business. Nkrumah found that the Convention Party had about thirteen branches. That was all there was to it. Middle-class Blacks got together, talked, wrote and published a few documents, but the mass of the population did not seem to them the people who should or could be the basis of a political party. But the Manchester Conference of 1945 established that only the African masses could coin African freedom. The party was not built one by one — it was a crusade, a revivalist campaign. People joined by the thousands. This was politics in the sense of politics in the Greek city-state. It embraced the whole man, and this people under leadership of Nkrumah stepped over centuries. Nkrumah travelled ceaselessly in urban and in rural areas, and the party organisers followed him. They organised village, city and regional units. Pedantic statisticians sneered at the figures, but by 1950 the party claimed a million and a half members out of a total population of five million, and it had every right to do so. The people did not pay regular subscriptions, but when the party called for a rally they came from far and near; and though poverty-stricken, they were able to raise on the spot what were sometimes astonishing sums of money.

Nkrumah taught the people of the Gold Coast that political emancipation from imperialist domination was a way of existence and not something that they did in their spare time. In the schools that existed, some students and some teachers had demonstrated against the arrests of some political leaders. The authorities expelled them. This population was distracted at the loss of the now doubly precious education, but Nkrumah proposed the formation of a secondary school independent of the British colonial government. A hall was hired in Cape Coast: kerosene, packing cases and boards were bought to serve as desks and seats. The expelled teachers became the staff. There were

only 10 students to begin with. One year later the school had 240 students, with a thousand students on the waiting list. This was the beginning of a national education movement. At news of the foundation of the school, requests poured in from all over the country. New schools were founded within a few days of each other. A dozen schools and colleges were founded and there were elementary schools in the far areas of Ashanti and Togoland. The people subscribed, chiefs appropriated land, teachers worked for small salaries, and the nation that was to become Ghana sprang into being. To think that Nkrumah merely mobilised the people against the oppression of British imperialism is to misunderstand one of the great political achievements of our century.

This was the basis of Nkrumah's defeat of British imperialism. He set the people in motion, discovered and unleashed the immense powers latent in an apparently docile African people. But along with the confidence in and discovery of the power of the people, Nkrumah boldly created organisations to unleash and harness this political power.

In September 1948, he founded a one-sheet evening paper, the *Accra Evening News*, which became the foundation of the press, which was soon as powerful a means of mobilising the people of the Gold Coast as the education had mobilised the youth. In January 1949 appeared a daily, the *Morning Telegraph* of Sekondi, followed by another daily, the *Daily Mail* of Cape Coast. These papers (the *Accra Evening News* in particular) attained a fabulous reputation. The *Evening News* sold all the copies it could print. It was besieged by news vendors, and the editors of those days claimed that if they had had the facilities to print they would have sold 50,000 copies a day in Accra, a town of 150,000 people, of whom a large proportion was illiterate. Copies were passed from hand to hand.

This was the way Nkrumah mobilised the people of the Gold Coast against British imperialism. This was the birth of African freedom. The people of the Gold Coast became a nation, and the nation it was that won its freedom. The British government did not give or grant anything. It was helpless before the new nation.

Ultimately, Nkrumah had to break from the Convention Party and start the Convention People's Party. And the time came when his own Convention People's Party called for what Nkrumah had given the name "positive action", the general strike of the whole nation against British rule. It brought the administration to an insoluble crisis. All they could do was to put Nkrumah in prison. But the laws of the day allowed him, while in prison, to run in an election. As a result of the election it was shown that 22,780 out of the 23,122 who voted, voted for Nkrumah. Under the circumstances, and always bearing in mind the tremendous mobilisation of the population which Nkrumah had managed the four years he had been in the country, the British government decided that it was impossible to rule the country unless Nkrumah was in charge of government. Those were the circumstances which resulted in his being led from prison to government office to

become minister in charge of the government, or, as it was called in those days, Leader of Government Business. There is not a political leader or a political party anywhere in the world which cannot learn from Nkrumah's politics in the revolutionary Gold Coast, 1947-1951.

Too often these events are summarised in books so that the reader cannot get the feeling of what happened. This must be avoided so that the real, the creative Nkrumah, is not lost in a few sentences. Here he is addressing the youth at Christmas 1948:

In the spirit of the season, I send you a world of hope and cheer. As never before, the Gold Coast of today stands on the threshold of a new era, a new era that bids the youth of this country, even the youth of West Africa, to take up their political responsibility. This era demands of the Youth of the new Ghana that they should be up and doing. In this sense, my message to the youth of the Gold Coast in particular, and West Africa in general, is simple and direct.

Stand firm; be vigilant and resolute. In a humble way, I would quicken you in thought and action. I would inspire in you the love of one's country above anything else. The future is in your hands; out of you must come thinkers; yes, thinkers of great thoughts; out of your rank and file must come doers, yes, doers of great deeds. You cannot think great thoughts and do great deeds by fear and cowardice. You must be prepared to face the shackles of imperialism with an unflinching courage. You must fight to destroy the doctrine of imperialism and colonialism, direct or indirect.

Youth of Ghana, the future of this country is in your hands. Emulate the youth of other countries. Learn from the youth of Burma, India, China, Russia, Ceylon, Britain and the new democracies of Europe. God and nature did not intend you to be forever slaves to the diabolical machinations of imperialism and foreign rule!

Youth of Ghana, be up and doing. This is the hour; this is the era; this is the new day! The generations of tomorrow are looking up to you. Only you the Youth — dynamic, volatile, fearless and daring — can carry on the struggle for freedom and emancipation to its logical conclusion. This is the age of Action; only the youth with their sagacity and impulsiveness can act.

Yes, fellow youth, the hour of liberation not only for the Gold Coast but for West Africa, is at hand. Go forward in unity. Let not detractors, traitors, cowards, quislings and opportunists get the better of you. Yours is a righteous cause. You fight for the cause of the right with free people of other nations to rid this world of the pest of imperialism, tyranny and colonialism. You fight for peace, democracy and socialism!

In the higher reaches of our endeavour, I bid you rise above criticism, keep on building and lay solid foundations — foundations of thought and action. Let your watchword be: In all things national unity; in all things, political self-government; in all things, action.

Today in the USA such words might be labelled as rhetoric. In the Gold Coast of 1948 the people roared their approval.

We have left for the last the proof that this magnificent and all-embracing work was in Nkrumah's head before he began. He landed in the Gold Coast in December 1947, after twelve years away. But he had been well educated abroad in the United States, and especially in collaboration with Padmore. In January 1948, he called a meeting of the United Gold Coast Convention and he laid before them a

programme written on the very day that he presented it. It is the document of the revolution:

First Period:

(a) Co-ordination of all the various organisations under the United Gold Coast Convention: i.e. apart from the individuals, membership of the various political, social, educational, farmers' and women's organisations, as well as native societies, trade unions, co-operative societies, etc., should be asked to affiliate to the Convention.

(b) The consolidation of branches already formed and the establishment of branches in every town and village of the country will form another major field of action during the first period.

(c) Convention branches should be set up in each town and village throughout the colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and Togoland. The chief or *Odikro* of each town or village should be persuaded to become patron of the branch.

(d) Vigorous Convention weekend schools should be opened wherever there is a branch of the Convention. The political mass education of the country for self-government should begin at these weekend schools.

Second Period:

To be marked by constant demonstrations throughout the country to test out organisational strength, making use of political crises.

Third Period:

(a) The convening of a Constitutional Assembly of the Gold Coast people to draw up the Constitution of Self-Government or National Independence.

(b) Organised demonstrations, boycott and strike — our only weapon to support our pressure for self-government.

We have shown how within twenty-seven months he had carried it out just as written, to the last comma.

Let me say here the final words about this great movement. There was nothing backward about the Gold Coast revolution. It was a revolution of our times. The backward, the politically ignorant, sat in the Colonial Office in London and in the colonial administration in the Gold Coast and what the future held for the people of Africa was Nkrumah. Within ten years, tens of millions of African people were to follow what had been begun in the Gold Coast. Such a historical movement is unprecedented in the history of the world; and so far men like Nkrumah appear only at long intervals.

It would be dishonourable to attempt to deny that Nkrumah did not establish a viable régime in Ghana. There are points where he laid down lines which future states would follow. There are others in which he failed.

There, however, are only two points to be made:

First, a long line of historical events, or failures of African states, show that Nkrumah's failure was not a failure of individual personality. It was the impossibility of establishing a viable régime and bringing some order into the messes that the imperialists had left behind.

Second, what is astonishing is not the failures but the successes. When did so many millions move so far and so fast?

To Africans, and people of African descent everywhere, the name of

Nkrumah became for many years a symbol of release from the subordination to which they had been subjected for so many centuries. After Marcus Garvey, there is no other name that is so symbolical of African freedom as the name of Nkrumah.

Finally, the world in which we live is very different from the world of the nineteenth century. This new age is marked by the attempt at complete emancipation of all the underdeveloped peoples, who for so many centuries lived under the domination of the imperialist West. Certain names stand out. First, Lenin, who started the revolution against imperialism in 1917; Mahatma Gandhi, who helped deliver India from the clutches of imperialist domination; and Mao Tse-tung who led China to freedom. And to these three great names, for the influence he had on the perspectives and mentality of Africans and of people of African descent, we have to add the name of Kwame Nkrumah. It is pleasant to record that at the present time, since his death, people are more conscious than ever before of the grandeur of what he began.

1972

Black Studies and the Contemporary Student

[This is the text of a talk organised by the Facing Reality group and issued in mimeographed form in 1969, when James was teaching at Federal City College, Washington. It is significant for saying something about what Black Studies should be that no one else in the USA was saying at the time. In James's view: "One of the important developments in education in the United States was the insistence of not only Black students but black people in general that American universities teach the history of black people, which had not been done in the past. It was not easy, because the Americans had not only paid no attention to it but their attitude on the whole was not as intellectually developed as in Britain. Therefore some special work had to be done to clarify what was involved. Twenty years ago Black Studies existed in name only."]

I have to make certain things clear from the beginning. I do not recognise any distinctive nature of black studies — not today, 1969. However, the history of the United States being what it has been and what it still is, there is a serious struggle going on between the advocates of one lot of black studies and the advocates of another lot. And, therefore, I am compelled for the time being to take sides; but for myself, I do not believe that there is any such thing as Black Studies. There are studies in which black people and black history, so long neglected, can now get some of the attention that they deserve. But when you look at what is taking place under the guise of black studies in the United States today, you realise what a fundamental position ought to be....

Now, first of all, I am going to take what is going on.... I have my own views. But I want to take what is going on because we cannot come with views and say, "Oh, look at this," and wave a flag, with other people talking about other things and people talking about them seriously. There is one serious person — they have him down here in *The New York Times Magazine* as W. Arthur Lewis, but at the bottom they tell you what is his real title; he is Sir Arthur Lewis. He is a very able man. He used to be Principal of the University of the West Indies and when the West Indian Federation broke up, Lewis left. He is now at Princeton and he has been knighted by the Queen for his services to scholarship. Now he has written that "The Road to the Top Is Through Higher Education — Not Black Studies" [*New York Times Magazine*, 11 May 1969, pp.344ff.]. I want to go into some detail about Arthur Lewis, who is a very distinguished black scholar.

He says that there is no clear line and that a great deal of error is also inevitable; and then he goes on to say,

America is really not a melting pot but a welding shop. It is a country in which many different groups of people live and work together side by side, without coalescing. There are Poles, and Irish, and Chinese, and Jews, and Germans, and many other ethnic groups.

Now Lewis is an extremely able man with a lot of experience and yet

he says there are Poles, Irish, Chinese, Jews, Germans, and many other ethnic groups — so he takes black people and he puts them among those. How a man can do that, with all honesty, I can't understand.

But their way of living together is set by the clock; there is integration between 7 o'clock in the morning and 5 o'clock at night, where all mingle and work together in the centre of the city, in the banks and factories, department stores and universities.

Now how long have all been working together and mingling in the banks, department stores and universities?

But, after 5 o'clock each ethnic group returns to its own neighborhood. There it has its own separate social life. There Poles do not marry Italians, even though they are both white Catholics.... But in the meantime this voluntary self-segregation shelters those who are not yet ready to lose themselves completely in the American mainstream.

So you see, that's what is happening to the Negro. He lives by himself voluntarily because he is not ready to lose himself completely in the American mainstream.

An American neighborhood is not a ghetto. A ghetto is an area where members of an ethnic group are forced by law to live, and from which it is a criminal offense to emerge without the license of the oppressing power. That is what apartheid means in the Union of South Africa. An American neighborhood is not a place where members of an ethnic group are required by law to live....

So these people are living in the ghetto because they like it, or they're getting ready to plunge into the diversity of American life. They're sheltering there, but when they get stronger, they will go.

I know this man. He says that you have apartheid in South Africa, but not here. He says that at this minute we Negroes have 11 per cent of the population. Our minimum objective must be to capture 11 per cent of the jobs in the middle and 11 per cent of the jobs at the top. That must be the aim and objective of black people in the United States — to get 11 per cent of the jobs in the middle and 11 per cent of the jobs at the top, corresponding to the 11 per cent of the population. Rising from the bottom to the middle or the top in the face of stiff white competition, prejudice and so on takes everything that a man can give to it. And those are the people who should be praised. The road to the top in the great American corporations and other institutions is how? Through higher education. That's all we have to do to get to the top. Through higher education: scientists, research workers, engineers, accountants, lawyers, financial administrators, presidential advisors; all these are people recruited from the university. So if we want to be able to get to the top and get our 11 per cent, we have to take advantage of the education that is offered to us. That is all that is wrong up till now. We haven't chosen the type of education which will get us to the top. And there are some people who are bitter enemies of the Negroes. "The trade unions are the black man's greatest enemy in the United States." And our greatest task in terms of numbers

is to conquer the middle, through better use of apprenticeships, of the high schools and of technical colleges.

What can the good white college do for its black students that Howard or Lincoln or Fisk cannot do? It can open the road into the top jobs. It can do this only by giving our people the kinds of skills and the kind of polish which are looked for by people filling top jobs.

They should go to the college where they can scrub a black man to make him white. That would be one skill that would be needed, if he could find a college to do that.

Any Afro-American who wishes to become a specialist in black studies should be absolutely free to do so. But I hope that the ... proportion who want to specialize in black studies may ... turn out to be rather small, in comparison with our scientists, or engineers, accountants, economists or doctors. Another attitude which puzzles me is that which requires black students in the white colleges to mix only with each other, to have a dormitory to themselves; to eat at separate tables in the refectory, and so on.... These colleges are the gateway to leadership positions in the integrated part of the economy, and that what they can best do for young blacks is to prepare them to capture our 11 per cent share of the best jobs at the top — one of every nine ambassadorships, one of every nine vice-presidencies of General Motors, one of every nine senior directors of engineering laboratories, and so on.

So the black people will have to go to schools and learn that and not bother with black studies, and they will get these positions. How does he think somebody is going to get some black man to become one of the nine vice-presidents of General Motors? It was the devil himself to get into the trade unions. And he actually says one out of every nine vice-presidents of General Motors.

An Attorney-General once said that in fifty years a black man could become President of the United States. Well, he meant well — that's all that we can say. But, we can say that in twenty-five years, one might become a vice-president of General Motors, and he will become a vice-president of GM, not because of passing examinations, but by the number of people who attack the offices of GM. They take one in and they say, "You be a vice-president. Now the rest of you go home. You see you can get on." I have known Lewis for many, many years, and that he has descended to this is completely beyond me because Lewis knows better than this. He has written this for a purpose.

How is one to be ambassador to Finland or Luxembourg — jobs which American Negroes have already held with distinction — if one is uncomfortable in white company?

Please, I am not responsible, I am only reading it. I see in your face great distaste for it. Mine is equally great. He is a countryman of mine, so what is to be done? Nevertheless. So that is why we are not trained: that is why we do not have one job out of every nine ambassadorships.

No doubt a few Negroes, born with the special talents which success in a highly competitive business world demands, will succeed in establishing sizable and highly competitive concerns.

But they wouldn't.

President Nixon says he is for black power in the black neighbourhoods and he is for black capitalism. Yes, he will have some people who will make cloth — some small manufacturing. But steel, modern industry, engineering, the big ships and the rest — no black people are going to have companies that deal with those. And do you think that Lewis doesn't know that?

Neither is black America going to be saved by a Marxist revolution. Revolution takes power from one set of persons and gives it to another, but it does not change the hierarchical structure of the economy. Any kind of America that you can visualize, whether capitalist, Communist, Fascist, or any other kind of ist is going to consist of large institutions like GM under one name or another.

He is teaching political economy at Princeton.

Any kind of America that you can visualize, whether capitalist, Communist, Fascist, or any other kind of ist is going to consist of large institutions like GM under one name or another. It will have people at the top, people in the middle and people at the bottom. Its leading engineers, doctors, scientists and administrators....

will be essentially the same. So the problem of the Negro is whether he is going to be mostly in the bottom job or whether he will also get his 11 per cent share at the top and in the middle, in a socialist or communist or fascist United States.

This is very mischievous indeed. I intend before this weekend is over to deal with what I have found out after having lived in the United States in a very crucial area for some weeks — that numbers of Negroes, important people, who are not committed to American bourgeois society, are extremely doubtful in the back of their minds whether a socialist society can fundamentally change the position of black people in American society. And, in my opinion, they have a lot of justification for thinking so. Because the people who say they are socialists, I don't wish to be rude, but SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] and all these people — what they put forward is nothing at all. A black man is entitled to say, "Well, what is that?" They tell me that SDS means, as far as they see, to make a better America. Some faults and mistakes — they want to correct those; but to change fundamentally the social structure, they don't see that, and that's why they say what Lewis is saying here. Whatever changes there are, black people are going to be down at the bottom or have to fight to get to the top. And Lewis is encouraging them by saying that whatever kind of society it is, whatever revolution takes place, it will consist of people at the top, in the middle, at the bottom, and the Negro will be at the bottom unless he goes to the schools and gets his best opportunity to go forward. This appears in *The New York Times*. I will inflict you no more with it. That is the kind of black studies that some of the schools are putting forward. They are saying, "Well, you want to study black studies; what you really need to do is to get the kind of education which will fit you for your 11 per cent of the top jobs and your 11 per cent of the middle jobs, too."

Now, opposed to that is what is taking place at Federal City College. They have a view of black studies which is not mine. But I would be glad to go back there, and I would join the black studies' faculty and do what they say. It is not for me to live in the Caribbean, to live in London for a number of years and to come here and to tell some black people what they should do for black studies. If in private they ask me, I will give them my opinion. But what they want to do, they will do. I will not interfere with that. Because they have ideas, they have experiences, they have lived from childhood, their parents and their grandparents have told them things, and they have a certain conception of the black man in this society. A man like Rap Brown says things that I can't imagine my saying. But if anybody wants to criticise him, especially people in England, I tell them, "You shut up and leave him alone. What he says and what risks he chooses to run, that is his business, comes from his past and his experience of the people around him."

But these people I am talking about have put forward an idea of black studies, and this is what they say in a document (I have told them, and I don't think they would object to my telling you, I didn't see why they had to say this): "Black education must take these forces into consideration and seek to make these forces reality." This is what they submit to the authorities that see after Federal City College. And they have to submit this to Congress to get the money. And this is what they say: "These forces are revolution and nation-building." And I say, "Now how do you expect the head of the college to accept a programme which says that it aims at revolution and nation-building and then take this document and go to Congress and say, 'Give us the money?'" But, anyway, these forces are revolution and nation-building. "Education which does not seek to achieve these goals is irrelevant to black people. Although these forces fuse, they have separate characteristics. Revolution is the process of struggle toward the objective — nation. Revolution must give definition to the nation. Revolution must call for an act to end white supremacy, colonialism and oppression embodied in Western ideas and individuals which affects and infects the existence of black people. The process of nationhood must conceptualise and structure the conceptions and possibilities of future black existence. The nation must be defined in terms of human and material and historical cultural resources of the people. The Black Education programme has as its purpose the sustenance and revitalisation of these black values which include undying love for black people." I said to them, "I mean to say, between us, you can't expect the head of the college to accept this, and then go to Congress and say, 'Give me the money for the black studies.'"

I was wrong. They got together at a meeting at which there were the Board of Education and the man in charge, nine or ten of them. Two thousand people came into the meeting to hear. They began to ask the Board questions. And ultimately the two thousand of them got up and walked out. Two thousand of them saying what they're going to have; so that when I told some of them that they were a little bit rash in stating it, they were more right than I was.

What is happening is this. The Board said, "No! We can't have this. We don't like your course. We are not going to allow you to hire any more people and we will go into this thing with you when we are ready." But, after this meeting of 2,000 people, and the determination of most of those who were doing Black Studies not to capitulate, the Board started to give way. It said, "You cannot hire anybody." Now it says, "You can hire whom you like." It said, "We don't like the course. But go ahead for the time being." But the Board is told, "No, we are going to leave." It says, "You were to get one-half million dollars and we promise you \$700,000." And it is told, "No. We don't want it." And it says, "Well, what is it you want?" And it is told, "We don't want to be under your authority at all." And the Board says, "Well — where will you go?" And it is told, "We are going to the community." So that is the situation at Federal City College. They are deadly serious about this programme. And they are going to refuse to stay in Federal City College unless they fail to get the support of the students. I have told them, "If you go away with a programme that a majority of the students do not accept, you will discredit the whole business." But they are prepared to fight Congress with its \$700,000, and its right to hire and fire, and they say, "We are not concerned about that. We want to go." And they have told the Board of Education, "We want to go." So, when I told them that I couldn't imagine how they could have written a document like this and given it to the Board, they were quite right and they knew what they were about. So the situation now is quite uncertain. What is to be done?

The Black Studies programme as now presented is autonomous to the point of being a separate college. At Federal City College the office of the Provost said, "Yes, that is exactly what we want." The goal of the programme is clearly outside the role of a public university: to provide centres of indoctrination for true believers, whether that belief is black nationalism, or Catholicism, or Nazism. That is what the authorities have said and that is exactly what we want to do — to teach people that black studies is something that concerns black people and the future of black people. I couldn't say that. That is to say, I didn't know how to say that. I could say, "Overthrow the bourgeois society and so on." But to tell some people, and they offer you the money to run it, and to say, "We don't care, we don't want the money, we'll go to the community," that is really something! So that is the situation. That is what is going on.

Now, as I say, that is not exactly my view of black studies. And I have to go into certain questions; first of all I have to tell you what is still my view, a view that I arrived at with my various socialist friends — Glaberman and others were among them — and I put it forward at a meeting in 1948:

We need a careful systematic building up of historical, economic, political, literary ideas, knowledge and information, on the Negro question inside the party. Because it is only where you have Bolshevik ideas, Marxist ideas, Marxist knowledge, Marxist history, Marxist perspectives, that you are certain to drive out bourgeois ideas, bourgeois history, bourgeois

perspectives which are so powerful on the question of the races in the United States. ["The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the US"]

That is what I said in 1948; I still believe it. I don't say so at all times — I don't gad about Federal City College and say this and that marxism, but sitting on this platform, that is what I have said....

Now I am going to speak on some of the ideas. First of all, I think I may have said this before; it doesn't matter. There are certain things, and I have to repeat them. I follow Mr Levi-Strauss. I am not a mad follower of human anthropology but I like certain ideas that he has of history. And he says: from the time the Neolithic Period began when Neolithic man began to cultivate the soil, to domesticate animals, to make pottery and to live in a house with his wife and family, or his wives and families, he says civilisation of a certain type began and to this day it has not changed. He says the cultivation of the soil, the domestication of animals, the making of pottery and the living in a house with his family, he says they began then, and nothing has changed for the last ten thousand years. Now I know what he means. Some people challenge him but I know what he means.

However, he says that there is one period in history which offers some serious change from what began ten thousand years ago, the period known as the Industrial Revolution. He says that when man began to use power in industry, it created a change in the development of human history and society which had not taken place in the previous nine thousand years of human existence. He says it is possible that then a change took place. On the whole he is inclined to believe that there has been no change. But he thinks maybe the Industrial Revolution, the use of power instead of human energy, the use of steam and what came after it, really began to change human nature.

Now it didn't change only human life, human nature; it changed human society. I have said before, and I want you to understand, that it is no use talking about black studies unless you make it perfectly clear that the wealth which enabled the bourgeoisie to challenge those who were in charge of society and to institute the power-building industrial régime came from slavery, the slave trade, and the industries which were based upon that. Now if you agree that the first serious change in the fundamental features of human society came with the Industrial Revolution, if you agree — because at times Levi-Strauss writes as if to say nothing has changed really, people act to this day no better, but if there is a change, it came with the Industrial Revolution — if you agree that the wealth which went toward the building up of the bourgeoisie so that they could challenge the ancient régime came from the slave trade and slavery, then I wonder (if you accept that) if you realise that to be doing black studies is to be able to get that into your head and then teach that to all the people who listen to you: that the vast change in human society came from the slave trade and slavery. All the historians tell you that. Marx also. His *Poverty of Philosophy* has the section on slavery. It was slavery that built up the bourgeois society and enabled it to make what Levi-Strauss thinks is the only fundamental

change in ten thousand years of human history. The black not only provided the wealth in the struggle which began between the old society and the new bourgeois society: the black people were foremost in the struggle itself.

