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**THE CASE OF JAH VERSUS MIDDLE CLASS SOCIETY:
RASTAFARI EXORCISM OF THE IDEOLOGY
OF RACISM IN JAMAICA**

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In a recent and timely article Joop van Kessel and André Droogers (1988) have criticised the failure of development theory in Latin America to view religion as anything but the irrelevant remnant of an outmoded past destined to disappear or be relegated to the private sphere of life with the transition of the countries of the region to modernization. This failure, according to the authors, explains the wider failure to produce any substantial result in the region over the last forty years of application. Development processes, they argue, cannot succeed in Latin America if identity is neglected, and since religion is an integral part of Latin American identity, the need to integrate the anthropology of religion into development sociology becomes clear.

The problem, unfortunately, has been a far more generalised and broader one. In many quarters of development studies the investigation of religious movements as constituent parts of social movements for change is still undeveloped, despite the importance of religion in the so-called developing world, despite, also, the richness of anthropological literature on the subject, particularly in Asia and Africa. But it is not just religion which development theory has ignored up to now, and with results similar to Latin America, but the broader area of life we know as culture. Fortunately, there seems to be a growing awareness of this shortcoming. In a series of public lectures a few years ago at the Institute of Social Studies on the theme of culture and development, Professor van Nieuwenhuijze declared:

It is high time ... to inquire, no doubt belatedly, into the significance of culture or civilization for the notion and practice of development. Clearly this cannot be a one-eyed inquiry, in the sense that one would look, as has occasionally been done without result, into sociocultural constraints hampering otherwise good economic development policies in particular settings. There is need to account for the significance of the cultural frame of reference at both ends of the given international -- read, intercultural -- transaction concerned with development. (1984: 4)

More recently Stavenhagen (1986) has entered a plea for ethnicity to be incorporated within the purview of development theory.

Still, as van Ufford and Schoffeleers remind us (1988: 4-6), the problem was also as much the making of anthropology, given its evolution into a discipline focusing almost blindly on culture to the exclusion of poverty and underdevelopment.

Thus, the obligation to continue the discussion resting as much with development theory as with anthropology, this paper explores the case of a religious movement whose contribution to the solution of what must be one of the most debilitating features of colonial underdevelopment, namely racism, has been a decisive

factor in the development of Jamaican nationalism. By keeping alive the issue of identity and forcing it on national consciousness, the Rastafari movement has helped to expose and by so doing overturn certain assumptions of the ideology of racism, particularly among the middle classes.

To be a bit more specific, at the risk of appearing somewhat dramatic, this is what the before picture looked like in the Jamaica of the 1940s:

In training and in outlook these middle classes are European. They retain little or no trace of their African origin except the colour of their skin. Some have been educated at Oxford, the Sorbonne, Madrid. They are coloured Europeans, in dress, ...in tastes, in opinions and in aspirations.¹

And in the early 1950s:

The coloured person in the West Indies represents a unique phenomenon in the hybrid world. He is generally almost entirely ignorant of African culture and despises what little he does know as being primitive and connected with the undesirable, that is the black. ... For such individuals there is a conscious ideal of self-identification with the European or Englishman (Henriques, 1953: 52-53).

The after picture, from quantitative research carried out among middle class tertiary students in the early 1980s, now looks like this:

Africans, that is black Jamaicans, emerged as the most accepted of all groups on all categories of the Social Distance Scale, and also as the group towards which the most favourable attitudes were expressed on the Attitudes to Minorities Scale. Such a finding suggests that the low esteem he enjoyed from others is now a thing of the past. ... Since the largest group in the sample was of mixed origin, it is not only the pure African alone who accepts himself, his blackness, his kinky hair, but the figures strongly suggest that Black is now indeed both beautiful and desirable generally (Richardson, 1983: 158).

Wondering, but without examining, what might have brought about this change, Richardson mentions the Black Power movement and the fact of Independence. My argument is simply that the main credit for this change belongs to the Rastafari. Because Rastafari

¹ Eric Williams, *The Negro in the Caribbean* (Washington: Panaf Publications, 1942), p. 60, quoted in Trevor Munroe (1972: 181-82).

membership is still relatively small,² its contribution is often overlooked. But the story also has wider relevance. Blacks are lowest on the totem pole in virtually every non-black country of the world. Thus, while the case of the Rastafari may well enrich our understanding of the role of identity in development, it also has direct implications for black identity in other parts of the world, including Latin America itself where religion rather than race is the main focal point.

Class and Race

Before introducing the Rastafari, a brief word on the class structure of Jamaica is necessary. Henriques, in the work cited above, drew the sketch of a three-tiered triangle representing a lower, a middle and an upper class, and correlating with colour ranging from black to coloured to white, respectively. There has never been any doubt among Caribbean social scientists that race and skin colour figure prominently in the stratification systems of the Caribbean. The question is what is their relative roles. Is stratification based on class or on race and colour, or both? If class, then we are dealing with an open system, in which there are broadly shared values; if race, with a system of ethnic segmentation, one prone to ethnic violence. The divisions on the issue have been mainly between functionalism and pluralism.

M.G. Smith, adapting the economic model of pluralism developed by J.S. Furnivall, has argued that Caribbean societies are plural societies, comprising different racial segments within the same polities, with each having its own distinct and separate cultural practices and norms (1965). They are brought together only by the market place, and held together by the political system. Thus, in a country like Jamaica, race is closely identified with culture.

Smith's model of pluralism has triggered considerable debate which has continued into the present.³ Lloyd Braithwaite, from a functionalist perspective, argued that Trinidadian society was integrated by a universally shared system of values, among them the

² There are no figures of membership. Rastafari is still not included in census takes. One "guesstimate" was 70,000 to 80,000 in the early 1970s.

³ See, for example, Vera Rubin (editor), *Social and Cultural Pluralism* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1962), which is a collection of the views of some of the most prominent Caribbean anthropologists and sociologists. See also, H.I. McKenzie, "The Plural Society Debate," *Social and Economic Studies*, Volume 16, 1967. Recently Smith has been involved in an on-going controversy with Don Robotham in the pages of *Social and Economic Studies*, Volumes 29, 32 and Volume 33.

ascriptive norms by which skin colour was associated with privilege, the closer to white the more of it, the closer to black the less (1955).

