

**Jahmaica:
Rastafari and
Jamaican society,
1930-1990**

Frank Jan van Dijk

2023 digital edition

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1930-1990**

**Jahmaica:
Rastafari en de Jamaicaanse samenleving,
1930-1990**
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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The worst evil of all are the members of that bearded cult who style themselves the Ras Tafariites and claim some kinship with Abyssinia. In reality this group has no religious significance, do not even know where Ethiopia is, and merely adopted the untidy habit of letting hair and beards grow through laziness and filthiness and a desire to appear more terrifying. ... I think that if a start is made by cleaning out these so called Ras Tafariites it will have a salutary effect on the remainder of the wrong doers.

Vere Johns, *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 June 1951, p. 6.

In the long term there is little doubt that the only method of suppressing the movement will be by sociological means.

Governor Sir Kenneth Blackburne, *Confidential despatch 637 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies*, Alan Lennox-Boyd, 10 June 1959.

A lot of middle class kids became Rastas. It is also true that by that time, their image had improved. Many were into art, doing creative things. They weren't necessarily a bad element. Their language was gaining currency among the middle classes and the school children. We had the feeling that Rasta talk was understood across the country.

People's National Party campaign manager, 1976. Cit. in Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, p. 106.

They are the ones who can bring betterment to Jamaica. I feel if the Rastas are in power, the killing and gang war will stop.

Letter to the editor of the *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 June 1979, p. 7.

To accept Jamaica as our home would be to acquiesce slavery and to condone slavery. We couldn't do that. We can never and will never give up our right to return to our homeland. We figure that the day when I and I return, the exodus take place to I and I homeland, it will be not just I and I going home now. Picture what that would mean to - picture as a symbolic gesture to - the monarchy in England. Their ancestors contributed a lot to bring my forefathers here. Picture how the Queen would feel ... to know that after all those years, after 400 years, they have not broken that spirit of I and I yearning to return to our homeland.

Michael Anthony Lorne, *Interview*, Kingston, 16 November 1990.

A note on the 2023 digital edition

This thesis was originally published in 1993. At the time, the book was distributed over a large number of (mainly European and North American) university libraries. Over the years, the book was reprinted three times (1995, 1998, 2001). In the early years of the 21st century, Ras Steve of One Drop Books at New York City was interested in selling the book. Steve published the original text with a new (green) cover for several years. One Drop Books apparently ceased its operations somewhere during the 2010's. Since I repeatedly kept receiving e-mails requesting a (digital) copy, I decided to try to convert the old WordPerfect 5.0 files to Adobe InDesign and to make a digital version available.

This digital edition contains the original text from the 1993 edition (including a few typo's). The digital edition differs in layout and hence in page numbering. The original 1993 maps were hand-crafted and of low quality in print. New maps have been made for the digital edition, except for the map of the Kingston Metropolitan Area (map 3), which turned out to be too time-consuming to reproduce. I refer the reader to the abundance of maps freely available on the Internet.

A similar problem occurred with some of the graphs, originally created in Lotus 1-2-3 running on Windows 3.1. Graph iii. (Ethnic composition in Jamaica, 1982) in the Introduction and graphs vi. and vii. (Rastafarians in Jamaica by age group and sex, 1982 and Proportional distribution of Rastafarians in Jamaica by parish, 1982) in Appendix III could not be reproduced. The accompanying tables I and II, however, are included in this edition. Finally, the original print included an Index of names and organizations. Since a digital version is searchable, the index has not been reconstructed.

Frank Jan van Dijk
Utrecht, May 2023

Preface and acknowledgements

Since this book has become lengthier than projected, it seemed a good idea to open the Preface with the wise words of Sir Winston Churchill - of which Anthony Mockler reminded his readers at the end of the third page of his preface to *Haile Selassie's war*: "a lengthy book does not justify a long preface."

To keep it short indeed: I would like to thank all those whose help was of vital importance in preparing this thesis. Too many people to mention by name, in Jamaica, England and the Netherlands, made their time available to answer my sometimes difficult, occasionally delicate or just plain stupid questions. In particular to those in Jamaica whose identity cannot be revealed: I am genuinely grateful for your patience and hope that what I have done with the information will not disappoint you too much.

In the Netherlands I was extremely fortunate to have Professor Harry Hoetink and Professor Bonno Thoden van Velzen as advisors. They had enough confidence to let me do what I thought was best, but when necessary always found the time for sound advice and meticulous editing. Special thanks is also due to Professor Arie de Ruijter, a virtual wizard in solving every conceivable bureau-crazy-related problem. In Jamaica Professor Rex Nettleford made valuable suggestions, and provided information and assistance during three periods of research. Both in Jamaica and the Netherlands Dr. Barry Chevannes kindly shared his impressive knowledge of the Rastafarian movement with me. In Kingston the staff of the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies provided practical support. In Utrecht the staff of the Department of Cultural Anthropology endured my daily presence during some two years and provided an opportunity to learn that academic politics are not all that different from Jamaican politics. Fortunately, Karin Geuijen, Marianne de Laet, Geert Mommersteeg, Wil Pansters, Marjo de Theije and Kootje Willemse were always kind enough to interrupt me and to call my attention to more important things than writing "a thesis nobody was going to read anyway." Wim Hoogbergen, Soleanie Martis, Hetty Nguema-Asangono and many others regularly referred me to interesting publications. Petra Nesselaar, Paula van Duivenvoorde and Jan Withagen assisted with the lay-out and printing, and gave advice whenever my computer refused what I wanted it to do.

Elsewhere in the Netherlands Henny van Dijk exhausted a few pens while reading drafts far more critically than I liked. Robyn de Jong-Dalziel skillfully corrected my Double Dutch and in the course of doing so also saved me from several factual errors. The remaining nonsense is entirely due to my stubbornness.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who over the years expressed sincere interest in what must have seemed an obscure subject and occupation. Since Betsie feels (wrongly) that she has not made any contributions worth mentioning, I will leave it for what it is, if only to prevent this preface from exceeding one page.

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List of abbreviations

AACG	Afro-Athlican Constructive Gaathly
ACLML	Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement
ACP	African Comprehensive Party
ACS	American Colonization Society
ALCAN	Alumina Limited of Canada
AME	African Methodist Episcopal (Church)
ANC	African National Congress
AOC	African Orthodox Church
BITU	Bustamante Industrial Trade Union
CAST	College of Arts, Science and Technology
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting Station
CCRJ	Catholic Commission for Racial Justice
CEE	Common Entrance Examination
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DAWTAS	Dawtas United Working Towards Africa
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
EATUP	Ethiopian-Africa Theocracy Union Policy
EIUC	Ethiopian International Unification Committee
ENAAD	Ethiopian National Alliance to Advance Democracy
ENC	Ethiopian National Congress
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EWf	Ethiopian World Federation, Inc.
EZCC	Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church
FAC	First Africa Corps commando
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FIOCAP	(True Genuine Authentic) Fundamental Indigenous Original Comprehensive Alternative Policy
GABOS	Great Ancient Brotherhood of Silence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IEWF	Imperial Ethiopian World Federation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JALPA	Jamaica Airline Pilots Association
JBC	Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation
JCC	Jamaica Council of Churches
JCHR	Jamaica Council for Human Rights
JLP	Jamaica Labour Party
JTB	Jamaica Tourist Board
KGB	Komitjet Gosoedarstvennoj Bezopastnosti
KSAC	Kingston St. Andrew Corporation
KTHS	Kingston Technical High School
M-26	Movimiento de 26 Julio
MND	Movement for a New Dominica
MRA	Moral Rearmament movement
MRR	Mystic Revelation of Rastafari
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCM	Negro Convention Movement
NWU	National Workers' Union
NYCPD	New York City Police Department
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PNP	People's National Party
PRG	Provisional Revolutionary Government
RCC	Rastafari Co-operative Community
RITA	Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly
RJR	Radio Jamaica Rediffusion
RMA	Rasta Movement Association

RTBO	Rastafari Brethren Organization
RUZ	Rastafari Universal Zion
SNCC	Student's Non-violent Coordinating Commission
STATIN	Statistical Institute of Jamaica
TUC	Trade Union Congress
U(C)WI	University (College) of the West Indies
UBIO	Universal Black Improvement Association
ULCHI	United Leadership Council of Hebrew Israelites
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
WLL	Workers' Liberation League
WPJ	Workers' Party of Jamaica
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

Introduction

On 16 March 1934 Chief Justice Sir Robert William Lyall-Grant reached his verdict in the court room of the small Jamaican fishing town of Morant Bay. Leonard Howell, 35-years-old, an “athletic figure” with a short beard, dressed in a black suit, was sentenced to two years imprisonment, without hard labor. The Chief Justice called Howell a “fraud.” “You pretend to have been in Ethiopia, when you have never been near the place.” Howell and his deputy Robert Hinds, who had just received a one year term behind bars, bowed and thanked the Judge. Outside the court room hundreds of followers, all with a rosette of yellow, green and black, awaited the outcome of the trial, during which, according to the correspondent of the local newspaper, “a great deal of amusement [was] afforded by the fanatical utterances” of the accused.

The police had been keeping a close eye on the activities of the self-declared “ambassador of Ras Tafari” since April the previous year, but the colonial authorities had been hesitant to prosecute Leonard Howell, since they feared that he “would revel in the advertisement of a persecution.” The meetings Howell had organized in the eastern parish of St. Thomas, however, had attracted growing numbers of poor black peasants and Howell’s speeches had become bolder and bolder. He had made “devilish attacks” on His Majesty King George V and the colonial government of Jamaica, and had called on his audience to stop obeying the authorities and to stop paying taxes and rent. Black Jamaicans, he claimed, were no longer British subjects. These were the Last Days, the final years in Babylonian captivity. The Messiah had returned in the person of the newly crowned Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I, formerly Ras Tafari. The descendants of the slaves who had toiled in the Jamaican sugarcane fields were soon to return to Africa. As the ambassador of Ras Tafari, Howell could provide the chosen with “passports,” pictures of the Emperor, for a shilling each.

Corporal Brooks and Constable Gayle had taken notes during the seditious speeches, but the evidence was insufficient to make a case. However, when *The Daily Gleaner* reported on the “blatant swindle” in mid-December it was felt that it was time to act. Within two weeks Detective R.T. Scott had arrested both Howell and Hinds on charges of sedition.

Almost half a century later, in February 1981, Leonard Howell, a resident of one of the most luxurious hotels in Kingston, passed quietly away. There was no mention of his death in the press and hardly anyone noticed his passing. But three months later, on 11 May 1981, almost all Jamaica mourned the death of another Rastafarian “prophet,” The Honorable Robert Nesta Marley, O.M..

After announcing the death of the King of Reggae, the radio stations had played his greatest hits nonstop. “We know where we’re going, we know where we’re from. We’re leaving Babylon, we’re going to our fathers’ land, in this exodus, movement of Jah people.” The next day the *Jamaica Daily News* appeared on the streets with a full-page photograph of Bob Marley in a red, gold and green frame. “The King is dead, long live the King.” When the news broke, the budget debates in the House of Representatives were immediately postponed and Prime Minister Edward Seaga, who only weeks before had awarded Marley the Order of Merit, declared that there would be an official state funeral.

On 21 May over 20,000 people crowded inside and outside Kingston’s National Arena to get a glimpse of the coffin of the man who had become the personification of Rastafari. Vendors and pickpockets did profitable business. There were thousands of Rastafarians and the red, gold and green of the Ethiopian flag was everywhere. Reporters and television crews from all over the world, and nearly all Jamaican dignitaries of any standing were present at this last salute to Bob Marley. In an Arena drowned in roaring praises to the Almighty, JAH RASTAFARI!, Governor-General Sir Florizel Glasspole, Prime Minister Edward Seaga and Opposition Leader Michael Manley read lessons from the Bible. “May his soul find contentment in the achievements of his life and rejoice in the embrace of Jah Rastafari,” intoned the Prime Minister, who also announced that the Cabinet had decided to erect a statue to Bob Marley, the man who had set the seditious message of Leonard Howell and other early preachers to music, had sold millions of copies of his albums, and had spread the message and the movement of Jah people all around the world.

Originally a parochial religious movement with strong millenarian tendencies, the Rastafarian movement has grown to become one of the most influential black movements in the world, with adherents in the Caribbean, Northern America, several Latin American, European and African countries, Austr-

lia and New Zealand. For the early - and today's orthodox - Rastafarians the former Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I, was the Messiah returned, the Living God, Jah Rastafari. They believed themselves to be the chosen, the true biblical Israelites. As descendants of black African slaves, brought to the Caribbean to toil in the sugarcane fields, the Rastafarians maintained that they were held captive in modern-day Babylon, which was doomed to perish in the Last Days. They, however, would return to the land of their fathers, Africa.

But over the years Rastafari has become a multi-faceted movement. While for some it has remained primarily the faith of Jah Rastafari, the Father of Creation, for others it has become essentially a "liv-ity," an expression of their black African identity. While some continue to see physical repatriation to Africa as their ultimate goal, for others that goal has become "spiritual repatriation" or "building Africa in Jamaica." While some have remained convinced that repatriation will be brought about by divine intervention, others have decided to realize the journey to the Promised Land by their own efforts. While some have relentlessly advocated full participation in Jamaican society in order to achieve social recognition, others have continued to insist on strict isolation in order to avoid contamination by Babylon. While most have urged the centralization and unification of the internally divided movement, many have refused to "come together inna one." While most come from the impoverished peasantry and the urban lumpenproletariat, many were born and raised in respectable middle-class families. And while for some the Rastafarian symbolism and rhetoric have become a "pathetic thing of the past," for others it has become a commercially lucrative image. The Rastafarian movement, in short, has developed into an extremely complex, acephalous movement, combining revolutionary millenarianism with escapist sectarianism, religious activism with political passivism, a quest for fundamental social change with a quest for formal recognition by the establishment.

This thesis deals with the complex process of change and development in the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica during the period between 1930 and 1990. The major aim of this study is to describe and analyze the influence of external factors on the movement's developmental process, especially the impact of the interaction with the wider Jamaican society.¹ The following chapters will thus for the most part focus on the actions and reactions of the wider Jamaican society with regard to the Rastafarian movement and on the effects of these reactions on the movement. The main sources for this study have been newspaper reports, pamphlets issued by Rastafarian organizations, documents of the (colonial) government and other Jamaican institutions, and interviews.

There are, I think, four good reasons for this approach. First, there is a dearth of detailed historical knowledge based on archival sources. The bulk of the serious publications on Rastafari are based either on a review of the literature or on anthropological fieldwork among the Rastas. A second and closely related reason is that insufficient attention has been paid to the constant interaction between the Rastafarian movement and the wider Jamaican society, and to the latter's impact on the development of the movement. In other words, the Rastafarian movement is often treated in relative isolation. Furthermore, there has been little attention for the important and far-reaching recent (post-1975) developments within the Rastafarian movement as a whole. Finally, in the more theoretically-oriented literature there is relatively little concern for the developmental process of religious movements, while comparative theoretical approaches to religious movements all too often lack a firm empirical base.

The literature and some of its shortcomings

"Co-optation and repression need to be examined in more detail."

To begin with, there is a lack of historical studies on Rastafari based on archival sources, including newspaper material. The history of the Rastafarian movement was first related by M.G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford in their 1960 *Report on the Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica*. This 40-odd page *Report*, written in a mere fourteen days, was a remarkable piece of "crisis writing," compiled at the request of several leading Rastafarians after a series of violent incidents had brought the relationship between the Rastas and the wider Jamaican society to an all-time low. Although a few newspaper reports were consulted, the *Report* was largely based on information provided by Rastafarian informants. While it was not - and did not claim to be - a definitive account, many authors have later treated the *Report* as such, in spite of Ken Post's warning that "its historical material must be treated with some care, as it contains inaccuracies."² Robert Hill's repetition of this admonition and

his conclusion that the description of the movement's history in the *Report* has been given "semi-canonical status" by other researchers, have so far not improved this situation.³

These two scholars are among the few who have concentrated on a historical study of the Rastafarian movement based on archival sources.⁴ Both were, however, concerned with the earliest years of its history. Hill published an article on the early activities of one of the first preachers, Leonard Howell, and Post included a chapter on Ethiopianism (and Rastafari) during the 1930s in his impressive analysis of the 1938 labor rebellion in Jamaica. Fragments of historical information from archives are to be found in several other publications, but many authors, especially those who published during the 1960s and 1970s, have largely based their conclusions on the history of the movement as described in the *Report*.