This struggle had two great examples. The first was the French revolution; the second was the American Civil War. And, in both of those, not only did the wealth that enabled them to move to a new type of society come from slavery, but the slaves were in the very forefront of the battle. Now tonight I'm going to use a kind of proof that isn't often done. The French slaves, when they became free, formed an army and they fought and defeated some fifty thousand Spaniards, about sixty thousand Englishmen who tried to take over the colony and another sixty or seventy thousand Frenchmen. They defeated them in battle. Lemmonier-Delafose wrote some memoirs forty years after, and I quoted in *The Black Jacobins* what he said about these soldiers. To my astonishment some years afterwards I was reading *Black Reconstruction* by Du Bois and I found that they were able to say much the same sort of appreciation of the black soldiers in the Civil War. I want you to take note of that, please. The black soldiers fighting in the French revolutionary war were of a similar type to the black soldiers fighting in the Civil War. I will give you the two passages and you will see how peculiarly alike they are. This is Lemmonier-Delafose: "But what men these blacks are! How they fight and how they die!" I am not boasting about black is beautiful. Please, I don't go in for that. If other people want to, that's their affair, if they say "Black is beautiful", "Black is ugly", black is whatever they like. I am concerned with historical facts.

... but what men these blacks are! How they fight and how they die! One has to make war against them to know their reckless courage in braving danger when they can no longer have recourse to stratagem. I have seen a solid column, torn by grapeshot from four pieces of cannon, advance without making a retrograde step. The more they fell, the greater seemed to be the courage of the rest.... Three times these brave men, arms in hand, advanced without firing a shot and each time repulsed, only retired after leaving the ground strewn with three-quarters of their troop. One must have seen this bravery to have any conception of it. French courage alone could resist it: Indeed large ditches, an excellent artillery, perfect soldiers gave us a great advantage — But for many a day that massed square which marched singing to its death lighted by a magnificent sun, remained in my thoughts, and even today after more than forty years, this majestic and glorious spectacle still lives as vividly in my imagination as in the moments when I saw it. [Quoted in *The Black Jacobins*, pp.368-9.]

Good. Now here is a description of black soldiers — also former slaves — in the Civil War by W.E.B. Du Bois:

The deeds of heroism performed by these coloured men were such as the proudest white men might emulate. Their colours are torn to pieces by shot, and literally bespattered by blood and brains. The colour sergeant of the 1st Louisiana, on being mortally wounded, hugged the colours to his breast, when a struggle ensued between the two colour-corporals on each side of

him, as to who should have the honor of bearing the sacred standard, and during this generous contention, one was seriously wounded. One black lieutenant actually mounted the enemy's works three or four times, and in one charge the assaulting party came within 50 paces of them. Indeed, if only ordinarily supported by artillery and reserve, no one can convince us that they would not have opened up a passage through the enemy's works.

[*Black Reconstruction*, New York, 1935, pp.107-8.]

It is practically the same thing that Lemmonier-Delafose is stating about the ex-slaves in the French revolution. This is what happened in the Civil War. And, that is not because their skins are black, or any special bravery of blacks. It is that men who are fighting for freedom and to whom freedom is a reality fight much better than men to whom — well, it is important, but not so important. That is why they both fought this way. This is what I want you to bear in mind.

Number one: The wealth that enabled society to make the big transition was rooted in the slave trade, slavery, and the industries that came from it. And, secondly, in the struggle by which the bourgeois established the political and social structure of this new form in the very front line, fighting as well as anybody else and better than most, in France in the French revolutionary war, and in the American Civil War, were the ex-slaves.

Now to talk to me about black studies as if it's something that concerned black people is an utter denial. This is the history of Western Civilisation. I can't see it otherwise. This is the history that black people and white people and all serious students of modern history and the history of the world have to know. To say it's some kind of ethnic problem is a lot of nonsense.

Now I am going to switch over to some modern problems and some modern individuals. I can't stay to deal with French literature from 1820 to the present day, 1969, nearly 150 years of history. It is impossible to write the history of French literature without stage after stage noting the tremendous roles that West Indians in particular have played during that whole period. You cannot write the history of French literature without having to deal with some ten black men from the Caribbean. I'm not going to go into that tonight. Even if you try to force me, I wouldn't do it. It will give a wrong impression. But I want to choose a few. I am going to choose one — Victor Hugo — because Hugo was not a man of the Caribbean, he was a white man. But he was the man of whom André Gide said, when they asked him who was the greatest poet of France, "*Malheureusement* (Unfortunately), Victor Hugo." Victor Hugo used to write a lot of liberal, revolutionary stuff and they didn't like it but he was a fine poet. And Victor Hugo was the dominant figure in French literature from 1820 after Napoleon right up to about 1880. When Dumas died, Hugo said that one of the greatest men of the romantic movement was Alexandre Dumas. This is what he wrote, and I translate:

No popularity in this century has surpassed that of Alexandre Dumas. His successes were more than successes; they were triumphs. They have the *éclat*

of a fanfare of trumpets. The name of Alexandre Dumas is more than French; it is European; it is universal.

And so forth and so forth. That is one of the greatest figures in French literature.

I am in London and I see some of the students and I ask one of them, "What are you doing?" He says, "I am doing a study of T.S. Eliot." I say, "Fine." I ask another West Indian student, "What are you doing?" He says, "I am working for my Ph.D." I say, "What are you doing?" He says, "I am studying D.H. Lawrence." I say, "Very nice." The most fantastic of them all is another fellow who tells me he is doing Joseph Conrad. Conrad is a Pole who wrote the English language and wrote very well indeed. But why should these West Indian students be doing D.H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad and T.S. Eliot when a man like Alexandre Dumas, the father, is there? One of the most remarkable figures of the nineteenth century. He didn't only write romantic novels. I suppose you know some of the novels, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Louise de la Vallière*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After*, *Chico the Jester*. Now I want to tell you what those novels did. After the French revolution, Europe and the rest of the world broke out into what was known as the romantic period which meant a tremendous expansion of the individual personality of the ordinary man. Previous to the French revolution, men lived according to a certain discipline, a certain order. The French revolution broke that and people began to live more individual, more experimental, more romantic lives — Personality. Among the forces which contributed to that were the romantic poets and novelists of the day. And not one of them stands higher in the popular field, in the expectation and understanding of the people of those days, than Alexandre Dumas. He was translated into every language. *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers* and the collected novels are European and universal novels. What I am saying is, not only did the black people contribute, not only did they fight in the ranks, but in forging the kind of lives which people lived afterwards, one of the foremost men is a man from the Caribbean. How do I make that into black studies? I can't. No! I can understand some university saying, "We are going to study the lives and works of black men who have not been done before." That I understand, but to make it black studies! And I have asked, "Allow me to come into your black studies programme." I am ready to go, but I can't do it in those terms at all.

Now, I want to take one or two other individuals. I want to take some men whom I knew personally. I'll do that at once before I go back to some other men. I want to take Paul Robeson and Richard Wright. Those are two men whom I knew quite well. I knew Richard Wright very well indeed. I may have mentioned this to some of you. Dick fancied himself as a cook. He would cook rice and chicken or something in some Southern way and say, "Come over, I'm going to cook today." I used to eat it. But he was a remarkable man. One day I went to the country to spend a weekend with him. He had gone to

the country to spend the summer. I came into the house and he showed me twenty-five books on a shelf. He said, "Look here, Nello, you see those books there? They are by Kierkegaard." I said, "Yes, he's very popular these days." He says, "I am not concerned about his popularity. I want to tell you something. Everything that he writes in those books, I knew before I had them." I never spoke to him about it after. I knew what he meant to tell me. Now Kierkegaard is one of the great writers of today. He is one of the men who, during the last twenty or thirty years, modern civilisation has recognised as a man whose writings express the modern temperament and the modern personality. And Dick assured me that he was reading Kierkegaard because everything that he read in Kierkegaard he had known before. What he was telling me was that he was a black man in the United States and that gave him an insight into what today is the universal opinion and attitude of the modern personality. I believe that is a matter that is not only black studies, but is white studies too. I believe that that is some form of study which is open to any university: Federal City College, Harvard, etc. It is not an ethnic matter. I knew Wright well enough to know that he meant it. I didn't ask him much because I thought he meant me to understand something. And I understood it. I didn't have to ask him about that. What there was in Dick's life, what there was in the experience of a black man in the United States in the 1930s that made him understand everything that Kierkegaard had written before he had read it and the things that made Kierkegaard the famous writer that he is today? That is something that I believe has to be studied.

There is Paul Robeson. I knew Paul very well. He was a remarkable person. He wasn't only a singer and an actor, that was something else, but a personality. And you get some idea of the personality that he was because he took his profession, his fame, his money and everything and he committed it completely to the Communist Party. That ruined him. But he wasn't alone, there were many who were ruined by it. What I want you to note is the complete commitment to the idea that something that was organised in Moscow and that came from Moscow was the only thing that could change the lives of the black people in the United States. That is worth examination, you know. To know his life, what led him to that, what he turned away from — and he didn't sway, go to and come: he joined up and he went all the way. I had a lot of fun with Paul. I always used to laugh at it. He was going to Moscow. I was going away from Moscow. But I liked him very much. He acted in my play, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*. And I think he liked me too. We used to meet: "Hello, Paul." "Hello, James." "How are you?" "Are you living in the United States, too, and I haven't seen you?" "Look, I am going over to San Francisco but when I come back I will get in touch with you and I will look forward to it." And he knew I wasn't going to do it, and I knew he wasn't going to do it, but we expressed some good feelings for the time being. There was too much between us politically, but, apart from that, a very fine person. And I believe that an examination should be made of what it was that drew

Paul to the Communist Party and made him the man he was, break completely with his past, throw everything into the dustbin with the idea that there was only Communism that could save his black people in the United States from being what they were and where they were.

But you can't sit down and make it up as Harold Cruse has done, you know. Cruse finds that the problem of Negroes in the Communist Party was due to the Jews. The man does not understand that the Communists have a line that in Switzerland, in Albania, in India, in China, in Moscow, in London, in Paris, has nothing to do with Jews. That is the stalinist line. And, therefore, you have to begin to explain what the stalinists do in regard to the Negroes in the United States by means of the line. But to say it's the Jews, well, I mean! No, there was more to it and I believe we will get a good understanding of what happened to an educated black man in the United States in the '30s, a man of great natural gifts — he didn't inherit money, a man of international fame, a man with world-wide contacts, a man loved and respected all over the world, that he would give it all up and commit himself to Moscow and the policies of Moscow. I believe that is worth examination. That will tell us much about black men in the United States; it will tell us much about the mental attitude of people in the '30s. It will tell us much about the impact white civilisation made upon a very distinguished, splendid man. That I believe is worth examining, more than T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence, much as I like both of them.

And now I have three more to do. I prefer to deal with them at the last because they are historical figures. They are three men of the nineteenth century, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Now Wendell Phillips is one of the most remarkable men of the nineteenth century. He was a man who received a first-class education. He was a lawyer. He inherited a lot of money, but Phillips committed himself to the abolition of Negro slavery in the United States and for thirty or forty years was completely devoted to that. And the personality that he developed cannot be seen except from the connection of the highest classical education that the United States could give. He was a New England Brahmin; he inherited a lot of money; he was trained as a lawyer; he had a fine education at Harvard — and he committed himself completely to the abolition of Negro slavery. That I believe is something that has to be studied. I read some biographies of Phillips — they are not aware of the kind of change that must have made in this man, this educated man, this man with all the wealth and all the prestige and power, intellectual power, of a New England Brahmin who gave it up and turned away and went and fought in the struggle for the abolition of slavery. By the way, he was a great revolutionary. I don't want to go into that but he's a man who has to be studied. I believe — I may be wrong, Professor Rawick here will tell me if I'm wrong — I believe that it is in a black university or a university by black people who are committed to the black struggle that Phillips helped start and which they have continued that they can really read his life and work out what really was decisive. I believe that. I don't think that the Harvard professor, or the Columbia professor or

Lewis at Princeton would be able to do that. No, I think at Federal City College they would be able to do that in time. (They can't do that now; they don't do enough — and not at Howard either. I hear that Howard is a very peculiar kind of an institution.) But an institution that is concerned with the development of black studies can handle a man like Wendell Phillips. I think so. That is what I intend to say at any rate. That is what I intend to say at the Socialist Scholars Conference and that, for me, is black studies. And Phillips was no black.

Another man who I believe is an important man of black studies is Frederick Douglass. I believe that there was a greater orator in the English language in the United States at the same time. That was Abraham Lincoln, because during Lincoln's greatest speeches, especially during the Presidency, he outlined and explored areas not then reached by philosophers, politicians and other persons of the kind. Frederick Douglass didn't do that. There is nothing in Douglass like the Second Inaugural or the Gettysburg Speech by Lincoln. But, beyond that, within the limits of a man agitating and making propaganda, I do not know a finer handler of the English language than Frederick Douglass. He was a man of exceptional qualities of mind, and he learned to read by begging little white boys in the street to teach him. Some of those speeches, to this day, I read them and I know nothing superior to them in the nineteenth century. Nothing. There is Abraham Lincoln, there is Demosthenes, there is Edmund Burke — they are in a category above. Edmund Burke on the American Independence. But just below, among the men who agitated and propagandised for a particular cause and did all that could be done within that cause, nobody stands higher than Frederick Douglass, nobody. And that is a matter for black studies and white studies too.

He was foremost among the propagandists for the abolition of slavery. And he was recognised as such, not only in America but in England. I remember, in particular, a statement by Mr Higginson, an army commander and New England Brahmin. Douglass, it seems, was a man over six feet, an extremely handsome man, a man who carried himself with great dignity and ease. Higginson, a New England Brahmin who had fought in the Civil War, said that he had walked down the road with a man whom one did not often meet, and have the opportunity to meet in public, that he had enjoyed it because it was an opportunity that he hadn't had before and didn't know when he would have again. This opportunity consisted in walking down the road with Frederick Douglass. I have repeatedly met that sort of thing in people who heard of Douglass and saw him. I think it is worth examining him properly. Foner has written four volumes of his speeches and so on, but Frederick Douglass, the particular man, who wrote in the middle of the nineteenth century — I haven't seen him stated anywhere. I believe a great deal can be got from a serious study of Frederick Douglass.

Before I touch Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States and a very interesting character, I want to say something else. Jaspers, the German philosopher, and Heidegger both agree: they say that there are many philosophers who go and write and get their doctorate on Plato,

Aristotle, Kant, Leibniz and such like, but they say that these fellows are merely writing books out of books, that unless a man is taking part in the philosophical struggles of the times in which he lives it is impossible for him to understand what Kant and Aristotle and Plato and these were doing, because when they were busy doing philosophy it was a part of them. And I know that unless you are busy actively taking part in politics, you read the history of these revolutions but you don't understand them. So people who are today taking part in the struggle, in the kind of struggle that Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips took part in, they will be able to write about them and they can understand. But the professor sitting down in his office and giving out his lectures two or three times a week and not involved in this kind of struggle, he cannot understand them. I know that from personal experience and I am sure that when Jaspers and Heidegger say that, they know what they're talking about. They say that all these people writing about philosophy — they don't know what they're saying. Because for them philosophy is something that they write from books; they read Kant and they read Plato and Aristotle and they write about it. They say that is nothing. And I know that can be applied to politics. And it is people in the midst of a struggle today who can write about Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips and really illuminate them. And that is not black studies. That is study of society.

Now, the last man I want to speak about is Abraham Lincoln. I'm getting into a lot of trouble at Federal City College over what I am saying about Lincoln. But they don't bother me. They like to say that Lincoln fought the Civil War to keep the country united, and he said that if he could keep the country united and keep the blacks as slaves, he would do that too. Yes, he said so, undoubtedly. But I want to end this talk about black studies by telling you something that I have discovered about Abraham Lincoln....

Now Abraham Lincoln some time when he was a young man, some thirty-odd years old, wrote a letter to a friend of his saying that he was on board a boat going down South and he saw on board some ten or twelve black slaves who were being sold to the South. One of them had been sold because he was too much concerned about his wife and he was not doing his work properly so they separated him from her and were sending him down South. In those days it meant that you were being sent to murder, prison, sickness, death of all kinds. What Lincoln noted was that these fellows were singing and dancing and behaving in a way that he could not understand — how people in that situation could behave in the way that they were behaving. He wrote this letter to his friend telling him exactly what he thought.

Now some time afterwards Lincoln was speaking to some young men somewhere in Michigan or Missouri and he told them what it meant in his mind to be an American citizen. Lincoln said that he and his generation knew the men and the children of the men who had fought in the American War of Independence. He said they were magnificent men. He said they had made a great historical experience and that had transformed their quality so that they were exceptional people. Lincoln

implied that there were no such people in other parts of the world because none of them had had that great experience. Then he went on to say, what about those people who have come from foreign countries and come to the United States, the Germans in particular? He said the Declaration of Independence and what it states and the experience of living alongside those people who were descendants of those who had fought in the War of Independence — that was making the Germans into citizens worthy of being members of the great American Republic. You see, what he's saying is that to be an American citizen and part of the American democracy demands an exceptional type of person. He wasn't speaking about colour. And when Lincoln was arguing with Stephen Douglas and he said he didn't think that blacks were the equal of white people, that is what he had in mind. He was saying the American citizen was a special kind of person who had had a special kind of experience and the blacks — he didn't think that they were up to it. It's difficult for me to get angry about that today. I understand his position because I understand his conception of what it was to be a citizen of the great American Republic. He had made that perfectly clear. To be that, you had to be descendants of those who had fought in the War of Independence and you had to be a part of that, and the Germans who came had to live with them and study the Declaration of Independence. They could become incorporated. But he said he didn't think the slaves could be.

Then the situation developed where Lincoln had to give black people a part in the war. Lincoln wrote another letter in which he said that the time will come when we shall see, we shall be celebrating, the preservation of the Republic and there will be black men who, with rifle in hand and clenched teeth, helped to save it while there will be white men who had fought against the democratic Republic. He changed his mind when he saw the black people fighting in the war; he felt that they, just as the people who had fought in the War of Independence, were now proving that they were perfectly able to be citizens of the Republic in the tradition which had been established by the men who had fought the War of Independence. And that is the reason for that famous sentence in Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address:

... Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this might scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether".

Lincoln was not making a speech, he wasn't writing an article, he wasn't seeking votes. He was the President of the United States elected for a new term and he was making it clear that he was going to settle his business; and if I understand politics all right, he wasn't talking so to the South — he was telling people around him: Now I am going to settle it. And government of the people, by the people, for the people

means, if it means anything, government of the people, including the black people; by the people, including black people; for the people, including the black people; because four score and seven years ago without the black people it was OK. He understood that something important had been established. So the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural contain his new conception of what black people were and their fitness to become citizens of the famous Republic and his readiness to do all that he could to see that that was done. That's why, in my opinion, they shot him. There were some who knew that he meant what he said, that he had enormous power and prestige, and he was making a declaration. He wrote a letter to somebody who wrote him and said, "I congratulate you on your Second Inaugural," and Lincoln said, "Yes, I think it's one of the best things that I've ever done, but a lot of people are not too sympathetic to it. But time will tell."

Frederick Douglass says that he was in Washington when Lincoln said that he trembled at what he saw around him. I believe that is an important part of black studies. I cannot think of black studies in any other way. I will end by telling you two things. Before the election in 1864 (I haven't told them this at Federal City College. I have a certain amount of discretion, you know. Not too much, but a certain amount), before Lincoln took part in the election of '64, Lincoln suspected that he was going to lose. Lincoln called Douglass and told him, "I want you to go down to the South; I want you to get twenty-five men who can go into the South among the blacks. I will give you the money and we will raise the black slaves in revolt." The main idea of that is very unpleasant to certain people. He was prepared to send people down to raise the slaves in revolt because he says, "I'm going to lose the election and if I lose it, nobody is going to carry it through." But as he won the election, he made clear what his policy was going to be. And I believe that he would have managed it. He would have managed something. I will go so far as to say if anything could have been done, Lincoln could have done it. Nobody else could. That's why he was shot.

So, my friends, that's where I stand in regard to black studies. I do not know, as a marxist, black studies as such. I only know the struggle of people against tyranny and oppression in a certain social and political setting, and, particularly, during the last two hundred years, it's impossible to me to separate black studies from white studies in any theoretical point of view. Nevertheless, there are certain things about black studies that need to be studied today. They have been ignored; we are beginning to see a certain concern about them. I believe also that certain of these studies are best done by black people, not by professors as such, but by the same people who are engaged in the struggle in which those people were engaged then. That will make them better understand them and illustrate them. And that is how I see black studies and how I am going to speak about black studies at the Socialist Scholars Conference, although I am ready to submit myself to the black studies department at Federal City College and do what they have to do. Life presents you with some strange difficulties and, at times, you have to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

The Old World and the New

[This is the text of the speech given by James at a celebration organised to mark his seventieth birthday on 4 January 1971 at Ladbroke Grove in London, an area with a high black population.]

Well, my friends, this is quite an occasion. One does not often reach a seventieth birthday. It comes once in a lifetime and nothing like it can recur. According to the Scripture, three score years and ten gives you a certain authority. Tonight I want to say to begin that I am extremely glad to be here in Ladbroke Grove. This is not just a statement that one makes on such an occasion. My birthday could be celebrated with some success in many parts of England, in large areas of the United States, in many parts of the Caribbean (if they would let me in, some of them), in parts of Africa too.

I want you to understand first that after the meeting I had here some months ago, and after I had been listening and talking to people, I would have chosen among all of them to be here in Ladbroke Grove to celebrate the seventieth birthday of someone who has been politically active for many years. I want you to understand that it is not something that I am saying because it has to be said. If they had given me a choice from all over the world of where I would choose, I would have said, "Ladbroke Grove". I hope you will be patient with me, and by the time I have finished you will understand that that was no casual statement, but it was rooted in my past political experiences, my past life, the future that I see before me and the future that I see before you.

What I am going to talk about is what one would call the Old World and the New. We are now in the throes of giving birth to a new world, and I am glad to say that we, my friends and I, the people that I have known, have taken part in this birth that is going on, and that you are going to be in on the culmination of it, I am quite sure. I had decided to retire at seventy-five, and sit in a chair and tell everyone what they ought to do, and give advice free of charge to everyone. But now I have decided I am going to stay till I am eighty because things are going to happen by the time I am eighty and I want to be there to see them. You are all fortunate in that you are going to be there, but I want to be certain to be there. I would like to.

Now, the first thing I am going to say is as a West Indian. This has nothing to do with my race. It has, however, much to do with my nationality. I say that it has nothing to do with my race because there is far more in common between me and ninety-nine per cent of Englishmen than between the Englishman and the Italian, the Englishman and the German, and the Englishman and the French. To begin with, we use the same language. I have sometimes wished that I had a native language but I find English good enough to go on with for the time being. We use the same books, we have similar social attitudes, the same basic ideas, even the same religion: in the West

Indies you will find the Protestant, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Baptist, Agnostic, Atheist, all the European religions are there, and that is what most West Indian people are. So we are different *in nationality*. I am going to try to bring out the difference in nationality, because the difference has meant a great deal to me in the things that I have to do and say about Western civilisation and the black people in it. It's due to nationality. And the second thing is: I speak as a Marxist-Leninist. That phrase is misused by many people today but I am going to speak as one. I have been one for many years. I see no reason to change, and I have been able to carry on with anything that interests me in the world as a marxist-leninist.

Now I want to talk to you of things that have happened to me, things that have happened to me personally. I think you would like to know. I remember when a presentation was being given to me at the West Indian Student Centre. By chance I happened to say a few words about myself. I was astonished at the response. I heard people all the time saying, "C.L.R. has told us something about himself at last." Well, if I am to do it again, this is the time. It will be quite a while before I have the occasion to say it again, and I want to begin with my parents.

I had very good parents. My father was a remarkable man. He was the head of the Teachers' Training School at Tranquillity. He was the senior student after two years. He was a great runner of the quarter mile, he was a fine batsman. When I went there to play cricket, people told me how my father used to hit the ball, implying that I wasn't doing as well, but I didn't mind. He taught himself to play music, he used to play the organ in the church. He taught himself shorthand, he used to do special reporting for the newspapers. I am not merely telling you about a remarkable man. What I am saying is, he was born in 1876 and he was doing all these things by the end of the century, and if he had gone to Paris, to London, to New York, anywhere, he would have been able to take his place and be a perfectly respectable citizen. That is what I want you to know about the West Indians, that is what my father was.

In regard to my mother, she was a tall, very handsome woman, and I will tell you something about her. My father was known, he was a distinguished person doing all these things, and one day his brother, my uncle, came and told him, "Robert, I have the girl for you." My father said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "I met her, she was tall and slim as a pole, she speaks in a most elegant ladylike manner and she is a very nice person, very handsome. Robert, she is the girl for you." My father said, "Well, what..." My uncle continued, "I told her that she should meet my brother and I have arranged that you should go and meet her, and she says you can." My father said, "But what kind of thing is this, what are you doing?" He replied, "Man, you should go and see her, she should be the girl for you, you should go and meet her." So my father — an appointment had been made — he went, and the result was me. [*Laughter.*] My mother was a reader. I learned to read, and to read the books she was reading. I don't know that in the year between 1901 and 1910 there was anybody in the Caribbean, and not many people in Britain, in her status and mine who read so

many books. All sorts of books came into the house. She read perpetually, and as she put the books down I picked them up. Even though she said I was not to read some, I would find where she was hiding them and took them up and read them. (I remember particularly books by a woman called Victoria Cross. She was supposed to be sexy. She didn't know what we know about sex today.) [Laughter.] But, anyway, that is what I did. So that's my mother and my father.

I want to speak about my grandmother. She died about 1935, she was about ninety-five. I knew her very well because in her last years she lived with us at my father's house. She had been born somewhere about 1840. My great-grandmother died in 1901. I know because I was born in 1901, and she was still alive to leave me a piece of land. I saw her, I saw my father, and I saw my grandmother. What I want to say is that they were highly civilised people. Nobody here seems to know that; they believe that we come to Britain to be civilised. They were as civilised people as you could find anywhere. I think of my father, he was a school master. Mr Power, my godfather, was a very elegant gentleman, he could have gone into any parlour; in the queen's parlour he would have conducted himself in the manner suitable to those peculiar Victorian days. He was a good example of that particular group of people. My aunt's husband, Richard Austin, was a teacher too; my sister's godfather, he was a teacher; we were a teaching fraternity.