Most scholars accept the applicability of pluralism to Caribbean society up to the end of slavery, but reject it as no longer a useful model for understanding the dynamics of the modern societies of the region. Race and colour remain as attitudinal remnants of the colonial past. Though 80% of Jamaica's population, for example, are of African descent, 15% of mixed African-European and the rest European and other white ethnic minorities, the fact is that upward social mobility by blacks are changing the complexion of the middle classes. In a recent effort aimed at reconciling both paradigms, however, Mills (1988), makes use of the Gramscian concept of hegemony to argue that while Caribbean societies are stratified by class, nevertheless race functions as ruling ideology. Concerned though he also was to answer widely expressed criticism that Marxism, by its one-sided focus on class, has no comprehensive answer to the realities of the Caribbean, he has in fact touched upon the issue which I believe to be central in any explanation of the rise of the Rastafari, namely racism as an ideology.

Ideology of Racism

The following brief sketch of racism as ideology provides an indication of its scope. I focus on the Black population, for it was primarily aimed at subordinating them.⁴ The main thing to understand is that racial ideology always presents itself as a cognitive system of binary opposites. All the qualities singled out for devaluation in the racially different group are the opposites of qualities which provide the subject group with a positive self-evaluation. Racism and ethnocentrism are always packaged as "they" and "we".

Skin Colour: white vs. black. In European culture, white is a symbol of purity and goodness, its opposite, black, a symbol of impurity and evil. By calling Africans "black" and themselves "white",⁵ Europeans set the stage whereupon the enslavement and

⁴ Throughout the history of slavery Jamaica had the highest incidence of revolts and plots against the system. The successful Haitian revolt led by Toussaint L'Ouverture was thought possible in Jamaica, and for a hundred years after Emancipation in 1838, whites lived in mortal fear of a black uprising.

⁵ Donald Woods (*Cry Freedom*) had the South African judge ask Steve Biko why they called themselves black when they really were brown. Biko retorted, "Why do you call yourselves white when you are really pink." "Precisely," said His Honour.

subsequent subordination of Africans could be elevated to the level of mythology. Thus, one common explanation of the racial difference was that the "darker" races were the children of Ham, that son of Noah who was struck with a curse for having looked on his father's nakedness. Both in the United States and throughout the Caribbean may be found stories of creation which offer explanations as to why some men are white, others black.⁶ While the tongue-in-cheek humour of many of them suggest that they are not accorded mythological status, they are nevertheless significant in that the common theme running through them all is that blackness is a mistake, due either to error on God's part or weakness and sin on man's part.

The concepts of "white" being pretty and "black" being ugly went effectively unchallenged until the emergence of Marcus Garvey in the 1920s. Even so these usages are not uncommon today.

The incongruity of black Christians praying that God wash them "white as snow", was not merely an ecological but a religious one as well, for, as the prophet Alexander Bedward saw it, even the skin colour of blacks was to be transformed into white following ascent to heaven.⁷ And no wonder, if Jesus and his angels were themselves white.

Body Norms: handsome vs. ugly. Skin colour represented only one aspect of the phenotypical differences between whites and blacks, the remaining ones being hair quality (fine vs coarse, straight vs crinkly), nose shape (straight vs flat, narrow vs wide) and lip size (thin vs thick). These qualities also contributed to defining who was beautiful, who ugly. A common practice among mothers was the pinching of children's noses to make them straight and thin.

Character: moral vs. immoral. Orlando Patterson tells us that *Quashee*, the Twi day-name for males born on Sunday, was used by whites to personify their stereotype view of the African slaves as deceitful, lying, capricious and lazy (1967: 174-81). Applying Merton's concept of the "self-fulfilling prophecy", he argues that the slaves responded "by either appearing to, or actually internalizing" these stereotypes (p.180). After slavery and certainly into the twentieth century, the term *Quashee* shed its connotation of deceitful and acquired instead that of stupid or foolish. It was more hurtful to call one *Quashee* than to call one

⁶ See Zora Hurston, *Mules and Men* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978) and Daryl C. Dance, *Folklore from Contemporary Jamaicans* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985).

⁷ Martha Beckwith, *Black Roadways: A Study of Jamaican Folk Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929), p. 172-73).

stupid, since an element of race still clung to the usage.

Quashee was not the only proper noun to be used as stereotypes. Two others, Kofi, the day-name for males born on Friday, and Bongo, the name of one of the Congo tribes and of a religious cult appearing among the Maroons, were also used to mean stupid or uncouth.

No doubt, the misuse of these day-names was partly responsible for their gradual disuse and the preference for Biblical and Anglo-Saxon names.

Another "failing of character" which became ideological was the accusation by whites that blacks were sexually irresponsible. Ironically, the proof of irresponsibility was not the large coloured population of the island, but "illegitimate births." There were two issues here. One was the failure to enter into the legal institution of marriage, and the other was what some sociologists have referred to as "serial polygamy". The former was a target of theological teaching of the Protestant missionaries on holiness, as Robotham shows (forthcoming):

Not the study of the scriptures and the demonstrated understanding of them; not good works nor religious revelation were the decisive factors, but the acceptance of certain social institutions as superior and others as inferior and the adherence to the superior system--this was the critical factor in "living holy" and entering into and sustaining a "church connection (p. 83).

During the late 1930s and the 1940s, a group of upper-middle class women, at one time led by the wife of the colonial Governor, used to stage mass marriages.

"Serial polygamy" referred to the series of consensual, or common law, unions which many people enter during their first fifteen years of cohabitation, resulting in a complex system of half-brothers and half-sisters. Many women therefore bear children for different genitors, while many men sire children of different mothers, often complicating the situation by their failure either to acknowledge or to bear paternal responsibility. Naturally, these forms of male and female "irresponsibility" have through the decades been placed at the root of crime, lawlessness and immorality.

Though the pattern of mating has not changed since emancipation, according to Roberts and Sinclair (1980), the institution of marriage, which is the mating form used by whites, although they too practice what could be called "serial polygamy"

except that it is legal,⁸ is one way of acquiring social respectability. Common-law unions, once the spouses pass thirty-five to forty years of age, thus tend to end in marriage at some point.