While there is a lack of detailed historical knowledge, there is, at the same time, a reasonably large body of publications on Rastafari based on "classical" anthropological field research (the bulk of the publications on Rasta are not based on original research at all).⁵ There are several researchers who, over a considerable period of time, have been engaged in research on Rastafari, using the approved research tools of the anthropologist. Since the early 1970s Barry Chevannes, Carole Yawney and John Homiak have published several valuable, though not always readily available accounts of the movement.⁶ These anthropologists have, among other things, tried to reconstruct parts of the historical development of the Rastafarian movement on the basis of oral histories of its adherents. The problems involved in the application of this method are well-known: stories are constantly reinterpreted and reconstructed, different informants relate different or even contradictory stories, the actual contents of the stories are likely to depend on the audience and the relationship to or position of the researcher, etcetera. However useful and significant this kind of material no doubt is, it is often hard to interpret or reconstruct these stories if the "conventional" side of the stories is either partially or completely unknown.⁷ In several cases researchers have unearthed Rastafarian stories about incidents and events in the history of the movement, without knowing for certain whether the events had really taken place or how they were perceived by Jamaican society as a whole. It is hoped therefore that the material presented here will provide other researchers with a detailed historical framework.

Secondly, the dynamic relationship between the Rastafarian movement and the wider Jamaican society, and its impact on the development of the movement over time is largely overlooked in the literature. Many authors on Rastafari, including George Simpson, Sheila Kitzinger, Joseph Owens, Leonard Barrett and Klaus de Albuquerque, as well as the present writer, have concentrated on the ideas and beliefs, the meetings and organizations, the life-style and values of the Rastafarians.⁸ Because several of these authors are students of religion, the theological and cultural dimensions of Rastafari have been thoroughly examined, not in the least - I should hasten to add - by Rastafarian authors themselves. The political and social dimensions of the movement within the broader context of Jamaican society, however, have not been given the attention they deserve.

Two notable exceptions to the tendency to treat the Rastafarian movement in relative isolation are a fine essay on Rastafari in the 1960s by Rex Nettleford, and Carole Yawney's thesis, which concentrates on a single Rastafarian leader and his group during the early 1970s.⁹ In several passages, Yawney criticizes the tendency to disregard the impact of the immediate social environment on the movement's development, both in the literature dealing directly with Rastafari and in the more theoretically-oriented literature. "Co-optation and repression need to be examined in more detail. One cannot ascribe certain developments or the lack of them to the intrinsic properties or dynamics of millenarian movements alone," the author writes.¹⁰ All this is not to say that other authors have completely dismissed the element of interaction with the wider society and its consequences for the Rastafarian movement, but rather that they have given it too little consideration. As I will attempt to demonstrate, it is to a large extent precisely this interaction with the wider society which goes a long way towards explaining change in the Rastafarian movement.

Let me give one example. The Rastafarian view on repatriation to Africa has undergone considerable change over the years. In short and without the necessary nuances, this development may be summarized as follows. In the early years repatriation was expected to happen any day and through divine intervention. As time passed and their ideas became more realistic, the Rastafarians began to see the necessity of acting themselves. The realization of their dream was no longer expected to occur in the immediate future. A considerable part of the movement even dropped the idea of a (physical) return to Africa altogether. How can we explain such a development? Leonard Barrett places great emphasis on alleged advice given to the Rastas by Emperor Haile Selassie, during a state visit to Jamaica in 1966.¹¹

During a private audience, the Emperor is supposed to have urged the Rastafarians to strive towards “liberation before repatriation.” Those Rastas who have sought (political) involvement in Jamaican society have since then frequently justified their position with references to this royal recommendation. However, as I will try to explain further on, the causes for the change in ideas about repatriation are far more complex. It was a gradual process subject to a multiplicity of influences: decolonization processes in Jamaica, the Caribbean and Africa, various undermining and co-optative strategies of the Jamaican government (including a government-sponsored mission to Africa), growing awareness and knowledge of the realities in Africa, the influence of Black Power ideas, the experiment with “democratic socialism” by the People’s National Party government, the fall and death of Haile Selassie, the emergence of a Marxist regime in Ethiopia, the rise of the middle class and intelligentsia within the movement, growing acceptance and a general lessening of tensions between the Rastafarians and the wider society.

About the third reason for this approach we may be brief. Many, especially more recent, studies of the Rastafarian movement, have tended to focus on one particular group or faction within the movement, rather than on the movement as a whole.¹² Barrett, whose monograph sets out to consider the entire movement, nevertheless relies and focuses on only a few individuals and groups, most notably on Samuel Brown, a politically-oriented Rastafarian who took part in the 1962 elections as an independent candidate.¹³ Yawney has carried out her fieldwork among the group around Mortimo Planno, who rose to prominence after he was appointed a delegate on a government-sponsored mission to Africa.¹⁴ Chevannes, in one of his many publications, concentrates on Claudius Henry and his Peacemakers’ Association, who between 1958 and 1960 were involved in a repatriation fiasco and in what was regarded as an aborted Rastafarian attempt to overthrow the government.¹⁵ In another study he concentrates mainly on the adherents of Robert Hinds.¹⁶ Homiak has worked primarily with the elders of the Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government.¹⁷ Robert Hill has devoted his attention to Leonard Howell, one of the first preachers, who later established a Rastafarian commune and claimed divinity for himself.¹⁸ And the present writer focused on the recent rise of the middle-class dominated Twelve Tribes of Israel.¹⁹ All this has contributed much to our knowledge of these specific groups, but at the same time has led to a (relative) disregard for the social context in which these groups operate. Furthermore, hardly any attention has been given to the various offshoots of the Rastafarian movement, because they are often regarded as not being genuine. Yet these groups have had a considerable influence on the relationship between the Rastafarian movement and the wider society.

The final reason for the approach chosen here relates, as noted, to the theoretical work on the development of religious movements. I do not intend to present a comprehensive review of the literature, which, if properly carried out, would require at least a thesis by itself. But a few remarks about some aspects of these theoretical approaches should be made, in order to clarify the assumptions made in this study and to enable the reader to place it in its proper (theoretical) perspective.

Religious movements seeking or expecting the advent of a just or perfect world, free of human suffering and pain, have emerged in virtually all historical periods and in many different parts of the world. Historians and theologians have produced an impressive body of literature on religious movements in the Old World, particularly since the Middle Ages, and more recently, students of the sociology of religion have produced an equally impressive body of literature on New Religious Movements in the Western world, especially the United States.²⁰ Anthropologists have noted and described their frequent appearance during this century in non-Western societies, especially in culture contact situations.²¹

There are, however, a number of problems with this vast body of literature. Because comparative studies are too often based on inadequate empirical knowledge they have tended to magnify selected aspects of a movement, which account neither for their complex character nor for their propensity to change over time. Secondly, while there have been many attempts to construct elaborate classifications, there is still hardly any agreement on basic terminology. Finally, a general preoccupation with the causes of and conditions for the emergence of religious movements, has led to disappointing results. At the same time, the further development of religious movements has been relatively neglected.

A general problem related to theory construction about religious movements based on comparative research, is that in many of these works the authors have used only a handful of, usually widely available and often outdated, case studies. The section on Rastafari in Vittorio Lanternari’s work *The religions of the oppressed*, for instance, is based on two articles by George E. Simpson, only one of which deals with Rastafari specifically.²² Laënnec Hurbon, writing on new religious movements in the Caribbean

and Rastafari in Jamaica as late as 1986, draws on a mere six publications, one of which deals with Rastafari in England, another with reggae music and a third with religion in the Caribbean. His fourth source is a publication in an educational series, which can hardly be considered as much more than a school text-book, while the two remaining sources were published as early as 1960 and 1968 respectively.²³ Yet all these partly irrelevant and outdated empirical sources do not prevent the authors from trying to reach general conclusions about Rastafari. Unfortunately, Lanternari and Hurbon are not the only ones to have used either inadequate or outdated material in their comparative studies. As one of the few critics of this practice, Stephen Glazier, remarks:

It is important to recognize that, in many respects, anthropologists and sociologists have failed to come to terms with contemporary Caribbean religions. When scholars such as an anthropologist I.M. Lewis use the Spiritual Baptists, vodun, or Ras Tafari to illustrate general theories of religion and protest or religion and deprivation, they often base their interpretations on data collected thirty years ago. Yet many changes have taken place in both Caribbean religions and Caribbean societies over the past thirty years.²⁴

In all fairness, it should be added that for those writing in the early 1960s, like Lanternari, one excuse may be that there were hardly any publications on Rastafari available, other than the work of Simpson and the *Report* by Smith *et al.* Yet with all due respect for the important contributions of these authors, this type of material hardly provides the basis of detailed knowledge necessary for theoretical abstraction.²⁵

The tendency to base general theories on inadequate empirical knowledge has not only led to outdated and static interpretations of the Rastafarian movement. There is also a tendency in these comparative works to magnify certain developments in and characteristics of particular sections of the movement, which are subsequently wrongly interpreted as typical for the entire Rastafarian movement during the whole period of its existence. In the literature on Rastafari from the 1960s and early 1970s great stress was placed on what was branded as a Rastafarian coup attempt led by Ronald Henry in 1960 (see chapter 2). The incident leads Bryan Wilson, in his *Magic and the millennium*, to conclude that the Rastafarian movement is a “revolutionist movement.”²⁶ Apart from the fact that the “rebellion” has been greatly exaggerated, armed resistance was in no way characteristic of the Rastafarian movement. As a matter of fact, Henry and his fellow “desperadoes” were not even Rastafarians. Although this was no doubt an important event in the development of the relationship between the Rastafarian movement and the wider Jamaican society, in amplifying this event as exemplary for a propensity to violence of the Rastafarian movement, such scholars in a sense make the same error of judgement as the Jamaican general public.²⁷

As Smith *et al.* stress, the Rastafarian movement has always been anything but a homogeneous group.²⁸ The diffuse organizational structure and the diversity of beliefs, ideas, opinions and attitudes within the Rastafarian movement is a factor which greatly complicates any effort to reach general conclusions about the Rastafarian movement. And when such efforts are based on inadequate empirical knowledge, they are doomed to lead to theoretical caricatures.

In the extensive literature on religious movements there is hardly any agreement on the basic terminology. A variety of designations are offered for different types of religious movements. Among the more frequently used are “nativistic movements,” defined by Ralph Linton as a “conscious organized attempt ... to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of [a] culture.”²⁹ A designation which has gained wider currency is “millenarian movements,” narrowly defined by Yonina Talmon as the expectation of “imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly, collective salvation.”³⁰ Wilhelm Mühlmann and others prefer the term “chiliastic movements,” while “eschatological movements” was coined as an alternative for basically the same type.³¹ “Messianic movements” has also gained wide currency. It implies a more restricted view of redemption as being brought about by a single divine savior, but is not always used accordingly, as André Köbben has pointed out.³² “Prophetic movements,” finally, is used by those who feel that the role of the prophet needs more emphasis. Unfortunately, these labels are often used haphazardly, causing confusion and in quite a few instances futile debates about whether movement X would be more properly labeled as millenarian or messianic, messianic or prophetic and so forth.³³ Since all these definitions tend to highlight certain characteristics of these movements, there have been several attempts to introduce broader concepts and then classify the various (sub)types. Anthony Wallace, for instance, coined the general term “revitalization movements,” defined as “a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture,” thus widening the concept to include secular as well as religious movements.³⁴ Bryan Wilson proposes a classification of seven “responses to the world.”³⁵ Weston LaBarre dismisses all these classificatory efforts as a “taxonomical game - which is sterile perhaps precisely because it embodies unexamined theory in the very act of classification,” and then proceeds to add to the

confusion by proposing the term “crisis cults.”³⁶

Both the confusion about the meaning of these designations and their haphazard use are reflected in the literature on the Rastafarian movement, where not only these labels are used, but several others as well. “Political cultism,” “cult of outcasts,” “protest movement,” “social movement,” “visionary movement” and “culture of resistance” are merely a few examples of the authors’ creativity.³⁷

Apart from the fact that these designations are often used quite indiscriminately, the definitions are usually also too static and rigid. For one thing, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Many millenarian movements are also messianic, since they expect the millennium to be brought about by a single divine savior, and nativistic or revivalistic, since they seek to incorporate traditional elements in a new world order. Furthermore, the character of a movement will almost certainly change over time. What may start out as a typical millenarian movement, may in due course develop into or give rise to a full-fledged political or social movement. There is thus little to be gained from a discussion on whether, for instance, the Rastafarian movement is more properly labelled a “millenarian,” “messianic,” “eschatological” or “prophetic movement.” It has displayed many of these tendencies during different periods, under different conditions and in different sections of the movement.³⁸ None of the labels applies to the whole movement throughout the entire period of its existence. The character of the Rastafarian movement, which is here deliberately called a religious movement in an attempt to use as neutral as possible a term, has changed continuously over time and produced various (secular) spin-offs.³⁹

As noted earlier, in the literature on religious movements there is not only confusion about the terminology, but also a preoccupation with their nature, their functions and dysfunctions, and most of all their *raison d’être*. A variety of scholars have put forward rather diverse interpretations of their nature. Norman Cohn, in his monumental study of medieval “revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists” in Europe, or Fokke Sierksma, in his controversial essays on several “messianic and eschatological” movements in different regions of the world, treat such movements as basically irrational, disruptive and futile collective fantasies of socially and psychologically dislocated and traumatized people looking for emotional compensation and outlets.⁴⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, in his study on nineteenth and twentieth century “primitive rebels” in Southern and Western Europe, as well as Peter Worsley, in his work on Melanesian “cargo cults,” reject such an approach. They emphasize the social and cultural conditions, and the strain these produce, rather than the individual mental instability of the adherents. In their view, such movements are understandable and more or less rational reactions to prevailing conditions. Both authors regard them positively as integrative forces contributing to a growing revolutionary consciousness, and thus essentially as pre-political or “archaic forms” of social and political movements.⁴¹

While there is thus considerable disagreement on the nature of religious movements, almost all authors consider them as responses of deprived groups to severe suffering. Many of these “religions of the oppressed” have emerged in the wake of natural catastrophe, epidemics, acculturation, subjugation, war and other disasters, which produce conditions of extreme economic hardship, oppression, social and political dislocation, the collapse of existing cultural institutions and psychological stress and disorientation. Such theories, whether they emphasize the cultural, social or psychological aspects, are grouped together under the heading deprivation theory. David Aberle and others have sought to refine this concept by stressing the relative aspects of deprivation as “a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and actuality” and by differentiating between various types (i.e. economic, social, behavioral or psychic).⁴² While various aspects of absolute, relative and/or multiple deprivation may be accentuated, the assumption, as Virginia Hine concludes, “that movements of all types arise out of deprivation, however it is defined, is almost universal.”⁴³

Although obviously forceful, there are nevertheless several basic problems with all these types of explanations, however sophisticated. First of all, they cannot account for the (negative or) non-cases, i.e. similar situations in which no movements arise. Furthermore it appears that deprivation is not a necessary condition for, let alone the cause, of either the emergence or the flowering of religious movements. As Bonno Thoden van Velzen and others have shown in studies of religious movements among the Bush Negroes (Maroons) in Surinam, such movements can also thrive under conditions where deprivation appears to be absent.⁴⁴ Thoden van Velzen and Walter van Beek also note another basic problem with deprivation theories: “they are couched in terms of such general nature” that they are extremely “hard to refute.”⁴⁵ But perhaps the most serious problem, as William Lessa and Evon Vogt conclude, is that a (multiple and/or relative) deprivation theory “provides little insight into any particular movement, the form it takes, or its history.”⁴⁶

Clearly, an adequate explanation of such movements must go beyond an analysis of the kind of deprivation involved to elucidate the social and cultural context out of which they grow. The proper study of such self-evident examples of religious dynamism thus can provide insights both into the subtler aspects of religious change and also in the more general processes of culture change. ... Religion is intimately bound to wider social and cultural processes, and as these change, so does religion.⁴⁷

While (multiple and/or relative) deprivation may in many, but not all cases be an important factor, the studies which concentrate on the causes of and conditions for the emergence of religious movements do not provide an altogether satisfying explanation. As a result many scholars have turned away from the problem of emergence and *raison d'être*, and focused on various aspects of a movement's actual existence and development.⁴⁸ While this has greatly expanded our knowledge of specific cases, "theory," as Garry Trompf writes, "has not kept pace with new data." The result has been an opaque and fragmented body of literature on numerous subthemes directly or indirectly relating to religious movements, in which, moreover, the various disciplines tend to neglect each others works.⁴⁹

Revitalization theory: a critique

"A deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture."

In the light of the foregoing, it may be useful to take a critical look at Anthony Wallace's revitalization theory, which, in spite of the fact that it was formulated in the 1950s, remains one of the most sophisticated, ambitious and influential theoretical frameworks for the emergence and further development of religious movements.⁵⁰ In the course of this discussion we will also touch upon the theories of several other authors.