There was a boy named Malcolm Nurse, his father was a teacher too. We knew the Nurses very well, mother, father and the rest of them. I knew all these people very well, their grandparents had been born in the time of slavery. My great-grandmother must have been born in 1905, she must have been ninety-six when she died in 1901, and I was not aware from what they told me about her, or from her children, that they were in any way backward, that they were in any way underdeveloped. These West Indian black people were a remarkable set of people. They are the ancestors of what West Indian people are today, and what they will be tomorrow. I bring this up because it took me some time to realise the kind of people that I had grown up with, who were my relations, who were my friends, what were their ancestors and what they represented.

Now there has appeared from the Caribbean — I must say a few words about that — a list of remarkable men. There was René Maran from Guyana, who won the Prix Goncourt in 1921. He was a French civil servant, he wrote a novel called *Batouala*. He won the Prix Goncourt, created a literary sensation, and the French government fired him for saying what he said about the African people among whom he worked. He was a remarkable man. The French intellectuals have a great reputation for taking part in political matters, and in 1926, André Gide wrote a famous book called *Voyage au Congo* in which he stated the crimes the French were perpetrating in Africa. And he had the reputation of being an intellectual who drew the attention of French and European intellectuals to the crimes of imperialism in Africa. But it had been done five years before by this West Indian, René Maran.

After René Maran came Marcus Garvey, after Marcus Garvey came George Padmore, known today as the father of African emancipation. After Padmore came Aimé Césaire, the man of Négritude and one of the great writers of our day. Then came Frantz Fanon, and mixed up with them is C.L.R. James. That is a notable list. You cannot under any circumstances write the history of Western civilisation without listing these West Indians. People have often asked me why it is they played the role they have so far. I have been working at it and I think I have some answer.

We lived in a very small community. Barbados today has about 300,000 people. So in a few years you could see the whole society and know everybody. Up at the top was the government representing the English people. That was one lot. White people; they had the positions of authority. Next to them was the brown-skinned middle class, people who were clericals and so forth. Below them were the mass of black people. You were able to see your society very clearly and to recognise the different sections of society which made up a whole. But what happened was this. Those few of us who got an education were able to read Thackeray, Dickens, Shakespeare, Hazlitt, a whole lot of people who had liberal ideas and put forward conceptions which were absolutely opposed to the kind of society in which we lived and the subjugations which were imposed on us. Therefore we had a conception from the books that we read. The result was that when we came to Europe and saw that the society did not correspond to what we had read, without exception we revolted against it. In other words, Marcus Garvey, who was not a marxist, was anti-establishment, absolutely against. He said we had to leave all this and go back to Africa. There was Padmore, a marxist, who joined the Communist Party and left it. There were Césaire and Fanon. I joined the trotskyist movement and left it. We did not abandon the revolution. That's a whole body of us, and it wasn't that we were merely bright. I think we had lived a certain kind of life, had been educated in a certain way, had read certain books; we came abroad and found that neither the life we lived nor the things that we saw were in harmony with the things we had read, and we automatically were and remained *against*. That is what has produced us, and today I believe that in those days we had to come abroad in order to exercise ourselves. But I believe that the West Indian of tomorrow will not have to come abroad. We have already seen in Trinidad that we are going to do at home what our ancestors have so successfully done abroad. [*Applause.*] That is one of the reasons why I am so glad to be here.

Now, I want to show you one or two things that I want you to remember. I am going to read you something I wrote in 1930 about a game of cricket in Trinidad. I want it clear that I wasn't a backward uncivilised person who came to Britain and learned everything that I now know. Here is that I wrote in 1930. I was comparing Hendren to Constantine, and I said (Hendren, he is the man going into bat):

... see him take guard, think of him during the 96 runs when minute by

minute he was wiping away the deficit of his side, risking nothing, losing nothing. It is English solidity, English determination developed to the highest pitch of proficiency by the experience of generations of cricketers. The West Indies of today will never defeat an English Test match team which contains eleven players of the calibre of Hendren.

Then I went on to describe Constantine.

And so we come to the fielding. But here description fails us. To see him take up position in the slips, to see him bend to gather a stationary ball, to see him throw to the bowler, these things we can describe. He moves as if he has no bones. Even in repose he is the perfection of grace. But it is when he makes one of those electric catches that a mere writer feels inclined to drop his pen. The thing has to be seen to be believed. The almost psychic sense of anticipation, the miraculous activity and sureness which gets the hands to the ball however desperate the effort required to reach it, the determination which ensures that though the heavens fall the ball will not. And then the courage, the sense of power which faces Hendren at a half-dozen yards and will not flinch. He seems to have cast a spell on the MCC batsmen. Some of them play slow bowling as if they had never played before, and the cause of it is that sinister figure lurking, no, not lurking, boldly waiting for catches two feet from the bat. Did he not miss one the other day we might begin to suspect that he was more than human. Nor does he spare himself. Where Hendren husbands his energy, Constantine expends his energy, Constantine expends his with a reckless, a positively regal, prodigality. It is Europe and the Americas over again — the old world and the new.

That is what I am talking about tonight. This is what I was writing in 1930, and I didn't have to come here to learn it. True, some people had come from England and taught us. Also we had English books and English periodicals. But we had mastered them in the Caribbean and had added something of our own. "It is Europe and the Americas all over again — the old world and the new." That is what I am talking about tonight, the old world and the new, and Ladbroke Grove to me is very much a part of the New World, the world that is to come and is on the way. Before I left the West Indies, I wrote *The Life of Captain Cipriani* in which I said that the government is the local Chamber of Commerce, and the Chamber of Commerce is the local government. I wrote also *The Case for West Indian Self-Government* before I came here. I didn't come here to learn that. I came to England in 1932, and I found out *afterwards* that the fact that I spoke English as fluently, had read so many books and remembered a whole lot of English poetry astonished them. I only found that out afterwards, the personal impact I had made. I was not aware of it because I had known a lot of people who were doing many of these things; we were not lost, I didn't get lost when I came here. Within a few months I began to write cricket, first for the *Daily Telegraph*, and next for the *Manchester Guardian*. I was a cricket correspondent for years. I began actively speaking about West Indian self-government here, there and everywhere. And then something happened to me which I think should be interesting to you.

There was an exhibition of African art in 1933, I think the first one

that had been held in Britain. There had been a few in Europe, and this one had been sent here to London. I went to it; I went because it was African, and because it was art, something new. I was about thirty-two years old and for the first time I began to realise that the African, the black man, had a face of his own. Up to that time I had believed that the proper face was the Graeco-Roman face. If a black man had that type of face he had a good face, and if he didn't, well, poor fellow, that was his bad luck, that was too bad for him. [*Laughter.*] I went to this exhibition, I bought the catalogue, I bought some books; I went up and down to Paris, there were many exhibitions in Paris. And so I began to look at the West Indians whom I knew, look at people, and I began to see the world and to see people in a way I had never seen them before. There were many things I learnt in Europe. That was one.

I began to write books. They were published all over the place. I wrote a play. It was a good play, people said so, but for me what was important about the play was that I got to meet the most remarkable human being I have ever met, and that was Paul Robeson. Physically he wasn't Graeco-Roman at all. He was a man with an African face, nothing Graeco-Roman, and a wonderful person, of great power and great gentleness. He taught me a lot about black people. I was learning.

Now I want to tell you something previous to that. I used to have a certain person in mind. I have looked back, I constantly look back to know what I was thinking at different times. And the person I usually had in my mind, whom I brought from the West Indies, was an English woman. I had never met her. She was a famous actress, a woman called Ellen Terry. I saw pictures of her, what people said about her, what she said about herself. She struck me as being a wonderful human being. I had her in mind as being a sort of European/British personality that brought the Greek to life. And then I met Paul Robeson and I had added another portrait to my gallery. I remember Ellen Terry in particular because of something that was said about her. There was a famous Shakespeare sonnet:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan th' expense of many a vanish'd sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

I must have said that to myself ten thousand times, why I don't know. But I read that when Ellen Terry used to say that poem, she used to burst into tears. I could understand why she did, and I felt a certain

understanding; she remained in my mind. I never saw her act or anything. And then Paul Robeson came, and I began to think Graeco-Roman, British, African — Paul Robeson was an astonishing man. His tremendous power and great gentleness. I have written an article about him in the United States press. And it is astonishing to me that a stranger from Great Britain should have to go to the United States to make those people understand what they had, and still have, in the person of Paul Robeson. I am very pleased that I started a campaign, and it seems to be going quite well.

Then I joined the trotskyst movement. I joined it about 1934, and in January 1937 I finished a book, *World Revolution*. Some of you young people will know it. The subtitle is "The Rise and Fall of the Communist International". January 1937, I was writing about the decay of the Communist International. I have to tell you that it took a long time before the general public began to understand it. I had to wait twenty long years before Khrushchev at the 20th Party Congress began to say the things that I had been writing about stalinism in that book. You have to wait sometimes, you have to make up your mind what you are going to do, and wait, be confident of the outcome.

At the same time, one night I heard that there was a man called George Padmore — he was a famous Moscow functionary — who was going to speak at Gray's Inn Road. I went to Gray's Inn Road to see the great George Padmore because he was so widely known. And into the hall walked Malcolm Nurse, my old friend from Trinidad. I used to go with him to Arima to bathe in the river below the ice factory. We had a talk that night. He remained with Moscow and I remained a trotskyst, but we never quarrelled. Very soon we were closer, when Padmore started the International African Service Bureau. He broke with Moscow. We were only about a dozen people. There was another man named Makonnen and there was Padmore's wife. People thought about African emancipation, the independence of Africa. But we kept on, and before fifteen years it was clear that we were the ones that were right, and they were the ones that were wrong. You have to wait sometimes. And that is the kind of thing I want you to remember tonight. Don't be afraid. Have your policy in mind and follow it through to the end.

I went to the United States in 1938 and I remained there. One day a girl I knew very well — she was part of our organisation — came to me and told me there was an African who said he would like to meet me. I knew she had told him that he ought to meet me. But I agreed to see him and he told me his name was Francis Nkrumah. That is how Francis became part of us. We talked together, we used to go down to Pennsylvania where he was staying, he used to come to New York. He was around us all the time. In 1943 he said he was coming to London to study law, and I wrote a letter to George Padmore that is famous in our annals. It said: "My dear George, Here is a young African whom I know very well. He is not very bright, but he is determined to throw the imperialists out of Africa. Do what you can for him." Padmore met him at the station and they began a partnership. Why did I say that

Nkrumah wasn't very bright? He used to talk about marxism, the export of surplus value instead of commercial capital, and a whole lot of stuff which he knew nothing about. When he came to Britain he was educated by Padmore and his massive collection of books, papers and so forth. George was very neat, he was always shaved, his files were always in order, and if you wanted to know what was taking place in Britain or colonial Africa in 1924, he went straight to the shelf and took the material out and handed it to you. That was the kind of man he was. He wasn't a great orator, he was a good speaker. He wasn't a great writer, he was a good writer. But for politics, tenacity, concentration, he was one of the most remarkable politicians I have known: a West Indian who went to school at the same time that I did, and who left the Caribbean when he was twenty-three years old to go to the United States. In other words he was one of us. He was one of those backward ones who came abroad to become one of the most remarkable politicians of the day. So when I tell you I am glad to be here, I want you to know where we have come from, what we did, and where you start. You haven't come here to learn everything, there is much you have brought here with you. [Applause.]

Now I want to talk more about black people, and the study of black people. I had written about black people, and I went to the United States in 1938 and I found the trotskyists in a first-class mess. I went down to Coyoacan in Mexico to see Trotsky and I told him certain things that I thought should be the policy: that the blacks have a right to be independent, and to carry on an *independent strategy*. They hadn't to be committed to the Communist Party, or the trade-union movement, a Labour Party, or anything. But it was their business to defend themselves, an elementary right every animal had, that every human being had; they should be encouraged to form their own organisations. Trotsky agreed. And once he said that, the party began to take it up, and they did their best with it.

I learnt quite a few things in the United States. Among them I learned the work of Dr Du Bois, than whom no more important name in the political and intellectual development of the twentieth century can be called. I want to read one passage from his great book *Black Reconstruction*. He says, "Such mental frustration [as the black man has to undergo] cannot indefinitely continue. Some day it may burst in fire and blood." He was writing and publishing this in 1935.

Who will be to blame? And where the greater cost? Black folk, after all, have little to lose, but civilisation has all. This the American black man knows: his fight here is a fight to the finish. Either he dies or wins. If he wins, it will be by no subterfuge or evasion of amalgamation. He will enter modern civilisation here in America as a black man on terms of perfect and unlimited equality with any white man, or he will enter not at all. [Shouts of "Right On!"] Either extermination, root and branch, or absolute equality. There can be no compromise.

In the United States, I used to see the doctor; at times he would say a few words and shake my hand. But I read that, and I read a lot of other

stuff, and I got to know a lot of people. So that when the time came for me to write seriously about the black struggle in the United States, I wrote some words which remain to this day. They were said in 1948, and when the party to which I belonged wanted to say more about this movement they printed it in 1962. Fourteen years had passed. They are still using it. I will read it to you. I learnt not only from Marx and Lenin, but I also learnt from Dr Du Bois and other people whom I met. And this is what I said in 1948:

Let us not forget that in the Negro people there sleep, and are now awakening, passions of violence exceeding perhaps, as far as these things can be compared, anything among the tremendous forces that capitalism has created. Anyone who knows them [*listen carefully, please*], who knows their history, is able to talk to them intimately, watches them at their own theatres, watches them at their dances, watches them in their churches, reads their press with a discerning eye, must recognise that although their social force may not be able to compare with the social force of a corresponding number of organised workers, the hatred of bourgeois society, and the readiness to destroy it when the opportunity should present itself, rests among them to a certain degree greater than any other section of the population in the United States. [*Applause — shouts of "Power!"*]

Today when I read that to some people, they are quite astonished and say, "You knew that?" I said, "I didn't make it up. It was there." I come from the West Indies. I had been taught to look, I had an instinctive prejudice against what the establishment and authority was telling me. That is what I had been trained for. I had come here with that. And I looked around the United States, and I read Dr Du Bois and others, and I wrote that in 1948. Today it is still exciting amazement.

I have something else to say. In 1951 I did a study of Herman Melville, the American novelist. Many publishers and other people said, "A very fine book, very fine indeed, very original. But we don't quite see our way to publish at the present time." They run away from it. Well, they had very good reason to run, the book gives a revolutionary view I wrote that book because I am a marxist. You should have some serious conception of the relation between the writer, the artist and his material base. There was a lot of talk about that, so I wrote the book and called it, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*. (I am working now on something else in regard to the artistic superstructure and the economic base. I may tell you about that another day.) But I went on to do a lot of work. We broke with Trotsky, myself and political friends of mine. We broke with Trotsky and we brought forward a new conception, not of Russia, but of modern society as a whole. We said that modern society, including Russia, was approaching the stage of state capitalism. Russia was a part of state capitalism and we drew some conclusions. I don't want to give you a lecture on politics, but I want to say that in the end we had certain things in mind that we wanted to warn people against — I am glad to say that today many people are thinking about it. We are against the concept of the vanguard party. We said: "You form a party? The communists have formed parties and they have done nothing else but

get blows for the proletariat and the peasantry for fifteen years. That kind of party, the time for that is over. Do what you can, work together of course, but a vanguard party on the stalinist model is no longer viable." And secondly, side by side with it, we fought the conception of "the plan", a few people sitting around a table drawing up "the plan" and then telling the workers, "You've got to do that: that is *the plan*." That is a sure way to total ruin. And you can look through marxist theories today and see that Marx never had that in mind: and in what he said you never see this concept of the party, with self-appointed people telling the workers how to fight. That is not marxism today in 1971. Workers in 1971 know more than any vanguard party can tell them. Those things we worked out, and we are glad to see that more and more people are today beginning to see that.

I have one more word to say before we have a little interlude. It is on *The Black Jacobins*. It was written in 1938. I wrote it in the same year Aimé Césaire was publishing *Return to My Native Land* [*Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*]. I don't know why I was writing *The Black Jacobins* the way I did. I had long made up my mind to write a book about Toussaint L'Ouverture. Why, I couldn't tell you. Something was in the atmosphere and I responded to it. What is remarkable is that today, in 1971, that book is more popular, more widely read than at any other previous time. In other words, though it was written so long ago, it meets the needs of the young people in the United States today, and I am very pleased about it, in Britain, Africa, the Caribbean and other places. There has been a French translation, there has been an Italian translation.... But the book was written in 1938 and still has a validity today, 1971, because I came originally from the kind of territory which produced René Maran, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, and we were prepared not only to say what should be done in the Caribbean, but we were trained and developed in such a way that we were able to make tremendous discoveries about Western civilisation itself....

We come to the last part of what I have to say, which I call "The New World — The World of Black Power". [*Applause.*]...

I sometimes speak these days about Black Power, with great emphasis on the tremendous work that black people are doing everywhere to change this old society. And sometimes some of my old friends tell me when I have finished, "But, James, you have left out the proletariat." I say, "But for God's sake, I have been talking about the proletariat since 1935. You mean I cannot make a speech in 1969 and take it for granted that you know I am still a man of the proletariat?" So they go away appeased. I hope.

Now I have met this question before, this question of the proletariat. I was at a meeting in Cuba and I spoke not to Fidel Castro but to some established leaders in Cuba. I told them, "Look, you are allowing people to say that the proletariat in the advanced countries will never make any revolution, that it is being corrupted by the profits and exploitations that the bourgeoisie is making out of the underdeveloped countries." I went on to say, "Look, you can allow people to say that

if you like, and whether the proletariat will make it or not I am not prepared to argue: it will and I win, it won't and you win. That, time will tell. But you cannot in Cuba consider yourselves marxist and let people say that the proletariat is being corrupted by the fringe benefits which it gets from the exploitation of the Third World. Marxism says that the proletariat is trained for socialism in *production*, not in *consumption*. So you can expect or not, as you like, but if you are putting forward a marxist position then the proletariat is trained in production, not by fringe benefits." A man told me, "Well, we don't say that." I replied, "You may not say it, but you allow a lot of visitors to say it, and you say nothing." He said, "Well, you know, we have to take such things as they come." I said, "OK." A few months afterwards, the proletariat in France, in May 1968, made one of the biggest movements the world has ever known: a tremendous strike by the proletariat. At last, I went about with my hands in my pockets. Many are quiet now since May '68. But I cannot speak at all times about the proletariat. There are some marxists who do not understand that the world has changed, that students who formerly were not in the forefront, in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement now are, and that today, black people in the United States and in the Caribbean, everywhere, are now in the forefront, and no movement can go forward without their taking a predominant position.

Now, I have been talking to you about being a West Indian and the advantages that it has given me in understanding what is taking place. That is very clear to me today in the United States. I am doing three lectureships: one at Federal City College in Humanities, one at Howard University, the most important black university in the United States, and I am also visiting lecturer at Harvard, perhaps the most famous American university. I have been to Yale and I am to go to Princeton. Why? First, because the educational establishments have need of knowledge about black people and black history and they possess very little of it. And secondly, the blacks in particular, but not only the blacks, are very interested in my method of approach. This is the reason. In the United States they have a great deal of energy. The black people are able to organise themselves and do tremendous things. I am always struck by the black women in the United States. I have known many revolutionary movements and I have known women in them, and those black girls in the movement in the United States may not be strong on marxist theory, but they are ready to take action, and do all sorts of things. They are astonishing people. But as I say, they like to hear me in the States. Why? Because I have the habit from many years of development, of tracing a movement from where it began, seeing the stages of its development, having confidence that it will reach another stage, and from there speculating, because at times you have to speculate. And they are today anxious because they feel that they lack that, and they are very much concerned everywhere for me to speak in that way. Not that they agree with what I say, but they are aware of the *process* that I bring to the analysis of a historical event. So that somebody in whose house I used to live told me the other day, "Mr

James, when you come back I want you to give us a class on marxism.” I of course agreed. I was astonished because they have fought down South, have had hard struggles, and now they feel a certain gap in their methods, and they think I can help them. And I am a West Indian who has studied that way, who was forced to look on society that way. I am doing something which they think is important, and I am glad to be able to do it.

Now in regard to Black people in the United States, I don't want to say much. I want to say this much. Mentally and spiritually they have left the ghetto. They may be compelled to live there, because you cannot leave the ghetto unless you have somewhere to go. But they have left it. I don't believe that any force exists in the United States to drive them back. They are out of it and they are going to remain out, and find what they can do. Some people talk about genocide. There must be near thirty million black people in the United States. How can you have genocide against thirty million people? It would take a lot of people to commit genocide against thirty million people. In addition, to do that would find a lot of white people who will be against it. I do not fear genocide against thirty million people, or any substantial amount of them. In my opinion, the American establishment is in a lot of trouble with black people. That is their problem, not mine. I am only glad to know that black people are out of the ghetto spiritually and that they are not going to return to it.

I am going to make one more remark, about the middle-class black people, those who have jobs in the post office, little government jobs in clerical places and so on. You know what I have noticed; everywhere I go I ask about it. These middle-class blacks are not angry with the young people who are out on the streets. They say, “Well, you cannot expect me to join them. I am sixty-five, I am not going out on the streets to throw bombs. I don't know what is a molotov cocktail. But if you choose to go, and you want to, well, maybe this is the way, because the way we tried we got nothing from it.” Everywhere I go I say, “What do your parents think?” And when I speak to them their attitude is, “Well, maybe that is the only way, maybe. I don't know.”

Now I want to talk about a few places, like Cuba, Vietnam and Tanzania. About Cuba I want to say one thing. Cuba is a West Indian island, and what you should know about Cuba is this. Alone in all the underdeveloped countries in the world, the trend of the population is from the cities towards the country. In all other underdeveloped territories, the population moves from the country to the town, but it is well established that in Cuba it is not so. I know Fidel is a West Indian because Fidel says: “What we have to do is direct our attention to raising the level of the *campesino*, the man in the country.” And those of us who know about Barbados and Trinidad and Jamaica know that that is the first thing to do. That fellow who has been working on the sugar estates, he doesn't want to work there any more, the whole thing is falling apart, and Fidel sets out to arrange an economy that would be different. That is the main point that I want you as West Indians to know.

About Tanzania. Africa has been going badly. There is no doubt about it. Country after country, crisis after crisis. I will mention one, Kenya, where just before the election Jomo Kenyatta was travelling somewhere in the country, among the Luo. He said that some of the Luo people treated him with disrespect and he put the Opposition in jail just before the election. Now he could be black as the ace of spades, but that is a false policy. There is one country in Africa today, that is Tanzania, where Dr Nyerere is putting forward a policy which means a change in the economic structure, a change in the political structure, a change in education, which is a model not only for Africa but for the whole underdeveloped world. And people in the developed countries would learn something from him. An important thing I want to mention is that Kaunda, who is following Nyerere, is saying: "We have to preserve the African village, because if we destroy the African village in our attempt to develop the economy, we destroy the very basis of African civilisation."

Now, Nkrumah and his followers didn't used to say that. They come to power and they start to develop the economy, to get a loan here, to have industry here, to do this and that and the other. The village to them was something that should be left behind as fast as possible. But today, after a number of years of failure, in Tanzania, led by Nyerere and with Kaunda following him, they are beginning to understand that if they want to build something in Africa, they have to build on the African basis, and the African basis is the village community. And I want to be able to tell you, I, at my time of life, am beginning to read lots of books that deal with the past of African civilisation, and the present high civilisation which exists in the African village. To be of high civilisation you haven't got to have a big aeroplane and houses of ten storeys and so forth. The African tribe, the African village, had many elements of high civilisation which they continue to have today. And it is on that that the future of Africa has to be built. And as I see that, I begin to appreciate the civilisation that existed in the Caribbean among the people I knew. They brought it with them from where they came, because they had that civilisation in Africa. And today, since the end of World War Two, people are beginning to see these things. I recommend to you books by Basil Davidson, who has made a study of African civilisation. Then there is another young man, Walter Rodney, has written a book called *The Groundings with my Brothers*. It is the finest study of African civilisation today and yesterday that I know. And those books are part of the present age. Those are the books that are training a new generation of people to see the world in a completely different way.

I would like to say a word or two about Vietnam. A lot of people speak about the crimes that the Americans are carrying out in Vietnam. I don't have to read them in the press, I know that before I read them in the press. What is important is that these people, whose civilisation is based on growing rice (and walking about in water up to their knees), have been able to resist the French and beat them, and now resist the most powerful nation the world has ever known. Today the chief

concern of the Americans is to get out of there as fast as possible. That to me is what is remarkable. That shows that the peasant today is not the peasant we knew twenty or thirty years ago. He is able, and will be able in a short time, to achieve advances of which we have no conception whatever at the present moment. That for me is the significance of Vietnam.

I want to come to a conclusion by talking about the West Indies. In Trinidad today a revolution is taking place. I want to tell you in particular something that happened to me some months ago in Washington. The students at Howard University asked me to come up there and speak to them and to choose my subject. So I chose as my topic, "The Caribbean: The Impending Confrontation". So I spoke, somebody moved a vote of thanks, everybody voted, and we went away. That was on Friday. I go up to Howard to teach on a Wednesday morning. When I came downstairs, I see about twenty students waiting. I said, "Well, what is it?" They say, "The confrontation has started. Have you seen the papers? What you were telling us, about the impending confrontation. We said, what is James talking about? He likes the revolution, but no revolution will take place in the Caribbean. Anyway, if he likes it, it will do no harm," and so forth. And they have come to tell me that it has started. That is what everybody understands today, that it is taking place in Trinidad, in the Caribbean — people expected it was going to take place in Jamaica first, but everybody knows that it is going to take place in the Caribbean.