The Motherland: Africa vs Europe. Racist arguments about the savagery and lack of civilization of Africa are now too well known to need any exposition here.⁹ They were very common in Jamaica, where the ideology seemed to have taken root much more among those exposed to the higher levels of the education system, for there is much evidence to show that among the uneducated masses Africa was always cherished as the land of the forefathers.¹⁰

As Africa was the land of darkness and savagery, so was Europe generally and England in particular the land of light and civilization. England became for every school child up to the time of Independence in 1962 the "Mother country".

Culture: Savagery vs. Civilization. Not surprisingly, many of the more important aspects of Jamaican folk culture were the object of ideological denigration. The folk religion, in all its variants, was described by one of Jamaica's leading intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s as the mud, which he contrasted with the gold. The mud was that tradition of African superstition and savagery, with its wild drumming, dancing, spirit possession and polytheism, in which the ignorant masses were mired, the gold the tradition of real religion, with its Easter morning pealing of bells, word of the one true God and studied reflection (Delisser, 1929). To the missionaries and Christian preachers themselves Afro-Jamaican religion was the work of the Devil himself. Christianity, of which they were the bearers, was the work of God.

While not all Blacks were stuck in the mud, all Blacks, except the relatively few who acquired a certain level of education, spoke "bad" English. In rural Jamaica "good" English was the speech of the local elite, the school teachers, the justice of the peace, the sanitary inspector, and so on. Nothing less was expected of them. Such people using the dialect were thought to be common and lacking

⁸ See M.G. Smith (1965), who shows that divorce and remarrying is a norm among the Jamaican whites.

⁹ See Herskovits' summary of them in his *Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

¹⁰ The historians tell us that many slaves resorted to suicide, believing that they would return to Africa on death. In my own research I found positive concepts of Africa that survived in the families of orientation of informants born in the early decades of this century. See my *Social and Ideological Origins of the Rastafari Movement in Jamaica* (forthcoming).

in "ambition". "Good" English was thus the speech of the upwardly mobile, "bad" English the speech of the uneducated and ignorant.

Using culture in the narrow sense of the fine arts, whites also inflated their own culture and claimed racial superiority over blacks.

II

I have spent some time illustrating the ways in which racism entrenched itself in Jamaica in the cognitive life of the people, because it is my view that the impact of the Rastafari is to be sought here rather than elsewhere. Naturally, to make out a claim for Jamaica as a special case not only is absurd, but makes questionable my suggestion that there is much about Rastafari of significance for other countries. For, racist and ethnocentric ideology has been the experience of colonialism, of Romans over English, English over Irish, Japanese over Chinese. Racism against the peoples of African descent is unquestionably, however, the most extreme. My main aim thus far is to illustrate the varied ways in which that ideology was propounded and in some measure internalised, in order to contextualise what I argue constituted the *raison d'être* of the Rastafari movement.

I say "in some measure", because behind the studied propagation of white racist ideology always lurked the fear of threat to white racist superordination. The country had experienced more slave revolts and plots than any other colony in the hemisphere, hosted the only maroon settlement which forced the British into treaty, had brought slavery to an end in 1834 with the greatest revolt in its history, had witnessed the suppression of a rebellion in which peasants rallied and slew on the basis of colour in 1865, and the overawing of a popular religious movement, whose leader had agitated for the overthrow of whites in 1895. Now on the eve of the appearance of Rastafari it was about to face the black nationalism of Marcus Garvey.

Marcus Garvey

Marcus Garvey was not the first black nationalist in Jamaican history, but he was the first to have fired the imagination of the masses on a grand and dramatic scale. He led the largest social movement among American blacks prior to the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, and the largest ever international black movement. The fact that Blacks in Africa and the Americas were inspired to become his followers indicates that theirs was a common experience. In fact, Garvey later revealed that what fired his imagination to uplift his race was finding the Blacks of Central America in the same position he had left them in Jamaica. Garvey

had an impact far greater than his own organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), or his actual teachings, far-reaching though these were. Just the fact that he was such a great man of himself did much to change the self-perception of blacks.¹¹

Linking the degrading conditions of blacks, which he found everywhere he went throughout the hemisphere, with their lack of power, Garvey set himself the task of building a power base through which, and only through which, blacks could command the respect of the world. To this end, his first step was the formation of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). But at the same time keenly aware that blacks were themselves partly to blame, owing to their lack of consciousness and low self-esteem, he also set himself the task of educating the race. Thus Garveyism was both a political and an ideological movement, whose points of focus may be summarised as follows:

Political Achievements

1. Founding of local economic enterprises, such as factories.
2. The launching of the Black Star Shipping Line, to foster and develop international pan-African trade.
3. Campaign for the decolonization of Africa, under the slogan "Africa for the Africans at home and abroad".
4. Launching a back-to-Africa movement to encourage skilled and professional blacks to return and contribute to the development of Africa.
5. Publication of an organ through which to spread the ideas of race consciousness.

Ideological Teachings

1. The black race constituted one nationality, whose native land was Africa. "Garveyism was Pan-Africanism at the level of popular

¹¹ Among the many works written about Garvey and/or the UNIA, see E.D.Cronon, *Black Moses* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955); Robert Hill (editor) *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Volume I-III (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983-85); Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-colonial Champion* (London: Karia Press, 1987); Rupert Lewis and Maureen Warner-Lewis (editors), *Garvey: Africa, Europe, the Americas* (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1986); Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (editors), *Garvey: His Work and Impact* (Kingston: University of the West Indies, 1988); Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976).

mass organization to confront the ideology of racism."¹²

2. As the seat of many early civilizations, Africa played a role in the development of world culture.

3. By its survival of European enslavement, where other races have been wiped out, the black race has revealed its inner endowment.

4. The past achievements of the race and its survival are sources of pride and self-confidence. They are also the sign of its present and future possibilities.

5. All races are equal. The present subjugation of blacks is transient; as transient, for example, as the past enslavement of the English by the Romans.

6. Self-reliance is the only way forward to gain the respect of other nations.

These activities and ideas were in their time revolutionary. The UNIA boasted of an eleven million membership at the height of Garvey's popularity in the early 1920s, scattered throughout the Americas and Africa. In French West Africa it became a capital offense to read Garvey's paper, *The Negro World*. In the United States the FBI, bent on crushing his movement, arrested Garvey on the trumped up charge of using the mail to defraud. Sentenced to prison, Garvey was deported to his native Jamaica, where he lost little time in entering the political life of the country. Forced to attend to the declining fortunes of the UNIA, he left Jamaica for England, where he died in 1940.