Wallace defines a revitalization movement as "a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture." Revitalization is "a special kind of culture change phenomenon," which distinguishes itself from evolution, diffusion or acculturation because it is change as a result of deliberate attempt, rather than resulting from "a gradual chain-reaction effect." The revitalization concept is broad, perhaps too broad, and has been criticized as such. According to LaBarre, if "taken literally, [it] includes all secular social change."⁵¹ Wallace includes in his revitalization concept, for example, the Bolshevik revolutionists in Russia and, without going into further details, he argues that "the obvious distinctions between religious and secular movements may conceal fundamental similarities of socio-cultural process and of psychodynamics."⁵² In practice, however, the author restricts the better part of his scheme to religious movements, if only because he places great emphasis on the importance of supernatural visions in relation to charismatic leadership.⁵³

One advantage of a broad concept like revitalization is that it encompasses nativistic, millenarian, revivalistic, messianic movements and other "subclasses," as Wallace calls them. As noted earlier, such typological subdivisions are often too static and rigid, since they allow neither for change within a movement over time nor for more than one such characteristic. I therefore propose to speak of millenarian, messianic and so forth *tendencies*, rather than movements.

Wallace is also criticized, notably by Annemarie de Waal-Malefijt, for stressing the rationality of revitalization efforts.⁵⁴ Many such movements appear to be rather spontaneous and undirected in character.

An additional and partly overlapping objection could be made against the emphasis Wallace places on the "effort to construct." The definition is too narrow in this respect. Many movements, especially those with strong escapist and millenarian tendencies, often appear to start off as little more than a quest, a longing for cultural change, rather than as an effort to bring about such change. In such movements, the adherents feel that they themselves have no special contribution to make or active role to play in bringing nearer the transformation to a new and perfect world order. Instead, they rely on the expected supernatural intervention. The role of the believers is restricted to carving out a niche in which they then try to create their own insulated micro-society, without attempting or aspiring to affect society-at-large.

While the revitalization concept includes both religious and secular movements, Wallace argues that no movement can, "by definition, be truly nonsecular" or, to use the words of Kennelm Burrigge: "no religious movement lacks a political ideology."⁵⁵ Religious movements, though primarily concerned

with beneficent or dangerous powers, inevitably develop an (implicit) ideology about interhuman power relations.⁵⁶

The better part of Wallace's revitalization theory concerns the "processual structure" which leads to the emergence of a revitalization movement. Wallace assumes that a society is an organic whole and that, following the principle of homeostasis, it will strive "to preserve its own integrity by maintaining a minimally fluctuating, life-supporting matrix for its individual members."⁵⁷ The author goes on to describe the effects of stress, loosely defined as "a condition in which some part, or the whole, of the social organism is threatened with more or less serious damage."⁵⁸ On the individual level, to summarize the argument, stress is the result of a discrepancy between an individual's perception of the environment (cultural as well as physical) and the "real" system, which can be caused by all sorts of "interference[s] with the efficiency of a cultural system ...: climatic, floral and faunal change; military defeat; political insubordination; extreme pressure toward acculturation, resulting in internal conflict; economic distress; epidemics; and so on."⁵⁹ The individual's perception of his environment is what Wallace terms "the mazeway," defined as "a mental image of the society and its culture, as well as of its own body and its behavioral regularities."⁶⁰ Persons under "chronic, psychologically measurable stress" have a choice between two options in order to reduce stress: they can either try to change their mazeway or try to change both their mazeway and "reality." The latter option is an effort at revitalization, which becomes a movement as soon as a group of persons collaborates in a "deliberate, organized, conscious effort ... to construct a more satisfying culture."

Wallace then distinguishes five "somewhat overlapping stages" in the revitalization process "in cases where the full course is run." The first is the "steady state." This is the (debatable) stage in which the vast majority of the members of a society manage to apply "culturally recognized techniques for satisfying needs," as a result of which intolerable stress is virtually absent. In the second and third stages, to further summarize the argument, stress is building up among larger groups and accepted stress reduction techniques begin to fail, which eventually leads to "a period of cultural distortion." In the fourth stage, "the period of revitalization," a movement actually emerges and, if completely successful, brings about fundamental social change in the society, thereby reducing collective chronic stress to a tolerable level, which then leads to the fifth and final stage, "the new steady state."⁶¹ All these stages are, of course, ideal types.

A few brief remarks are in order here. First of all, one of the basic problems with all those theories which try to explain the emergence of a movement out of a crisis situation or some sort of (relative and/or multiple) deprivation, including psychological stress, is that they add comparatively little to our understanding of the nature of these movements, which need to be seen in their historical and cultural context. Only against the backdrop of older, local traditions of ideas and beliefs, norms and values, and existing social, cultural, political and economic relationships can we understand the nature of a movement and its system of belief. As we shall see further on, Wallace implicitly acknowledges this when he notes that the formulation of ideas in revitalization movements generally "depend on a restructuring of elements and subsystems which have already attained currency in the society and may even be in use."

Furthermore, the existence of collective chronic stress as such does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the rise of revitalization movements. Like other deprivation theories, it fails to explain the non-cases: situations in which there is comparable collective chronic stress, but in which no such movements arise. Collective chronic stress may, for instance, also result in collective apathy or spontaneous and undirected rioting. Here it may be interesting to refer to a comparative study by Judith Justinger, who found "no support for the hypotheses that [such] movements are the result of stress, relative deprivation, oppression by another nationality, natural disaster, the collapse of traditional values, or the loss of confidence in traditional authority."⁶² As we shall see in chapter 1, in the case of the black population of Jamaica it is hard to imagine that a considerable part of it was not under chronic stress in one way or another over prolonged periods. Yet only in a few cases did this lead to the emergence of what one could call "revitalization movements."

While I do not intend to indulge in a debate about Wallace's basic assumptions (the organic analogy and the principle of homeostasis), the postulate that there is some sort of ideal state for a society, in which chronic stress, crisis or deprivation among certain groups in the society is virtually absent, is questionable. It implies the equally debatable idea that in those situations where there is collective chronic stress, a society or part of it will automatically strive towards a state of equilibrium, in which the vast majority of the members of a society will again manage to apply "culturally recognized techniques for satisfying needs." Many societies are undoubtedly in a state of almost continuous cultural distortion, in which part

of the population will over decades, perhaps centuries, find itself in a virtually constant social, economic and cultural crisis causing chronic stress. Brute force and oppression may be successfully employed to perpetuate such situations. Slavery and colonial rule in the New World and elsewhere are obvious examples.

But the principal aim here is far more restricted than Wallace's ambitious theory. What effectively concerns us is the fourth stage, "the revitalization state." Wallace formulates six "major tasks" or "functional stages" which a revitalization movement has to meet in order to be successful and to bring about the cultural change it is seeking.⁶³ The first major task is "mazeway reformulation." This is not only a reformulation of an individual's "mental image of the society and its culture, as well as of its own body and its behavioral regularities," but also, though not specified as such by Wallace, a (re-)formulation of an image of a better world, "a more satisfying culture" and the ways and means by which to realize this better world. In other words, it is the (re-)formulation of ideas and beliefs about the existing order, about a new order and about the transition from old to new. It thus entails the recognition that "reality" can be changed (and change here includes the total destruction of the existing order) by the intervention of the divine and/or the actions of the followers themselves.

Wallace suggests that "the reformulation of the mazeway generally seems to depend on a restructuring of elements and subsystems which have already attained currency in the society and may even be in use." Taken literally, such restructuring would mean a synthesis of existing ideas only, which leaves little room for new ideas to be (re-)combined with older ideas. Although it appears that completely new ideas are often involved, the ideology or system of beliefs will always be firmly rooted in existing ideas and traditions, which in itself demonstrates the need for a historical analysis.

A mazeway reformulation, according to Wallace, is normally "abrupt and dramatic, ... a moment of insight, a brief period of realization of relationships and opportunities." Also, it usually "seems to occur in its initial form in the mind of a single person rather than to grow directly out of group deliberations."⁶⁴ Mazeway reformulation is thus a revelation, a vision or a dream experienced by the person who will eventually become the leader or prophet. Generally, the author continues,

a supernatural being appears to the prophet-to-be, explains his own and his society's troubles as being entirely or partly the result of the violation of certain rules, and promises individual and social revitalization if the injunctions are followed and the rituals practiced, but personal and social catastrophe if they are not.⁶⁵

"[A] radical inner change in personality," Wallace adds, is frequently the result of such revelations. The dream or vision creates "an intense relationship with a supernatural being." All this, of course, refers to religious rather than secular movements.

The second major task is communication. "The dreamer undertakes to preach his revelations to people, in an evangelistic or messianic spirit; he becomes a prophet." The form of communication can range from speeches at mass meetings to "individual persuasion." The message contains two key elements: converts will be protected by the supernatural and both the convert and the society will "benefit materially from an identification with some definable new cultural system."

Perhaps we may group Wallace's first two tasks (mazeway reformulation and communication) together as basic requirements for the actual emergence of a movement. In other words, if either one of these tasks is not performed there will be no movement. With mazeway reformulation alone, an individual will at best have developed an understanding of the evils of the existing order and an idea about (the transformation to) a new and better, more satisfying order - as no doubt countless individuals do. He or she may communicate those ideas and beliefs to others, but unless those others are convinced of the validity of the message, the prophet-to-be will remain a leader without a following.

The third of the major tasks identified by Wallace is organization, collective and coordinated actions directed towards a certain goal. Once the prophet has gained adherents, "a small clique of special disciples (often including a few already influential men or women) clusters about the prophet and an embryonic campaign organization develops with three orders of personnel: the prophet; the disciples; and the followers."⁶⁶ According to Wallace, Max Weber's concept of charismatic leadership is characteristic of the organizational structure of revitalization movements. While followers may, like the prophet, experience visions of the divine and thereby also enter into a special relationship with the supernatural, all followers develop a "parallel relationship" with the prophet: "as God is to the prophet, so (almost) is the prophet to

his followers.”⁶⁷ Followers thus ascribe some sort of exceptional quality or “fascinating personal power” to their prophet, a quality believed to stem from the prophet’s special relationship with the divine, which thereby forms the basis for the prophet’s “uncanny authority and moral ascendancy” over his following.

Charismatic leadership may be frequent in revitalization movements, but does not appear to be a general characteristic. The Rastafarian movement provides an example in which the majority of the followers have not entered into a “parallel relationship” with a prophet.⁶⁸ While there have been, and still are, several cases of groups under charismatic leadership within the movement, many Rastas have refused to recognize claims of special qualities deriving from an exclusive relationship with the divine. Visions, revelations and communication with the Almighty are not only generally believed to be open to all, but are also believed to be of equal authority.⁶⁹ It is probably this latter element which distinguishes the Rastafarians from many other revitalization movements.

While Worsley, following Talmon, claims that “fissiparity ... is an outstanding feature” of movements where there is “a reliance upon direct inspiration [from the divine],” it is the Rastafarian insistence on equality of authority in communications with the Almighty that has led to an extremely diffuse organizational structure within that movement.⁷⁰ It is not only that other charismatic leaders may emerge within the movement, break away and succeed in creating their own following, but rather that within large sections of the Rastafarian movement everyone is considered to be a prophet of equal standing, with or without a following. Only in a few groups does one find the structure of organization (prophet, disciples and followers) identified by Wallace. Leadership in the movement is often based on what the Rastafarians have termed “eldership,” informal, multiple leadership based on seniority, experience, knowledge, eloquence and other “respected” personality characteristics, rather than claims to and recognition of an extraordinary relationship with the Almighty.

Wallace, taking his cue from Weber, emphasizes the problem of “routinization of charisma” as “a critical issue” for a movement’s continuity. Sooner or later the prophet’s power must be handed over to others if the movement is to survive the death or failure of its charismatic leader. Here lies an inherent weakness of revitalization movements under charismatic leadership. The Rastafarian movement, as we shall see, has known two instances in which groups have almost completely disintegrated after either the death or failure of their prophet. The movement, however, also provides a (perhaps unique) example of a group which, upon the death of its charismatic leader, transferred the charisma ascribed to him to an outsider, the leader of a Marxist political party, regarded as the reincarnation of the original prophet.⁷¹

On the other hand, in the absence of charismatic leadership in many other groups within the Rastafarian movement, lies both their strength and weakness. Strength, because the continued existence of such groups and the movement as a whole is not directly dependent upon the presence and success of one leader; weakness, because it causes significant problems for effective organization. Problems of organization, according to Wallace, become more acute as a movement grows and prospers, and endeavors to realize its goals, however vaguely defined. Some sort of distribution of organizational tasks and responsibilities becomes inevitable, which normally entails a differentiation between religious (the prophet) and political (the disciples) leadership. But partly because all can claim equally valid inspiration from God, and because they have persistently refused to accept the leadership of others, many of the Rastafarian groups have been unable to overcome this problem of organization. As will be described in the following chapters, the inability to develop an effective organizational structure has in many ways been one of the major obstacles to the movement’s success - a problem of which the Rastafarians are well aware.

A movement’s further development is an ongoing, never-ending process of adaptation, which Wallace identifies as the fourth major task. Leaders and followers must react to internal as well as external events and developments. The way in which they succeed in doing so determines whether a movement will continue or cease to exist, grow or decline. Adaptation being an ongoing, never-ending process, implies that a movement also has continuously to adapt its mazeway (a re-reformulation process), communication and organization. We could also regard this as adaptation at the ideological level (mazeway (re-) reformulation) and adaptation at the practical or material level (communication, organization), which are, needless to say, closely interrelated. Change in organizational structure will in many cases require changes in ideology.

Unfortunately, Wallace has paid relatively little attention to this crucial task of adaptation, focusing primarily on reactions of resistance from the movement’s opponents.

The movement is a revolutionary organization and almost inevitably will encounter some resistance. Resistance may in some cases be slight and fleeting but more commonly is determined and resourceful, and is held either by a powerful faction within the society or by agents of a dominant foreign society. The movement may have to use various strategies of adaptation: doctrinal modification; political and diplomatic maneuver; and force.⁷²

Further on in his discussion, the author identifies “the amount of force exerted against the organization by its opponents” as one of the two major variables (together with the degree of realism of doctrine, to which we will turn further on) which determine the question of success or failure of a movement. According to Wallace the probability that revitalization movements will fail to effect change is “directly correlated with [the] amount of resistance” it faces from opponents.⁷³ In other words, the more repression a movement encounters, the more likely its demise. This, I would argue, is somewhat too simplistic. No doubt the vast majority of these revitalization movements by their very nature expect repression from the establishment. What these movements share is a quest for a new order, since the existing order is believed to be unjust, corrupt, evil, immoral and/or repressive. As such, repression merely confirms the adherents in their belief about the necessity for change. Apart from that, persecution, imprisonment and even killings - as is well known - create martyrs. Up to a certain point then (a point of total containment or virtual extermination - as recently in the tragic case of David Koresh’ Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas), repression is likely to strengthen these movements and the status of those who suffer for the good cause.⁷⁴ From the point of view of the antagonists, repression is therefore likely to have an adverse effect. Wallace’s conclusion about the probability of failure or success for revitalization movements should thus be rephrased as “up to a certain point negatively correlated” with the intensity of resistance.

Apart from the fact that there are numerous examples of movements which have been left totally undisturbed over long periods of time, repression, resistance and force against a movement are, as will be shown in the following chapters, not necessarily the only reactions a movement may have to adapt to. Subversion and co-optation strategies may be employed as well, and are perhaps an even greater threat. Both the colonial British government, successive Jamaican governments and Jamaican society-at-large have since the 1950s made use of various subversive strategies in their dealings with Rastafari, while the 1970s witnessed the widespread co-optation of Rastafarian symbols and rhetoric. The movement, as will be discussed in the following chapters, has had great difficulties adapting itself to these developments.

Apart from adaptation to actions and reactions from its immediate social environment (the society of which it is a part) a movement also has to adapt itself to events and developments which are not directly provoked by or related to the movement, but which somehow affect it. As we shall see, the Rastafarian movement was at various times greatly affected by social, political and economic developments in Jamaica, elsewhere in the Caribbean and, hardly surprisingly, in Africa. Last but not least, there are, of course, the internal events and developments which may force a movement to adjust on an ideological and/or a material level. Failures of prophecy, the death of prophets and leaders, the struggles for leadership, the rise of new generations, the assimilation of other (class or ethnic) groups, controversies over the interpretation of new developments and the like, are all changes to which a movement has to find an answer.

In the face of a constantly changing environment, a movement may also have to adjust with regard to what Wallace defines as one of the four “varieties and dimensions of variation:” the “choice of secular and religious means,” in other words the choice between the manipulation of interhuman and human-divine relationships. The use of the term “choice,” which suggests a calculated decision, is somewhat unfortunate, but focuses attention on the fundamental difference between religious and secular movements, between millenarian and (secular) revolutionary movements.