I know about fifteen or twenty young people, under the age of thirty most of them — there are one or two over thirty, don't be upset by that — I know these folks, young people, who have ability, whose capacity is being stifled. People with special skills in economics, in politics, in science. One of them I want to tell you about. He is a young man under thirty. He is teaching at a famous American university. He is a member of a French Creole family. When I heard him talk, I thought this is a man who is white by mistake, the way he was talking about what the Caribbean would be. And that is very important. There are Chinese, many are East Indian, they are all ready to create a new political structure in the Caribbean. There are some East Indian people here. I hope you realise the significance of what is taking place in Trinidad today. Some 30-40,000 black people left Port of Spain and marched down to the Indian area to let them know that in talking about Black Power they didn't exclude the Indians. They had marched to let them know that they were as one with them against imperialism and its stooges. I have been writing about that, other people have been writing and speaking about it, for twenty years. That one march settled the whole situation for years to come. That is the kind of politics they are making.

I am quite certain that the Caribbean islands are going to make discoveries in politics, economics, and social structure, social advances, which are going to be a wonderful example to both the underdeveloped countries and the developed countries. The Caribbean islands are in between, they are underdeveloped, but at the same time they have no

native language, no native religion. They have the power, energy and desire to go forward which the underdeveloped peoples have, and therefore they can be models to both the underdeveloped peoples and the developed peoples. And please have no doubt about the West Indies I have spoken to you about, the men who have appeared in the past, what they have done, what all of us have been able to do, was because we were West Indian. Have no doubt about it, that what has been done abroad is going to be done in the Caribbean, and some remarkable pages of history are going to be written by our people. [*Applause.*]

The last thing is this. I came here the other day. I had a meeting with some of the young people. I talked to them. You know, I have been talking to people a long time now, particularly to West Indians, since 1932. And there was something new here. There was something new in the young men and the young women. And that is why I said at the beginning, having the past of the West Indians in my head as I have, I was glad that this celebration was taking place in this area. There is something new here. I am told, I have seen them, that there is a present generation that has grown up in Britain. They have been to school with the British children, have had the same lessons, have eaten the same food. They are as ready to eat egg and chips as to eat curry. That's what they have eaten in school here. That's how they have grown up. And when they reach the age of seventeen or eighteen and leave school, they cannot understand why they should be shunted off to different jobs, and be unemployed, when they have grown up with the other English children. That's what they can't understand. Their parents were ready to accept discrimination. They came here and took jobs on the buses, they came here and took jobs on the railways, they came here to take jobs washing dishes, etc. This present generation says, "No, we will have the same kind of jobs that everybody else has, otherwise we will fight to the end." That's why I am glad to be here. And I want you to know this. You have every right to be concerned about the police. You have every right to be concerned about justice. You have every right to be concerned about housing. You have every right to be concerned about employment, and about everything else. Because it is the business of the government to see after these things. You have been demanding this and that and the other: if they are not doing it then the responsibility is theirs, and it is your right to keep on demanding. [*Applause.*]

There is a case at law. I am not a lawyer but I feel this is a highly important case. If you are convicted, those of you who are there, it is going to have tremendous reverberations. If you are not convicted, there are going to be changes and so forth about the law. What happened in that demonstration was not merely a demonstration of some people. You have registered your position in the minds of a whole lot of people, including the Home Secretary, Mr Maudling. He suddenly got scared about Black Power. He didn't read about it in books; it was because they made the demonstration. And ministers and the police always know what is the force of those who are demonstrating. By that demonstration you have written an important page in history, and it is the beginning of future pages.

May I end by saying this. Your future is the future of Great Britain; the future of Great Britain is your future. If you make it, then it means that Britain will be making it. And if you don't make it then the Britain that there is will not be making it, and there will have to be a new Britain, not only for you, but for all the oppressed and poor everywhere. Thank you very much. [*Applause. "Power!"*]

1971

Presence of Blacks in the Caribbean and its Impact on Culture

[This article, dealing with the historical importance of certain key personalities from the Caribbean, was published in June/July 1975 in the New York Amsterdam News.]

The Africans transported to the West Indies had to develop or improvise a culture suitable to their new environment because the chief industry which necessitated their arrival in the Caribbean was systemised agriculture. Africans became the choice labour supply because the only Europeans obtainable on a large scale were the dregs of European society. The Amerindians already on the islands were hunters and trappers and not a people heavily experienced in agriculture and associated skills. In contrast, the African had lived in an organised society; he had practised agriculture; African society was in many spheres politically organised. Many Africans had lived in urban areas and had become highly socialised. Consequently, they were easily able to adapt to certain requirements of the sugar industry. The concentration of labourers on the plantation was combined with the ability to work in the factory process which transformed the cane into material which could ultimately be refined. If the African had not been able to adapt himself to these particular circumstances and maintain co-operation in the social life which this industry demanded, then the civilisation in the Caribbean and in North America would have been something entirely different from what it is.

The African, faced with this advanced social necessity, had to adapt what he brought with him to the particular circumstances which he found in his new environment. Being a civilised and socialised person he had to work out first of all the means of satisfying his desire for freedom. Although there had been slavery in Africa, the African in the new world soon discovered that it was the blackness of his skin which identified him as a slave. The primary effort was a struggle for freedom. But, being a developed person, and with his past, it was natural for him to develop a philosophy and a religion. His philosophy and religion proved to be a combination of what he brought with him and what his new masters sought to impose on him. To a large extent he was careful to keep his philosophy and religion to himself. He was one person to his master; and as soon as he went to his house or hut where he lived, and was able to create a culture of his own, he became a different person.

It is only within recent years that scholars have begun to realise that a black who was away from his master from "sundown to sunup" was a different person than the one who laboured from "sunup to sundown". Here is a definitive statement by a French aristocrat who visited San Domingo, one of the great centres of slavery:

One has to hear with what warmth and what volubility, and at the same time with what precision of ideas and accuracy of judgement, this creature, heavy and taciturn all day, now squatting before this fire, tells stories, talks, gesticulates, argues, passes opinions, approves or condemns both his master and everyone who surrounds him.

It is obvious that the slave cultivated two personalities, and that he was able to quickly learn the elements of civilisation of the West is evidence that he had brought a high state of civilisation with him from Africa.

The Caribbean islands are small and the slave-owners concentrated on extracting from the land all the sugar and coffee that they could. The slaves were very badly fed with salt fish, salt beef and rice, a great deal of which was imported from the territories of New England. To supplement these rations, the slave was given a parcel of land to cultivate some food for himself. The yield was an important part of his livelihood.

Modern scholarship shows that in the middle of the eighteenth century, a little more than a hundred years after slavery of Africans was introduced in the Caribbean, it reached the height of productivity. Free labour of Africans made the forest into grounds of lush and fruitful production. This development was made possible by the ability of the African slaves to quickly learn the mechanics and use of the European farming instruments. The sugar factories and the establishment were dependent entirely upon the efficiency of these slaves. The sugar industry in the Caribbean was one of the most developed industries of its time. The very food which the slaves ate was imported and, at that early date, it was impressed upon them that what they produced was sent abroad. Thus, as far back as the seventeenth century, they were at the centre of a great international industry.

Finally, the desire of the white men for the black women, and the ease with which it could be expressed, consistently produced a mulatto grouping which was privileged by their fathers to do the less strenuous work, to own property and acquire a basic education. A major concern about the slaves' development stemmed from the masters' fear of them communicating with one another. To prevent this, the slaves who spoke the same languages were separated, but the action did work out, for the slaves learned the white man's language with astonishing rapidity.

The essential similarities of the culture to which the slaves were accustomed in Africa and the culture which they had to acquire in the Caribbean were extremely important. In both places they lived a recognisably organised existence. We know today that they had worked out a philosophy and politics of a high order; that they were great artists, particularly in the sphere of wood-carving; and that there were certain advantages which they had that were beyond those of western civilisation. The role of older people was highly esteemed among them; and quite often the social structure was built upon the experiences of the elder individual. They had organised their sex life in a manner very different from the restrictive codes which permeated the

hypocrisy of the West. They had notably organised themselves so that they did not have the overly brutal administration of justice often to be found in the western world. One of the greatest historians of African peoples, Aimé Césaire,¹ insisted that European civilisation was, in his own phrase "courtier's civilisation". In that respect, there were similarities which enabled the blacks to endure the savage labour to which they were subjected in the new world. But there was one fundamental difference: In island after island, many thousands of slaves refused to submit to the brutal discipline of their supposedly civilised masters. They continually ran away from the plantations to the hills, where they organised and defended their lives. These escaped slaves were called Maroons, and they figured mightily in the making of Jamaica. So effective were the Maroons in defending themselves that the British government was compelled to arrange a treaty with them. It stipulated that a certain area in Jamaica would be given over to them, to live and organise themselves as they wished. The very important aspect of this development is that, at last, history is beginning to show that the originators of the Haitian nation emulated the slaves in Jamaica by escaping into the hills, away from plantation slavery. In the hills and mountains they were able to similarly defend themselves and form the revolution which resulted in the construction of a new nation. Led by Toussaint L'Ouverture,² this achievement is the only successful slave revolt in all recorded history.

This struggle for independence by slaves in the Caribbean created and broadened certain aspects of world civilisation which are not sufficiently known. The territories in Latin America at that time were all subordinate to great European powers. The Latin American peoples had observed, with certain fear as well as satisfaction, that the newly founded United States had won and maintained an independent existence but felt that only a territory similarly developed could achieve that freedom and distinction. However, when it was seen that the slaves of French San Domingo won their independence and maintained it over the years, the Latin American peoples were impelled to believe that they could do the same. Thus, the independence of Haiti set the example for the rebellions and independence of the Latin American countries.

Haiti had been the colony which had annually received the largest number of slaves. The year before the revolution, some 40,000 slaves had been imported, but on 31 December 1803 the slaves were able to declare their independence. The ferocity of the revolution instilled fear in the British, who recognised that, by importing and increasing slaves in its colonies, similar revolts might likely occur. As a consequence, the British abolished the slave trade in 1807, and America followed in 1808. Napoleon, having failed to maintain an imperial French outpost in Haiti, sold the Louisiana territory to America and this affected the whole future course of American history and marked the end of major French imperialistic incursions into the new world.

All these connections are far closer than is usually the case in history. Simon Bolivar, defeated in his first attempt to win independence in Latin America, escaped to Haiti. There he fell ill and was cared for by

the Haitians. When he had recovered, they gave him arms, money and whatever help they could in order to enable him to try again to establish independence in Latin America. All that they asked of him was that whenever he was successful he should abolish slavery. Wherever Bolivar won independence he carried out his promise and slavery was abolished.

Internationally the impact of the peoples of the Caribbean goes far beyond relations between neighbouring countries. The Trinidadian Sylvester Williams³ organised during the opening year of this century the first Pan-African Congress ever held. Approximately one quarter of this century passed, and other Trinidadian, George Padmore,⁴ rose to be the most prominent black functionary in the insurgent Communist International. Breaking sharply with his political sponsors, Padmore went on with his Pan-African activity to earn the title of "Father of African Emancipation". It was in 1943 that I introduced Kwame Nkrumah, a Gold Coast student studying in the United States, to George Padmore in England. This effective team of African and West Indian proceeded to work their way in mobilising African people towards the first independent state that continent had known since its long ordeal of European invasion and slave-trader expeditions.

A few years before Padmore went to Europe to begin his Pan-African work, the Jamaican Marcus Garvey⁵ arrived in the United States and organised more American blacks into a politically race-conscious movement than the continent of North America had ever seen before or since. Africa was placed irreversibly before the world's consciousness. In this connection two more names are easily brought in. Frantz Fanon,⁶ a West Indian from a French-dominated island, served in the long drawn out and finally victorious Algerian revolution. The import of his books was for the whole world. Few books by a black man were so avidly read by so international a public, particularly young whites seeking a reflective context that could help them understand their own changing place in a totally disordered world. The last name coming to mind is that of Stokely Carmichael,⁷ born in Trinidad, destined in America's turbulent sixties to write his name large in the annals of black movements.

Worldwide contributions by black West Indians are no wise limited to the reshaping of the world order. Individually and in the mass they have enriched the content of world culture, its variety of forms and modes of expression. Black West Indians have made a tremendous contribution to musical instrumentation. For centuries no such addition has been made to the corpus of musical instruments as the steelband. The originators of it are men from Trinidad and Tobago, Spree Simon and Ellie Mannette, and no study of culture is worthy of the name which leaves out these remarkable creators.

Of the same distinguished Caribbean originality is the Calypso, carried to a high degree of artistic finesse and at the same time appealing to the people, as has been done by the Mighty Sparrow. What is more astonishing is that within recent years in Europe the Calypso has attained great reception. This was followed by Ska, a popular Jamaican

creation. Out of Ska grew Reggae, and the popularity of that type of musical creation has swept over Europe and is making its way in the United States. This is testimony of the creative genius of the black people in the Caribbean, whenever an opportunity presents itself.

Such is also the case with popular sports. Before the end of the last century, teams of English cricketers were paying visits to the West Indies. Teams chosen from the Caribbean territories visited England in 1900 and again in 1906. By 1928 West Indian cricket teams were promoted to play Test Matches, and since that time cricket has played a notable role in two spheres. Caribbean teams exchange regular visits with teams from England, Australia, New Zealand, India and Pakistan. In addition, many West Indian players have attained a skill second to none and are now regularly employed by English counties to play throughout the English season.

West Indian writers have established themselves among the finest interpreters of national expressions of the present day. A writer who becomes more and more famous today is Aimé Césaire who is associated with the concept of Négritude. Césaire was born in Martinique and educated in Paris. Usually associated with him in the concept of Négritude is Léopold Senghor of Senegal, but Négritude as advanced by Senghor would never have made the impact upon world consciousness without Césaire's vibrant poem, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Return to My Native Land*).

I am aware that the limitation of space prevents me from including more of the contributions which West Indians have made and are making to the culture of other countries, and particularly to black people everywhere. The import of these contributions can be appreciated best with knowledge about most of the mentioned individuals and about the times and conditions within which they had to work. For this reason the following biographical sketches are provided:

1) Aimé Césaire (1913-) was born on 25 June, the seventh child of a middle-class family, according to the living standards of the economically depressed black community of Bassa-Pointe, where his father was, for a time at least, an employee of the lower-echelon government. Césaire's excellent grades at the Lycée Schoelcher, in Fort-de-France, earned him a scholarship to attend the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, a teacher-training school, where he earned a degree in letters. This training prepared him for entrance to Lycée Louis-le-Grand for a higher education which he completed with honours.

Césaire's high scholarship enabled him to voice rebellious reaction to colonialism and imperialism in impeccable French with heavy African overtones, as exemplified in his fiery and lengthy poem, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, which he wrote in 1939. The poem is literally regarded as a sacred text to the younger generation of black anti-colonialists. It introduces the concept of Négritude which, with the theory it implies, can be interpreted as an awareness by a black person,

in any part of the world, of a particular kind of sensibility, different from that of a white person but in no way inferior. Négritude can also be interpreted as the rejection of white civilisation and the substitution of black cultural values.

In the early 1940s Césaire returned to Martinique and spent the war years teaching at Lycée Schoelcher and writings for *Tropiques*, a magazine which he and his wife founded in Paris to take home for publishing. The French authorities did not look with favour on the publication and it had to be discontinued, but not before its influence had spread throughout the Caribbean.

It was after the war, in 1945, that Césaire's political life took shape. His bitterness over oppression attracted him to the Communist Party, a recognised party in France's multi-party structure. On its ticket, he was elected as a delegate to the Assemblée Nationale in Paris: and in 1946 he became a member of the Assemblée Constituante which framed the constitution for the Fourth Republic in France (1946-58). Césaire broke with the Communist Party and, on his return to Martinique, he formed his own party, Progressiste Martiniquais, and was elected mayor of Fort-de-France. In March 1967 he was re-elected deputy from Martinique through his party.

Despite the pressures of his active political career, Aimé Césaire continues to maintain his position as a writer in the front ranks of Négritude, producing not only an extensive body of journal literature — poems, articles, reviews, etc., especially for the pages of *Présence Africaine*, but also several collections of poetry, plays, and important historical and political essays. Césaire is available to the English-speaking reader in a selection of translated poems in *State of the Union* (Bloomington: 1966): three editions of the *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (New York: 1947), under the title *Return to My Native Land* (Paris: 1968; Baltimore: 1968). A brief excerpt from the 1947 version appears in Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, *The Poetry of The Negro, 1746-1949* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1949). There is also an anonymous translation of the "Lettre à Maurice Thorez: Letter to Maurice Thorez" (Paris: 1957).

Césaire's primary contribution to the culture of the world, and to blacks in particular, is his creation and projection of the word Négritude, which explains the innate philosophy and ethnocentrism (I am somebody) of the black man. Supplemental sources: *Négritude: Black Poetry from Africa and the Caribbean*. Edited and translated from the French by Norman H. Shapiro, New York.

2) Toussaint L'Ouverture (1745?-1803), the eldest of eight children in his family, was born in San Domingo (now Haiti). His father, son of a petty chieftain in Africa, was captured in a tribal war, sold as a slave, and was brought to San Domingo in a slave ship. The colonist who brought him discovered his abilities and allowed him certain liberties on the plantation. These privileges included the use of five slaves to cultivate a plot of land.

Toussaint was small in stature, ugly and ill-shaped. As a boy, he was

so frail and delicate that his parents did not expect him to live, but he was determined to acquire not only knowledge but to develop a strong body. He succeeded in accomplishing each objective.

The blacks on the island spoke a debased French known as creole (and they still do), and near the household lived an old man, Pierre Baptiste, who became Toussaint's godfather. He spoke French and knew a little Latin and geometry, subjects in which he tutored Toussaint; and from his father, Toussaint learned about medicinal plants, knowledge that the father acquired in Africa. To strengthen his body, Toussaint resorted to the severest exercises which enabled him by the time that he was twelve to surpass in athletic feats all the boys of his age on the plantation. He could swim across a dangerous river, jump on a horse at full speed and do what he liked with it. He also learned to read, write and draw, and his deportment was amiable.

His master could not help observing Toussaint's abilities and make use of them. Toussaint was relieved from tending the flocks and herds, the usual work for young slaves, and was made the master's coachman. This post carried considerable dignity, comfort and the opportunity and time for Toussaint to further cultivate his talents, enrich his mind and polish his manners. From this post, he was made steward of all the livestock on the plantation, a responsible job usually held by a white man. Despite his superior knowledge and status on the plantation, Toussaint was compassionate, benevolent, even-tempered and a person who always kept his word. He had cultivated a mastery over himself in mind and body.

As a young man, he had his fling, then at the age of twenty-five he decided to settle down. Unlike many others who preferred the use of concubines, which was widely prevalent among all classes in San Domingo, but particularly among slaves, he married a woman who happened to have a son already. She bore him one child, a son, and they lived together in the greatest harmony and friendship.

It is probable that Toussaint had never been whipped or badly mistreated, as so many other slaves had, but he knew and felt the dehumanising effects of slavery and the ordeal that slaves had to bear in shouldering the whole structure of San Domingo on their backs, and in making the island the richest colony in the world.

Abbé Raynal, a French priest, wrote a book, *The Philosophical and Political History of the Establishment and Commerce of Europeans in the Two Indies*, which opposed slavery. It came into the hands of Toussaint when he was growing up and over the years he would read and re-read the following passage over and over again, and it planted a seed in his mind:

A courageous chief is wanted. Where is he, that great man whom Nature owes to her vexed, oppressed and tormented children? Where is he? He will appear, doubt it not: he will come forth and raise the standard of liberty.

Toussaint's training, experience and make-up had prepared him to fill this leadership role, but the course which led to fruition did not occur until he was forty-five years old, when he began a distinguishing

military career. He became the leader of the revolution which freed the slaves in San Domingo. Following this achievement, he was appointed by the French government as commander-in-chief of the French forces in the country (mainly but not entirely black), after which he became the governor.

Toussaint administered the colony with astonishing skill then Napoleon Bonaparte decided to send in an expedition to restore slavery. Toussaint fought the invasion courageously but in the end capitulated and retired to his estate. In this period of uncertainty he was arrested and taken to France. Bonaparte imprisoned him in the Alps, where he became ill and died.

The independence of Haiti was actually achieved by Dessalines, Toussaint's lieutenant, but any study of the country will reveal that his successes were built on the foundation established by Toussaint.

In Toussaint L'Ouverture, an individual one generation removed from Africa, can be seen the embodiment of qualities which makes him a role model for inspiration in any culture in the world. Source: *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, by C.L.R. James.

3) Henry Sylvester Williams (1869-1911) was born in Arouca, Trinidad, presumably on 14 February, the first son of Henry Bishop Williams, an architect and expatriate from Barbados, with his wife Elizabeth. All of Williams's early life was spent in Trinidad, where he attended school and later became a teacher. His ambitions, however, reached beyond the confines of the English-dominated colony. He looked forward to becoming a lawyer. In 1891 he went to New York where he came into contact with the black leadership, then in September 1883 he enrolled in the Faculty of Law at Balhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He studied there for only one year before migrating to London, where he was admitted on 10 December 1897 to study law at the prestigious Gray's Inn. It took him, however, five years to complete the three-year course.

His persistence in pursuing law as a profession, despite difficulties that he obviously had but are unknown, reflects his strong character and ability to persevere — qualities which enabled him to exercise patience but determination to succeed in his chosen fields of activity.

He made acquaintance with other blacks in London while he was in law school and, with these contacts, he became the prime organiser of the African Association, founded in September 1897. The objectives, as stated in its constitution are as follows:

To encourage a feeling of unity, to facilitate friendly intercourse among Africans in general: to promote and protect the interest of all subjects claiming African descent, wholly or in part, in British Colonies and other places, especially Africa, by circulating information on all subjects affecting their rights and privileges at subjects of the British Empire, and by direct appeals to the Imperial and local governments.

Williams regarded the association as the core for a world-wide, concerted effort by blacks to obtain political and social benefits for the

race. With this view in mind, he began to organise plans to convene a Pan-African Conference in London on 23-25 July 1900 — the first conference of its kind ever held. His untiring efforts resulted in the attendance of at least thirty-three delegates from Africa, the West Indies, Canada, Haiti and the United States. The conference was considered remarkably successful. The name was changed to Pan-African Association; a constitution and by-laws were drawn up; a permanent organisation was formed and the following officers were elected to serve for two years: Bishop Alexander Walters of New Jersey, president; Rev. Henry B. Brown, London, vice-president; Dr W.E.B. Du Bois, Georgia, vice-president for America; Henry Sylvester Williams, London, general secretary; T.J. Calloway, Washington, D.C., secretary for America; and Dr R.J. Colenso, London(?), Treasurer. Two other conferences were scheduled — Boston in 1902 and Haiti in 1904.

Williams made every effort to sustain the momentum of the conference through personal contacts, a journal which came out once, and through his book, *The British Negro*, but he failed to obtain financial support.

Williams was licensed as a barrister in 1902 and shortly afterwards volunteered for service in the Boer War in South Africa, which he saw as a struggle of civilisation against frontier Dutch barbarism. After the conflict, he became the first black registered barrister in Cape Town but found the country uncongenial. It is reported that at least one attempt was made on his life. He returned to London apparently in a rather comfortable economic position and gained popularity as host, guide and intermediary with the press and the Colonial Office for the blacks visiting the city, and he espoused the plight of the poor whites in the Marylebone area of the city. In 1906 he became a Labour candidate from the Third Ward for a seat on the Marylebone Borough Council. He won. Thus, Britain had its first black local government official.

Williams was appointed to the Improvements and Housing and to the Legal and Parliamentary Committees of the council which, he discovered months later, were non-functioning. The former had no money and the latter no questions to answer. The Conservative Party, with a majority of seats, controlled the council and defeated the bills for reform which Williams and others wanted to institute. Recognising the futility of his position and perhaps feeling the effects of blackwater fever which would take his life in three years, Williams's attendance at council meetings was spotty. In August 1908, before his term of office expired, he returned to Trinidad for good, taking his English wife, the daughter of an army major, whom he married in 1896.

Williams was admitted to the Trinidad Bar and acquired the reputation as a very competent barrister. His practice grew steadily but in March 1911 he became suddenly ill and died at the early age of forty-two.

Williams's concept of a Pan-African organisation to unify the efforts of black people throughout the world, for their own interests, is becoming a prerequisite in the thinking and culture of the black man.

The development is evidenced from the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), consisting of the independent African states, and from the impetus given to the concept by forces of the Third World (non-white peoples in underdeveloped countries). Supplemental sources: "Henry Sylvester Williams: Pioneer Pan-Africanist" by Clarence Contee, article in *Black World*, March 1974; "Blacks in Britain: Henry Sylvester Williams of Marylebone Borough Council, 1906-1909", paper prepared by James R. Hooker for conference of African Studies Association in Syracuse, New York, 1973.

4) George Padmore, real name — Malcolm Ivan Meredith Nurse (1902?-59), was born in the Arouca District of Tacarigua in Trinidad, the only child of James and Anna Nurse. The father was a schoolmaster and highly competent naturalist, belatedly rising to become senior agricultural instructor in the Department of Education. His book, a comprehensive geography of the West Indies, was never published. The oral history of slavery in Trinidad, told to him by his father, was passed on to George at an early age.

George finished the local public schools with distinction and in 1918 graduated from the Pamphylian High School, a private institution. He was a serious, motivated student and passed all examinations to qualify for certificates and diplomas; in one examination he qualified to become a student in pharmacy.