By his intense concentration on the black man, Garvey was mainly responsible for the attention which increasingly larger numbers of Jamaicans began to pay to events in Africa.¹³ The coronation of Ras Tafari in Ethiopia in November 1930 was one which the founders of the Rastafari movement interpreted as the fulfillment of prophecy. Before reaching the peak of his career Garvey was already a hero to the Jamaican masses, both in the common and mythological senses of the word. Myths had developed about what he said and did, making him superhuman.¹⁴ Thus, it was alleged, that in one of his many speeches he had prophesied that one was to come after him greater than himself and that the people should look to Africa when a King would be crowned for their

¹² Horace Campbell, "Garveyism, Pan-Africanism and African Liberation in the Twentieth Century," in Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (1988), p. 168.

¹³ Mainly, but not solely. Post correctly notes the role which "the refocusing of consciousness outside the island onto the ancient African kingdom of Ethiopia" (1978: 161) played, and traces the effect of Ethiopianism on that consciousness.

¹⁴ See Barry Chevannes, "Garvey Myths among the Jamaican People", in Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan, *Garvey: His Work and Impact* (Kingston: University of the West Indies, 1988).

redemption. As if to strengthen their belief, Tafari, as Haile Selassie, took several titles of religious significance: "King of Kings and Lord of Lords", "Light of the World", and, claiming descent from the Solomonic line, "Conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah".

Leonard Howell, Joseph Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley, all three of whom were returned migrants, Robert Hinds and Brother Napier -- were among the earliest to start preaching that Prince Tafari was God. But they went further and transposed the Biblical metaphor of the children of Israel in captivity, from which Christianised blacks had always found inspiration and hope, into the reality itself. Black people were the true Israel and Ras Tafari the returned messiah come to deliver his people. Christ, they preached, was and had always been black. He was the real King of the black race; therefore blacks owed no allegiance to King George. Thus was the Rastafari movement born.

The movement took root mainly in the city of Kingston among the marginalised stratum of the working class, peasants uprooted by social conditions in the countryside and blocked from external migration.¹⁵ Right up to the end of the 1960s this was the stratum most drawn to the faith.

Rastafari Beliefs

Rastafari beliefs and practices have developed over the years and it seems best to summarise them in this way. I identify three phases of growth up to the present time, each covering approximately two decades.

In the first two decades, the 1930s and 1940s, beliefs centred on the identity of God, as set out above. Propagating the faith took the form of street meetings. Each preacher established his own "King of Kings" mission, which was attended by those converted at the public meetings. Ritual practices varied from mission to mission, but included baptism, fasting and celebration of special anniversaries, such as the Coronation, and the cultivation of head and facial hair according to the Nazarite vow as set out in the Book of Leviticus.

The second two decades, the 1950s and 1960s, was marked by the call for repatriation and by the rise to ascendancy throughout the movement of a radical trend which became known as the Dreadlocks. As I shall be dealing more fully with the most important of the episodes, it should suffice to make two observations. First, this

¹⁵ This process is traced in *Social Origins of the Rastafari Movement* (forthcoming).

demand to return to Africa had been institutionalised as a part of Rastafari ideology by the early founders, following fast on the heels of Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement, but Rastafari activity was not focused on it during the thirties and forties, except for two episodes. The first was on the first day of August 1934, the one hundredth anniversary of Emancipation. The second, in 1943, was "a two-man demonstration on 6 April in the chamber of the Legislative Council itself" (Post 1981:317). By the end of that decade and the start of the next, Rastafari had begun to agitate for repatriation. According to the concept, blacks are Africans, or rather Ethiopians, for Ethiopia was the name of the continent before the white man renamed it; Africans, or "Ethiopians" were seized and transported to the Americas against their will; hence Repatriation, or return to the motherland. But Repatriation is a divinely ordained act, depending on the will and action of God, not on man. It is different from migration. In that August 1934 episode, it was alleged that they expected the sea to part, just as in the time of Moses, but this time only for those with a beard.

The second observation is that agitation for repatriation gained momentum only in the 1950s. The Repatriation movement of the fifties came against the background of increased external migration to Britain and increased attention by old Garveyites to the possibilities for migration to Liberia and other West African countries. In fact, through the Ethiopian World Federation Haile Selassie had made a land grant at Sheshamane in Ethiopia for the settlement to blacks, in token of appreciation for their support during the anti-fascist invasion of his country. The gift aroused great interest, particularly among the Rastafari, when a Federation official visited Jamaica in 1955 and made the announcement. Scholars who argue that the movement is essentially millenarian need to exercise caution, for only thrice in the six decades (1934, 1958 and 1959) did the dream of the millennium result in any millenarian activity worth mentioning. The growth and impact of Rastafari have not been dependent on the dream of the millennium.

The Dreadlocks emerged in the course of overturning the authority of the older generation, whom they judged to be too compromising towards the society. They were more separatist, symbolising their ideological stance in their spectacular hair style. To the older generation the scissors and razor had been taboo; to the Dreadlocks the scissors, the razor and the comb.

Other beliefs and practices institutionalised by the Dreadlocks were:

1. sacralisation of ganja (marijuana) as a sacrament;
2. development of an argot, focused on the concept of the personal pronoun I;
3. symbolic identification of the status quo with the concept

Babylon;

4. ritual ascendancy over women;
5. extension of the concept of God as man to include man as also God.

Many of these beliefs and practices are the results of idealisation of beliefs and practices already present within the culture of the folk, but carried to extremes. Such, for instance is the God-man concept, which derives from folk belief in the immanence of God; such also the sacred ritualisation of female subordination, which has precedence in social and cultural life.¹⁶ But in other instances, deliberately and consciously they identified with traditions which were vilified under racist ideology. For example, the Dreadlocks appropriated the names associated with stupidity. One which soon became, and which still remains, a title of respect was Bongo. The name Nati, referring to hair quality, is another.

The last two decades, the 1970s and 1980s, have been marked by three far-reaching developments. The first was the use of reggae music as the medium of expression of Rastafari sentiments, and the mutual identity of the two; second, the internationalisation of the movement, due to the impact of reggae, to migration and racism in the metropolises of both the northern and southern hemispheres. These have been well documented.¹⁷ Third, but not yet fully studied is the triumphant entry of Rastafari into the middle classes. With this last we come to the central point of this paper.