While, as Hobsbawm writes, both groups share “a profound and total rejection of the present, evil world, and a passionate longing for another and better one,” (religious) millenarian movements differ from (secular) revolutionary movements with regard to their ideas about the role of followers in bringing about the transformation from the existing to the new order.⁷⁵ Religious movements with strong millenarian tendencies are characterized by “a fundamental vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about,” but

[m]odern revolutionary movements have - implicitly or explicitly - certain fairly definite ideas on how the old society is to be replaced by the new, the most crucial of which concerns what we may call the “transfer of power.” The old rulers must be toppled from their positions. The “people” (or the revolutionary class or group) must “take

over” and then carry out certain measures - the redistribution of land, the nationalization of the means of production, or whatever it may be.⁷⁶

In secular movements the “organized efforts of revolutionaries is decisive.” The followers themselves will bring about change, for which they not infrequently work out detailed strategies and (action) programs.

But the “pure” millenarian movements operate quite differently Its followers are not *makers* of revolution. They expect it to make itself, by divine revelation, by an announcement from on high, by a miracle - they expect it to happen somehow.⁷⁷

Typical millenarian movements thus perceive a far more restricted role for their following in bringing about the transformation to the new, perfect world. Other than being faithful to the moral and behavioral codes, and performing the proper rituals to propitiate the supernatural, the adherents believe that they have no decisive role to play in creating a heaven on earth.⁷⁸ Of course, as Hobsbawm emphasizes, there are many intermediate positions between these extremes.

Wallace recognizes a trend towards increased reliance on political action, which he attributes primarily to the dynamics of successful revitalization efforts.

There is a tendency, which is implicit in the earlier discussion of stages, for revitalization movements to become more political in emphasis, and to act through secular rather than religious institutions, as problems of organization, adaptation and routinization become more pressing.⁷⁹

Hobsbawm and Worsley both take the argument one step further by maintaining that religious movements with millenarian tendencies are essentially integrating forces among politically unorganized groups. In this view, millenarianism and its appeal to the supernatural serves to overcome traditional divisions and to transcend social and cultural boundaries. As Talmon summarizes it:

In primitive societies it appears mainly in so-called stateless segmentary societies which have rudimentary political institutions or lack any specialised political institutions altogether. When it appears in societies with fairly developed political institutions it appeals to strata which are politically passive and have no experience of political organisation and no access to political power. ... It is the lack of effective organisation, the absence of regular institutionalised ways of voicing their grievances and pressing their claims that pushes such groups to a millenarian solution.⁸⁰

Millenarianism, according to these authors, reflects growing political and revolutionary awareness, and is essentially a pre-political form of protest. It is therefore likely to develop or be absorbed into full-fledged social or (revolutionary) political action. According to Worsley, there is

a general trend in the development of the cults away from apocalyptic mysticism towards secular political organization, a trend from religious cult to political party and cooperative. ... But when secular political organization has replaced millenarism, the cults which persists into the era of secular politics almost invariably lose their drive. The revolutionary energy is drained from them; they become passive.⁸¹

In this evolutionary perspective, it is presumed that the defects of millenarianism will sooner or later be realized and that eventually political action will become inevitable. Worsley in particular assumes that millenarians will seize political alternatives once they present themselves. When a political consciousness has developed and hitherto politically passive groups gain access to political instruments and institutions, millenarianism will cease to thrive and movements will develop or be assimilated into political organizations. Those purely religious movements which “survive” in these situations tend to become passive, inward-oriented sects.

Though this is obviously a forceful explanation, neither Wallace, Hobsbawm nor Worsley pays sufficient attention to what Yawney terms “the inherent limitations” which “purely” religious movements encounter in this process.⁸² Reliance on the protection or intervention of the divine, vague perceptions of the new order and transformation from old to new, doctrinal inflexibility, dependence on charismatic leadership and the importance ascribed to revelations can all severely hamper the potential of purely religious movements for political action. The transition from millenarian to political thinking may be an extremely difficult one, since it demands a fundamental shift in orientation. As I hope to demonstrate in the following chapters, it requires more than just the development of a political awareness and the availability of political alternatives. Even when these conditions have been fulfilled, and even when the adherents recognize the necessity or desirability of political action, they may still encounter various, sometimes insurmountable obstacles to effectively making such a transition.

Hence, it follows that there is reason to doubt the assumption that the development of political consciousness and the availability of political instruments, will automatically lead to the demise of millenarian expectations. Millenarianism may flourish - and is in fact known to have done so - in situations in which political awareness and options have clearly presented themselves. Noting that while, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Jamaican society provided several radical political alternatives, Yawney reminds us that the growth of the Rastafarian movement almost "outpaced the birthrate." To this may be added that already several decades earlier, during the labor strikes of the late 1930s, the social classes from which the Rastafarian movement drew its adherence had demonstrated that it had developed a clear political consciousness, while political alternatives were, though perhaps less accessible, certainly present in the form of labor unions and later popular political parties. In other words, the alleged conditions for the further flowering of millenarianism had ceased to exist, but the movement did not, as Worsley's theory would suggest, develop into a full-fledged political movement nor had it become totally passive. It appears therefore, as Talmon concludes, that "membership in millenarian movements in modern societies functions more as a competing alternative to membership in militant secular movements rather than as a preparation for it."⁸³

Yawney makes an interesting suggestion in this respect, when she asks:

Is it possible that conservative political forces would actively seek to perpetuate millenarian activities among a segment of the population which is potentially explosive, rather than risk the possibility that such people would seek a more radical alternative?⁸⁴

According to this author, more attention should be paid to the manipulation of such movements and even to "the real probability of infiltration by *agents provocateurs*."⁸⁵ Although the latter may at first sight appear a little paranoid, subversion and co-optation, as will be described in the following chapters, have played a crucial role in the reactions of Jamaican society towards the Rastafarian movement. But while they have certainly served to defuse Rastafarian radicalism, it is doubtful whether such reactions directly contributed to the perpetuation of millenarian ideas.

Failure to adapt to changing internal and external circumstances will undoubtedly prevent many movements from reaching the fifth "functional stage" in their developmental process, identified by Wallace as "cultural transformation."

As the whole or a controlling portion of the population comes to accept the new religion with its various injunctions, a noticeable social revitalization occurs, signalled by the reduction of personal deterioration symptoms of individuals, by extensive cultural changes, and by an enthusiastic embarkation on some organized program of group action.⁸⁶

Wallace here and elsewhere in his discussion links the probability of failure and success to "realism."

This group program may, however, be more or less realistic and more or less adaptive: some programs are literally suicidal; others represent well conceived and successful projects of further social, political, or economic reform; some fail, not through any deficiency in conception and execution, but because circumstances made defeat inevitable.⁸⁷

Realism, as Wallace correctly stresses, is "a difficult concept to define without invoking the concept of success or failure." Perhaps it may be understood as a proper perception and understanding of the attainability of goals in a given situation. At any rate, conventionality of perception is of little or no relevance, since revitalization movements are unconventional almost by definition.⁸⁸

"Purely" religious movements, which are characterized by a reliance on the divine and hence by "a fundamental vagueness" in their perception of goals and means to achieve them, are unlikely to effectively bring about social and cultural changes, since an "embarkation on some organized program of group action" inevitably requires political action. Waiting and praying for the supernatural to transform the world into a Garden of Eden has - so far - proven futile.⁸⁹

Although the general thrust of cultural transformation is clear in Wallace's ideal-type scheme, it is a concept which is difficult to define more precisely. To begin with, it is not only a complex problem to determine in which cases one may speak about "a controlling portion of the population," but above all about "a noticeable social revitalization" or "extensive cultural changes." Furthermore, it will often be difficult to make a convincing and direct link between, on the one hand, social revitalization and cultural change - however defined - and, on the other hand, the activities of a movement, which certainly

in modern societies will normally be but one of the many forces at work. A connection between the activities of a revitalization movement and change is perhaps too often and too easily suggested. The literature on the Rastafarian movement provides several examples, especially for the 1970s, when the People's National Party government instituted plans for far-reaching social, political and economic change in Jamaican society. At the same time it temporarily adopted certain symbols and elements of Rastafarian rhetoric for electoral purposes. The changes it eventually realized were hardly the direct result of the impact of the Rastafarian movement or even in accordance with the initial expectations within the movement. Without wanting to suggest that the Rastafarian movement has not in many different ways contributed to changing social and cultural consciousness in Jamaican society, the implementation of change, if any, has almost always been the result of party politics rather than of Rastafarian activity.

Few movements will be so successful that they actually bring about fundamental cultural change in a society. Most will be abortive, crushed by harsh repression, subverted, co-opted or assimilated into broader coalitions, will disintegrate after the death of charismatic leaders, dissolve after the failure of prophecy or break apart because in one way or another they have failed to adapt to a changing environment.⁹⁰ Wallace does not consider the possibility that movements may be so effectively subverted and co-opted, that they will eventually seek accommodation with the establishment. Although the author leaves room for modification of doctrine, he presupposes that the ultimate goal of a movement remains bringing about change in a society. But in the course of time and due to changes within the movement and the society of which it is a part, the doctrines and goals may eventually be adapted to the extent that accommodation rather than cultural transformation becomes the general objective. It will be argued here that while the Rastafarian movement has at different times sought both the radical transformation and gradual reformation of Jamaican society, it has also increasingly sought accommodation, recognition and acceptance.

“Routinization” is the sixth and final task Wallace identifies. It is again a concept adopted from Max Weber, who discusses it primarily in relation to charisma. Wallace defines routinization as follows:

If the group action program in nonritual spheres is effective in reducing stress-generating situations, it becomes established as normal in various economic, social, and political institutions and customs. Rarely does the movement organization assert or maintain a totalitarian control over all aspects of the transformed culture; more usually, once the desired transformation has occurred, the organization contracts and maintains responsibility only for the preservation of doctrine and the performance of ritual (i.e., it becomes a church).⁹¹

Routinization is, in fact, a task to be performed once a movement has effectively ceased to exist as a (revitalization) movement. It has already come to represent the (new) dominant or established culture, which has then, as Wallace terms it, entered the “new steady state,” “different in pattern, organization or *Gestalt*, as well as in traits, from the earlier steady state.”

It is hoped that this brief discussion has demonstrated that there are several problematic elements in Wallace's revitalization theory. The definition of the revitalization concept is both too broad (encompassing all secular change) and too narrow (excluding a “passive” quest for change). His organic analogy, which assumes that the principle of homeostasis and steady state can be applied to societies, is debatable. Collective, chronic stress as the cause for the rise of revitalization movements, which falls into the category of deprivation theories, cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for their emergence. Criticism may also be leveled against Wallace's focus on the crucial role of prophetic leaders with charismatic qualities, in relation to both maze-way reformulation and organization. On the other hand, Wallace pays little or no attention to any reactions from the movement's social and cultural environment other than repression. The assumption made by Wallace that revitalization movements will increasingly come to rely on political action or, as Hobsbawm and Worsley suggest, are likely to develop into full-fledged social movements, may be questioned as well. Hence, the view that millenarianism is essentially pre-political must be rejected. So, too, Wallace's suggestion that such movements will continue to strive towards cultural transformation, for it is equally likely that they will eventually seek accommodation.

Yet for all their defects and unwarranted (implicit) claims for general validity, such (evolutionary) schemes draw attention to a number of crucial elements in a movement's developmental process, which will help in understanding and interpreting some of the processes at work in the Rastafarian movement.

The contents

“His-story rather than history.”

It has been argued that in the literature on Rastafari there is a serious lack of detailed historical research based on archival sources. There is also a tendency to treat the movement in relative isolation, neglecting those aspects of change and development which are caused and conditioned by external influences, notably the interaction with the wider society. There is, furthermore, a gap in the knowledge of recent developments within the movement as a whole. Finally, there is a need for detailed description and analysis of the movement's development *vis-à-vis* the society of which it is an inseparable part, as a first step towards enabling theoretic generalization. It is hoped that this thesis will contribute towards a partial bridging of these gaps.

I should immediately emphasize that this is, of course, an attempt to tell *a* story, rather than *the* story about Rastafari and Jamaican society. It is a story, written from a diachronic perspective and based on a certain type of sources, mainly newspaper accounts, along with pamphlets, government correspondence, interviews and - needless to say - the literature on Rastafari (see Appendix II for a brief discussion of these sources). Furthermore, it is also an outsider's story, told by someone who is neither Jamaican nor Rastafarian. “His-story” rather than “history,” a Rastafarian might justifiably remark. Some Rastafarian authors maintain that only a Rastafarian can write sensibly about Rastafari. As Culture expressed it in the reggae song “Babylon can't study:”

Babylon, you can't, you can't, you can't study the Rastaman (it's bigger than you in this time).
Babylon, you can't, you can't, you can't study the Rastaman (hear me).
For when you think that the Rastaman is down (you know),
Jah Jah help I to be around.
And when you think that the Rastaman gets carried away by society,
Jah Jah bring I up to humanity reach.
Babylon, you can't, you can't, you can't study the Rastaman.
Go back to college and come again.⁹²

Research on the movement by outsiders is sometimes denounced as a form of “scientific colonization.”⁹³ I should merely like to mention that, in my opinion, the in- and outsider's approach each has its own strengths and limitations, and should be regarded as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

In spite of its length, I regard this thesis as groundwork. As usual, the major problem was not a shortage, but rather an abundance of material, and a limited space into which to cram it. No mention can be made here of various subthemes and discussions in the literature on Rastafari or in the general literature on religious movements, unless those themes are directly relevant to the central problem. Unfortunately, even within the narrow framework of this thesis, many details had to be omitted for reasons of space. The newspaper material on the period 1958 to 1961 alone, with the repatriation fiasco and the treason trial of Claudius Henry, his son Ronald's “rebellion,” the University of the West Indies' *Report* and the government-sponsored mission to Africa, would suffice for a lengthy thesis. The same goes for current attitudes towards Rastafari among the Jamaican elite. Hours of tape-recorded interviews and books full of notes will have to wait for another occasion. Apart from the material which was collected, but could not be processed here, there is a far greater wealth of material about the Rastafarian movement which could not even be collected. Archives full of untapped documents are still waiting to be explored.

But instead of continuing to explain what this study does not pretend to be, let me return to its actual contents. This chapter continues with a brief introduction to some basic “facts” about Rastafari and Jamaican society, for those readers not familiar with the movement and/or the island.

Chapter 1 discusses the historical evolution of Jamaican society up to the early twentieth century. It developed from a thriving (sugar)plantation society to an impoverished British Crown colony, and in the course of time its history inevitably became one of white, European oppression and black, African resistance in which religion often played a crucial part. Yet the two ideas crucial to Rastafari, the belief in an eventual return to Africa and the special role ascribed to Ethiopia in the ultimate salvation of the black race, were not uniquely Jamaican. Rather, these ideas, which both centered around an identification with the biblical Israelites, were to be found in many different forms, religious as well as secular,

throughout the New World. Back-to-Africa ideologies and Ethiopianism, however, appear to have had their strongest impact in two countries between which there were frequent and close contacts: the United States and Jamaica. In a sense, Rastafari was but one in a chain of movements based on similar ideas, which all sought liberation from exploitation in Babylon and redemption in Zion. But the particular form it took was heavily influenced and shaped by the specific Jamaican context and cultural heritage.

The second chapter presents an account of the early years of Rastafari, from its emergence in the 1930s up to the absolute depths in its relationship with the wider Jamaican society in 1960. The first Rastafarian preachers announced the advent of the Messiah, the imminent salvation of the oppressed black Jamaicans and their impending return to their fathers' land. With the coronation of Haile Selassie I, they maintained, the British Crown and the colonial government of Jamaica had lost their authority over black people. During its first three decades the Rastafarian movement was subject to continuous persecution. The colonial government, although at first hesitant, soon charged the early preachers with sedition or insanity, and most of the leaders spent long periods behind bars or in the mental asylum. Persecution by the security forces and repeated clashes with their lower-class neighbors soon forced the first Rastafarian organizations to keep a low profile. A brutal murder, the diminishing influence of the early leaders, a message about a land grant in Ethiopia, the struggle for independence in Africa, the Cuban revolution and other local as well as global developments all contributed to a gradual radicalization among the Rastafarians during the 1950s. Although the 1950s saw the first attempts to undermine the basic beliefs of the Rastafarians and to convert them to Christianity, repression continued to be the government's dominant strategy, which only contributed to more tensions and, during the late 1950s, culminated in several violent clashes and what was considered to be an abortive Rastafarian coup. In the perception of the general public the "small but irritating minority" of Rastafarians had suddenly become a group of dangerous revolutionaries.