His first job after graduation was reporting shipping news for the *Weekly Guardian* newspaper. He did not like the work nor did he do it well. He was fired. On 10 September 1924, he married Julia Semper, a neighbour and daughter of an officer in the constabulary. They became the parents of two children, Blyden and Julia.

In 1925, after taking a course in sociology at Columbia University, George became a pre-law student at Fisk University in Nashville. He became an excellent public speaker, particularly on colonial issues, and filled many engagements on college campuses. He withdrew from Fisk because of its internal troubles and the tense racial atmosphere in the city. He went back to New York, joined the Communist Party and in September 1927 enrolled at the Law School of Columbia, but before attending classes he switched to the Law School at Howard, on the advice of friends in the party. It was at this time that he assumed the name "George Padmore" to conceal his identity from government agencies. In his dual life at Howard, he became even more popular as a student, public speaker and youth leader than he was at Fisk. Despite his studies, he ably represented the party in many ways from Washington to New York, and was chosen for grooming in Russia for international activities. In March 1930 he left Howard to go to Russia, much to the displeasure of his wife and children whom he had brought to the United States and was leaving behind.

In Russia he moved in high, important circles: first as an American specialist, and afterwards as head of the Negro Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern). Padmore travelled extensively, worked hard and did his work well. The colonial issues

provided him with excellent opportunities to point up the hypocrisy of democracy as practised by the western governments. These issues were of prime importance to black people but, according to Padmore's nephew Malcolm Luke, a London physician, Padmore used to recount "receiving directives to cease attacking French, then British, then American imperialism, till he was left finally with the Japanese alone". "These Asians," he would snap in disgust, "are not the imperialists who have their boots across the black man's neck." Padmore was anathema to the western powers and his presence in their countries was not looked upon with favour. Oft times he would have to sneak in and out of a country to do his work. To appease the West, the Comintern decided to close the ITUC-NW in August 1933. Padmore heard about it on 13 August and promptly resigned his offices. When reports of this development reached the public, many versions of his defection appeared in print, including his own which he printed twice.

Padmore met Dorothy Pizer in 1937, a very bright English girl from a poor family. Her formal education was limited but she overcame the deficiency by serious application to study. She was a stenographer with similar political views as Padmore and wanted to benefit from his worldly experience; then, too, he was handsome. Her offer to help him was accepted and a close relationship resulted. She became known as Padmore's wife.

After the break from the party, Padmore worked for nearly twenty-five years in the interest of and in many capacities for the liberation of black people; particularly in Africa. He brought them together in conferences, advised them on political strategies and objectives, established organisations, and taught them the rudiments of leadership and the responsibilities which go with it. He did a yeoman's job which he regarded as a labour of love, for most of his pittance of income was derived from his writings and lectures.

Nkrumah, a protégé of Padmore, appointed him in 1957 as his personal adviser on African affairs. Padmore now had space, money and a staff to do the job he felt capable of doing — effect pan-African unity — but time was not in his favour. The "Father of African emancipation" died of a liver condition on 23 September 1959. To Ghanaians, George Padmore is their John the Baptist.

The major works which he produced during his career are: *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, London, 1931; *How Britain Rules Africa*, London, 1936; *How Russia Transformed Her Colonial Empire*, London, 1946; *The Gold Coast Revolution*, London, 1953; *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, London, 1956; and *Africa: Britain's Third Empire*, London, 1939.

From the viewpoint of culture, Padmore's contributions have been of a catalytic nature — shaping the abilities of those who came under his influence so that they could effect reforms in society which would give expression to the culture of the black man. Supplemental source: *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*, by James H. Hooker, New York, 1967.

5) Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887-1940), the youngest of eleven children of a patrilineal family of Coromantee stock, was born on 17 August, between St Ann's Bay and Roaring River, Jamaica. His parents were poor peasants; the father preferring the less irregular and remunerative but more enjoyable engagements as "village lawyer". Fortunately, the mother, being a good cook, sold cakes and cookies to supplement the family income.

Marcus wrote that he attended the schools of the town and graduated from the Church of England High School. It is known, however, that at the age of fourteen, short and stocky, he was apprenticed, for economic reasons, to his godfather who was a printer in St Ann's Bay. As a youngster, he played happily with all the children in the neighbourhood, including the daughter of a white Methodist minister. Marcus was told that when she was preparing to leave for school in Scotland, her parents cautioned her to never communicate with him because he was a "nigger". His reaction, stated in his own words, was: "It was then that I found for the first time that there was some difference in humanity and that different races, each having its own separate distinct social life." This traumatic experience could have shaped, to some degree, Garvey's subsequent philosophy.

He writes also that the printing trade was limited in St Ann's Bay and that he went to Kingston, obtained a job in a printing shop where, at the age of eighteen, he became a supervisor. The union struck for higher wages but was defeated and, because of his leading role in the strike, he was not rehired. It is said that this experience left him contemptuous of labour organisations and influenced his life-long scepticism of the labour movement's help in his efforts for redemption of the black man. For a while he worked in the government printing office and soon afterwards started editing his first periodical, *The Watchman*. Without adequate capital, the venture soon folded but Garvey continued his activities in a political organisation known as the National Club which had a fortnightly publication called *Our Own*. Around this time he came to know Dr Robert Love, and English-trained Jamaican physician, highly respected legislator and publisher of the *Advocate*. He devoted much of his time and money to improve the conditions of the poorer classes. He was a source of inspiration to Garvey. It was probably he who induced Garvey to travel and see conditions of blacks elsewhere.

In 1909 Garvey left Jamaica for the first time. He went to Costa Rica. There he worked for a while as a timekeeper on a banana plantation and saw the disturbing plight of blacks. It preyed heavily on his mind. He quit the job and started lecturing, telling the workers to take pride in their race and to improve their conditions. He protested to the British consul about the treatment the black workers received, but obtained only bureaucratic indifference. From this point on, Garvey decided to devote full time to organising black people. To broaden his perspective and familiarise himself with existing organisations, he visited England, the United States, and Panama before returning home to organise the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

In 1917 Garvey moved the headquarters to New York City, which was fast becoming the black metropolis. Within a few years he built one of the greatest political movements of the twentieth century.

He propagandised the "back-to-Africa" idea for black people living in the Western hemisphere: he organised the Black Star Line to take them to Liberia and on return trips transport cargo to the States. The projects failed from inefficient organisation and severe opposition of the great powers. Garvey started a weekly newspaper, *The Negro World*, to propagate his views. The newspaper, devoted solely to the interests of black people, was also printed in French and Spanish for the benefit of blacks in countries where English was not the native tongue. Advertising for skin bleaching and hair straightening compounds was not accepted since they were contrary to his thesis about racial pride and beauty. Many colonial governments considered the newspaper as dangerous nationalism. In some countries, anyone seen reading it was subjected to a jail term; in French Dahomey, possession of it subjected the person to life imprisonment. Garvey purchased a large auditorium in Harlem and named it Liberty Hall. It served as his headquarters. He also established the Negro Factories Corporation with the objective of building and operating factories in big industrial centres in the United States, Central America, the West Indies and Africa to manufacture every marketable commodity.

Garvey's career as an organiser of black people was not without legal and financial difficulties, including domestic troubles. In December 1919 he married Amy Ashwood who had been with him since the inception of UNIA in 1914. They were divorced in 1922 and later that year he married his private secretary, Amy Jacques. They became the parents of two boys, Marcus, Jr. and Julius.

Garvey's second shipping line, the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company, which he established in place of the Black Star Line, also failed. He was prosecuted and found guilty before the United States District Court of New York for promoting through the mail sale of stock of the defunct Black Star Line. Garvey was fined \$1,000 and sentenced to five years in federal prison. He was deported to Jamaica in December 1927. There, he formed the People's Political Party with the hope of winning seats in the legislature. During the campaign he proposed impeachment and imprisonment of unfair judges, alluding to his fine of £25 for contempt of court in a civil suit against him. For making the proposal, he was fined £100 and sentenced to three months in prison. During his stay in jail he was elected to the Allman Town Ward of Kingston, but, being forced to miss three consecutive meetings, his seat was declared vacant. He was charged another time for seditious libel but was acquitted on a point of law. Although Garvey became a member of the Legislative Council in Jamaica in a by-election, his political influence and popularity declined, despite the efforts of another newspaper, *The New Jamaica*, which he established in 1932 to communicate with the people. In 1939, embittered by the consistent rebuffs of his countrymen, he moved his headquarters to London. There, he found few friends and was forced into isolation. Sometimes

he was heckled for denouncing Haile Selassie as a coward for leaving his country during the war with Italy. He opened a School of African Philosophy to train interested blacks for leadership; this, too, failed.

In January 1940, Garvey suffered a stroke and on 10 June, at the age of fifty-seven, he died penniless in a small West Kensington flat and was buried in London. The government of Jamaica, after achieving independence, had the body brought home for appropriate ceremonies and burial, as a national hero.

The impact of Garvey's philosophy, to date, has had, in my opinion, more effect in shaping current belief of blacks in their cultural values and in the wisdom of economic development and determination than any other force. It is likely that his basic philosophy will remain a pillar in the black man's search for a place in the sun. Supplemental source: *Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940*, by Adolph Edwards, London and Port of Spain, 1967.

6) Frantz Fanon (1925-61), born in Martinique, was one of six children, the youngest of three boys in the Fanon family. The father's salary in the French customs service was modest but, augmented by the wife's income as a shopkeeper, the family had a Martinican upper-class status. They were able to afford a commodious apartment centrally located in the Savanne area of Martinique, employ a cook and a woman to clean, as well as pay tuitions for the children to attend the lycée. It had a student body of 4 per cent of the young population, the others attended the free public schools. The early education and social life of the children were under the watchful supervision of the parents and teachers, steeped in French traditions and culture. The freedom to think in this formative period of Fanon's life was circumscribed by the books available, and they were text books extolling the history and literature of France. Some fiction was available in the public library but its image did not attract children.

The island had a population of about 300,000 people: some 1,000 were rich, an ingrown, unfriendly group of whites who owned three-quarters of the island's productive land, the larger stores, the construction companies, the newspaper, and most of the port facilities; and there were about 25,000 others, mostly black, who could be regarded as middle class. All the manufactured goods, except rum, and many of the staple groceries and all the meats were imported from France. The prices were higher than those in France. Fanon wondered about this as he grew up, and the answer to this was simply because the upper classes were more concerned about maintaining their relative positions above the masses, and the French rule supported the preservation of class distinctions among every element of the society. He wondered, too, about the occupation of French troops who were antagonistic to the blacks, but as taught, he was French, period.

In 1943, as Fanon was approaching eighteen and finishing the first part of a baccalaureate degree, this was during World War II, he joined the Caribbean Free French Revolution Movement in the internal war in France between the Vichy or Nazi administration and the de Gaulle

government in exile. Fanon was assigned to guerrilla retreat duty which involved contacting troops concealed in the jungle and leading them to small boats for ferrying to safety in the British island of Dominica. The de Gaulle forces won and Fanon volunteered for active duty in the regular French army for the duration of the war. He was sent to North Africa and there he received his first lesson in overt racism by the French troops against the Africans. The experience was traumatic and unforgettable by Fanon even after his unit had been posted to France, where he also witnessed and was subjected to racial discrimination. Fanon was injured twice while in action: first he sustained a very minor wound when a bullet grazed his face, and serious wounds the next time in the chest and shoulder by mortar shrapnel. He was promoted to corporal and decorated for his two years of warfare.

At home, Fanon became a disciple of Aimé Césaire and his marxist views at the time. He returned to the lycée to prepare for entrance to a university, possibly to train for a career in drama. His father died in 1947 and this caused economic hardship to the family. He had won a scholarship to a university in Paris for study in the field of his choice, and, in terms of practicality, he thought it best to acquire training for a career in a field more socially useful and materially compensating than drama. He chose to become a dentist.

Three weeks after matriculating for his professional studies, Fanon had grown weary of the large black population in Paris, and irritated by what he regarded as idiocy of the students at the university. He withdrew from the programme and spent a year studying chemistry, physics and biology before going to medical school. For his medical education, Fanon went to Faculté des Sciences in Lyons. There, out of a student body of 400, less than 20 were black, mostly from West Africa. The black community was sparse with no eligible females of Fanon's age. Without choice, there, he had to live in a white world which, outside of the university, did not accept him. Of the women who accepted him as a human being, one of them gave birth to a child. Fanon supported it and the girl was capable of supporting herself. He excelled in studies and was treated almost as a colleague by the professors, but being black bothered him until he read *General Psychopathology*, by Karl Jaspers. The book deals with existentialism, a twentieth-century philosophy which contends that there is a solidarity among human beings that makes each equally responsible to the other. The book relieved Fanon of depression and his work became of greater importance to him than his race. To obtain his degree, according to the rules, he was able to successfully defend before five professors his thesis, which was on an aspect of neurological research. Under the supervision of the hospital at Saint-Ylie, outside of Lyons, he stayed on at the university with a psychiatric residency.

By 1951, Fanon's mind had become clear of obstruction; his work was going well; he was writing; and his political thoughts were crystallising. He became involved with Josie Dublé, a white woman a little younger than he, with a moderate socialist background. She was interested in his work which he dictated and she typed and discussed

with him. They married in about 1952 and she continued to assist him. In that same year, Fanon was admitted to the residency programme at the hospital of Saint Alban, Mende. The hospital was the model for numerous psychiatric reforms projects for all of France. Fanon did well and the two years there qualified him as a psychiatrist by profession, which meant assurance of a position as *chef de service* in a major psychiatric institution within France. His first post was at Pontorson, on the Atlantic Coast of France where he accepted the temporary position as *chef de service* in the psychiatric hospital. While serving in this capacity, Fanon saw listed in an official government bulletin an opening for a psychiatrist in the hospital in Blida, Algeria. He obtained the position, knowing that an internal war was being waged there over conflicts in political ideology. This situation could very well have been the reason which attracted Fanon to Algeria, where his revolutionary inclinations became a reality.

All of the psychiatrists and their families were European and only one or two on occasions would extend any social courtesies to the Fanons. They lived an isolated life which Fanon utilised to write several books. While there, the Fanons became parents of a boy whom they named Olivier. Fanon was very unhappy about what he saw about the treatment of the native people by the Europeans and endeavoured to boldly make changes in the treatment accorded them in the hospital. In due course, Fanon used his position to become a highly trusted and an important figure in the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN). He left the hospital in 1957 to devote full time to a number of different positions in the revolutionary force: spokesman and diplomat for nationalists; writer; always working for FLN Health Service; director of the press service in Tunis; and in 1958, when a provisional government of Algeria was created, he was attached to the Ministry of Information.

In the course of his work for the FLN Fanon was on the Algeria-Moroccan border when his jet hit a mine. He suffered twelve vertebral fractures, complicated by paraplegia and sphincterian troubles. He was taken to Rome for medical treatment. According to reports, the car which was to take him to the airport in Rome was sabotaged and exploded prematurely. His life was saved again after he moved to another room after reading a press report of his presence in the hospital. That night gunmen came into the room that had been vacated and shot up the empty bed.

In March 1960, Fanon was appointed the permanent representative of the FLN in Accra, Ghana. From this post, he was able to expand his other missions in West Africa, by travelling under assumed names. Late in the year, he was stricken with leukemia, a terminal disease. He went to Tunis and then to Russia for treatment, and finally came to the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, as a patient. Fanon died on 6 December 1961 and his body was flown back to Tunis.

Fanon's books *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*, are based on particular periods of his life, and *Toward the African Revolution* is a collection of articles showing his development

of thought from the time of his withdrawal from conformity to French bourgeois values until his death.

Fanon's social philosophy gained currency with the rise of concern among blacks about the values of their cultural heritage and the need for release from oppressive forces by whatever means necessary. His forthrightness in expressing his views is a cultural contribution to the morale of black people and an admonition to others. Supplemental sources: *Fanon: A Biography* by Peter Ceismar, New York, 1971; *Frantz Fanon*, by David Caute, London and New York, 1970.

7) Stokely Carmichael (1941-) was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on 21 June. When he was eleven years old the family emigrated to Harlem, in New York. Stokely did not have much fatherly attention and was rebellious. His statement about his father is as follows:

My father really worked hard, day and night. There were times when I did not see him for a week. He'd get up in the morning and leave for his regular job — he was a carpenter — then he'd have an odd job on the side, so he'd probably eat at my aunt's house downtown and go to his odd job, and after that he'd drive a taxi, and then he'd come back and go to sleep. By that time, I'd be in bed.... He died in early 1962. He was a man in his late forties. It was a heart attack. We think he died of hard work.

While living in Harlem, Stokely joined a street gang and did what most street gangs do. The family moved into an all-white section in the Bronx. After the father passed away, the mother went to work as a maid. Since Stokely was a very bright student he was admitted to the Bronx High School of Science, restricted at the time to gifted students in the city. For a while Stokely was a member of an automobile-stealing gang of middle-class white boys, but he began to think seriously about what he was doing and pulled away from them. He read Marx and his theory and became concerned about the exploitation and oppression of black people. During his senior year at school the news media played up the brutality inflicted upon the sit-inners in the South and this inspired Stokely to become actively involved. He joined the youth group of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in picketing some of the Woolworth's stores in protest against its racial discriminatory policy, and then to Washington, DC, to picket the House Un-American Activities Committee. In his state of mind, he even refused scholarships to white universities, preferring a black institution instead.

Stokely entered Howard University in Washington in 1960 to major in philosophy. He joined the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), an affiliate of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The NAG conducted sit-ins and demonstrations to desegregate public places all around the Washington area. After graduation in 1964 he worked full-time for SNCC, becoming senior field secretary in Alabama. He organised the Lowndes County Freedom Organisation, and an independent political party, using the black panther as a symbol. The party spread into other countries.

In May 1966, Stokely was elected chairman of SNCC and in June of that year he became a national figure. Participating in the "James Meredith March" in Mississippi, Stokely used the phrase "black power" in a short speech about a way to help blacks develop racial pride and the ballot for education and economic development. The phrase, together with "black is beautiful", has been popularised among blacks everywhere in the world.

From May to December 1967, he went on a world tour, for the purpose of internationalising the struggle of disadvantaged peoples. He visited Britain, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, North Vietnam, Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Guinea. In May 1967 Stokely relinquished the post as SNCC's chairman but remained in the organisation as a field worker. Early in 1968 the Black Panther Party (formed in California in 1966) made him their Prime Minister. This party was allied with SNCC but after the alliance was broken, Stokely was expelled from SNCC on the grounds that he could not hold the two positions. Stokely settled in Washington in 1968 and helped to organise the United Black Front at a secret meeting of about a hundred black leaders representing some twenty organisations.

He married South African singer Miriam Makeba in April 1968, and they went to live in Conakry, Guinea. Stokely resigned from the Panther party, saying that he could no longer support "the present tactics and methods which the party is using to coerce and force everyone to submit to its authority".

Stokely returned to the United States in March 1970, and declared that his mission is to wage "a relentless struggle against the poison of drugs in the black community".

Apart from the positive force which Stokely represents as a person, he will be remembered best by the "Black Power" concept which he popularised and infused into the culture of the black man's life. Supplemental sources: *A Biographical History of Blacks in America since 1528* by Edgar A. Toppin, New York, 1970. *New York: Civil Rights: A CBS News Reference Book* by A. John Adams and Joan Martin Burke, New York, 1970.

Towards the Seventh: The Pan-African Congress — Past, Present and Future

[James delivered this address at the First Congress of All African Writers in Dakar, Senegal, on 8 January 1976, and at Federal City College's Homecoming in Washington, 19 October 1976. It was published the same year in Ch'indaba (the successor to Transition, edited by Wole Soyinka) and in the pamphlet Not For Sale, following a speech by Michael Manley (of which James then said: "In fifty years of political activity and interest in all sorts of politics, I have never read a speech more defiant of oppression and in every political way more suitable to its purpose.")]

Now, I am to speak tonight on Pan-African Congress. That is a very difficult subject. There are hostile opinions on one side and the other. I tell you what I am going to do. First of all I am going to give you the kind of attitude that we should have in thinking about such a subject at this time. We cannot look upon it with the ordinary mentality. But I cannot begin unless I tell you the method with which I think you should look upon the great events in the particular period in which we live.

First of all, what should we think about the world in which we live? I want to tell you something of my experience, which has been rather wide. After World War I, those who were in charge of society wanted to give people some ideas that the barbarism and degradation which World War I had stuck on Western civilisation should not be considered inevitable ... there was some way out. And therefore they got one of their men, Mr H.G. Wells, to write a book that he called *The Outline of History*. There he said that what had happened was an historical event, but he sketched an outline of history and gave the impression that if we went along with good hearts and clear minds we could go some distance away from it. But unfortunately within twenty-five years there was a more dreadful war than the one which had taken place between 1914 and 1918. So once more the West was in trouble as to how to give some general idea of how people should look upon the civilisation in which they were living.

They got a man named Toynbee; some of you have been burdened with his long books. I went to England in 1932, trying to learn everything I could. Toynbee published his first volume, I bought it. I read half and I have never read anything by him since. I said whatever he has there is not for me. But Toynbee was the man they paid attention to, and in America, where they like summation of important events, Toynbee did well indeed. But after a time, people began to feel that Toynbee's conception that history would develop because of some new doctrine, which would spring from some unknown or unimportant country as Christianity sprang from Palestine — well, that did not seem so satisfying after all.

So they went and got someone else, his name is Kenneth Clark. Now

H.G. Wells wrote on *The Outline of History*, Toynbee wrote on *The Study of History*, now they got Kenneth Clark to write on *Civilisation* (and this shows you the confusion they were in). He gave twenty talks on television on "Civilisation". Not about history and where we are going and what is its origin — where are we this time. No, this was something else: we are supposed to be civilised but what is civilisation? And Mr Clark told us what he thought. I will read one or two extracts for you. He says, "At this point I reveal myself in my true colours, as a stick-in-the-mud. I hold a number of beliefs that have been repudiated by the liveliest intellects of our time." He adds, "We have no idea where we are going..." Now I could have told him that forty years ago, but nevertheless he is the man chosen to give the twenty lectures. The Queen made him a Lord after — he used to be Sir Kenneth Clark but after he gave these lectures he became Lord Kenneth Clark for saying, "We do not know where we are going..."

Let us go to the end, to one of the most important pieces of exposition I have read anywhere. He, Clark, quotes W.B. Yeats in a poem which is famous: "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold." All right, I agree their things are falling apart, their centre cannot hold. That's OK with me. Even when he goes on to say, "The trouble is there is still no centre," I agree. But then, "the moral and intellectual failure of marxism has left us with no alternative..." Now isn't that something? I am sure when he began the lectures the Queen knew that when he was finished she was going to make him a Lord. These lectures have been played all over the world. He is a man with great intelligence and great knowledge. I believe he is a wonderful figure of the nineteenth, not the twentieth century and he ends up with, "the moral and intellectual failure of marxism"! So that it is marxism which has failed to give them something to live by and develop: that's why they don't know where they are going, because marxism has not told them. Now, friends, I am not making jokes. I am telling you what is the opinion of the people who rule the world.

I will take one more example — President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. He gave a press conference in Paris on 24 October 1975, and this is what he said: "The world is unhappy. It is unhappy because it does not know where it is going." Very interesting. That is the President, or I don't know what they call him now since de Gaulle's constitution, but he rules in France. "The world is unhappy because it does not know where it is going, and because it senses that if it knew, it would discover that it was headed for disaster." Now I ask you, this from the Head of State in France? "The crisis the world knows today will be a long one, it is not a passing difficulty, it is actually the recognition of permanent difficulties ...": it is not going to stop, it is going to go on. "It is actually the recognition of permanent change..."

So I thought I should begin that way and get you to understand not only what I think ... I have been thinking that for thirty or forty years, thinking that they don't know what they are doing, where they are going. But to hear them say it is a matter, I think, of importance. If any of you have different ideas, please remember that although you may

think things are going well enough, know that those who are in charge of the world don't think so, and that is very important.

Now to go to the question of Pan-African congresses. My aim is to pose the Seventh Pan-African Congress, but that, I am sure, requires a steady view of the first six. The first Pan-African Congress took place in 1900. It was founded in London by a Trinidad lawyer called Sylvester Williams. Sylvester Williams was married to an English woman, and when I was a small boy he returned to Trinidad — about 1908. And I remember my father saying: "There he is talking a lot about Africa and Pan-Africanism: all of us should be together, and he married a white woman." But I was a small boy, these things didn't matter to me so I didn't pay much attention. But Sylvester Williams began something and we have to look at when he began. It was 1900. Many things were happening in 1900. To begin with they were preparing for the war that would break out in 1914. There were also many "Pan" things beginning. There was Pan-Slavism and Pan-Arabism and so on. In other words, people were dissatisfied with the existing structure and the development of society, and they were searching for new roads and new ways.

There was taking place in 1900 one of the first great wars for independence of a colonial people. It is astonishing but that was a war of white people, the Boer War, fought by the Boers against the British for freedom and independence: the first of the colonial peoples to fight an open war in order to maintain their independence. At the same time, the British Labour Party showed its hostility to the Liberal Party and the Tory Party, and it formed a Labour Party which in twenty years was to become the largest party in Britain. So that all these events were moving towards a change in the general social structure, and Sylvester Williams with his Pan-African Movement was part of a world-wide movement. I want you to remember that. It was not that someone sat down one day and said, "Let me form a Pan-African Movement." There was something going on. There were various changes in the world and many people were taking part. That is the first thing I want you to remember. These Pan-African congresses all have their particular place in a particular history.