III

As our "before" picture presented at the beginning would have

¹⁶ In another article, *The Phallus and the Outcast: the symbolism of the dreadlocks in Jamaica*, I attempt to show that ritual and ideological dominance over women was a necessary sequel of their ideological and symbolic break with the society.

¹⁷ On reggae music and Rastafari, see Sebastian Clarke, *Jah Music* (Heinemann, 1980), Stephen Davis, *Reggae Bloodlines* (Anchor, 1977) and Timothy White, *Catch a Fire* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983); on Rastafari overseas, see Horace Campbell, *Rasta and Resistance* (Hansib, 1985). A number of publications have been put out on the Rastafari in Britain, among them E. Cashmore, *Rastaman* (Allen & Unwin, 1979), Peter Clarke, *Black Paradise* (Aquarian, 1986), Len Garrison, *Black Youth* (ACERP, 1979) and D. Hebdige, *Reggae, Rastas and Rudies* (University of Birmingham, 1975). For a study based in Rotterdam, see P. Buiks, *Surinamse Jongere op de Krauskade* (van Loghun Slaaterus, 1981).

made clear, the middle classes, made up predominantly of the coloured population, were far from immune to the ideology of racism. In his analysis of class consciousness in the period leading up to the 1938 labour rebellion, Ken Post explains:

Race was also a very important factor in the consciousness of the lower middle class. Along with their collars and ties, a light brown skin and 'good' hair and features were the marks of their superior status, and were among the criteria for getting a job. But race was not only important to the lower stratum; it was crucial for the entire middle class (1978: 103).

But the symbols of social mobility were not the only concern of the middle classes, Post further explains. They "tended to reproduce quite faithfully the ideas of their betters. Indeed,...it was the special task of many of them to develop and propagate those ideas, since clergymen, teachers, journalists and others were concerned specifically with cognitive practice" (p. 101). In other words, white colonial society had produced the intellectuals on whom it could rely for its apologia.

To view the middle classes from this point of view alone would be one-sided. As Phillips explains, in the pre-war years there had emerged among the middle classes a nationalist movement split between those with a "Jamaican" and those with a "'Pan-African tendency' focussed on a wider set of Pan-Nationalist concerns" (1988: 106). The latter, it is clear, were motivated by the racial contradiction, and would have been influenced by Garveyite and pre-Garveyite black nationalism. For the former -- the larger and more influential -- their nationalism derived from other contradictions, such as the control by the colonial government of "education and other matters vital to the middle class" (Post, 1978: 103).

Middle class nationalism, led by the "Jamaican" tendency, soon crystallised in the formation of the People's National Party (PNP) in 1938, whose demand for self-government, strengthened by the labour rebellion and meeting objectives of the British government, led to a process of gradual decolonization which culminated in independence in 1962. According to Munroe (1972), the main problem facing the upper middle class, which led this process, was how to secure control of the country without the arousal of the masses. Though the thesis overestimates the independent political potential of the working class and underestimates the significance of the black nationalist wing in the national movement,¹⁸ it aptly

¹⁸ For example, in 1948 the House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution calling on the Government to aid the Back-to-African movement; between March and May 1954 the Opposition PNP pressed for Government to invite Haile Selassie; and in November 1954, Government hosted a state visit from President

identifies the process as "constitutional decolonization", and explains its results as the "growth and consolidation of middle class dominance" over political life (p. 75) and a constitution patterned off the British.

In effect, therefore, the independence movement avoided the issue of race. Thus, the nationalism which Norris found among the educated in Jamaica on the eve of political Independence lay "in the confidence that Jamaica can successfully build a miniature Britain, America or a European-type state" (Norris, 1962: 72), rather than build on the "cultural traditions or creative spirit of the Jamaican people" (p. 88).

Still, there was hope: the Rastafari.

While the conformist is still over-deferential to the white stranger, the Rastafarian expresses his defiance by abusing him publicly. While the conformist still looks on a white man as a source of financial assistance and few would hesitate to beg from him if the opportunity offered, the Rastafarian prefers to live in appalling squalor, but does not beg. (Norris, p. 98)

She found Rastafari to be "an instinctive kind of nationalism and an instinctive search for dignity and naturalness as far removed from race hatred as straightforward national consciousness is removed from hatred of other nations", notwithstanding it being a "crank" philosophy (p. 99). In other words, by electing to lead a life based on the affirmation of being black, without at the same time being racist, the Rastafari have seized hold of one of the main springs of national development, namely a sense of national identity. In this respect, they represented, for Norris, not so much a signpost leading the way to Rastafari as a symbol of the harmony between the reality of being black, and the consciousness of and confidence in that reality.

This point must not be glossed over. Some commentators accuse Rastafari of being a form of "reverse racism", sometimes comparing it to the Black Muslims. Nothing could be further from the truth. As Father Owens observes, this judgment derives from a failure to grasp the essence of a doctrine which not only "effectively negates the white racism pervading the society, but which also strives to overcome the logical premises which make any type of racism possible" (Owens, 1976: 57). Most other Whites who have studied the Rastafari would share Owens' view. This gives the Rastafari a humanism with potential lessons for other groups and peoples.

Rastafari exorcism of the ideology of racism among the middle classes and inspiring of a more wholesome sense of identity began

Tubman of Liberia.

in the period of the Dreadlocks, with a millennarian episode which, not surprisingly blown out of all proportion, had the effect of treating the Rastafari seriously for the first time and of beginning a process of self-examination. Ken Post describes Jamaica as an open society prone to external influences. Understandably, therefore, the impact on the middle classes was in no small measure facilitated and enhanced by the rapid acquisition of independence by African nations and equal status with other sovereign states of the world. But while external processes made the middle classes better listeners, the Rastafari forced them to think, and to choose.