Chapter 3 reviews the events and developments during the 1960s, a decade of ambivalence. Following a university report on the movement, the government decided to send a delegation of Rasta leaders to Africa, to see for themselves that it was not all milk and honey in the Promised Land. The Rastafarians were unable to overcome their internal differences, but nevertheless a controversial delegation toured Africa and also met with their "Messiah returned." However, this strategy of subversion went hand in hand with repression. While there were several more violent incidents and harsh retaliatory actions, the government invited Haile Selassie for a state visit to Jamaica, hoping that it would lead to a clear denial of His Imperial Majesty's alleged divinity. The state visit became a milestone in the history of the movement and boosted the prestige of the Rastafarians. Yet three months later the government bulldozed the slum area where most Rastafarians lived. During the late 1960s, while Rastafari began increasingly to appeal to and influence the youths in the slums of Kingston, Black Power intellectuals formed a loose coalition with politically-oriented Rastafarians. Rastafari was becoming *the* grassroots movement on the island and while the Jamaican establishment was torn between the necessity of accepting the existence of the movement and its wish to eradicate "the Rastafarian menace," the Rastas were torn between their desire for repatriation and a growing awareness that liberation could perhaps also be achieved in Jamaica.

The turbulent developments of the 1970s are discussed in chapter 4. With the full support of the Jamaican establishment, the ancient orthodox church of Ethiopia was invited to establish a branch on the island in the hope of converting the Rastafarians to Christianity. However, the 1970s were dominated by two other developments, which greatly affected the relationship between the movement and the wider society. The election campaign of the People's National Party signaled the further assimilation of Rastafari into mainstream society and its co-optation by the middle classes. In its search for "democratic socialism" the new government, under the leadership of Michael Manley, desperately tried to project a progressive, pro-black image, which produced a radical change in the social climate. Rastafarians had high hopes for fundamental changes, which were bitterly frustrated. Around the same time reggae music, closely associated with Rastafari, hit the international record charts, instantly propelling several Rastafarian artists to fame and fortune. Rastafari was rapidly becoming "the in-thing," but persecution and discrimination continued. To varying degrees youths, from both the lower and middle classes, adopted Rastafarian beliefs, ideas and symbols, giving rise to "the subculture of Dread." In the midst of escalating violence and political gang warfare, the movement experienced its heyday, in spite of the "disappearance" of its Messiah and the emergence of a Marxist military *junta* in the Promised Land. As a result of the dramatic developments in both Babylon and Zion, the Rastafarian pursuit of physical repatriation to Africa gradually gave way to further involvement in Jamaican society.

During the 1970s reggae music spread the message of “the movement of Jah people” all over the world. As chapter 5 describes, Rastafari had already made some inroads among young Jamaican migrants in England before the advent of the “reggae rhythms.” But when Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and scores of other Rasta artists rose to become internationally acclaimed superstars, Rastafari rapidly developed into one of the most potent forces of black protest. Suddenly Rastafarian-inspired groups popped up all over the English-speaking Caribbean, where they took many different forms. While in Grenada Rastafarians were involved in the coup of Maurice Bishop’s People’s Revolutionary Army, the Rastas in Trinidad seemed to develop into a pacifist and strictly religious group. The reactions of the local elites varied accordingly, ranging from concern about the negative impact on tourism to an official license to kill. Meanwhile, Rastafari in the United States was branded as the most vicious form of organized crime. In several African, Latin American and European countries, as well as in New Zealand and Australia, Rastafarian beliefs, ideas and symbols also attracted growing numbers of followers. Events abroad began to have repercussions on the developments in Jamaica and the Rastafarians made several attempts to unite the various “Houses” around the world.

In chapter 6 we return to Jamaica in 1980. With the island on the brink of bankruptcy and civil war, the Rastafarians celebrated their Golden Jubilee with concerts and a new repatriation offensive. But the heyday of Rastafari was soon to be over, at least in Jamaica. The progressive Manley government was replaced by a no-nonsense cabinet from the conservative Jamaica Labour Party. The personification of Rastafari, Bob Marley, died and “roots reggae” succumbed to dancehall “slackness.” The scores of young Jamaicans who had identified with the movement during the 1970s now turned their backs on Rasta. In the meantime, various spin-offs contributed to a further blurring of the already vague dividing lines between genuine and pseudo-Rastafarians. While “Rent-a-dreads” catered to American tourists along the island’s fine beaches, the religious core of the internally divided movement was trapped in the dilemma between isolation versus participation in Jamaican society while awaiting repatriation. The young and middle-class adherents in particular were already firmly rooted in Jamaican society, and gradually even the most orthodox groups also resorted to political means to achieve what appeared to be the new focus of the movement: accommodation, recognition and an end to discrimination and harassment. As the 1980s drew to a close, there were requests for formal incorporation as a legitimate religion, law-suits and attempts to participate in the general elections. Co-opted by the wider society, disorganized and divided, by 1990 the revolutionary potential of the Rastafarian movement seemed to have been reduced to virtually nil.

In the final chapter the major aspects of the previously described developments are reviewed briefly and an attempt is made to draw some conclusions.

The Rastafarian movement: some basic facts

“It’s more than just a physical get up and go home.”

Defining Rastafari is quite a problem, not only for the adherents themselves, but for its adversaries as well. One of Jamaica’s most popular columnists once described the Rastafarians as:

a strange sect that regard Haile Selassie of Ethiopia as a god. Even now they do not believe that Haile Selassie is dead. ... It is difficult to say what the Rastafarians believe in. Their replies to questions are a jumble of irrational and muddled thoughts and quasi-theological non sequiturs. But I think the nearest translation of their assorted incoherencies is that they regard themselves as black Hebrews exiled in a world called Babylon, worshipping a black god. White men, they say, have been worshipping a dead god and have been trying to teach black men to do likewise. They believe that the King James version of the Bible is a distortion of the truth; that the black race was punished by God with slavery for sinning. To them Ethiopia is Zion, to which, their sins forgiven, they will eventually return.⁹⁴

Despite the overt disdain, the “translation” is, in a sense, not far from the truth. The Rastafarian movement does not have a fixed system of belief and ritual shared by all or even most adherents, and also lacks an overall organizational structure. “Every man has to find out for himself,” is one of those catch phrases used to explain that Rastafari is “an inborn conception” and that “no man can stand between the I and His High Majesty.” Rastafari is a highly individual experience, in which there is little room for mediators between the human and the divine. Although there are several “charismatic leaders” who claim and are ascribed a special relationship with the divine, visions, revelations and communication with the Almighty are open to all. As a result, there are probably as many interpretations of Rastafari as there are Rastafar-

ians.

Nonetheless, several scholars have attempted to condense Rastafarian beliefs into a neat summary. Leonard Barrett, for instance, identified six basic elements, which, unfortunately, have come to be considered as authoritative.

- Haile Selassie is the living god.
- The Black person is the reincarnation of ancient Israel, who at the hand of the White person, has been in exile in Jamaica.
- The White person is inferior to the Black person.
- The Jamaican situation is a hopeless hell; Ethiopia is heaven.
- The Invincible Emperor of Ethiopia is now arranging for expatriated persons of African origin to return to Ethiopia.
- In the near future Blacks shall rule the world.⁹⁵

This summary is far from perfect, but may serve as a starting point for our introduction to Rastafarian beliefs.⁹⁶ To begin with, it should be noted that there is a fundamental problem inherent in any attempt to condense “Rastology” into a few points. Not only does it fail to account for the great diversity of beliefs and ideas within the movement, it also fails to account for the changes in these beliefs over time. But although any attempt to give a summary of Rastafarian beliefs is a hazardous venture, it is nonetheless necessary for a basic understanding. As noted before, Rastafarians normally object to outsiders summarizing their beliefs since they feel that only the followers themselves can adequately translate their beliefs. Several Rastafarian authors have explained Rastafarian beliefs in writing and it is therefore at least appropriate to illustrate the discussion of the points mentioned by Barrett with quotes from the Rastafarians themselves.⁹⁷

The belief in the divinity of Ras Tafari Makonnen (1892-1974), the former and now deceased Emperor of Ethiopia (1930-1974) who took the name Haile Selassie I at his coronation in November 1930, is without doubt the most central element in the Rastafarian belief system, although there are many different views about the exact nature of Selassie.⁹⁸ Still, for most Rastafarians he is first of all the Messiah returned.

Every Rastafarian recognised [sic] H.M. Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia to be the return [sic] Messiah We base these beliefs on our interpretation of the scriptures, and can quote many passages in the Bible which endorse these beliefs and the concept of the Divinity of H.M. Haile Selassie I. Rastafarians accept Christ in the flesh, but not the spirit ...

We believe that we have a right to acclaim H.M. Haile Selassie of Ethiopia as the Black Christ of this Era. We are not trying to change the face of history, but ... the historical prophesies should be accepted as the truth accordingly. Others accept the Dalai Lama as the God King, and no one tries to dispute the claims of the people of Tibet, so the world should be able to accept our true belief that Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia is the Christ, Champion of this Era, fighting for the emancipation of the Black Man and the Freedom and unity of Africa.⁹⁹

As will be discussed in more detail in chapter 1, many factors have played a role in the evolution of the conviction that Haile Selassie was the Messiah returned, *Jah*, the redeemer of the black race. In the New World there was a tradition of reverence for Ethiopia, for a long time the only independent monarchy on the African continent, and the coronation there of a black king of the last independent Empire was at the time regarded as the outcome of biblical prophecy. Historical coincidence played a role in the sense that the newly crowned Emperor took a series of biblical titles, which the Book of Revelation had declared would be borne by the Messiah upon his return. These titles were of crucial importance for the first Rastafarians and were seen as proof for the conviction that the Emperor was indeed the Messiah returned.

Several events later confirmed this belief. In 1935 Ethiopia was overrun by Italian armies and the Emperor went into exile in England. The war was interpreted as the final spasm of the beast from Revelation and the return of the Emperor in 1941 as the victory foretold in the Bible. A newspaper photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie, posing with one foot on an airplane bomb, convinced the Rastas of his immortality. As will be described further on, several other myths about the Emperor’s divinity emerged during Haile Selassie’s state visit to Jamaica in 1966 and upon his “disappearance” in 1975.

As black Jamaicans, whose forefathers had been enslaved and taken from Africa to the sugar plantations of the New World, the Rastafarians believe themselves to be the true biblical Israelites, the chosen, exiled in modern-day Babylon, the Western world. This conviction is based on a belief held by

many black people in the New World that there is a clear parallel between the fate and history of the biblical Israelites and that of the black race. The biblical diaspora was equated with the black diaspora that resulted from the Atlantic slave trade. The exile and captivity in biblical Babylon were likened to slavery and exploitation in the New World. And, logically, the biblical promise of a return to and redemption in Zion were equated with a return, repatriation, to the homeland. For many, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 1, it was more than just a parallel. It was the discovery of their true identity. The black people were the true biblical Israelites.

The notion of being the true biblical Israelites was thus closely and inseparably connected with the vision of Jamaica as Babylon and Africa as Zion, and hence with the belief in the inevitability of repatriation. The Rastafarian world view is dualistic, with the opposition of good and evil being represented by Zion and Babylon. Babylon is “the corrupt establishment of Western society ... built upon capitalism and imperialism which elevates itself over human life.”¹⁰⁰ In a narrower sense the term is also used to refer to the police “as upkeepers of the wicked system.” England and the United States are often viewed as the main centers of Babylon, but it is the Vatican where the headquarters of Babylon are located. To the Rastafarians the Pope is the “personification and lineal representative of the devil, just as the Emperor is the personification of Jah Almighty.”

Through the Pope, Babylon is perpetrated. Confusion, chaos and mayhem spread, as he heads the Roman Catholic Church and leads its followers into captivity. The Rastafari recognize that the Roman Catholic Church is the head of Christianity and because of its ancience and power it has truth. But the Rastafari state that through the Pope, the Roman Catholic Church presents the truth to the people backwards, sideways and upside down, thus creating confusion and chaos amongst the people, making them slaves of colonialism and imperialism through making them worship the devil (Pope) instead of Christ.¹⁰¹

The Pope, according to the Rastafarians, is not only the head of the Roman Catholic Church, but also the *de facto* leader of the mafia, the fascists and the Ku Klux Klan. Rastas will point out that it were the Romans who crucified Christ and the fascist armies of Mussolini who attacked and occupied Ethiopia.¹⁰²

Jamaica, “Jamdown,” is an outpost of Babylon, the Western world, where the Rastafarians are strangers in a strange land, oppressed and exploited by the descendants of the white colonial slave masters and their brown and black successors. Babylon has held the black man in slavery for centuries and now tries to keep him in “mental slavery.” It is a complex system of oppression which the Rastafarians have to face, a system in which no means are spared to “downpress” them. Religion, indoctrination, education, politics, rumor, intimidation, violence and war are all used to keep the black race powerless, ignorant, servile and in poverty. The clergy, the politicians, the big businessmen, the press, the police, the army, the teachers are all part and puppets of Babylon. The Rastafarians, the ones who have come to Jah, *know* this (Rastafarians insist that they do not “believe,” for belief implies doubt).

Zion is Africa, in particular Ethiopia. Ethiopia is used to refer to both the state and the continent. Africa is Ethiopia and Ethiopia is Africa. But the country Ethiopia, as the seat of His Imperial Majesty, is the spiritual center. Africa will eventually be restored to its former glory and once again become the place where “righteousness rules” under the guidance, authority and protection of Jah. Rastafarians have a cyclical conception of time. They “know” that Africa is the birthplace of mankind, the richest, wealthiest and most fruitful place on earth, which had achieved the highest degree of civilization in ancient times. But because of its sins, the black race was conquered, enslaved and held in Babylonian captivity by the white oppressors for centuries. The return of the Messiah as Emperor Haile Selassie marked the end of the suffering. “As it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the end.” Jah will restore the natural world order.

Repatriation, rather than migration, to Africa is part of the fulfillment of prophecy and the restoration of the natural scheme of things. In its broadest sense it is a return of all races to the territories where they belong. The Europeans to Europe, the Africans to Africa, the Chinese to China and so on. Jamaica, like the rest of the Americas, originally belonged to the Amerindian population, and will eventually be returned to them.

The repatriation issue may serve as an example of the many different ideas within the Rastafarian movement. Some Rastafarians maintain that repatriation will come about through divine intervention and that the faithful cannot do much to bring it closer, except to practice patience. “Wait I and I must.” Jah will some day send ships, seven miles of Black Star Liners, to collect his lost sons and daughters.

Others maintain that repatriation is a state to state affair to be settled between the heads of government or by the United Nations. Still others maintain that it is perfectly right to take action themselves and to collect money and means to send pioneers to the Promised Land, which some regard as Ethiopia proper and others as the whole of Africa. Then again there are those who feel that the Rastafarians should temporarily abandon the idea of repatriation because of the situation in Ethiopia or should drop the idea altogether and try to “build Africa in Jamaica.” These positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but reflect some of the different beliefs adhered to within the movement. And, as we shall see, the influence of and support for one or the other opinion has changed over time. But the idea of a return to Africa remains a central issue in “Rastology.” As one of the leading intellectuals in the movement explained:

To accept Jamaica as our home would be to acquiesce slavery and to condone slavery. We couldn't do that. We *can never* and *will never* give up our right to return to our homeland. We figure that the day when I and I return, the exodus take place to I and I homeland, it will be not just I an I going home now. Picture what that would mean to - picture as a symbolic gesture to - the monarchy in England. Their ancestors contributed a lot to bring my forefathers here. Picture how the Queen would feel ... to know that after all those years, after 400 years, they have not broken that spirit of I and I yearning to return to our homeland.

So, it's more than just a physical get up and go home, you know. In other words, what it would represent to the whole world, that a people, I and I, who have remained unconquered even after 500 years. That would show a difference in the mentality of the black man. Just come in like Nelson Mandela. He has brought out a spirit of the black man, by virtue of remaining in prison and only come out in an uncompromising manner.