Now, what is noteworthy about the First Pan-African Congress is this. The foundation of all that we are doing, the intellectual foundation, is the work, for the most part, of a distinguished American scholar, Dr W.E.B. Du Bois. Dr Du Bois happened to be in Paris in 1900 doing some activity of some kind or other, and Sylvester Williams was bright enough to ask him please to come to London to take part in this First Pan-African Conference. Dr Du Bois went, and was made Chairman of the committee which prepared the manifesto of the conference. And I tell you, you should read that document when you get a chance. Because even in those days, although they were making appeals to governments and persons in authority, asking them please to look at what was happening to Black people, and to use their influence in order to lift Black people from the low level at which they were being maintained, yet at the same time there was more than a

spark of the Du Bois militancy, even defiance, which you will find in that document written in 1900.

Well, that was the end of that. Things were quiet for a while, and then bourgeois society exploded in the first descent into barbarism. The war of 1914-1918. Please do not think that my experiences are records of abuse or records of anger. There is hostility in the world, everybody knows that, but when people get together for a war and kill ten million people, I don't believe that that is any mark of civilisation or progress. I say that is a tendency towards barbarism! What they fought the war for, nobody knows exactly: they are still arguing about that now.

About two or three years ago there was a heated debate in the British press as to how the British got into the war. There were certainly people who had signed for war, but some members of the British Cabinet said that they knew nothing at all about it. They were told they had to send an army to meet the Germans in France and they said OK, if you have agreed to that, well, let us send it. But they said they knew nothing about it from the beginning. They are debating it still. Let them debate it, we are not concerned with that at all.

But that was the first one: 1914-1918, the first descent of Western civilisation openly into barbarism for everybody to see, everybody, colonials and Europeans themselves. At that particular time, 1918, when the conference was taking place which was to settle what they have not settled up to today, Dr Du Bois went to France and asked permission to hold a conference, which would put before the Versailles Conference what Black people in the world at that time needed. I want you to note that in 1900 Sylvester Williams was part of a forward movement. In 1918, in the general disruption of society caused by World War I, Du Bois jumps into the situation and asks permission to hold another conference.

Well, permission was given him, he held it, there were conflicts. I don't think there is any need to go into that. We have enough conflicts of our own to be bothered about conflicts that took place in 1918. At any rate they held a conference in 1918. Between 1918 and 1929 (I want to go forward somewhat) Du Bois held four conferences. One was held in Britain, one was held in Belgium: he held them all over Europe. He wanted to hold one in the United States, he even wanted to hold one in Africa. But those conferences were not successful. For the most part they were conferences of people who were interested: intellectuals, people in the liberal spheres of society, and other people who were concerned with the development of civilisation. There were some people from various parts, but only a few people from Africa. All were essentially people who were viewing the African question from an intellectual point of view. Yet those conferences did a great deal. They formed the basis of what we were going to do afterwards. Nevertheless they were not particularly successful, and they were not particularly successful not only because of the composition of the people who formed them, but because when you read the documents of those conferences, and Dr Du Bois himself in his essay "Four Congresses" has told us what they were, they were not seeking control of their economic

and social life, they were not seeking independence. Although they recounted many evils, what they insisted upon was the correction of those evils. At times they spoke about the economic question. Still, all through those conferences you can see that what they were doing was this: they were calling on well-meaning people, intellectual people in sympathy with the Blacks, to help to form an organisation of superior people who would lead the Black people out of the difficulties in which they were.

I personally believe that there was ground for a bolder Call. But it would be very wrong for us today to look upon what they were doing in 1918 and 1929 and say abstractly that they were mistaken. We can say that, but what we must not do is to give the impression that if we were there at that time we would have done differently. They did what they could and above all laid a foundation. But by 1929 Dr Du Bois could not go any further. There were two reasons for that. First, 1929 was the year of the tremendous degradation of the economic life of Western civilisation. World War I, 1914-1918, had shown that civilisation had no ethical or humanistic principles by which it could live. One thousand nine hundred and twenty-nine (1929) showed that the economic system by which it lived could not be controlled, and when it started to go all ways, they went all ways, because even then as today they did not know what they were doing.

Well, by 1929 Dr Du Bois states that he could not get any money to continue his conferences. But something else was happening. In Moscow, where the Third Communist International had been established, its leaders thought that with the degradation of society in 1929 the time had come for it to begin to work among Black people. They needed a Black man of ability in order to do this work and they sent to the United States and called for a young man who went by the name of George Padmore. He went to Europe and he held a first conference, a Workers' Conference, in Hamburg in 1930. Then he went on to Moscow. Between Hamburg and Moscow he was soon very well established. He became a very powerful person in the Communist International, having under his control and direction all the work that was being done for Africa and people of African descent.

In 1932 I went to Great Britain from the Caribbean, and in 1933 one day in London I heard that the famous George Padmore was coming to speak in Gray's Inn Road. So I found myself in Gray's Inn Road — in those days I went to see everything that was new — to see the famous George Padmore. I went to the hall and there were about seventy or eighty people, about half of them white, and about five minutes before the time I walked my boyhood friend Malcolm Nurse, and they told me that this was George Padmore! I did not argue. If Malcolm chose to call himself George Padmore that was OK with me. But we knew each other at once. He came and said, "Hello, how are you?" And I said, "We will talk afterwards." We went to my flat after and we talked till about four o'clock in the morning. He told me: "You were here in 1932 March, April, May?" I said yes. He said, "I was here in 1932, and I was looking for people to take to Moscow and train them for the

understanding of the African development and the African revolution.” I told him: “Well, George, if you had met me here in 1932 and you had told me let us go to Moscow to be trained up, I would have gone with you at once.” What would have happened to me there I do not know, but nevertheless that is the way things were, and ever after Padmore and I remained good friends. He used to come in and out of London and whenever he came he would come to see me. He was a Communist, a Stalinist, and I had joined the Trotskyist movement, but we never quarrelled because both of us had a political perspective, the revolutionary emancipation of the African people. Furthermore, we had been friends from childhood: we had gone to bathe in the river in Arima, and had done a lot of things as young men together. I knew his father, his mother, his sister, and they knew all mine. His father and my father were teachers together. I always remembered that George Padmore the revolutionary was the son of Alfonso Nurse the teacher, and to him I was the son of Robert James the teacher, of Trinidad. We never quarrelled, despite our differences in political orientation. We understood and trusted one another. More of that another time.

Well, one day in 1935, George Padmore appeared at my door. Now Padmore was a man whose trousers were always in order, his hair was always well combed, his clothes were always as they ought to be. He was a careful person — careful in politics, careful in organisation, careful in his person. I saw him looking somewhat dishevelled and I said, “George, what’s up?” He said, “I have left those people, you know.” It was many months before I got the full significance of that. For him the Communist International was “those people”. He had been working with them because they wanted someone, and they would spend the money to help the organisation to develop. But he did not believe in them, and he told me why he left them. It is extremely important. They (the Communist leaders) told him, “Well, George, the situation is changing and we want you now to take it easy with the Democratic Imperialists: Britain, France and the United States, and lead the attack on the Fascist Imperialists Germany, Italy and Japan.” Padmore told them, “But how can I do that? Germany and Japan have no colonies in Africa, how am I going to attack them when it is Britain and France who have the colonies in Africa, and the United States is the most race-conscious country in the world? How do you expect me to tell those three in my African propaganda that they are the democratic imperialists?” So they told him, “Well, George, you know, that is the line.” And in those days when the Communist said that that was the line, you followed the line or you got another line, you went out. They stood no nonsense. Harold Cruse does not understand that but at any rate let Mr Cruse stay where he is for the time being. So George said he told them that he was not going to do that and they said, “But, George, you understand, we must have discipline.” He said, “You can have discipline but you are not going to discipline me to say that Britain and France and the United States are ‘Democratic Imperialists’ who are the friends of Communism. That is out.” And he packed his bag and he came to London.

Well, in London he formed an organisation called the International African Service Bureau: in time he published a paper called *International African Opinion*. He asked me to edit the paper. I was at the same time the editor of the Trotskyist paper. You can therefore understand that when I hear people arguing about Marxism versus the nationalist or racialist struggle, I am very confused. Because in England I edited the Trotskyist paper and I edited the nationalist, pro-African paper of George Padmore, and nobody quarrelled. The Trotskyists read and sold the African paper and the African nationalists attended each other's meetings and there were nationalists who read and sold the Trotskyist paper. I moved among them, we attended each other's meetings and there was no problem because we had the same aim in general: freedom by the revolution.

In 1938 I came to the United States. But I must warn you that we were all waiting for the crisis of World War II which everybody saw coming, and we expected the revolution to break out during or at the end of the war, in the same way that it had broken out in Europe during World War I. But 1945 came, and the revolution had not taken place. But there was an event of some importance to us, a conference of the World Trade Union movement in Paris. That trade-union conference had a lot of funds to play about with and they invited a whole lot of people from Africa — journalists, politicians, writers and the rest — to come to Paris for the International Trade Union Conference. And then they came to London and Padmore said, "Now you all have come here to hear that *they* have to say, you come to Manchester and hear what *we* have to say." And that was the origin of the Manchester Conference.

Two things I have to draw to your attention. If those trade-union groups had not invited all the Africans, Padmore would never have been able to invite a hundred Africans from Africa, and pay their way to come to Europe, but unless Padmore had had his organisation, ten years old, he would have never been able to make use of the fact that the Africans were there, and could call them to Manchester for the famous Manchester Conference.

At that conference there was a person I want you to take particular note of. I had gone to the United States in 1938, and about 1941 somebody brought to me someone who called himself Francis Nkrumah. We became very friendly. Nkrumah was always a very capable man, very sophisticated, he danced very well, he spoke easily to everybody — he as an exceptional man. But he used to talk about marxism, commodity production and so forth, and he used to talk a lot of nonsense. But I did not quarrel with him, because he used to talk a lot of sense about Africa and imperialism. But he told me that he was going to London to study Law, and I wrote a letter which is well known. Let me quote it for you: "Dear George, this young man is coming to you," (there they have put some dots and left out what I said), "he is not very bright, but do what you can for him because he is determined to throw the Europeans out of Africa."

Now some people think that I believed that Nkrumah was stupid.

Nobody who spent half an hour in Nkrumah's presence could think he was anything else than a highly intelligent, highly sophisticated young man, very sure of himself. But Padmore would understand what I meant. When I wrote to Padmore and said: "he is not very bright, but you, George, do what you can for him," George would know that in the political intricacies that the modern world demanded Nkrumah was not trained. And I asked George to do it for him because George Padmore was one of the most highly educated politicians of any kind in Europe. He met Nkrumah at Waterloo Station and they began that great combination of Padmore and Nkrumah, which ended in the explosion in the Gold Coast and the beginning of the development of Africa with Ghana. Now Ghana is very important.

I speak of Western Civilisation. 1914 to 1918, a step down. Crisis of 1929 to 1932, further step down. War from 1939 to 1945, further step down. And after that the steps down come with astonishing speed and I am disturbed that I speak to Black people and they don't seem to understand that this Western Civilisation that has dominated us for so long, for the last century, has been falling down, step after step, going down and down and down.

First of all, there was the Russian Revolution, which renounced them completely and said they had no right to exist. Next they lost India, some four or five hundred million people. Then they lost China, under Mao Tse-tung. And fourth they lost the Gold Coast under Kwame Nkrumah. Let us not forget the importance of what Nkrumah did. Please take note: there were only five million people in the Gold Coast, but ten years after Nkrumah had won independence for the Gold Coast, there were some forty new African states, and a hundred million African people. I have never heard or read of any revolutionary movement of such tremendous force and power as that which followed Nkrumah after he had won the freedom of the Gold Coast. So those are the names: Lenin, Mao Tse-tung, Gandhi and Kwame Nkrumah, who have led the world in the situation where it is, and Western Civilisation goes falling down from step to step.

Now, these countries didn't do everything. They gained independence but in country after country they went to the military for safety. There are many people with great lack of knowledge of history who think that that is very revealing. I don't. The British, when they were making the change from a feudal type of society to a modern, they had to make it ultimately under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, the soldier. The French, when it came to changing from the ancient régime to the modern, they did it under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte. The United States when it made its change had to do it under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln, who found (and educated) the best generals. And when it happened in Russia, it ended under the leadership of someone who called himself Marshal Stalin. He took unto himself the military post which he was not entitled to but nevertheless he was head of state and he thought it best to call himself a Marshal. Mao Tse-tung of the Chinese revolution was a soldier. So that when the Africans turn to the military, it is not any particular African weakness; it is a

natural development of people who are moving from one stage of social development to another.

But it does not necessarily mean that they have to follow that, because in Africa today there is one of the greatest politicians in the world at the present time, who is making the transition and not doing it in a military way or doing it with violence. I refer to Dr Nyerere, the head of state of Tanzania, who is attempting to make a new socialist state. That's what we have to remember. I will not say that he is the foremost political thinker of the day, that would be provocative. But I will say that I do not know any political thinker who has the clarity and has the firmness to carry through what he is thinking, as Dr Nyerere of Tanzania today. And Tanzania is one of the greatest and most important signs that Africa is on its way.

Now, my friends, we have watched these other countries. Many of the African states have gone their way, and during the last few months we have had Angola and Mozambique, which have put South Africa in a position where I can say, without fear of contradiction from this platform, that it would be a remarkable thing if in ten years' time the Africans are not ruling the whole of South Africa. If any of you doubt that, you please take the word not of James but of Dr Vorster, the President of South Africa, who says: "Let us talk, because if we do not talk the consequence would be too ghastly to contemplate." Now that is what Vorster is saying, and who would the consequences be disastrous for? For him and his people! Not anybody else. So that's where we are today.

Now I want to do something else. The Pan-African movement began with Nkrumah, but first it divided into two and then disintegrated. And once more in 1974, the Sixth Pan-African Congress posed a reunion and a regeneration of policy. I am going to spend some time on that, not too much, because I am not here to spend much time quarrelling. But I am going to take The Call, that is to say, what we sent out — some of us here in the United States — to tell people about the conference. "Those who are fighting today in Africa make no distinction between political independence and complete economic control." In the 1945 congress, we emphasised political control, but we say those who are fighting today make no distinction. "Upon this policy, which Africans are carrying out with arms in hand, the Sixth Pan-African Congress must draw a line of steel against those, Africans included, who hide behind the slogan and paraphernalia of National Independence while allowing finance capital to dominate and direct their economic and social life."

Now that was The Call we sent out. And then I noticed the Editor of *Black World* devoted a whole issue of the magazine (March 1974) to the Sixth Pan-African Congress. To my astonishment this issue made me the leading theoretician. It made me, C.L.R. James, give what he called "An Overview". He left a lot of space at the side so that no one could miss it. I was as astonished as anybody else, but I was able to say one or two things which I will read to you now: "I do not think that people as a whole who were around the Fifth Pan-African Congress

were very much concerned about what the Fifth or any congress was going to do." That famous congress in 1945 did not have too many people around it, not many people knew what they were doing. "But today the African people in the world are very concerned, are very anxious, and have all sorts of organisations all of which aim at dragging the Black people from their subordinate places. That is the difference between the Fifth and the Sixth Congress. In the Fifth we were a vanguard, we were a body of people who had advanced some ideas — and advanced ideas they were. But a great mass of the population following us, that we did not have. Today, not only the Sixth Pan-African Congress, but all sorts of groups" — get this please — "all sorts of groups in every part of the world — in many parts of Africa, in the United States, right through the Caribbean — are taking in hand and having in mind where we are going and what we are going to do." That was a tremendous difference from the old conferences.

To prepare for the congress, I went around, God knows I went everywhere. I went to Nigeria, I went to Ghana, I went to somewhere else in Africa — I can't remember. I went to the Caribbean twice, I went to Guyana, I went to Trinidad, I went to Jamaica twice. I travelled all over the United States. I went to the west coast. I would have eight or ten meetings over the weekend between Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Francisco. I travelled thousands of miles and I said we would have a conference of the kind I have described in the "Overview". All was going well, very well. Then, two weeks before the conference, I heard that people could not come from the Caribbean unless they were sent by the government. Now, I want to tell you I am suspicious of all governments. I listen with great sympathy to what happens in Tanzania. I listen with great sympathy to what is happening in Cuba and if there are difficulties I try to find out what they are. I believe that something of great importance to us is happening in China, but I don't know for certain. But I keep my mind away from condemning them because I believe a great attempt is being made there. With the rest of the world, when they say something they are entitled to say it, but I also am entitled not to believe. Where it is possible I say what I have to say, where it is not convenient, I keep my mouth shut but nevertheless I am generally very concerned.

So they said that we were not to have anybody from the Caribbean unless they were sent by the governments. I know those Caribbean governments as well as anybody else. And I was not going to be a representative of any one of them! And the people I knew in the Caribbean were getting ready to go — we were not going to be representatives of any government. Many people were getting ready to help us. But we did not go to the conference, and though specially invited I did not go.

And I am not here to attack the conference. All I will say is this — this is simple, but it is fact. The conference left *no* particular doctrine behind it. The Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester was the beginning of the struggle for political independence, with the power of the mass of the population behind it. The aim and the means, mass action.

But the Sixth Pan-African Congress — nobody can stand up here and tell me what the Sixth Pan-African Congress stood for. It stood for nothing in particular, that is why. Any time a congress takes place, there ought to come out of it some doctrine, some ideas of which people can say, "We know what that conference stands for, we are for, we are against, or we don't know." But what the Sixth Pan-African Congress stands for nobody is able to say, and I am not going to attempt it tonight.

Now the last thing I want to do this evening, having talked about the past, is to speak about what I believe is the next conference that we are going to have, *that we must have*: the Seventh Pan-African Congress. I am not here only to tell you about the history, about what happened. That you can find out for yourself if you are inclined, or you can talk to people. But my business, after having done that, is to outline for you what I believe should be the business of the next Pan-African congress, the Seventh. I am entitled to do that. You can agree or disagree, but I want to make the perspective clear. I hope that this is going to be printed so that we can start the discussion at once. Whenever that conference may take place, we begin today with some definite programmes and policies on which a discussion can start. And I am going to say them with the utmost plainness because they are not difficult.

Number one: When you look at society today, you know that the national state, which began with the United States and the French revolution, is a total failure. The national state is no longer anything that can be looked upon as a political formation with any great significance. The bourgeoisie themselves are breaking up the national state. They have broken Germany into two and to break Germany into two is to break Europe into two. Germany is the centre of European civilisation. They have divided it: they have taken half and the Russians have taken half. They have divided Korea: "You take up there and we take down here." They would have divided Nigeria if they had the chance, but the people said not a bit of it and they finished up with Ojukwu. Otherwise Nigeria would have been divided and some of them would have said, "This is ours and that is theirs." They did their best to divide Vietnam: "You take up there and we take down here." They couldn't manage it and the Vietnamese have all of it now. That means that the national state is no longer a viable political entity, and I am saying that when we are writing the documents for the Seventh Pan-African Congress we should go straight forward and say: for us no longer is the national state an ideal.

West Africa should be united as a West African federation. Southern Africa should be united, especially since Mozambique and Angola, as a Southern African organisation. Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania should be an East African organisation. And we go further to say that all those states to the north of Africa — Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and all of them — should form one organisation. In other words, we are not going to hold a conference and hold up the national state as an ideal any more. That belongs to the last century. In a new conference we must

speaking about the shape that the world is taking before our eyes, and we put forward for Africa and people of African descent the new ideas: the abolition of the national state as a political entity — that's number one. Those who wish to debate it can do so. These federated units can integrate their economic development unimpeded by the old, outworn economic shibboleths, such as free enterprise.

Number two: What is Dr Nyerere doing? Dr Nyerere is very much concerned with the destruction and the prevention of the development of the African élite. You go to an African country, you go to the capital. There is a fine hospital, there is the church, there are two or three banks and so on. Take a motor car or walk five miles away from that centre where Western civilisation is flourishing and you will find people living as their ancestors lived five hundred years ago. And Nyerere is concerned that what does not happen is that the African peasant is exploited by the African élite. That is the trouble. He not only has to deal with the imperialists who keep on doing what they can to maintain domination. There is an African élite in every African territory which had adopted the ways and ideas of Western civilisation and is living at the expense of the African peasant. And we, in talking about a Seventh Pan-African Congress, must make it clear that the African élite is what we have to deal with, and that the African peasant must be our main concern.

Point number three: If we are talking about the élite, then we have to be concerned with the masses of the population. The masses of the population today matter in a way that they did not matter twenty-five years ago. Who in the name of heaven could have predicted that Vietnamese peasants, living on rice for the most part, would have been able to defeat the most powerful country that the world has ever known! I am telling you that they were able to do that only because the whole population was involved. That was why they could do it and I am drawing a conclusion from that.

When we look at Cuba, when we look at Vietnam, we can see that in the old days we used to think that it would take one hundred years for a peasant population to rise to the standard of a fully developed modern state. Vietnam has shown that that is absolutely untrue, that if modern civilisation is able to give them what they need, in ten or fifteen years there is no peasant population which would not bring itself forward and be able to rank, if not in the vanguard, but as a modern state. That is what Vietnam has proved, and that is what a Pan-African conference must say: We of this conference are looking forward to a new relation of leaders and masses of population in Africa and in countries of African descent. That is what we must look forward to in the future.

Now, the first point then: the national state. Good. The second point: the élite we are after. The third point I want to take is our consideration for the mass of the population. And here I want to move a bit. I have here a book called *Child of the Dark*. It is a book written by Carolina Maria de Jesus of Brazil. She had three children by three different men. I am not criticising her for that, that is her business. She

lived in a Brazilian ghetto, and on the whole she was very generous in her appreciation of members of the opposite sex — which was to her credit. But despite the fact that she had only two years of school, she was a natural-born writer. And she sat down every night and wrote a diary about the kind of life she was living in the Brazilian ghetto. It got into the hands of a Brazilian reporter, he went through it and published it. When the book appeared in Sao Paulo, in less than six months, 90,000 copies were sold. It has sold more than any other Brazilian book since the beginning of Brazil centuries ago. Let me repeat. The book that has had the widest circulation in that huge area is the book by this woman with two years of schooling. That is an example of what can be done by the mass of the population when it is given the opportunity to express its natural ability. Lenin was very much concerned about that. He always said, give the common people the chance, they have the energy, they have the ability, they have the desire to change. But the ordinary society suppresses them and keeps them down. If you free them you get energy, you get initiative, you get forward-looking policy, etc., which can be a tremendous advance in the economic and social development of any country.

I believe that in a Seventh Pan-African Congress we ought to be able to say that the initiative and suppressed powers of the people must take its place. We not only want the attack against the élite, we want the educated to recognise the suppressed initiative of the African peasant, of the people in the formerly colonial African countries. Now, recent years have shown that they have in them the capacity to lead their country forward, if only they are given the opportunity. A Seventh Pan-African Congress must insist that the educated do not stand in the way of their opportunity to express the powers which they have already displayed.

I think I have only two more points to bring to you, and they are both from a Caribbean writer, George Lamming. And it is very fitting that I end with a Caribbean writer because, as you know, the Caribbean people have done as much as anyone else to advance the cause of African emancipation. I am going to give you two examples from the writings of that distinguished writer George Lamming of the kind of mentality which we should bring to the Seventh Pan-African Congress, and the discussion that I hope would begin at once, immediately after these ideas get a start.

Lamming is writing about a West Indian rank-and-filer, Powell. He is a thief, he is a murderer, he is a rapist. And Lamming writes in [*Season of Adventure*]:

Until the age of ten, Powell and I had lived together, equal in the affection of two mothers. Powell had made my dreams and I lived his passions. Identical in years and stage by stage, Powell and I were taught in the same primary school. And then the division came. I got a public scholarship which started my migration into another world, the world of the educated, the world of the élite. A world whose roots were the same, but whose style of living was entirely different from what my childhood knew. It earned me a privilege which now shut Powell and the whole village right out of my

future. I have lived as near to Powell as my skin to the hand it darkens, and yet I forgot the village as men forget a war, and attached myself to that new world which was so recent, and so slight, beside the weight of what had gone before. Instinctively, I attached myself to that new privilege and to this day despite all my efforts, I am not free from its embrace.

In other words, he left the ordinary society, and by means of the scholarship, he went up among the élite.

I believe deep in my bones, that the mad impulse which drove Powell to his criminal defeat was largely my doing. I would not have this explained away by talk about environment, nor can I allow my own moral infirmity to be transferred to a foreign conscience labelled imperialism. I shall go beyond my grave, in the knowledge that I am responsible for what happened to my brothers.

We, the educated, are responsible for what happens to the people below. He goes on:

Powell still resides somewhere in my heart, with a dubious love, some strange nameless shadow of regret, and yet with the deepest, deepest nostalgia, for I have never felt myself to be an honest part of anything since the world of his childhood deserted me.

I don't know anywhere, where any intellectual, any member of the intellectual élite, has taken upon himself the complete responsibility for what has happened to the people he has left behind him. The people will make their way. We who have had the advantages must recognise our responsibility. That is a Caribbean pronouncement and I am very proud of it. I know Lamming very well, and there are not many intellectuals who realise what they are doing and the social crimes they commit, who say: "I won a scholarship, I joined the élite and left my people behind, and I feel that that action on my part is responsible for what is happening to them."