On new year's day 1959, Fidel Castro entered Havana in triumph. The event made a great impact throughout the Caribbean and the rest of the hemisphere. Later that same year, one Reverend Claudius Henry, leader of a group of Rastafari, proclaimed October 25 to be "decision day" when Israel's scattered children would return to Africa.¹⁹ Undaunted by the failure of this prophecy, but less open to the public, Henry quietly began planning for repatriation, when a police raiding party swooped down on his headquarters and seized an arms cache and two letters. The arms included two or three firearms and several rounds of ammunition, dynamite, machetes and clubs. The letters, addressed to Castro, informed him that as they were about to depart for Africa they wished to hand over the country to him. He was charged with treason felony: intent to intimidate and overawe Her Majesty's Government and to invite in a foreign power. As if that was not enough, weeks later news broke that members of Henry's church were involved in guerilla operations in the Red Hills area above Kingston, and that two British soldiers were killed in an operation against them. A manhunt soon resulted in the capture of a four-man squad which included Henry's son, Ronald. These they charged with the murder of a police infiltrator whom they had buried near their training ground in the hills.

The effect was electrifying, especially among the middle classes. Not since the Morant Bay rebellion in 1865 had a group of Jamaicans taken up arms against the state. As if that was not enough, here was a group of people who wear their contempt of society by their hair and even facial expressions. It was time to put a stop to the lunacy that was Rastafari. The police were not slow to take their cue from the general public, as a wave of intimidation, shaving of locks, arrests, beating and imprisonment, descended on all Rastafari, in unprecedented scale and scope.

Acting wisely, a small group of Rastafari led by Mortimo Planno approached the University with the suggestion that a

¹⁹ For a fuller presentation of his activities see my "Repairer of the Breach", in Frances Henry (editor), *Ethnicities in the Americas* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976).

carefully documented and publicised study of their movement would go a long way in convincing the society that Rastafari was essentially peaceful. It was a brilliant stroke, for the University, then an affiliate of the University of London and headed by W.Arthur Lewis, was already making great headway in challenging the pro-British, anti-Jamaican orientation of the middle classes, by an already deserved reputation for scholarship and excellence, especially in the field of tropical medicine. The sanction of such an institution would not be lost on the real sources of influence and power.

The urgency of the situation led Lewis to assign three of his finest scholars, all Caribbean, to carry out the investigation. The result after two weeks of intense field work was *The Rastafari Movement in Kingston Jamaica* by M.G.Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, which Lewis presented to the Government. Sketching in brief outline the beliefs, the historical course and structure of the movement, the scholars gave an analysis which exposed the appallingly bad social conditions and poverty in the midst of which Rastafari was the only hope to large numbers of people. After careful study, the Government seized upon one of the several recommendations, that a mission be sent to Africa to explore the possibilities for migration there, and acted swiftly. The Mission, which included three Dreadlocks, set off early in 1961, and after visits to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia, it returned to present a majority and a minority (Rastafari) report, both of which were published and hotly debated in the press.

Predictably, initial middle class reaction was very hostile. Some felt betrayed by the sympathetic tone of the University study, while many objected to the Mission as a waste of taxpayers' money. But coming from the University, and backed by a popular Government, both Report and Mission made it quite respectable for middle class persons to show sympathy towards the Rastafari. This was something new. Roger Mais, the way artists often see ahead of their times, had a decade earlier portrayed Rasta in heroic terms in his novel *Brother Man*. Now, however, the University initiative was to mark the beginning of an entirely new stage in the development of the society. No scholar has understood this better than Nettleford and no title conveys more the essence of a book's content than does his *Mirror, Mirror* (1970). With the issue of national identity confronting Jamaicans at independence in 1962, history was kind to the country by providing three events in the course of the sixties, three lessons for those who wished to learn: the Henry crisis and its aftermath (Report and Mission), the Visit of Haile Selassie in 1966 and the Black Power movement in 1968-69. Different events but the same question, the same search. Assessing the "lessons from the sixties", Nettleford noted "trends which are irreversible", notably the fact that "the established order, despite its misgivings about race consciousness, dares no longer to see itself psychologically as an adjunct of Great Britain" (1970: 221). But we jump too far ahead.

To be brief, the three-day visit of Emperor Haile remains unparalleled for the extraordinary level of popular enthusiasm, crowd size and tolerance towards the Rastas.

He cried as he stood on the steps of an aircraft of Ethiopian Airlines which had brought him from Trinidad and Tobago to Jamaica and surveyed the vast and uncontrollable crowd which had gathered at the Palisadoes Airport to greet him. The tears welled up in his eyes and rolled down his face. It...was an emotional welcome.

Because from Wednesday night people had gathered at the Palisadoes from all parts of Jamaica, coming on foot, in cars, in drays, in carts, in hired buses, on bicycles and by every means of transport that can be imagined, and there never has been in the whole history of Jamaica such a spontaneous, heart-warming and sincere welcome to any person, whether visiting monarch, visiting V.I.P. or returning leader of any Jamaican party.

Of the welcome His Imperial Majesty said later that he was overwhelmed and deeply moved. It demonstrated, he said, the close ties and affection which bind the people of Jamaica to Africa and Ethiopia. ...

And the enthusiasm was too much for mere authority. The police were surrounded by the tide of it all ... The result: all the prearranged ceremony went by the way. ... The Emperor was in fact hurried in nervous haste to the Governor-General's car to make his triumphant entry into Kingston, ... and to start what must have been the biggest traffic snarl in the history of their city....

The cries were everywhere: "The day has come. God is with us. Let us touch the hem of his garment."

As the Governor-General's car moved off, people continued to mill around it and to place themselves in its way, some shouting, "Remember me. Prepare a place for me in thy kingdom." (Owens: 1976: 250-52)

Later in the official state receptions, first with Government and then with Royal guest as hosts, for the first time middle and upper-middle class elites actually came face to face with the Dreadlocks. Indeed, it was said to be the in-thing to be seen on friendly and familiar terms with them. Police action against them was muted for the three days, and they made no attempt to conceal their smoking of ganja. The treatment of the Dreadlocks during Selassie's state visit amounted to unofficial legitimization of the movement.

The Black power movement in Jamaica was the work of the Guyanese Lecturer in African History at the University in 1968, Walter Rodney. Rodney formally launched a Black power group on the campus and, more importantly, took his expertise extra mures among the Rastafari, including the Claudius Henry group, whose leader had just been paroled from a ten year prison sentence for

treason felony. The Government, which had had him under surveillance, took advantage of his departure abroad to attend a Black writers conference in Canada, to ban him from re-entry as a dangerous subversive. A protest march by University students against the action triggered several hours of rioting and arson by unemployed youths throughout the city. At several roadblocks which the youths set up, the only white and coloured people let through without damage to their cars or injury to their persons were those recognized for their work on behalf of black people.