During slavery they bought a lot of our slaves with saltfish and rice and peas, and food and trinkets. They were able to convince the chiefs in Africa with trinkets, mirrors and those things. They are doing it now with Volvo's and visa's and video's - some of the leaders. You *must* make these people understand that there is a set of people that these trinkets, these saltfish and rice and peas, these Volvo's and video's cannot buy. And that is I and I, the Rastafarians, who *will* return to our homeland.¹⁰³

In his identification of the six basic beliefs of the Rastafarians, Barrett overemphasized racial, if not racist, ideas and the opposition between black and white. As Joseph Owens has clearly demonstrated, there is a strong *racial awareness* among Rastafarians, but hardly any racism.¹⁰⁴ Even the most staunch proponents of “black supremacy” in the movement acknowledge that “some white man can have a black heart,” as a priest of the Africa Ethiopia Black International Congress Church of Salvation once told me after a two hour cross-examination. “Black” or “white” to the Rastafarians is not primarily a matter of skin color, but rather of mentality, “a function of the heart.” Just as there are outward whites who can be inwardly black, there are outward blacks who are inwardly white. As Carole Yawney writes:

One of the paradoxes of the movement is the fact that despite their unequivocal rejection of entire classes of people on ideological grounds, the Brethren always make exceptions for any individual who comes among them with a sincere intent. The Rastas say that one must be careful how one treats a stranger for one never knows who is an angel - and besides, God says that “remnants of all nations shall be saved.”¹⁰⁵

Barrett himself notes that “despite the rhetoric, the Rastafarians, contrary to many reports, are not anti-White. The White race is seen as oppressors, but not all White people are considered evil.”¹⁰⁶ Although it does appear that earlier preachers, like Leonard Howell, firmly believed in the inferiority of the white race (defined by skin color), the dominant attitude among Rastafarians today is one which stresses the brotherhood of man, regardless of race or skin color. The fact that some Rasta organizations have whites in their membership, as well as persons of Indian, Chinese and mixed origin, speaks for itself.

In essence then, the only beliefs held in common by the Rastafarians today are that His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia is the Messiah returned - although even here there are a great many nuances - and that the Rastafarians in particular and the black population in general are the descendants of the true Israelites, with a moral right to African identity and nationality, which most consider to include the right to return to and become citizens of Ethiopia or any other African nation.

The Rastafarians have fundamentally rejected the basic norms and values of the wider Jamaican society, with its strong cultural orientation towards Britain and the United States (“Jamerica” is another of those words invented by Rastas to denote the Americanization of Jamaican society). In anticipation of their repatriation to the Promised Land, the Rastafarians began to search for their lost African identity, a quest which has resulted in the development of a unique lifestyle, centered around independence, peace and love, and living in harmony with nature became the central themes. The beards and the long “dreadlock” hairstyle, the use of ganja (marihuana or Cannabis Sativa L.) as “the wisdom weed,” the red, gold and green colors of the Ethiopian flag, and the distinctive Rastafarian dialect, are only the

better-known outward symbols of this new identity.

Rastafarians attach great importance to independence in all respects. Independence manifests itself in the belief that “no man can stand between the I and the High Majesty.” As believers in the divinity of Jah, the Rastafarians consider themselves a temple of Jah. All have received a special revelation from Jah, all can claim divine inspiration and all are therefore divine themselves. As such all have an equal right and ability to communicate with Jah and to interpret “Rastology.”¹⁰⁷ Many, but not all, refuse to submit to self-styled leaders and only respect the experience and wisdom of the “elders,” those who have been Rastafarians for a long time, and have attained a level of understanding and insight that the younger adherents have yet to reach.

The importance of independence is also reflected in the fact that many try to avoid working in wage employment, which they often regard as a form of slavery. Instead they prefer to establish themselves as independent farmers, artisans, petty traders and the like. Self-employment, however, is as much an ideal as a necessity, because unemployment in Jamaica is rampant and most employers still refuse to hire a full-fledged Rasta.

Despite their often seemingly aggressive use of words like “war,” “revolution,” “soldiers,” “warriors,” “freedom fighters,” and so on, the Rastafarians continuously stress Peace and Love. Rastafari is, contrary to the opinion of many Jamaicans, non-violent: “Perfect love driveth away all fear.” Rastas have always denounced the use of force and violence by others as well as by those who professed adherence to the movement. In an environment where violence is widespread and in a situation where the Rastafarians are prone to outright persecution, it requires strength to live in peace and to love one’s enemy. Yet many Rastafarians have managed to do so and accept no excuse for the use of violence by one of their own.

As Israelites Rastafarians observe the laws of the Old Testament. Most Rastas observe strict dietary taboos. The Divine Theocracy Temple of Rastafari Selassie I prescribes: “Thou shall eat no meat, fish, salt, eggs, bully beef, sardines, chickens, mutton, beef, codfish, no alcoholic elements such as rum, beer, stout, wine, gin brandy, no beverages, nothing out of tins or Bottle.”¹⁰⁸ These taboos are not kept by all Rastafarians, though virtually all will refuse to eat pork. Rastafarians try to live in close harmony with Nature and as such detest all “chemically” prepared food, which includes everything grown artificially, for instance with fertilizers, and all canned food. In their pure, natural *Ital* diet they prefer locally available fruits and vegetables. Hard drugs and alcohol are also considered to be chemical products, as are many conventional medicines.¹⁰⁹ The more orthodox Rastas carry this natural way of life to the point of using only natural and often self-made materials for clothing and they do not use plastics (e.g. for dishes or cups). Apart from being natural, their life style is also often sober and humble, without any of the Babylonian luxuries.

Ganja, the most common name for marihuana in Jamaica, is to the Rastafarians one of the natural herbs created for man. The “holy herb” or “wisdom weed” is their source of religious inspiration and a means of communication with Jah.¹¹⁰ Smoking the herb enables the Rastas to reach a level of understanding and insight which cannot be otherwise attained. Since its introduction by Indian indentured laborers during the mid-nineteenth century, ganja use has become common among the Jamaican lower classes.¹¹¹ The Rastafarians, however, were the first to give it religious justification, based on their interpretation of several Bible passages. Genesis 1:12, for instance, states: “And the earth brought forth grass, and herb ... and God saw that it was good.” Exodus 10:12 urges: “... and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left.” Psalm 104:14 says: “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man ...”

Many Rastafarians today grow their beards and hair, the latter in the now well-known long, matted dreadlocks. The exact origin of the style is unknown, but the dreadlocks, as will be discussed in chapter 2, first appeared in the late 1940s and early 1950s. There have been references to pictures of Ethiopian warriors, to a tradition among Galla and Masai tribes in Eastern Africa, to photographs of Kenyan Mau Mau rebels and paintings of Christ, to the lion’s manes as a symbol of African power, the biblical story of Samson, the *Jatavi* (locks) of Hindu priests, the “natural” growth of black persons’ hair, and to several passages in the Old Testament, such as Numbers 6:5: “All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.” And Leviticus 19:27 says: “Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shall thou mark the corners of thy beard.” Today dread-

locks have become the prime outward characteristic of Rastafari, although not all Rastas wear locks and not all “dreads” are Rastafarian. Since the 1970s it has become a fashionable hairstyle for many non-Rastafarians, but many Jamaicans still identify a Rasta by his locks.

Rastas also attach great importance to the power of the spoken word, which has resulted in the development of a unique Rastafarian idiom, known as *Iyarc*.¹¹² Special significance is assigned to the pronoun “I.” It reflects the Rastafarian belief that they themselves are divine, a temple of Jah, as well as their pride and self-respect. “I,” in Jamaican patois phonetically identical to “high,” has replaced the subservient “me” (“I and I” is the plural “we”) and Rastafarians will frequently talk about themselves as “I-man” (the plural “men” is reserved for non-Rastafarians). “Me read me Bible,” as proper Jamaican patois would have it, becomes “I-man read I Bible.” In the Rastafarian language “I” has also come to replace the first syllable of numerous words: “Ivine” (divine), “Ital” (vital or natural), “Issembly” (assembly), “Iration” (creation) or “Ithiopia” (Ethiopia) are some examples. Haile Selassie I (Roman numeral) has become Haile Selassie I (pronoun) or Haile I Selassie I (pronouns), while Rastafari is pronounced as RastafarI. The INRI (Jesus Nazareus Rex Iudaeorum) has become “I Negus Rule Ithiopia,” in which “Negus” is the Ethiopian title of King.

The Rastafarians have also modified existing words, which in their view have incorrect negative or positive connotations. A negative word like “oppressor,” which includes the (positive) element “op” or “up,” has become “downpressor.” Similarly, a “deadline” has become a “lifeline.” “Back to I and I roots,” implying a regression, has become “forward to I and I roots.” Words are also scrambled to reveal their symbolic power. Transposing one letter in “words” makes “sword,” which according to the Rastafarians is no coincidence and signifies that words can do as much harm as the sword. Names have also been reworked. Ras Tafari (Emperor Haile Selassie) is often referred to as “Rasta Far Eye.” Queen Elizabeth II (Roman numeral) has become Queen Elizabitch. The University College, commonly known as the UC until the 1960s, became “You blind.” Former Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga suffered a similar fate and became “Blind-aga” or, because of his close links with the Reagan administration, “CIA-ga.” Jamaica has been termed “Jamdown,” to highlight its oppressiveness, but also “Jahmek-ya” or “Jahmaica,” to indicate that even that beautiful little rock in the Caribbean Sea was created by Jah the Almighty.

There are no reliable data about the numbers of Rastafarians in Jamaica. Until 1982 Rasta was not included in the population censuses (see Appendix III for a discussion of the data from this census, which registered a mere 14,249 Rastafarians). The fragmented organizational structure, the absence or unavailability of membership registration and the objections of Rastafarians to cooperating in censuses account for the lack of useful information from within the movement itself. Claims of Rastafarians that six out of every ten Jamaicans are either Rasta or Rasta sympathizers or claims that the movement has a biblical 144,000 adherents are either grossly exaggerated or completely fictitious.

Leonard Barrett’s 1977 estimate of 100,000 Rastafarians, including undefined sympathizers, has become almost generally accepted.¹¹³ Although this figure represents only some 5% of the total Jamaican population, it remains a somewhat wild and probably exaggerated guess. As will be explained in Appendix III, a figure somewhere around 50,000 - although little more than yet another “guesstimate” - seems more likely, at least for the early 1980s. Yet it should immediately be added that there is a general consensus that the impact of the Rastafarian movement on Jamaican society far exceeds its numerical strength.¹¹⁴

The social composition of the Rastafarian movement was (in the mid-1970s) summarized by Barrett as 1) young, with up to 80 percent between 17 and 35 years of age, 2) predominantly male, 3) until 1965 predominantly lower class, 4) of black African origin and 5) predominantly ex-Christian.¹¹⁵ The 1982 census data, if treated as a random sample, largely confirm these earlier observations, made during the mid-1970s. The age group distribution has changed somewhat, perhaps as a result of a natural increase in the numbers of Rastafarians between the ages of 35 and 50, and because of an increase in the numbers of Rastafarian children (over 17% in the census was under 15 years of age). The percentage of female Rastafarians is still relatively small (including children, a mere 12% in the census), but may have increased since the 1970s, especially among middle-class Rastas. The census does not give any indications about social-economic, ethnic or religious background, but it appears that the movement is still predominantly lower class, although the number of middle and upper-class Rastafarians has steadily increased over the years. In a country where the vast majority of the population is of black African descent and from a Christian background, the last two characteristics of the social composition

of the Rastafarian movement are fairly predictable.¹¹⁶

Jamaican society: some basic facts

“Censuses in Jamaica are works of fiction.”

The island which many Rastafarians want to leave is one of the Greater Antilles in the Caribbean Sea, located between 17E43' and 18E32' northern latitude, and between 78E21' and 76E11' western longitude. To the north lies Cuba at a distance of a mere 140 kilometers, to the east Haiti at about 180 kilometers (see Map 1). The island covers an area of 10,962 square kilometers. Its greatest length is approximately 240 kilometers, its greatest width some 80 kilometers.

Jamaica is mountainous, almost half of its surface lies above 500 meters. Located in the eastern part of the island is the impressive Blue Mountain Range, which stretches from the southwest to the northeast and reaches a height of 2,292 meters (Blue Mountain Peak). Jamaica's western part is dominated by a 300 to 900 meters high limestone plateau. In this area, around Manchester, bauxite is found. The central northwestern part of the island is known as the Cockpit Country, a rough, inaccessible and strangely sculptured karst-like landscape. In the southern part of the island there are several large plains, site of the main agricultural districts. The most important of these are the Liguanea Plain around the capital city of Kingston and the areas around Savanna-la-Mar, Black River, and between May Pen and Spanish Town (see Map 2).¹¹⁷

Jamaica has a tropical climate, influenced by northeastern trade winds and is prone to hurricanes, which have ravaged the island on several occasions, the latest being in September 1988 (Hurricane Gilbert). Due to the mountain ranges, the northeastern part of the island usually receives more rain than the southwestern part. The main rainy season ought to be from about August to October, with a minor season around May. Temperatures, in the lower areas, vary between 25 and 30 degrees Centigrade throughout the year.

Data from Jamaican population censuses and government statistics should be treated with care. They may be open to political manipulation, are incomplete and sometimes even contradictory. As Morris Cargill once illustrated the point:

Map 1. The Caribbean



Map 2. Jamaica



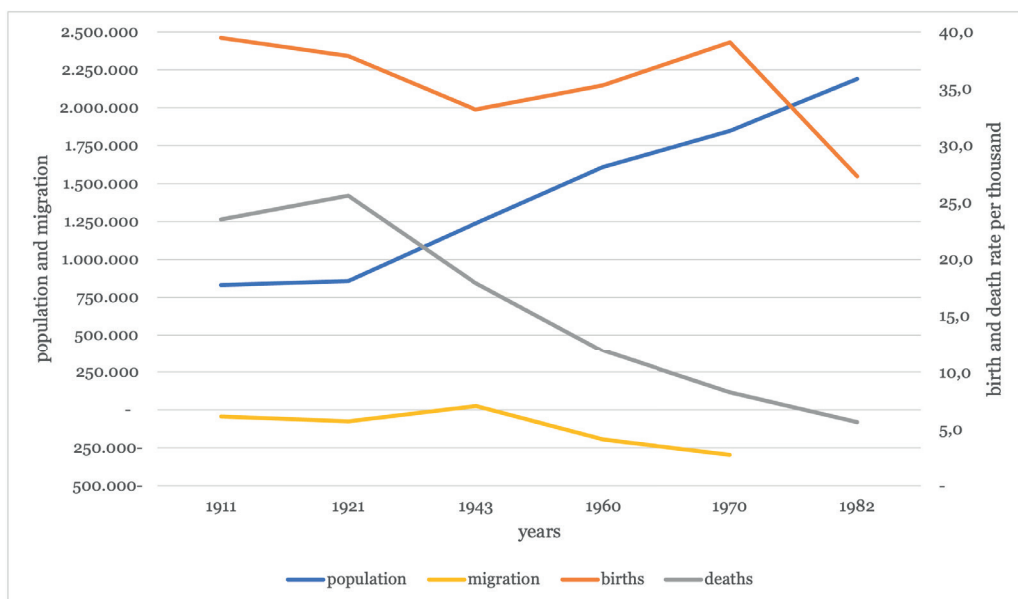
Tom is as near jet-black as it is possible for anyone to be. But in the last national census he put himself down as Scottish, which is one of about a million reasons why censuses in Jamaica are works of fiction.¹¹⁸

Although exaggerated, this points out the weaknesses of Jamaican “facts.” In the absence of more reliable data, however, they have to serve as indications.¹¹⁹

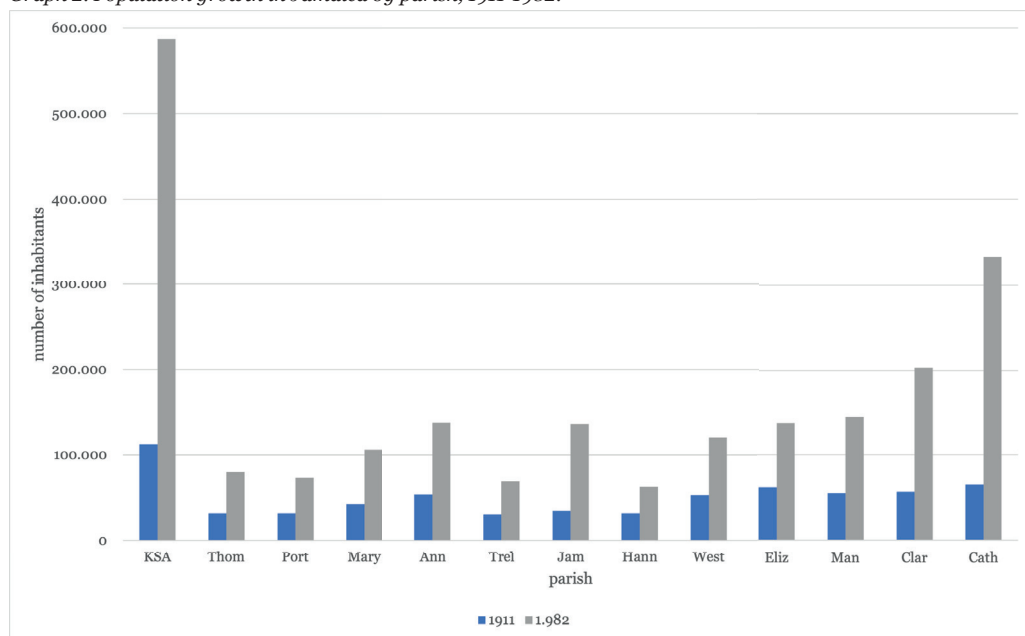
Jamaica has experienced a rapid population growth over the past few decades. In the 1911 population census 831,400 Jamaicans were counted. Some seventy years later, in 1982, the total population stood at approximately 2,190,300 (see Graph i). The most recent figure available at the time of writing, for 1989, estimated the population at 2,392,000.¹²⁰ As in many other Third World countries, the death rate has rapidly fallen, from 25.6 per thousand in 1921 to 5.6 per thousand in 1982. During that same period, the birth rate declined only slowly, from 37.9 to 27.3 per thousand, and even witnessed an increase between 1943 and 1970. However, due to large migration losses, the actual growth of the total population has been significantly lower than the natural increase would suggest, with the exception of the intercensal period 1921-1943.