Now I must end in about five or six lines. Lamming has written a book called *Natives of My Person*, and it has two interesting passages. The longest part of the book is called the Middle Passage, and when you hear talk about the Middle Passage you at once think about Blacks being transported. In Lamming's pages about the Middle Passage there isn't one Black man. What Lamming is doing is analysing the white men who made the Middle Passage, and the critics, white and black, are very confused about it. They can say what they like, but for me this is one of the finest contemporary books I have read. This Black writer is examining those who made the Middle Passage — we have enough of Black suffering and how they were treated on the trip, etc. Lamming says: "What about those men who were doing it?" And he gives examples of who and what they were, and why. Then at the end of the book, he describes a discussion among the wives of these men. The wives went out to meet them: they were the surgeon's wife, the steward's wife, the woman who was the leader. The surgeon's wife asks: "Why did we follow them here? These men are no good and yet we have followed them out here, why did we do that?" The steward's wife says: "Yes, why follow them here?" And the lady of the house,

who was in charge, says: "Because we are a future." Because women are a future. The steward's wife says: "A future, you say?" And the last lines of the book are from the lady of the house, "A future, I repeat: we are a future they must learn." We the women are a future the men must learn. Not what the women will win by Women's Lib. Not what will happen to them in twenty years when they win the privileges of which today they are deprived. Today, Lamming says, today women represent something, are something, they *are* a future that men must know something about. In other words, what he is saying here is what he has been saying in all his books: that men constitute an élite in relation to women, and women have got a capacity, which men have got to learn.

I believe that all these matters (and many more) could be the material for a Seventh Pan-African Congress. And I believe that it is not only Africans who would be able to understand that tremendous move forward there posed, but people all over the world and in the advanced countries would understand, with our repudiation of the national state, our repudiation of the élite, our respect for the great mass of the population and the dominant role that it would play in the reconstruction of society, our recognition that our élitism is morally responsible for what is happening to the ordinary man, our recognition of the capacity they have in them, our recognition of the need to release the enormous energies of the mass of people, in particular in women and the peasants, such a congress could be the Seventh for Pan-Africanism but, for that very reason, the First of a new world-wide social advance.

1976

George Padmore: Black Marxist Revolutionary – A Memoir

[James has frequently said: "George Padmore in my view is one of the greatest politicians of the twentieth century. He earned for himself the title of 'Father of African emancipation'. I knew him from the time I can remember myself and through all our lives when we were together we had similar attitudes to the emancipation of Africa and the need for black people to establish themselves as ordinary people." This is the edited text of a talk given in North London in 1976.]

I want to talk about George Padmore and I am going to begin by talking about our early life in the Caribbean; that is the first part of what I am going to say because it is not an accident that certain people in the Caribbean have taken such a prominent role in international politics and literature. The second thing I am going to move to is George's life abroad — in the United States and then his political life in Europe afterwards — unfortunately in Africa he didn't last very long. And then finally I will try to give you some picture of George Padmore as a human being. So I am going to begin with the material circumstances in which he grew up and the social relations which shaped him: the longer I live the more I see that people are shaped to a degree that they do not yet understand by the social relations and family and other groups in which they grew up. I believe — and I may be wrong here and I am treading in dangerous waters — that the new science of genetics is beginning to find a lot more in the physical structure of people and the way they behave than we believed even twenty years ago, but that I will leave for the time being.

Well, I grew up in Trinidad and so did George. Now Trinidad is 50 miles long by 35 miles broad, a scrap of an island — it is not as scrappy as Barbados which is nothing at all. Now in those islands you could see politics and society in a way that you could not and did not see it in Britain.

When I was a small boy and George was a small boy, there was the governor, George F. Huggins, the most important persons, the heads of departments, the Attorney-General and the rest of them, the officials, the white people, who had all the money and property. Then there was the brown-skin middle class and near to them some of the blacks who had some education, and below them the peasants and the plebeians, the ordinary people. So that you could see the social structure and understand what was taking place in a way that it was difficult to when you were living in London N4 or Lancashire or.... It is easier now with television but before TV it was not easy to know what was happening — you had to get up in the morning and read a good paper. And that is a lot of trouble. But in those days, it was like TV, you could see and know everything. And George and I were very close — in one respect. My father was a teacher and notable teacher, Robert James.

People who knew Trinidad in their younger days remember him up to now. But George's father, James Hubert Alfonso Nurse, was also a teacher and a very remarkable man. Some time in the 1890s the government said that the elementary school children should be taught agriculture because that was what they would do when they grew up. So they appointed someone to go around and teach agriculture and Mr Nurse learnt so quickly that they took him away from teaching and made him an instructor in agriculture to the school teachers around. Some dispute started in the newspapers and Mr Nurse wrote letters in the papers, signing himself Agricultural Director to the Board of Education, or something like that. There was a man in Trinidad, a white man who used to call himself Professor Carmolidy. Why they called him professor I don't know, but he was in touch with the Board of Education and he violently objected to James Hubert Alfonso Nurse writing to the papers as a scientific member of the Education Department. A dispute started and finally James Hubert Alfonso Nurse told them to go to the devil and he resigned.

Well, he was quite a figure, everybody knew him — had a fine voice and spoke well. He and his wife were not together and he lived in a small room at Belmont Circular Road and it is one of the few rooms I have seen in the Caribbean which was covered all round with books. He had built shelves and they were completely covered with books from the floor right to the ceiling. So James Hubert Alfonso Nurse was a man who had some education, because the teachers then and middle-class whites had some education. He was a man who had defied the government, he lived in an atmosphere of books and he declared himself a Moslem. He said he had left the Christian church — he would have nothing to do with Christianity, he was a Mohammaden — I did not understand what that meant — nobody knew anything about Black Moslems then. I believe he had been reading a book by a famous Barbadian (what was the name? Blyden), *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, and that book was talked about a great deal. So he left the church. He was defiant. And Malcolm Nurse, his son, was our good friend. He and my father were good friends. Everybody respected Mr Nurse for what he was, and he used to talk to me — say a few words, something insignificant. I was a little boy nothing more than about eight or ten years old. I knew his wife; I knew Malcolm's sister and the two families used to meet and talk and he and my father would go to the Savannah to watch the cricket and go to the races and they used to take me along and Mr Nurse would be there holding forth. He would talk about his books and so forth and he was quite a distinguished figure in those days.

Now my father went to teach in Arima and I lived in Arima for some years and that is only 15 miles from Port of Spain. But Arima in Trinidad — in the old language, the Carib language — meant rain, and Naparima meant no rain. So around Arima the cocoa industry flourished and the black men were in charge of it and whites bothered little with Arima then. They were more interested in sugar, but some Frenchmen came and developed the cocoa industry and a lot of black

men developed the cocoa industry around Arima. These became very wealthy and in 1897, when they came to Queen Victoria's Jubilee or something, they asked her if they could make Arima into a municipality. And Queen Victoria, knowing as much about Arima as she knew about Canada's Alberta, said, "Certainly," and Arima became a municipality. With these black men owning all this cocoa around Arima, the result was that there was a black mayor, Mr Beekles. There was another black mayor, Mr Symister, and all these black men in Arima ran the races, Santa Arima races, etc. etc....

Now you may wonder what this has to do with Malcolm Nurse. Mrs Symister, whose husband had been mayor and one of the councillors of this new municipality, was related to the Nurses and every summer during his vacation, Malcolm used to come from Port of Spain to Arima to spend time with Mrs Symister. And as he and I were boys together and his father and my father were good friends and my father knew the Symisters, every summer George used to come and he and I — the chief thing I remember — used to go and bathe in the river.

The Arima river is at the bottom of the Ice Factory and every day either I went to the Symisters or George came to pick me up and we would go and bathe in the pool at the bottom of the river, and then go right up and go further into the deep part of the river and so on and talk about all sorts of things. I hadn't and he hadn't got the faintest idea that one day our names would be linked in the study of the emancipation of Africa and European politics.

Now there was a school where some of the middle class would go and you could win a scholarship and get there free — they gave you four scholarships a year. I won one. George didn't win one; his father paid for him at St Mary's College and when the time came for me to leave school, I began to teach and do journalism and George got a job on the *Mirror* as a reporter with the result that we both became familiar with a whole lot of things. I was reading European literature and history, and George reading chiefly — I remember those days well — Du Bois, Garvey and the others. I also read Du Bois and Garvey but my chief concern was European literature, because that was what I was educated on chiefly — I had done well at school on that and I was teaching that when George was working as a reporter on the *Trinidad Guardian*, which meant that he had to go through all the material that came in, which enabled him to begin the tremendous amount of information which he had later — that was about 1921-2....

Well, in about 1923 George went away to the United States. We were members of the Black middle class. Below us were the workers, the plebeians, the peasants. Above us was the white officialdom and the bankers and the rest of them. And George was very sensitive to all this. He was more sensitive than I was. I remember, before he went away he told me: "Look here, I am supposed to be an assistant reporter at that paper and Mr Jones (a dignified old gentleman) is the assistant editor. But you should see the way Mr Parker, the editor, treats him. He calls him Jones, come and do this, Jones, see about that. He treats him like a reporter. So Jones has the name of assistant editor but it

means nothing. I could never be an assistant editor and be pushed around like that." Anyway, he went away to the United States. So you get the first glimpse of George. At question time I will give you some more details.

We were bright and we had the opportunity of gathering a lot of information. I want you to understand that George's father was a revolutionary and a man who had this body of books. That is number one. Number two — he was a man who declared he had nothing to do with Christianity; he was a Mohammedan. And George went to St Mary's College where he studied a kind of middle-class education that you got in public schools in England. I got it at the Queen's Royal College and then I continued to teach and George was a reporter at the *Trinidad Guardian* where all this world information used to come to be sorted — then to be put in the paper. We had telegrams coming in every day. So that was Malcolm Nurse and he went away to the United States about 1923.

In 1932 I came to England. I didn't see or hear much about George. But when I was in England, one day I heard that the great George Padmore, the great Communist, was coming to speak in Gray's Inn Road. I had heard a lot about George Padmore, the great man from Moscow who was organising black people all over the world, so I said I would go, because in those days I was going to see and hear all that I could. I went to the meeting and there were about fifty or sixty people, half of them white, and suddenly, after five minutes, there walked in the great George Padmore. Who was he but my friend Malcolm Nurse? He had changed his name (that was for the police) and everybody knew him as George Padmore. So we said, "How are you?" and so on. By that time he was tied up with Moscow, I was headed away from Moscow; I was a Trotskyist, but that didn't trouble us. That night we went home. I went either to his room or he came to mine, I don't remember, but we stayed talking till about 4 o'clock in the morning and that is a conversation I must remember.

He said: "You came here in 1932?" I said, "Yes, March 1932. I was here and I stayed about here in London for about three months." He said: "My God, man, I was here in 1932 looking for people to carry to Moscow to help to train them to organise blacks. If I had seen you I would have asked you." I told him: "Well, boy, if you had seen me and asked me to go to Moscow the day after I had landed in London I would have gone." That was how we just missed one another. What would have happened to me I don't know, because by 1935 Padmore broke with them, and I remember that day very well.

Padmore, as I shall tell you later, was a very big man. He was a West Indian of the old school. Always everything in order. But this afternoon someone knocks at the door and I went and saw George and he looked not only dishevelled but his eyes were not what they ought to be. So I said, "Hello, George, sit down." Whenever he came to London he would always come to see me and we would talk. I was a Trotskyite and he was a Stalinist but that didn't bother us. We were both concerned with the emancipation of Africa. I said, "Hello, George,

what's up?" And then he used a phrase which took me a long time to understand. He said, "I have left those people, you know."

It was only after some months that I began to get the significance of "those people". Padmore had been a Communist. He had been a great leader of the Communist movement. When on May Day the Communist armies used to march about Moscow, George would be on the platform with Stalin, Molotov and the rest of them. He lived in the Kremlin. But nevertheless he called them "those people" and it became clear to me afterwards — and I have been told even that much — that he had never been completely swept away by the Stalinist conception of Marxism. He said: "I lived there; I saw what was going on." He gave me some examples which I have no time to tell you now. But he said: "I stayed there because there was a means of doing work for the black emancipation and there was no other place that I could think of. But I had come to Moscow from the United States. They had been looking for a bright man to take charge of this. They had seen me in the United States when I had worked there and I had got a good education in Trinidad." So they brought him to Moscow and Hamburg was the centre. And he moved about Europe organising the black people into the Black International Trade-union Movement. So that day I asked him: "George, what has happened, why have you left them?" And he told me something of which only now, in later years, I understand the full significance.

George had a great deal of money at his disposal; he had a newspaper that he used to edit; he was a member of all sorts of committees. Whatever was going on anywhere, he, as a member of the Communist Party and as an official of the Communist International, was able to go. But they came and told him one day in 1934: "George, you know, we have to change the line. We must say that the United States, Britain and France, they are imperialists it is true, but they are democratic imperialists; but Germany, Italy and Japan are the fascist imperialists. So as you write, George, in your paper and your propaganda, make it clear the distinction between the democratic imperialists and the fascist imperialist." George told them: "How can I do that?" He says, "That makes nonsense of all I have been writing and preaching before." He said: "Germany has no colonies in Africa, Japan has no colonies in Africa, what is this? The most racially-minded country in the world is the United States. Britain and France are the ones with the colonies in Africa. Italy just has Ethiopia, that's all. And they are not safe there." They said: "George, you know that's the line, you have to take the question internationally," but George says, "I can't do that — I can't write that."

In the old days, it isn't as now: when you were in the Communist Party and they gave you a line, you followed that line; you followed that line or you went out on your ears. So George packed his stuff and went away and came to London and settled down to work. And it is very strange. There were not many of them who so definitely and clearly said no to the Communist Party. "No, I am not going to follow this new line and despite all the new opportunities that you offer to me,

I am going away and I am going my own way and try to work at it in the best way I can." This was quite something to do. When I think of the enormous number of people who followed the line and as the Communists twisted, managed somehow to twist with them, because they thought here was something going on; here they had money; they did not have money in the sense that they had money to spend, but they had money to carry out activities and they usually had political enemies and the Communists represented, in theory at least, their supporters, and when the Communists changed the line and said, "We are still going at those people but we are going this way instead of that way," many of them, nearly 90 per cent of them, capitulated or gave up altogether and drifted away. But George said, "No, I'm not going to be in that, I'm not going," and he came to London and immediately started to organise again. Where these tough men came from I don't know. George was not shaken at all by them, but he was just a little disturbed that day.

The next thing is that I had started an organisation in Britain called the International African Friends of Ethiopia. You will see a lot about it in a book called *Pan-Africanism* by a German writer. Have you heard of that book? Read that book, get it and read it; it is worthwhile reading. It has all the material there. He makes one or two mistakes but they are insignificant. He understands politics and he understood what we were trying to do. We had the international African Friends of Ethiopia. I was the chairman. There was a Mrs Amy Garvey, who was Marcus Garvey's previous wife; and there was a marvellous man who called himself, ultimately, Makonnen. There was a man who died in prison in Ghana, he wrote a book called *African People and God*, Dr Danquah. We formed this society and we were doing reasonably well and George came just then at that time and he joined the society. Soon the Italian armies swept over Ethiopia and the society faded away. George formed a new society, the International African Service Bureau.

Now some of the things I say, you won't be able to appreciate. It was the only organisation in the world at that time that was talking about and writing about the emancipation of Africa. There wasn't another one. There were isolated people here and there, like De Graft Johnson and others, who were writing books. But an organisation that in time to come published a journal — George asked me to be the editor and I was the editor for a while — there wasn't one anywhere. Most of the politicians in Britain looked upon us as reasonably intelligent West Indians but they said: "What is this emancipation of Africa? What is that? That has to be a lot of nonsense..." Now at that time there were not many black people in England. There were a few, and we would go periodically to Liverpool or Manchester but the chief thing that we did, and George organised it and kept it going, was to keep in touch with the left wing of the Labour movement. We got into close touch with the Independent Labour Party which had split away from the Labour Party. We were in close touch with the left-wing members of the Labour Party and left-wing organisations. And whenever the Communists held a meeting or some kind of conference, we were there,

presenting resolutions, making speeches. What was our function in those days? Periodically we held a meeting but chiefly we aimed at the left wing of the Labour movement such as it was. That was all we could aim at. And, God have mercy, now I look back at what happened. We rented the upstairs of a big building in Westbourne Grove. I pass by Westbourne Grove and I look at it and I say: "But, James, you all used to rent some big buildings." We rented the building and Makonnen saw after everything. I was a Trotskyist and, in those days, I used to edit the Trotskyist paper. Nobody made any quarrel. George was concerned with the revolution, chiefly in regard to Africa; we were concerned with the world revolution but I took special interest in the revolution for Africa. So it did not matter. They used to come to our meetings. We used to go to theirs. And nobody held as many meetings as George. George took it as a principle and he used every event. He said: "Don't let anything happen and not hold a meeting. When three or four incidents take place, the press is full of it and when you do nothing about it and then after a while there are further incidents and people will say that these people take no interest, they are backward people etc." So George, as soon as something happens, he will hold a meeting, then we'll have twenty, sometimes twenty-five, fifty and even a hundred people, and will pass a resolution. Next morning George will go down or we will go down or we would send a letter to the Colonial Office saying that last night such an organisation as the African International Service Bureau held a meeting and we passed this resolution and we would like you to have a copy. The Englishmen in the office said, "Thank you very much," and wished us goodbye. We kept on going at them, we had to keep in touch with the left wing of the Labour Party, they would help us somewhat. We used to ask maybe five questions, we would repeat this to the Labour minister but he would answer only once. We would say, "Is it true that the Colonial Secretary said so and so ...?" We filled him in with information all the time. One thing I must say for Kenyatta. His brains he kept to himself, that is the best way I can put it. But he was in constant touch with people from Kenya.

George earned his living by writing articles and sending them out to various newspapers. They didn't send him any money, at least they sent him very little. But they used to send him back copies of the paper, so George always had a lot of information and there was always certain information George got. There were Africans who came from Africa to attack the Colonial Office and to ask for help, there were Africans who came to England to get in touch with the Labour Party but whoever they were and wherever they came from, they found themselves in George's house. George was not a brilliant speaker but he always spoke well. He was not a dashing writer. But he had control, conviction and determination to carry on his organisation because we had about ten people — about eight West Indians — I don't want to go into names now.

George kept that organisation going, never missing an opportunity. And then I met Nkrumah in the United States and we used to see a lot

of him and we used to go down to Pennsylvania or to the university where he used to teach or he would come up to New York to our trotskyist group, though he was never a trotskyist but nevertheless very friendly. He used to talk to us about Africa and we used to talk to him about marxism etc. Well, I wrote a letter and gave it to George about Nkrumah and that letter is a very important thing because in it I said something that could easily be misunderstood by you but would not be misunderstood by George.

I said: "This young man is coming to England; I know him very well, he is not very bright." Now an ordinary person wouldn't understand as Nkrumah was a very sophisticated and fluent man — I don't mean he was a fool. He was my good friend and I knew he was politically sound. He was determined to throw the Europeans out of Africa and I asked George to do what he could for him. George understood at once: The man is a born revolutionary, devoted completely, but doesn't know much. George went to meet him at Waterloo Station, took him home and he educated him. What Nkrumah did in Ghana afterwards was due to the political education that Padmore gave him....

Well, Padmore covered the waterfront, everywhere and everybody periodically would go to France and it was very curious, he sent me to see a man called Kouyaté and also to meet the Trotskyists. And George kept up that acquaintance with Kouyaté although Kouyaté remained in the CP and George had left and would have nothing to do with them.

Then the news came that in Ghana, in the Gold Coast, the black lawyers, businessmen and the rest of them who were in charge of a party called the Convention Party wanted someone to run it because at weekends they were not concerned with that; they would rather go to the races or play cricket or play cards or run after girlfriends or something. They wanted someone to run the party. They heard that Nkrumah was active and energetic in politics and creating a reputation in London and they sent for him to come and — here, I go by rumours — Nkrumah wanted to form another organisation called the Circle Movement. You can see a reference to it in the appendix to the first volume of his reminiscences. Nkrumah thought he would be better off if he stayed here. I am told, I don't know how true this is, that George and Dorothy Padmore told him, "Go right back and work there, they have sent for you." And as a rule you listened to Padmore, you didn't doubt him. But when he said something you knew at once what he was talking about. And Nkrumah went back and it is impossible to understand the development of the revolution in the Gold Coast that brought Ghana, unless you realised that, from the very start, the man behind was Padmore.

When I was in Ghana in 1957, they told me a story about the independence celebration concerning Nkrumah, Ghana and the government. They said one day, the Governor came back from Britain and the papers said the Governor had returned but nobody came. Then a day or two afterwards, it was said that George Padmore was coming and the people all turned up to meet him and the papers printed long interviews, etc., and that was what Padmore was like before the

revolution took place. Nkrumah got power after being in gaol — he was a quite remarkable man.

In 1957, I remember three episodes which I will tell you about, I believe, my friends can take it or leave it. Nkrumah wanted me to stay there and work with him but he never approached me directly about it and I wasn't going to ask him about it. But while I was there, we spent quite a lot of time together and I stayed with him at State House while the others stayed at the Hamburg Hotel or other hotels. One night I said to him that he hadn't made a speech on foreign office affairs. He said, "Come with me tonight," and he and I went in the official car to the meeting where there was the Governor-General and the rest of them. Nkrumah made a tremendous speech about the foreign policy of the new free Ghana. When he had finished, he said, "Look, I am going on to our platform. You take the car and go home." So I got into the car. To the sharp-eyed African I was a West Indian and I am in Nkrumah's car going home, so the people seeing me assumed I was Padmore and said, "Goodnight, Mr Padmore." I replied suitably.

The second thing was that there was a serious disagreement between Padmore, his wife Dorothy and Nkrumah. Nkrumah got power in 1951 and the transfer was not made till 1957. He kept on manoeuvring with the British government, the British government trying to get the Ashantis to split away from him. And George and Dorothy kept on telling him to go ahead and take power, but he said, "No, let me wait," and so on. So in 1957 I got there and told him: "George and Dorothy are very angry and, up to this day, are certain that you should have gone on and taken power." And I said to him, "What do you think about it?" He gave me an answer which showed me that he was a very advanced politician. He said: "I really don't know." He said, "I could have taken it but what I was afraid of was that the heads of provinces, the magistrates and everybody else would leave." That is exactly what they did to Sekou Touré. Not only did they leave in person, they pulled out the telephones, they took all the documents, burnt them and carried what they could and left him stranded. He did not know that in advance. Nkrumah said: "I was scared that they would all go suddenly and leave me with the country. That is why I waited until 1957."

George was there at that time. He had one African weakness, only one, he liked to dress in African clothes. (I also have a weakness there, but I like the Ghanaian garments, they remind me of the Roman toga; the ones I don't like — no offence is meant — are the Nigerian pyjamas.... I have since been to Nigeria and have felt more at home there than in any part of Africa. I met a man there the living image of my father and saw various women who looked exactly like my aunts. I feel my ancestors originally came from Nigeria. I would like to talk to you about that another time.)

George never passed any remarks about the African character — never once did I hear him speak of the African personality or the difference between Africans and West Indians or the difference between Africans and Europeans. George kept his eyes on the political issues all the time.

I remember the night of the independence dinner celebration, George was there dressed up in his African clothes — he came and talked to me and he was a very serious man. He pointed out all the people there; there was Nkrumah dancing with Princess Marina (Duchess of Kent, whose husband died in a plane crash), there were the police, the head of the department of education, the magistrates and a lot of white people, and George said to me: "When Nkrumah was fighting for independence, they were putting all the black people into gaols, now with independence the black people are outside and the white people inside dancing."

Nkrumah made George head of the Department of African Affairs, to organise revolutionaries and organise the African states. For the first time in history, the African states were organised and George did that. Makonnen was in charge of housing and feeding and I can't talk about George and his politics without speaking about his wife Dorothy. She was English and Makonnen was from the Caribbean. Dorothy was an educated woman. She did George's French and German translations, she also understood Marxism and had been a member of the CP.

Makonnen was the magician. We would meet and decide to have meetings, this meant renting a hall, printing our leaflets, etc. When it was finished, we only had just enough money to pay for the building in Westbourne Grove. Makonnen somehow always managed to find the cash (I don't want to inquire too closely where he got it from).

Dorothy assisted George in his writing, the books he read, the literature he should get. She did the entertaining of all George's Caribbean and African friends — knew all their national dishes. Makonnen arranged the finances and the meetings, both in public places and Hyde Park. That was the organisation.

About Padmore I have written that he was one of the finest political organisers of the twentieth century. I not only wrote this. It was asked of Mr Macmillan: "What was the thing in your ministry that you remember and are most proud of?" and he had the nerve to say: "The granting of freedom to African territories." I remember the difficulties Padmore had in mobilising the freedom movements. Unfortunately, Padmore lived only one year after, then he took ill and died. I think it was the *New York Times* with which Padmore kept up an unceasing conflict and it was the broadcasters in the United States that gave him the title "Father of African Emancipation".

There are two things I have to tell you; the 1946 Conference.... Padmore started his International African Service Bureau in 1935 and for ten years it was a small insignificant organisation, but all the people who were politically alive knew what was going on and we used to go and write books, publish pamphlets, speak everywhere so people knew something about us. In 1945 the communists and the imperialists together held a big conference in Paris, the first trade-union conference. It was an international conference and they paid for the Africans, the African journalists, the politicians — the first conference after the War.

Then the British government, which was in trouble with the British people, asked what they meant by "immediate independence" and they

said: "Immediate means at once, but you have to wait a bit."

The British government invited them from Paris to a special conference in Oxford to explain the word "immediate" as it applied to Africa. Then it was that Padmore's insignificant organisation hit hard. We said they had come to Paris to hear about the International Movement and they had then to call a special conference in Oxford to explain what "immediate" means for Britain and what it means for African colonies.

What I want to say is that if we had not been working in what looked like an insignificant and small organisation, there would never have been independence for African states — after 1957, about forty African colonies got their independence.

It started in 1945 with the Pan-African Conference. A year or two afterwards, Nkrumah went back and gained independence for the Gold Coast, and after Gold Coast got its independence, within ten years, nobody here can guess how many African states followed him. I give you a chance. Guess. Within ten years after Nkrumah had done it in Gold Coast, within ten years, how many African states were there? ... *Forty*. I know forty. Forty African states. Now people don't know what that means. I have never heard in history at any time of forty new African states coming at the same time. Never! It means that they were only waiting for somebody to give them the start and the 1945 conference which Padmore organised and where he brought the boys gave them the start and Nkrumah gave them the start in the Gold Coast, and forty African states followed in ten years.