The "Rodney riot", as the event became known, had its causes in grave economic and social conditions. Industrialisation by development saw unemployment double from 13% at the beginning to 25% at the close of the sixties, while all around were the signs of growing affluence. The riot once again did violence to middle class consciousness by raising the question of racial identity. But this time, thought found expression in action, as a group of intellectuals formed the "Abeng" movement, from the horn used by the Jamaican maroons, and began the publication of a weekly by the same name. *Abeng* ran for only six or seven months in 1969, but, apart from the dissemination of radical black nationalist ideas, its significance is to be found in the organic link it sought to establish, in the Rodney tradition, between the middle and working classes. It became a partisan voice of the poor.

But the middle class University-based intellectuals, learning from Rodney, understood that Rastafari critique of the society was already creating changes in the consciousness of the masses. Thus, although many individual Rastafari became active participants in the *Abeng* group and contributors and distributors of the weekly, it was in the adoption of the linguistic symbolism developed by the Dreadlocks, and by then part of urban street culture, which more than anything else proved that the country was indeed in a new stage. The use of words such as grounding, Babylon, beast, men was a regular feature of the newspaper,²⁰ and of the vocabulary of intellectuals, especially at the University. Rodney, for instance, titled his reflections on the whole experience, *Groundings with my Brothers*.²¹ By 1971, amid speculation about the date of election, the then Prime Minister reminded an audience: "Only one man can call a general election, and that man is I man."

That election, when it finally came in February 1972, saw the use of other Rastafari symbolisms. Understanding the positive

²⁰ The derivation of Babylon and Beast is Biblical. See the Book of Revelation. *Man* refers to a person of integrity and authenticity. Rastas refer to themselves as *I man*, and to another person as *di man*. *Men* is the opposite of *man*. For a brief explanation of Rasta talk, see Owens (1970), pp. 64-68.

²¹ (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1969).

symbol which Africa had become largely through the impact of the Rastafari, both incumbent Prime Minister, Hugh Shearer, and Leader of the Opposition, Michael Manley, made widely publicised trips to the Motherland the year before. Each visited Ethiopia and received gifts from the Emperor. Manley's gift, however, was a rod, which in the traditional semiology of the folk represented spiritual power, a tradition the Rastafari, with their brightly painted multi-coloured rods, had continued.

Coincidentally, there were many allegations of corruption against the Government, so that when Manley, popularly known to his followers as "Joshua", in exploiting this produced the "rod of correction" which Haile Selassie had given him, he set loose very powerful emotions.

Thousands of Jamaicans came to believe that the Rod was imbued with supernatural powers, and everywhere he appeared people wanted to touch this potent source of power, a few ascribing to it healing properties.²²

Understanding quite well the potency of the symbolism, Edward Seaga²³ then claimed to have found the real rod, which was nothing more than a "stick of detention". The PNP, however, did not fall for the humour of the campaign, as many middle class persons treated it. Instead they responded by publishing a full page ad refuting the claim and in a carefully staged moment at a public meeting Manley dramatically reasserted possession of it by producing a box out of which he took it and held it aloft.

Commenting on the episode, Adam Kuper remarks:

One cannot dismiss this sort of thing as merely symbolic or as cynical vote-mongering. The historical depreciation of blackness and African-ness in Jamaica was achieved by the manipulation of symbols, and these symbolic gestures help to liberate people from ingrained feelings of inadequacy and impotence. ... Symbolic reversals of the traditional value-system have helped to undermine the whole traditional structure of deference. It is true that these things are merely symbolic as opposed to the continued inequalities in Jamaica. But this does not mean that the politicians are being cynical. It would take a very cool man to disrupt these attitudes while deliberately calculating to maintain the established system of privilege. (1976: 106-7)

²² Olive Senior, *The Message is Change: a Perspective on the 1972 General Election* (Kingston: Kingston Publishers Limited, 1972), quoted in Adam Kuper (1976), p. 105.

²³ Seaga studied folk religion in West Kingston, which he represented in Parliament.

There can be no doubting the role of the Rastafari in this reversal of values, an achievement accomplished without effecting any large scale conversion of the population. Its methodology, if one may call it that, is one of symbolic confrontation, and on many fronts: hair, language, dress and several other modes we have been unable to detail in this essay.

Kuper puts it another way. Rejecting the class and race models of Jamaican society, including the plural society model, as being rigid models out of alignment with actual reality, and substituting the folk model of status used by Jamaicans, with an ambiguity and a variability that he argues correspond more to real life, he diagnoses the Jamaican political system as fairly healthy, impervious to any threat of division based on either race or class. Thus, he assesses, black nationalism does not provide any basis on which to change the system. Where then does he consign the Rastafari?

'Rastas' and 'rich whites' do not make up Jamaica, except for television crews. But they provide useful reference points for the self-definition, by contrast, of the 'ordinary Jamaican'. (p. 99)

That "ordinary Jamaican" swept Manley into power in an election in which 60% of the new Peoples National Party voters and 44% of Jamaica Labour Party voters who switched to the PNP identified positively with the rod (Carl Stone, 1974: 26). Although the rod was a symbol rather than the cause of their identification with Manley's vision of correcting the ills of the society, Stone's figures showed that identification with the Rastafari movement was proportionately greater than with the rod.

Responses to Rastafari Movement and to the
Rod of Correction

	% Sympathetic and Supporting Rastafari	% Indifferent to Rastafari	% Hostile to
New PNP Voters	68	18	14
New JLP Voters	38	12	50
JLP Voters who switched to PNP	36	31	33
Consistently JLP voters	35	25	40

Source: Stone (1974), p. 27.

More new voters (68% PNP and 38% JLP) expressed sympathy towards the Rastafari than expressed identification with the rod (60% PNP and 12% JLP). The new voters were mainly the youths who had reached the voting age of twenty-one between the 1967 and the 1972 elections.