As a result of the high birth rate, a large proportion of Jamaica’s population consists of children. In 1982 some 38% of the total population was under 15 years of age (in 1970 this figure was still as high as 46%), while the proportion of the population in the 15-29 years age group was 28%.¹²¹ Average life expectancy stood at 71 years in 1981.¹²²

Graph i. Major demographic developments in Jamaica, 1911-1982.



Graph 2. Population growth in Jamaica by parish, 1911-1982.



Jamaica has undergone a rapid urbanization process. In 1982 almost 48% of Jamaica's population was classified as urban, whereas in 1943 this figure was slightly over 19%.¹²³ The major city and capital of the island is the city of Kingston, located on the south-eastern coast in the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew (for administrative purposes the island is divided into fourteen parishes). Kingston, officially known as the Kingston-St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC), has a population, at least according to the 1982 population census, of some 525,000 or 24% of the total population.¹²⁴ In reality this figure is probably higher. Other major towns are Spanish Town, the former capital west of Kingston with a population of 89,000; Portmore, a booming residential area at a short distance southwest of Kingston with a population of 73,400; Montego Bay, one of Jamaica's major tourism centers along the northwestern coast with 70,300 inhabitants and the regional centers of May Pen and Mandeville with a population of 41,000 and 34,500 respectively (see Map 2).

As can be seen from Graph ii, the KSAC has had to cope with a tremendous population growth during the twentieth century. Apart from the parishes of St. James, with Montego Bay, St. Catherine, with Spanish Town and Portmore, and Clarendon, with May Pen, all other (predominantly rural) parishes experienced only moderate increases in their population. Until 1970 the rate of growth of Kingston was by far the largest. In 1911 some 13.5% of the population lived in the capital city, but by 1970 the figure had risen to 28.7%. After 1970 secondary towns, like Portmore, Spanish Town and Montego Bay, have shown a faster growth rate than the island's capital, as a result of which its proportional importance witnessed a slight fall to 26.8%.¹²⁵

Jamaica's population is predominantly of black African origin, descendants of slaves from Africa's West Coast. In the 1982 population census close to 75% of the population classified itself as "Negro/Black" (see Graph iii, not available in this digital edition). Again, in reality the percentage is higher, since almost one tenth of the population, for one reason or another, refused to answer the question and was listed as "not stated." Another 13% of all Jamaicans described themselves as "Mixed/Negro" (mulatto). Furthermore, there are small groups of "East Indians," "other mixed," "Chinese" and "Whites." The remaining part of the Jamaican population consists of people classified as "others."¹²⁶

In spite of the island's National Motto *Out of Many One People*, suggesting complete racial harmony, ethnic origin and skin color are still of great social significance. The relationship between social status and "color" or "race" is a complex one. Here it is sufficient to note that in the period of slavery (until 1834), as will be discussed in chapter 1, social status and economic and political power in Jamaican society were based on a three-layered hierarchy, in which the white, European population formed the top, a significant group of what in the Jamaican context are termed "brown men" formed an intermediate mid-

dle class, and the black, African masses the lower classes. As relatively late arrivals, the approximately 36,000 East Indian and 5,000 Chinese indentured laborers who came to Jamaica during the nineteenth century, were “assigned” an intermediate social position.¹²⁷ The small numbers of Syrian and Lebanese migrants, most of whom established themselves as traders, were assimilated into the “white” elite.

As time passed and the upward social mobility of the black and mulatto population increased, the once neat “class-color correlation” faded. Yet the colonial heritage still affects Jamaican society. The small group of whites, including the Syrian/Lebanese, continues to exercise disproportionate influence and power over the island’s economy and politics. Many of the few really powerful and wealthy families in Jamaica are (near) white, including the families of the political leaders who have dominated Jamaican politics since 1944. In the middle classes the mulatto part of the population is, despite the increased social mobility of recent decades, still well-represented. The overwhelming majority of the lower classes, the peasantry and what one could term the lumpenproletariat or under class, is black.¹²⁸

Among the middle and upper classes in Jamaica, the dominant cultural orientation has long been exclusively European (British) and American. As a former British colony, the “official” language spoken in Jamaica is English and the “Queen’s English” is regarded as good and civilized. The majority of the population, however, speaks “patwa” (patois or, perhaps more accurately, Jamaican Creole), a dynamic mixture of several African languages and English, which is generally perceived by the elite as the lower-class language, the language of the poor black peasantry. Similarly, the elite considers European features - a thin nose, small lips, straight hair and a light skin color - to be more beautiful and desirable than African somatic features. The focus on European and American values is not limited to language and physical traits, but extends to such diverse aspects as family life, marriage, education and clothing. In the course of sustained upper-class confirmation of the “good” European traits and values, and the “bad” African traits and values, the preferences of the elite have trickled down to the lower social economic strata. As Rex Nettleford summarizes it:

The fact is that we are still enslaved in the social structure born out of the plantation system in which things African, including African traits, have been devalued and primacy is still given to European values in the scheme of things.¹²⁹

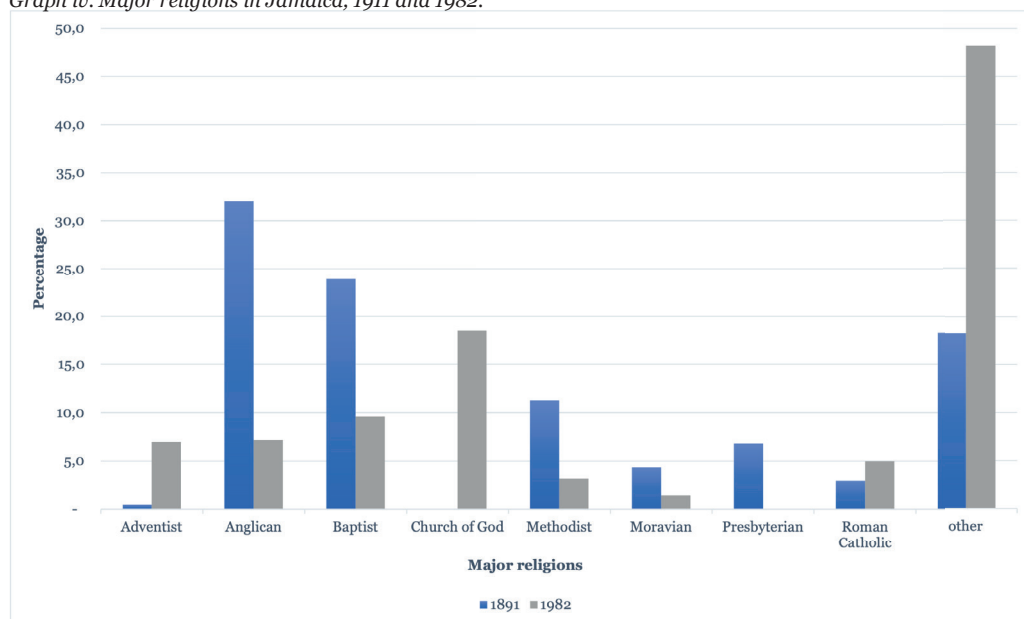
Conformation to the European bias of the elite has long been a necessity for upward social mobility. In recent years, however, there are evident signs of a growing acknowledgement of their African heritage and descent among the black and mulatto population. The Rastafarians, as we will see further on, have played an important role in this revaluation of Jamaica’s African legacy.

Jamaica is said to belong in *The Guinness Book of Records* by virtue of having the largest number of churches per square mile. The Jamaicans claim to be a “religious” people. Almost every conceivable Christian denomination is present. In recent times the traditionally most influential churches, Anglican, Baptist and, to a lesser extent, Presbyterian, Methodist, Moravian and Catholic - commonly described as the established churches - have rapidly lost ground to American-based Pentecostal churches (Church of God, see Graph iv). The greatest loss was without doubt experienced by the Anglican Church. Whereas in 1943 over 350,000 persons claimed adherence to this church, this number had decreased to fewer than 155,000 by 1982. The Baptist Church lost some 100,000 members during the same period. So, whereas in 1943 more than half of the population was either Anglican or Baptist, this figure had fallen to fewer than 17% in 1982. Within the same 40 year period, the Methodists and Moravians experienced a decline in membership of about 40,000 and 20,000 respectively. Only the Roman Catholic Church grew in absolute numbers during this period; from 70,000 in 1943, via a record 142,000 in 1970, to 107,000 in 1982.

On the other hand there has been a very rapid rise in the number of adherents of Pentecostal fundamentalist religions, grouped under the heading Church of God, which counted over 400,000 members in 1982, almost a tenfold increase over the 1943 number. Today almost one in every five Jamaicans claims to adhere to the Church of God. At the same time, however, the number of Jamaicans who claim to be non-religious has also increased rapidly. In 1943 just under 50,000 persons said that they had no religion. By 1982 this figure had risen to over 385,000.¹³⁰

Apart from the so-called established and evangelical churches, there are also several African or Afro-Christian churches, cults and sects, like Kumina, Convince, Pukumina (or Pocomania) and Revival or Revival Zion. Membership in these churches is often not openly admitted, as they are still perceived

Graph iv. Major religions in Jamaica, 1911 and 1982.



to be “backward” by the nation’s elite. Last but not least, there is of course Rastafari.

Jamaica became independent on 6 August 1962. Since it was still part of the British Commonwealth of Nations, Queen Elizabeth II remained the titular head of state, represented by a Governor-General. There is parliamentary democracy, modelled after the Westminster example, with a Senate of 21 appointed members and a House of Representatives of 60 elected members, each representing a constituency. General elections, based on universal adult suffrage, are normally held every five years. The political scene has been dominated by two parties: the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People’s National Party (PNP). Since the first general elections in 1944 these two parties have held power alternately, until now always after two successive terms in office.

Jamaica’s economy is weak and underdeveloped, although by Third World standards Jamaica is rated as a middle rather than low income country. As a former sugar colony, the economy for a long time depended exclusively on agricultural exports, which besides sugar, consisted mainly of bananas and coffee. In the 1950s large reserves of bauxite were discovered and their exploitation has since provided a crucial addition to the agricultural exports, which have steadily declined in importance. Only in the late 1980s were the foreign exchange earnings from bauxite and alumina surpassed by the profits from the tourist industry. In 1989 the total value of exported bauxite and alumina was US\$ 558 million, while agricultural exports accounted for US\$ 121 million (with sugar and bananas earning US\$ 66 million and US\$ 19 million respectively). Tourism earned the island a record US\$ 607 million.¹³¹

In that same year the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in current prices was valued at J\$ 22,315 or US\$ 3,437 million. The per capita GDP was J\$ 9,468 or US\$ 1,458.¹³² It is indicative of the weakness of the island’s economy that the real per capita GDP of 1965 was higher than that of 1985. The distribution of wealth is extremely uneven. In 1989 a Jamaican study team found that some 750,000 people on the island were below the poverty line (defined as the amount of money needed to purchase basic food items only). The problems were most grave in the rural areas, where over 32% of the population was estimated to live in poverty, as opposed to 7% in the capital city of Kingston. Only some 400,000 Jamaicans benefitted from the government’s *Food Stamp Programme*.¹³³

Jamaica imports large amounts of food, consumer goods and raw materials. In 1989 the total value of exports amounted to US\$ 2,083 million, while the country imported goods and services for the sum of US\$ 2,610 million, leaving a trade balance deficit of US\$ 527 million. As a result, the Jamaican government is heavily indebted to a large number of countries and institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. In 1986 the external debt had grown to US\$ 3,499 million or over 160% of the GDP.¹³⁴ Jamaica currently pays more to the IMF and World Bank to meet the installments and interest on loans, than it receives in aid from these institutions.

Employment is a major social and economic problem. The official unemployment rate in 1989 was 18.0%, one of the lowest figures recorded in recent years. Among women unemployment is much higher: 26.1% were without work in 1989. Young men (under 26 years of age) also face great difficulties in finding work: 22.6% were unemployed. The unemployment rate for young females was as high as 48.6%.¹³⁵ In reality these figures are probably far too low and do not account for underemployment. Fairly generally accepted estimates point to average unemployment figures ranging between 25 and 30%, and for young females up to 60%.

Agriculture, in spite of its continuously declining importance as a foreign exchange earner, remains the main employment sector. Some 28.4% of the total labor force was active in this sector (including forestry and fishing) in 1989. Manufacturing and construction provided employment for some 15.4% and 6.3% of the labor force respectively. The various service sectors, including commerce (15.7%) and public administration (8.4%) are other main sectors of employment. Mining (0.7%) is, from a perspective of employment, not of great importance. The deplorable situation on the labor market is illustrated by the fact that the number of people employed in the private sector between 1943 and 1982 increased by a mere 18%, while the number of employees in government service increased over 20 times. Many Jamaicans, however, are without regular employment and have to make a living from “shuffling” and petty trade.¹³⁶

Needless to say, Jamaica experiences most of the other well-known problems of a Third World society as well. Suffice it to say that medical care is absolutely inadequate, education facilities are far from ideal, illiteracy is still widespread, social programs are insufficient to relieve the plight of the poor, there is a desperate shortage of affordable housing, the infrastructure (roads, running water, electricity, telephones, etc.) is underdeveloped and receives minimal maintenance, there is a significant brain-drain, there is corruption and incompetence in public administration and politics, a high crime and violence rate, and so on.

Since Jamaica’s capital figures quite prominently in this thesis, a short description of Kingston is in order. Kingston was founded in 1692, after a severe earthquake had destroyed the better part of Port Royal, until then the island’s trading and commercial center. The city was geometrically laid out with rectangular street blocks. The Parade formed the northern boundary of the town; commerce and trade concentrated along the Waterfront and harbor. The number of inhabitants increased from approximately 5,000 in 1700 to 25,000 in 1790, and just thirty years later Kingston was by far the largest town in the British West Indies with a population of 35,000. Nevertheless, Spanish Town remained the formal capital of the island.

From the first half of the eighteenth century, the town was surrounded by the huts of free blacks and runaway slaves, later joined by French refugees from Saint Domingue (Haiti).¹³⁷ Around the same time, the wealthy merchants began to move north into the hills of St. Andrew, where it was cooler, quieter and more healthy than in the crowded town. At the main intersections, Half Way Tree and Cross Roads, and along the roads running off them, they built large and luxurious mansions. The transference of the capital from Spanish Town to Kingston provided another stimulus for settlement outside the old town of Kingston. The retreat of the wealthier to the higher parts north of Kingston laid the basis for both the socio-economic and the psychological division between uptown and downtown Kingston, as it still exists today.

Strictly speaking, downtown is the old section south of the Parade. In a broader sense, it also encompasses the areas known as West and East Kingston, the part of Kingston roughly south of the line Washington Boulevard, Dunrobin Avenue, Constant Spring Road, Half Way Tree Road and Up Park Camp (see Map 3, not available in this digital edition). The old center is still a busy commercial area, although many of the big businesses have in recent years also moved uptown, notably to New Kingston. Attempts to halt the decay of the old center have led to the construction of high-rise commercial buildings and hotels, as well as new shipping facilities at what is commonly known as the Waterfront.

The area roughly south of Washington Boulevard and Dunrobin Avenue, and west of Constant Spring Road, Half Way Tree Road, Slipe Pen Road and Orange Street is known as West Kingston, for many Jamaicans a “no go area.” This is the part of the city that is crowded with tin-can and cardboard “houses,” connected by dark alleys, dry gullies and dirt tracks, and drowned in an unbearable stench and the never-ending blare of ghetto blasters and jukeboxes. This is the part of the city where the unemployed and unemployable live, where glassy-eyed children suffer from hunger, if not malnutrition, and disease,

where dogs, rats, pigs, goats and people roam through the garbage in search of food. This is the part of the city that each day receives an unknown number of migrants from “the country,” dreaming of better times. This is the part of the city where political differences are decided with an M-16, where conflicts with neighbors are solved with a machete, where “dons” establish their control over territory and drug trade with murder, where policemen act as judge and executioner. This is the part of the city where thousands of Jamaicans desperately try to scratch a living from virtually nothing, where thousands of Jamaicans work long hours for low wages, where thousands of Jamaicans share the little food they have with friends and neighbors. This is the part of the city that is divided into neighborhoods with names like Trench Town, Jones Town, Greenwich Town, Denham Town, Whitfield Town, Tivoli Gardens, Riverton City and, formerly, Back-O-Wall and the Dungle (or Dunglehill), which the reader will frequently encounter further on, as this is the part of the city that one observer once described as “the Rasta Vatican.”