That is the work that Padmore did. So in my autobiography I'm going to make it clear: the old world and the world I knew very well is gone. It no longer exists. The new one has not come but we are in a state of uncertainty, and four people's names will always be remembered as the people who did it, who led the movement. Number one is Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. Number two is Mahatma Gandhi in India. Number three is Mao Tse-tung in China. Number four is Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, because it's not only the five million people in Ghana who gained their independence and raised the flag, but forty African states followed within ten years and what they started seemed to have gone down. But it hasn't gone down really, as Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Angola tell you that it hasn't gone down. And the originator above all is George Padmore....

To study the work of Padmore is easy enough, the books are not difficult to get. The books are being reprinted in the United States and I want to recommend two to you. Nancy Cunard published a book on Africa which Padmore helped her to produce and that book has been reprinted in the United States. It was published in about 1936 and it is a book to read.... You will see Padmore's articles in there. You will see some other people. You will see in there articles by Ezra Pound, one of the great writers of modern language, poet of the United States. There is another man who has about ten articles that he translated. He is an Irishman, I wonder if you know his name? The finest writer in English today. He is still alive. He writes in English and French just as

Joyce used to do. He wrote *Waiting for Godot*. Beckett of course. In that book by Nancy Cunard, which she wrote with the assistance of George Padmore, there are ten articles translated by Samuel Beckett. You know, I am going to remind him of those in my autobiography. Maybe he will remember it with satisfaction or not, but he is there. Ezra Pound is there, all sorts of people there because Nancy Cunard was a very rich woman ... and George helped her to write that book. The book is called *The Negro*, that is all, and I read that book today and really she did wonderful work. It is a wonderful thing to remember because in those days it looked as if, well, you were doing some work and the whole world was against you, and who would have believed that in America today, two or three years ago, there would be a firm to reprint Nancy Cunard's book. They have reprinted also *Pan-Africanism or Communism* and it is that I'm going to end with.

Pan-Africanism or Communism was the last book that George wrote. He said, "Look, the Africa that I knew can *never* remain colonial." That he was *absolutely* certain of. He says, "The revolution is going to take place there." That he knew. That was fundamental. But he says: "It will have some leadership and those Communists, I know them, and unless the Africans themselves produce their own leaders, the Communists are going to take over and then God help them." That is the meaning of the phrase, "Pan-Africanism or Communism". By Communists he meant those people in Moscow whom he knew very well. So he said, telling the Africans, "The revolution is on its way; organise yourselves and take it over, otherwise the Communists are going to take it over." But the European imperialists, he knew their days were done. And by and large, although much that is said does not immediately apply today, I don't know *anybody* else, except perhaps Dr Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, who is worth more careful consideration.... Anyone who wants to know where the movement came from, what was its foundation, the people you have to look at are Marcus Garvey who made it a mass movement, Du Bois who gave it the historical and social background that it needed, and George Padmore who organised it.... Marcus Garvey was the great agitator who made Black people and Black politics something in the world. Before Garvey there was none. After Garvey ... the great theorist and historian was Dr Du Bois, but the organiser, the man who took Du Bois's theory and linked it in such a way to political movement, to the mass movement that Garvey had created — that man was George Padmore. And while it is good to know something about Oliver Cromwell and Robespierre and so on, I believe you couldn't do badly by studying closely the works of Padmore. That is one of the greatest politicians of the twentieth century, and I have written that if Macmillan says that the freedom of Africa, of the African colonies of Great Britain, was the thing he remembered most, then he should put a statue of Padmore in his living-room; because Padmore was a very handsome man.

Question: Did Padmore concern himself at all with West Indian politics?

Ah! That was a battle that took place in London, because the West Indians who were in London — I don't wish to be rude ... there were many very able men, but they used to be called by the Africans "Black Englishmen", because we had no past, you know. Those of us who were educated were educated in the British schools, and there was nothing much nationalist going ahead in those days. So the Africans were not as bright as we were in the things that were going on in Britain and France, but they found that we were very efficient and a great battle took place over a building that the British imperialists wanted to build in London for the black people. And we said no, and Padmore and I and WASU, the West African Students' Union here, said no. "What are you going to build for black people for? Why not give the money to them to build and work on their own and so forth?" ... I bear my share of concentrating on Africa, although during the last fifteen years I have made it clear on fifteen occasions, both there and in Britain and in my writing, that if they call me back to do something in Trinidad tomorrow, I will go

Question: It's true that Padmore was involved with politics in Ghana and might not have been able to go back, but he must obviously have been interested in Trinidad politics?

He was interested in Trinidad politics. I was interested in Trinidad politics, but my real concern up to 1938 was Africa, and we joined up with the Africans.... When the Africans had a celebration, when WASU and company held a meeting or had a dinner to celebrate things, I would come there and speak. They would put me or Padmore down as the main speaker, because we made it clear that the future of black people lay with the emancipation of the African people and not with the Caribbean. We were very short-sighted, I agree entirely.... We undoubtedly did not do what we should have done in regard to the developments in the Caribbean. I did one thing. I wrote *The Black Jacobins*. You know why I made up my mind to do that? I said, "I am sick to death that whenever they talk about the West Indian they say he is suffering; he's intelligent but he's looked upon as backward because he came from slavery.... I am going to write a book in which I will show that the West Indian had more in him than that." And I decided that and I began to study, to write *The Black Jacobins*. That is how I came to do it, and although I took the West Indian as an example, all that book is permeated with the idea that what I'm talking about is what the Africans should do.

Three Black Women Writers: Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Ntozake Shange

[James was largely responsible for making the work of these three writers better known in Britain. He first spoke publicly about them at the Riverside Studios in London on two consecutive evenings in August 1981, lecturing on the theme "Black Women in America in Fact and in Fiction", and he gave subsequent talks at smaller gatherings such as the one at Black Ink, the Brixton-based writing collective, recorded here and previously published in Cultural Correspondence, edited by Jim Murray, Winter 1983.]

I have chosen three books to discuss: *Sula* by Toni Morrison; *Meridian* by Alice Walker; and *Nappy Edges* by Ntozake Shange. These books are by three Black women, though I haven't chosen them because they are Black women, but because they are very fine Black writers. They are first-class writers. *Meridian* and *Nappy Edges* I would place in the very front rank of books being published in the United States today. There is another reason, also, that I was particularly interested in these: they represent a social movement in the United States.

Women all over the world seem to have realised that they have been exploited by men. Marx pointed out many years ago that women were more exploited than the proletariat. (This is a remarkable thing for him to have said.) Now women are beginning to say: "Who and what are we? We don't know. Hitherto we have always tried to fit ourselves into what men and what masculine society required. Now we are going to break through that." These three women have begun to write about Black women's daily lives. Black women in America for hundreds of years have been scrubbing, sweeping, cleaning, picking up behind people; they have been held in the background; kept for sex. And now Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and Ntozake Shange have taken these Black women and put them right in the front of American literature. They can't be ignored any more. So it seems that in the women's movement, as usual in the United States, Black people took part; and they have taken a part in it which, as I hope to show you, is important not only to Blacks, but to society as a whole.

I'm going to talk about these books one by one. I'm not going to read from them too much; except for the poetry, because poetry must be read. Then I will talk about writing, because that is what you are concerned with; and because it is an important part of the Black struggle today.

I will begin with *Sula* by Toni Morrison. *Sula* is the story of Black women; this in itself is an unusual topic for an American writer, so far as I know. The story begins with a description of the Bottom, a black slum of the southern town Medallion; and with the story of a World War I soldier who is released from an army hospital while still having problems with hallucinations, is arrested for his peculiar behaviour, and is finally sent home to the Bottom, which he had not seen since going into the army. He seems to be crazy, and doesn't know what has happened to him. He establishes an annual holiday in the Bottom called

National Suicide Day: on this day every year people can let out their anger and their violence acceptably. He lives alone, and generally celebrates the holiday alone. He supports himself by catching fish twice a week and selling them. This is how the book begins. It begins this way to register that the people in it, and the work they do, and the life they lead, are not normal. But this is the life of the vast majority in the South; from 1971, when the book was published, until this very day.

We are introduced to two girls; Sula and Nell. They are very good friends. The level of their lives is very low, and they go through much together. There is something harmonious between them. They are not separated even by the accidental death of a small boy who drowns while playing with them; even by the bizarre incinerations of two of the people Sula lives with. They grow up around and in spite of the daily poverty and tragedy. Nell gets married to a man named Jude. Sula sees that he is a handsome, hard-working, well-meaning young man. She helps with the wedding and reception, and then leaves town.

Ten years pass between the wedding and the beginning of the next chapter; 1927-37. Nell is still with Jude; they are living well, and have two or three children. Sula returns well-dressed, sophisticated, and college-educated. She and Nell seek to rediscover that friendship which they had before, but Sula is unable to accommodate herself to the old society. One day, Nell comes home to find Sula and Jude together in the bedroom, and Jude leaves her that day. Sula does not particularly want Jude; she begins sleeping with men in the town and is further distanced from the other townspeople. She becomes, at one point, really attached to a man; but it is, of course, at that point that he leaves her.

Sula and Nell see each other only once more in their lives. In 1940 Sula becomes seriously ill and Nell visits to offer help. She finally asks, "Why did you do it? ... We were friends.... And you didn't love me enough to leave him alone. To let him love me. You had to take him away."

To which Sula replies, "What do you mean take him away? I didn't kill him, I just fucked him. If we were such good friends, how come you couldn't get over it?" As Nell is leaving, she asks her, "How do you know ... who was good? ... I mean maybe it wasn't you. Maybe it was me."

After Nell leaves, Sula dies. At the end of the book, at Sula's grave, Nell comes to a significant and painful realisation: that it is not Jude but Sula that she has missed so much in the years since they all parted.

This is a fantastic book. Now, I want to quote a particularly significant passage, from the chapter just following Sula's return:

It had surprised her a little and saddened her a good deal when Nell behaved the way the others would have. Nell was one of the reasons she had drifted back to Medallion, that and the boredom she found in Nashville, Detroit, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Macon and San Diego. All those cities held the same people, working the same mouths, sweating the same sweat. The men who took her to one or another of those places had merged into one large personality: the same language of love, the same

entertainments of love, the same cooling of love. Whenever she introduced her private thoughts into their rubbings or goings, they hooded their eyes. They taught her nothing but love tricks, shared nothing but worry, gave nothing but money. She had been looking all along for a friend, and it took her a while to discover that a lover was not a comrade and could never be — for a woman. And that no one would ever be that version of herself which she sought to reach out to and touch with an ungloved hand. There was only her own mood and whim, and if that was all there was, she decided to turn the naked hand toward it, discover it and let others become as intimate with their own selves as she was. (pp.104-5)

Now, this Black woman has gone to all of these most important towns and places of social life in the United States, found them no good, and has gone back to Medallion. That is a very bold thing to write about. She tells us why Sula returns — because everywhere she goes the men and the problems and emptiness with them are always the same. The important thing about that is that it could, and would, be said by women on every level of society in the world today, from the highest to the lowest. This woman could not find a man who would treat her as another human being, and she got tired of it and went back to her home town. So on the one hand, the friendship between women, that is so often ignored, is really of great importance; and on the other hand, no matter how hard she tries, she just learns that friendship with a man is impossible.

Toni Morrison is saying that in this society, with the lives they lead, this is what happens to men and women; this becomes characteristic of the love relationship. I find it astonishing and revealing that Toni Morrison should insist that this tremendous insight come from a poor Black woman, on the lowest level of American society. She is also saying that the real fundamental human difference is not between white and Black, it is between man and woman.

Now we come to *Meridian* by Alice Walker, whom I have found to be one of the finest writers in the United States. Near the beginning of the book, *Meridian* is told by a group of her friends that she can only join the movement if she makes up her mind that she can kill for the Revolution. *Meridian* is not so sure about this; she is willing to die, but not to kill. It goes against her upbringing and her heart. She goes off on her own to work and live with the people in the South. The story goes on and *Meridian* becomes very involved with a Black man named Truman, who eventually becomes involved with a white woman named Lynne. The personal, sexual and racial interrelations of these three people, and the context of the civil rights movement, are treated very well indeed. They have a lot of difficulties. Again we have a picture of the significance of friendship between women:

As they sat they watched a television program. One of those Southern epics about the relationship of the Southern white man to madness, and the closeness of the southern black man to the land. It did not delve into the women's problems, black or white. They sat, companionable and still in their bathrobes, watching the green fields of the South and the indestructible (their word) faces of black people much more than they watched the

madness. For them, the madness was like a puzzle they had temporarily solved (Meridian would sometimes, in the afternoons, read poems to Lynne by Margaret Walker, and Lynne, in return, would attempt to cornrow Meridian's patchy short hair), they hungered after more intricate and enduring patterns. Sometimes they talked intimately, like sisters, and when they did not they allowed the television to fill the silences. (p. 173)

This is tremendous. These two women have quarrelled over a Black man; he has gone with both of them, and generally made a mess of things; but they have become friends. This is beautifully expressed. This is a serious and difficult topic; not many books deal with the relationship of a Black man and a white woman, or even with two women getting together and understanding one another. This is an astonishing thing, but it is not the most astonishing thing in the book by far.

I'm going to deal now with another part of the book which makes it one of the most extraordinary books I have ever read. A young man has been killed; a Black church is having a service for him, to help the father and so on. Meridian is there, and as she follows the service, and hears the people singing, suddenly, after all her troubles, Meridian comes to this conclusion:

There was a reason for the ceremony she had witnessed in the church. And, as she pursued this reason in her thoughts, it came to her. The people in the church were saying to the red-eyed man that his son had not died for nothing, and that if his son should come again they would protect his life with their own. "Look," they were saying, "we are slow to awaken to the notion that we are only as other women and men, and even slower to move in anger, but we are gathering ourselves to fight for and protect what your son fought for on behalf of us. If you will let us weave your story and your son's life and death into what we already know — into the songs, the sermons, the 'brother and sister' — we will soon be so angry we cannot help but move. Understand this," they were saying, "the church" (and Meridian knew they did not mean simply "church" as in Baptist, methodist or whatnot, but rather communal spirit, togetherness, righteous convergence), "the music, the form of worship that has always sustained us, the kind of ritual you share with us, these are the ways to transformation that we know. We want to take this with us as far as we can."

In comprehending this, there was in Meridian's chest a breaking as if a tight string binding her lungs had given way, allowing her to breathe freely. For she understood, finally, that the respect she owed her life was to continue against whatever obstacles, to live it, and not to give up any particle of it without a fight to the death, preferably *not* her own. And that this existence extended beyond herself to those around her because, in fact, the years in America had created them One Life. She had stopped, considering this, in the middle of the road. Under a large tree beside the road, crowded now with the cars returning from church, she made a promise to the red-eyed man herself: that yes, indeed she *would* kill, before she allowed anyone to murder his son again.

... Meridian's dedication to her promise did not remain constant. Sometimes she lost it altogether. Then she thought: I have been allowed to see how the new capacity to do anything, including kill, for our freedom — beyond sporadic acts of violence — is to emerge, and flower, but I am not

yet at the point of being able to kill anyone myself, nor — except for the false urgings that come to me in periods of grief and rage — will I ever be. . . .

... But at other times her dedication to her promise came back strongly. ... On those occasions such was her rage that she actually felt as if the rich and racist of the world should stand in fear of her, because she — though apparently weak and penniless, a little crazy and without power — was yet of resolute and relatively fearless character, which, sufficient in its calm acceptance of its own purpose, could bring the mightiest country to its knees. (pp.199-201)

In other words, these people hadn't to be trained or taught marxism; these Black people in this Southern church had built up a sense of community, and of right and wrong, so strong that if the need came, they would join any revolutionary movement that meant to kill those who were oppressing them. This is a major problem, this feeling that there are certain people who are revolutionaries but the great mass of the population is not, is filled with God and Christ. Alice Walker shows instead that they, in their church, with what they have learned there, with the togetherness they have, with the songs they have sung, and the beliefs they have, would be ready to join anything to overthrow the mightiest nation on earth; to overthrow the United States. Whether you agree or not, it is a tremendous notion and a successful book.

I lived in the United States for twenty-five years, and I had no idea that this kind of community could be built in the Southern Black churches; but, of course, this was the source of Dr King's power. It would not be the same in the West Indies. The Black church does not have the same role to play, because the Bishop of Trinidad is a Black man, his son is a member of the revolutionary trade-union movement; the result is that Blacks do not feel that terrific separation and persecution that has driven those Blacks to form those churches in the South. The Black church also could not have the same revolutionary significance in Britain.

The friendship between women; the impossibility of women getting on with men, as long as men see them chiefly as sexual instruments; the church; the lowest levels of Black life in America: these Black women are arriving at conclusions that are filling the minds of the most advanced and hard thinking people today.

There is a poem called "Advice" by Ntozake Shange, and it's from her book, *Nappy Edges*. It begins:

people keep tellin me to put my feet on the ground
i get mad & scream/ there is no ground
only shit pieces from dogs horse & men who dont live
anywhere/ they tell me think straight & make myself
somethin/ i shout & sigh/ i am a poet/ i write poems/
i make words/cartwheel & somersault down pages
outta my mouth come visions distilled like bootleg
whiskey/ i am like a radio but i am a channel of my own
i keep sayin i do this/ & people keep askin what am i gonna do/
what in the hell is going on?

...

people keep tellin me these are hard times/ what are you gonna be
 doin ten years from now/ what in the hell do you think/ i
 am gonna be writin poems/ i will have poems/ inchin up the
 walls of the lincoln tunnel/ i am gonna feed my children poems on
 rye bread with horseradish/ i am gonna send my mailman off
 with a poem for his wagon/ give my doctor a poem for his heart/
 i am a poet/ i am not a part-time poet/ i am not an amateur
 poet/...

She says, "I am a poet, and I'm going to be a poet." It can't be better stated, and she says it for you and me and other people; a person who is not educated can well understand what she writes. She is a very serious and a very funny woman. She can also be very mad. "With No Immediate Cause", I think, is her finest poem:

every 3 minutes a woman is beaten
 every five minutes a woman is raped/
 every ten minutes
 a lil girl is molested
 yet i rode the subway today
 i sat next to an old man who
 may have beaten his old wife
 3 minutes ago or 3 days/ 30 years ago....

She is telling me things that I had no idea of. I read these things in the paper and I pass on, but she says: "It happened to me. That man over there who served me coffee, he might have done it."

... i took the coffee
 & spit it up/ i found an
 announcement/ not the woman's
 bloated body in the river/ floating
 not the child bleeding in the
 59th street corridor/ not the baby
 broken on the floor/
 "there is some concern
 that alleged battered women
 might start to murder their
 husbands & lovers with no
 immediate cause"
 i spit up i vomit i am screaming
 we all have immediate cause
 every 3 minutes
 every 5 minutes
 every 10 minutes
 every day
 women's bodies are found
 in alleys & bedrooms/ at the top of the stairs
 before i ride the subway/ buy a paper/ drink
 coffee/ i must know/
 have you hurt a woman today
 thrown a child cross a room
 are the lil girl's panties
 in yr pocket
 did you hurt a woman today

i have to ask these obscene questions
the authorities require me to
establish
immediate cause

every three minutes
every five minutes
every ten minutes
every day

She makes it personal. She doesn't speak about "it" in general, like a politician; she says, "It happened not to the public in general, but to me, and that's what I think about it." Only first-class poets write this way.

Now I want to say a few words to the writers. You must be able to write what you think — and maybe what you write about your day-to-day, everyday, commonplace, ordinary life will be some of the same problems that the people of the world are fighting out. You must be able to write what you have to say, and know that that is what matters; and I hope you can see that you can begin anywhere and end up as far as anybody else has reached. I hope you are not scared to write about what concerns you, what you know — these things matter.

Write what you have to say, and think about it. Read as much as you can, don't limit yourself. Gather knowledge. Copy down a phrase that strikes you or a passage that matters. But when you get down to write something, concentrate on it. That is my advice. Concentrate on it and read it over. And if it takes you two weeks, you have to settle down and get it right. That is the way to write poetry. But the point is, to express your knowledge, concentrate on special writing.

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21 Poland

[This was a speech at an American Support Rally for the Polish free trade union Solidarity, in November 1981, which gave James the opportunity to say something about his "fundamentally marxist view of society and politics". It was published in the Winter 1983 issue of Cultural Correspondence, which also carried a brief interview with James in which he stated, in response to a question about the influence Solidarity as a political phenomenon has had on his own thought: "I don't argue with people any more about Socialism and Marxism. I say: there is Solidarity, the working class and the farmers, united in making a new society. Now you tell me what else Socialism is. I don't have to prove the existence of 10 million members. I am saying the same as Walesa, who is not an extraordinary figure like a Marx or a Lenin, but a worker himself.... Polish Solidarity has abolished the contradiction between politics and power, or between the factory and the community."]

Your welcome was very flattering. I only hope that when I am finished you will still feel the same way.

Where does Solidarity come from? What is it doing? And where is it going? That is my theme. One hundred and ten years ago in Paris the Parisian people formed the Commune. They abolished the police and they abolished the army. They finished with their local CIA and FBI, finished them completely. They said that their council, the Commune, would be both legislative and executive. They said further that the pay of a member of the council would be equal to the pay of an advanced worker. Not a penny more.

When people asked Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "What is this thing the dictatorship of the proletariat that you talk about?" they told them, "There, look at it, the Paris Commune. It has abolished the police and abolished the army. That is the people."

Lenin went next with the Soviet, and he kept the Commune in mind all the time. When the Soviet came with workers' representatives for every 500 workers, Lenin said, "This is it, we have gone beyond the Commune." Unfortunately the Commune was one complete city. The Russian workers were too small to handle that tremendous body of peasants in that vast country. But the Soviet made a stage of the development of the working class. And now we have the final stage that we have reached today with Solidarity in Poland. Commune — Soviet — Solidarity. That is the movement. They haven't come by accident. They are part of the organic movement of the working class in capitalist society.

Now I want to talk about what they are doing today. They have upset the international policy of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The Russian army was supposed to march through Poland and go to the Atlantic. That was the policy that they were working on, that they are working on today. Today, after Poland, the Russian army is not going one foot. It is not going to the Atlantic. It has got to stay at home. It has got to deal with Warsaw. It has got to deal with Odessa. With Leningrad. And

it has got to deal with Moscow. That's what it has to defend. It is going nowhere.

And all these foreign-policy experts have to realise that. That the Russian army cannot go anywhere when it will have at its back Solidarity in Poland today and Solidarities tomorrow. Because the Polish people said, "We are for the Warsaw Pact and we support the Catholic Church (some of us are Catholics)," but they do not hesitate to call upon all the workers and peasants in the totalitarian states to join them in an international movement. And then comes another problem. A problem not for me. Today they don't want the American armaments in Europe but tomorrow they will say if the Russian army cannot march, we don't want the American army either. That is a problem that they have to settle and that has been caused by Poland alone. Far less when the European peoples follow the example of Solidarity, which they will, there is no difficulty about that at all.

And now the last thing I want to say about them. Tomorrow: I have two countries in mind. One of them is South Africa. They carry on a lot of games there. "When we become a parliament we who are whites want so much percentage of it." One man one vote. I don't believe any such thing will take place in Southern Africa. I believe that when the people move they will move as a solid body of people who are reversing the trend of events and taking hold of their country again. It will be a movement like Solidarity and a rising of the people like an earthquake or a tempest as Marx used to describe the revolution. That is what is going to happen in South Africa and the whites who are sympathetic will be able to join. Not to get so many people or percentage in the parliament and so many rights justified. No. They can join the organisation and we shall see an example of Rousseau's General Will taking place in South Africa.

The last country that I want to speak about is the United States of America. I have spent twenty-five years of my life here and one thing I learned is: this is no European country. It has an individuality of its own. I have been watching the political system especially since Roosevelt came and brought in the New Deal and transferred a lot of power to the Executive. There are two big meetings here every four years. The Democratic Party meets and the Republican Party meets. These are national mobilisations, they are national mobilisations appealing to everybody. But when the day comes when people feel that those national mobilisations are not doing what they want them to do, there will not be any longer a national mobilisation but there will be a mobilisation of the nation. That is something else. And number two: the minorities in this country — Blacks, Chicanos and others — will be able to join the mobilisation of the nation, take part in it, take from it all that they want and at the same time bring to it all that they want to bring to it. The individual who has been crushed by developing capitalism will achieve a mobility in such a development of politics.

And I want to end by telling you: I don't know that I will see that. I have been in the world a long time. But I expect to see it in South Africa before I go and when it comes in the United States I may be away but

you can be certain that if I am away I will do my best to come back.
[*Applause.*] I will have plenty to tell you but you will have plenty more
to tell me about American Solidarity. Thank you.

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C.L.R. James: Bibliography

While this bibliography aims to cover as wide a range as possible of C.L.R. James's work over the years, it obviously does not claim to include details of every article or lecture. Allison & Busby will be grateful to receive information about any significant omissions or errors. James used various pen-names at different times, particularly during his stay in the USA from the late 1930s to early 1950s, including J.R. Johnson, Evans, J. Meyer, G.F. Eckstein, A.A.B., Native Son, Brother Williams, and he was often the principal author of writings published collectively by the Johnson-Forest Tendency (F. Forest was the pen-name of Raya Dunayevskaya). As far as possible, works by James are listed chronologically within the sections. References to the three volumes of *Selected Writings* published by Allison & Busby have been abbreviated as follows:

<i>Future</i>	= THE FUTURE IN THE PRESENT, <i>Selected Writings</i> Volume 1.
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