Not only the working class youths, but the middle classes as well were now defining themselves closer to the Rasta than to the white reference point. A fascinating development was the appearance and growth of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, a Rastafari organization formed late in the 1960s, which, according to van Dijk, has become a haven for middle-class Rastas, allowing them to preserve liberal middle class values, such as much greater equality between the sexes than among other Rasta groups. For example, women "may speak as often and with as much authority as the male representatives" and "are considered to be equal in all respects but the male comes first, just as in the Bible" (van Dijk, 1988: 11). Also, there is freedom for those who prefer not to grow the beard or wear dreadlocks, and freedom for women to wear pants -- a license which is taboo among the Dreadlocks.

Not all middle class Rastafari belong to the Twelve Tribes. There are lawyers, journalists, lecturers, doctors and other professionals who have been professing the consciousness of Rastafari but are not members of the Twelve Tribes. Twelve Tribes, however, is itself a symbol of the kind of "shift in consciousness"²⁴ that has been forced upon the Jamaican middle class by the Rastafari movement. This does not mean that the middle class is becoming Rasta. Far from it. But it does signify a tendency to identify more with the African reference point than with the European.

One of the most important aspects of Jamaican culture which facilitated the change has been popular music. Originating in the ghettos of Kingston, reggae rose to become a national music form whose popularity made the political parties use it in their campaigns. Sections of the middle classes used to deplore what they considered its artless monotony. But when reggae made it internationally, beginning with the song which made the first break-through on the English charts, Desmond Dekker's Poor me, Israelite, through to the genius of Bob Marley and the Wailers, Peter Tosh, Jimmy Cliff and a veritable constellation of stars, all shining the light of Rastafari, international approval silenced all middle class criticism and opened the way for even greater identification. The name people in the rest of the world associate most with Jamaica is Bob Marley.

The appropriation of Rastafari argot by the intelligentsia which began with the Abeng movement proved not to have been a mere

²⁴ To borrow a phrase of Ken Post.

transient fashion but to have signalled a profound and lasting change. In a recent paper, Velma Pollard traces the use of certain Rastafari words of philosophical import in the works of two of the country's major poets, Dennis Scott and Lorna Goodison, to convey a sense of black identity. "[T]he culture of Rastafari", she observes, has moved like yeast through the Jamaican society infusing all these expressions with its power" (1989: 18).

Conclusion

As an ideology racism was internalised by black Jamaicans at both folk and middle class levels of the society. For the middle class in particular it was important for upward mobility. Their role in society also made them serve as the reproducers of anti-black African and pro-white European ideas. Rastafari emerged in the 1930s among the marginalised urban population as an ideological antidote. By forcing on the country, especially the middle classes, whose dominance over social and political life was consolidated during the period leading up to Independence, a re-examination of its identity, the movement helped to achieve a readjustment to the reality of being black. External (such as African independence) and other internal (such as the short-lived Black Power movement) helped to bring this about, but there is no denying the major role played by the Rastas.

To be sure, Rastafari remains a small fraction of the population of two million people. Its impact is therefore assessed not by counting the number of adherents, but by discovering its symbolic role. This the late Edna Manley, wife of Norman, the man most identified with Jamaican nationalism, and mother of incumbent Prime Minister (for the second time), Michael, understood very clearly when in the last dated entry of her diaries she revealed that in the 1950s she was yet to understand the Rastafari, but that when she did, what struck her more was not the belief in Haile Selassie but "the identification with a Black God".

All the white imagery that consciously and unconsciously had found its creative expression in the white Christs all over Europe -- all over the world -- carried there with the Christian religion, couldn't mean the truth to the black people of the Caribbean or black America, and this was true not only in the case of the poor masses but also to the intelligent thinking youth of the middle class. (1989: 291)

All this has not meant the end of racism as ideology in Jamaica. Derek Gordon in research carried out in 1983 found light-skinned persons moving up the social ladder more quickly than blacks and remaining there in larger proportion (1988: 277). But whereas this was accepted reality in the 1940s, the middle class no longer accepts this.

During the incumbency of Prime Minister Seaga in the 1980s an often-voiced complaint was that the Government relied too heavily

on foreign and local white consultants and advisers. When therefore the new Manley administration announced the appointment of some local white advisers in March 1989, it sparked a public controversy. Many blacks were of the view that appointments revealed yet again a lack of confidence in the ability of blacks, at a time when they manifested equal if not greater competence and loyalty to the country. So hot was the issue that *The Jamaica Record*, run by a black entrepreneur, devoted two Sunday issues to the debate. In his contribution, Nettleford observed:

Some feel that the deliberate and conscious defocusing of social and economic issues away from the reality of the Black imperative in development is not the least among the causes of past failures. (1989: 4)

As with Latin America, so also with the Caribbean, it is being suggested, development policies have failed because they ignore the issue of identity, in this case black. Which is to say, assuming the argument to be true, that they will continue to fail to the extent that they ignore the issue.

This leads me to a final suggestion. Norman Girvan (1988) argues that the integration of European migrant labour into the industrialising economies of Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries took place on a basis of a racial segmentation of the labour force into "non-competing" groups. White workers were assigned the role of supplying skilled, Indians and Blacks the role of supplying cheap and unskilled, manpower. Thus, in the lowland temperate regions where European migrants settled, Blacks were relegated to *minifundios* in the agricultural sector and to the marginalised low-paying occupations of the city. Indians fared similarly.

This process was both reinforced by an ideology of racism, and in turn reinforced it. Since it benefited both white labour and white owners of capital it was characterized by a powerful alliance of attitudes and actions within the white community as a whole in relation to non-whites. Therefore it introduced a deep and abiding cleavage along racial lines so far as the development of a true "proletarian" consciousness, from the standpoint of the relations of production, was concerned. (1988: 17).

The white proletariat of Latin America is therefore itself a carrier of the ideology of racism. Girvan does not say to what extent Blacks and Indians have internalised the sense of inferiority, but is quite clear that it was natural that black nationalism and *indigenismo* were responses to the specific historical and contemporary conditions of the respective peoples of Latin America.

This makes the identity question in Latin America somewhat

more complex. While it is true that religion plays a major role in it, the fact that "the struggles of white proletarians and other exploited white groups lacked a racial dimension" (Girvan, p. 20) make their struggles that less effective and complete. Blacks in Latin America, therefore, could learn from the experience of Jamaica and the Rastafari movement, not necessarily in adopting the religion but in learning from its methodology of ideological transformation through symbolic confrontation.

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