Uptown is the area where the middle and upper-class Jamaicans reside. There are busy junctions like Half Way Tree, Cross Roads and Matilda’s Corner. There are luxurious shopping malls along Constant Spring Road, in New Kingston and at Liguanea. There are well-stocked supermarkets, exquisite deli-shops, fine restaurants and flashy discotheques. There are the high-rise hotels of New Kingston, with tennis courts and swimming pools, like the pink-painted Wyndham and the blue and white Pegasus. There are air-conditioned banks and offices, with black mirror windows, lavish gardens and guarded parking lots full of shiny new Honda’s, Toyota’s and BMW’s. There are oases of rest, like the Hope Botanical Gardens, Devon House or the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies.

In uptown Kingston the general rule is, the further up the richer. There are a few forgotten corners dotted with slums and inhabited by “sufferers,” feared and distrusted by their uptown neighbors. There are modest two-room apartments in Duhaney Park or Hughenden, where the hard-working members of the lower middle class pay more rent than they can afford. There are small town houses along Hope Road and Dunrobin Avenue, where barbed wire and guards make sure that those who do not belong there cannot enter. There are pleasant villas in Barbican and Mona, where the pensioners and their dogs keep an eye on the gardeners from behind the steel bars. There are extravagant residences in Beverly Hills, Cherry Gardens and Stony Hill, where the “Mercedes-Benz Brigade” enjoys itself around the swimming pool with the latest gossip, a sip of Tia Maria and a bite of jerk chicken, while looking out over this city of contrasts, which combines appalling poverty with inordinate wealth, repulsive dirt with extraordinary beauty, deafening noise with frightening silence, raging violence with serene tranquility.

Chapter 1.

Babylon and Zion: A short history of Jamaica and the forerunners of Rastafari

As noted in the Introduction, the emergence of the Rastafarian movement in the early 1930s and its subsequent development can only be understood against the backdrop of Jamaican history. The island's history has been dominated by white European oppression and black African resistance, with religion often playing a crucial role. For the poor black masses, Jamaica was the experience of exploitation in Babylon and the promise of redemption in Zion.

But although the Rastafarian movement is, to a large extent, the unique product of specific historical conditions in Jamaica, it nevertheless shares many characteristics with movements and ideologies which already existed or later emerged in other parts of the New World and Africa. As such the movement can - and should - be placed in a tradition of back-to-Africa movements, Ethiopianism and, in a broader sense, black nationalism. Apart from that, the emergence of the Rastafarian movement and its ideology were influenced by events and developments in many other parts of the world. This discussion of the forerunners of Rastafari will therefore take us from Jamaica to Ethiopia, from the United States to Liberia, and from England to South Africa.

A short history of Jamaica

“A thousand Irish girls and some Scotsmen of questionable character.”

Although very little is known about them, the original Jamaicans were Siboney Indians who, in a distant past, had sailed from Florida. From about 650 A.D. they were confronted with the Arawak, an Amerindian tribe from the Orinoco region in South America. The Arawak spread throughout the Caribbean, probably in two waves, around 650 and again around 900 A.D., gradually making their way from Trinidad to Cuba. Jamaica became one of the rather more densely populated islands and the Siboney disappeared as a distinctive group. The Arawak, largely dependent upon fishing, lived along the shores and are generally described as peaceful “primitive” people, with a material culture at Stone Age level. It is said - though this is disputed - that they gave the island its name, Xaymaca or “Land of Wood and Water.”

Around the close of the fifteenth century the Arawak population in the Caribbean began to feel threatened by another tribe, making its way north and west along the same route the Arawak had once taken. These Caribs, feared for their alleged cruelty and cannibalism, had almost wiped out the Arawak populations in several islands east of Jamaica. They never made it to Jamaica, but the Arawak were surprised by another conqueror. In May 1494 Christopher Columbus and his crew arrived on the Jamaican shores and declared the island a Spanish possession.¹³⁸

The first Spanish colonists arrived in Jamaica in 1509, when Juan de Esquivel and his men founded the settlement of Sevilla Nueva on the north coast. They soon found out that the island had little to offer, in other words there was neither gold nor silver, and quickly lost interest in the island. In the course of some hundred and fifty years the Spaniards' only “contribution” to the development of Jamaica was the complete extermination of the Arawak population. A combination of fatal European diseases, mass-murder, slavery, ill-treatment and suicide put a swift end to their existence. By the beginning of the seventeenth century there was not one of these early Jamaicans left. As a substitute the Spaniards had started to import slaves from the African continent, though on a limited scale. Around 1600 the African slave population, as Mervyn Alleyne points out, probably consisted of no more than about a thousand persons, who “rapidly completed the process of acculturation ... and became fully assimilated to Hispanic culture.”¹³⁹

Under Spanish rule, the island was used mainly as a supply base for the Latin American mainland. Most of the colonists tried to leave Jamaica as soon as they had reached it: the mainland offered more possibilities. Those who stayed behind tried to make a living from hunting, cattle raising, small farming and a little trade. The island and its colonizers remained poor throughout the whole period of

Spanish occupation, while the constant raids by British, French and Dutch pirates and buccaneers did not make life easier either. Spanish rule over Jamaica ended in 1655 and bequeathed the island little more than a few names - like Ocho Rios, Savanna-la-Mar or Liguanea.¹⁴⁰

On 10 May 1655 a fleet of 38 British ships, carrying about 8,000 men and sent out by Oliver Cromwell, anchored off the Jamaican coast. This same *armada*, commanded by Admiral William Penn and General Robert Venables, had previously made a futile attempt to conquer Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic). To compensate for this failure, it was decided to attack Jamaica. But the 1,500 Spanish colonists put up a spirited resistance and it was not until 1660 that the island was fully under British control. The Spanish colonists fled to Cuba, leaving behind an estimated 300 slaves, who took refuge in the inaccessible mountain areas. With the signing of the Treaty of Madrid in 1670, Spain formally recognized Jamaica as British territory.¹⁴¹

The Lord Protector, though far from pleased with the failure to capture the more important island of Hispaniola - Admiral Penn was incarcerated in the London Tower - nevertheless actively stimulated the colonization of Jamaica, a policy that was, after the Restoration, continued by Charles II. So, within a very short time the first British colonists, both planters and bondsmen, arrived on the island, among them "a thousand Irish girls and some Scotsmen of questionable character."¹⁴² Others came from Barbados, Nevis and New England. Although at first Jamaica was meant to become a colony for small farmers and white indentured laborers, King Sugar soon changed Jamaican society.¹⁴³

Centuries earlier sugarcane had slowly made its way from New Guinea, through India and the Arab world, to the Mediterranean. The Spaniards and Portuguese had later cultivated sugarcane in their possessions in the Atlantic Ocean, the Canary Islands, Azores, Madeira and São Tomé. Columbus had taken it to the Caribbean on his second voyage and from 1516 on Spanish colonists had cultivated the crop in Santo Domingo and later in Jamaica as well, though on a limited and hardly profitable scale.

Until the second half of the seventeenth century sugar had been a luxury, mainly used by the elite as a sweetener and a medicinal ingredient. After 1700, however, the demand for sugar in Europe rapidly increased and it quickly became an everyday product. The British started growing sugarcane in Barbados, where, in the 1640s and 1650s, it proved to be a profitable crop. Jamaica, some 30 times larger, provided more opportunities for large-scale production and, within a few years after the island had been captured from the Spaniards, there were some 50 sugar estates in Jamaica.¹⁴⁴ The production of sugar required an enormous labor force and to this end thousands of slaves, mainly from the African West Coast, were brought to the island. The total number of African slaves imported, together with their precise origins, is subject of scholarly debate, but need not concern us here. According to George Roberts, in 1658 the white population of Jamaica numbered 4,500, while there were about 1,400 slaves on the island. Almost a century later, in 1754, there were 12,000 whites and no fewer than 130,000 African slaves, while by 1775 their numbers had increased to 12,737 and 200,000 respectively.¹⁴⁵

Even when measured against the standards of the day, slavery in the sugarcane fields was extremely cruel and inhuman. The atrocities of slavery have been extensively documented and need not be repeated here. One of the effects of this inhuman system, however, was that the white masters lived in a constant state of fear of the potentially destructive power represented by the overwhelming numbers of African slaves. Regulations to keep some kind of a numerical balance in the master-slave ratio had little effect. The quest for more cheap labor power was stronger.

Resistance to slavery, individual as well as collective, started at the very beginning of the slave trade in Africa, continued during the horrible Middle Passage and, of course, on the plantations. Escape, sabotage, conspiracy, poisoning, suicide and insurrections, both local and island-wide, occurred throughout the whole period of slavery in Jamaica. Between 1655 and 1834, when slavery was abolished, more than 400 revolts were recorded. One of the first large-scale revolts took place in 1678. Other major uprisings occurred in 1760 and 1831. Suppression and punishment were extremely brutal, but in the long run never deterred the slaves from resistance.

Another problem that plagued the British colonizers, and initially facilitated the resistance of the slaves, were the Maroons, Spanish-held slaves who had taken refuge in the inaccessible mountain areas when their masters fled to Cuba.¹⁴⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century the Maroons had two strongholds, one in the Blue Mountains (the Windward Maroons) and the other in the Cockpit Country

(the Trelawny Maroons). In 1690 they were reinforced by a large number of so-called Coromantee slaves, who had rebelled in the parish of Clarendon.¹⁴⁷ They joined forces under the command of Cudjoe and his brothers Accompong and Johnny, and developed a formidable technique of guerilla-warfare, raiding plantations by night and disappearing into the impenetrable mountain forests before the planters could react. The British troops were not trained for this kind of environment and warfare, and suffered defeat after defeat. Eventually, the British adjusted themselves to the situation and, helped by Mosquito Coast Indians, freed slaves and on one occasion even sailors, had some success. They never succeeded in bringing about the total destruction of the Maroon bands, however. The so-called First Maroon War thus lasted from 1655 until 1738, when the British were forced to offer Cudjoe and his men a peace treaty. The Maroons accepted the offer (Cudjoe's brother Johnny did so a year later) and thereby gained formal freedom, some 1,500 acres of infertile land in the Cockpits and limited self-government. In exchange, they committed themselves to assist the British in the suppression of slave revolts and the seizure of runaway slaves.

In 1760 a major, carefully organized uprising occurred in St. Ann, known, after its leader, as the Tacky rebellion. Tacky and a handful of conspirators had managed to lay hands on weapons and with hundreds of other slaves made their way inland, raiding estates and killing planters. The slaves were strengthened by their belief that a medicine made by their priests rendered them invulnerable. Consequently, when the British troops executed one of the rebels, their faith was badly shaken and most of the slaves surrendered. The colonial government had called in the help of the Maroons, one of whom eventually killed Tacky. His remaining followers chose to commit suicide. In the meantime, however, the revolt had spread to other parts of the island and, when the rebellion was finally crushed a few months later, some 300 slaves and 60 planters had lost their lives. The same Maroons who had fought against the colonial regime for 83 years and who had then provided a secure haven for runaway slaves, had now become a crucial instrument in the repression of slave rebellions.

Jamaica and the other sugar-producing colonies in the British West Indies experienced their Golden Age between 1748 and 1756, when sugar prices were stable and high, and both demand and production steadily increased. But for many different reasons decline set in during the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁸ The American War of Independence resulted in a breakdown of commerce. While Jamaica faced soaring prices and a shortage of imported goods, the export of sugar to Europe was severely hampered. The prices for slaves increased sharply and exhausted lands led to reduced yields, as a result of which more idle land had to be put into production to make the necessary profits. On top of that, prolonged droughts (1764) and hurricanes (1784, 1785, 1786) regularly ruined both sugar and local food crops. Some 15,000 slaves in Jamaica reportedly succumbed to malnutrition between 1780 and 1787. An estimated 40% of all Jamaican sugar estates were abandoned or went bankrupt in the sixteen years between 1775 and 1791.¹⁴⁹

At the same time, the gradually emerging industrial mode of production in England required competitive prices, which, due to their inefficient production methods, Jamaican sugar estates could not meet. Increased competition from Cuba, Saint Domingue and other sugar-producing colonies further eroded the economic position of the Jamaican plantation system. The West India lobby in London fiercely defended its interests, sometimes successfully, sometimes in vain, but as Parry *et al.* expressed it, "the great days of the slave plantation were passing."¹⁵⁰

The last decade of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century witnessed several revolutions and wars of independence in the New World, further undermining the colonial powers. In Saint Domingue the slave population succeeded in establishing the first independent black republic in the New World, causing quite a number of French planters and colonists to take refuge in Jamaica. Surinam, Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica and Barbados all had to cope with serious rebellions, not to mention the successful freedom struggles on the Latin American mainland.

Jamaica also had its share of rebellion. In Trelawny Town, one of their five settlements in the Cockpit area, there was great dissatisfaction with the land grant of 1738-1739. Moreover, the Maroons had problems with the British Superintendent stationed in their village. In July 1795, when two villagers were punished for a theft in Montego Bay, the ensuing disturbances soon escalated into the Second Maroon War. With a mere 300 men, the Maroons of Trelawny Town, using their successful guerilla techniques, fought for five successive months against a far superior number of soldiers and local militia. The planters, with the 1791 revolution in nearby Saint Domingue fresh in their terrified minds, reacted even more harshly than usual. When at last the British threatened to use a hundred vicious

bloodhounds imported from Cuba, the Maroons, and about one hundred runaway slaves who had joined them, surrendered. Although they gave up on condition that they would not be exiled, 556 Trelawny Town Maroons were deported to Nova Scotia, from where they were shipped to Sierra Leone four years later.¹⁵¹

In spite of the rapidly worsening economic situation, sugar production in Jamaica continued to increase during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, until in 1805 a record-breaking 122,000 tons were exported. As a result of the continuously increased production, the slave population had almost reached the 300,000 mark. The importance of the slave trade as the major factor in the growth of the population had by then declined. Local uprisings and the 1791 revolution in Saint Domingue had intensified the fears of Jamaican planters, while the growing demand for slaves outside the Caribbean had made them more valuable. Economically, stimulation of natural reproduction had become more attractive. Meanwhile, voices against slavery were becoming louder by the year.

With the abolition of the slave trade in the British territories in 1807 the crisis spread. The planters had never been on very good terms with London and the passing of this Act did not do much to improve the relationship. When in the following years Parliament, under influence of the abolitionists, passed laws to improve the condition of the slaves in the British colonies, the Jamaican planters and their Assembly went “as far as to threaten to transfer their allegiance from Britain to the United States, or to set up an independent republic in the island!”¹⁵². Fearing rebellion more than ever before, the slave masters only hardened their treatment of the slaves. Brutal, inhuman force was the only means by which the white population could sustain chattel slavery.

Around 1820 the whites in Jamaica numbered some 35,000, all of them free but not constituting a homogeneous group. One of the distinctions made was that between the mostly English or Scottish-born immigrants and the Jamaican-born Creoles. Another, equally important distinction was based on economic status. The most powerful group within the white community were the (often absentee) owners of the larger plantations, whether immigrant or Creole. Others in the group of what Michael G. Smith calls the “principal” whites, were the senior administrators, the high-ranking military men and the wealthy merchants. This group effectively controlled the colony’s political institutions. The group of “secondary” whites consisted of such people as small plantation owners, junior administrators and employees, professionals and petty traders.¹⁵³

Socially below the whites was an intermediate class of free colored (mulatto or brown) persons, originating from children born out of the sexual relations between white masters and their female slaves. Although by law these children were slaves, it had become customary among the planters to grant them their freedom. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the free colored already outnumbered the white population on the island. Quite a few of them were educated, went into business or settled as professionals, and attained a certain prosperity. Although some became wealthier than whites (even slave owners themselves), they remained a lower social category, and until 1830 without political rights. But not all “brown men” were free. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century an almost equally large group was enslaved, mostly the offspring of white males who had no power, financial means or wish to manumit their children. In general, colored slaves were given the better and lighter tasks, often working as craftsmen or domestics.¹⁵⁴

Finally, there was the black population, which heavily outnumbered the white and colored classes. The vast majority of them worked as field slaves, engaged in the cultivation and production of sugar. Smaller numbers worked as craftsmen or domestics. Apart from the differentiation based on occupation and tasks, there was a distinction between African-born and Creole slaves, and between the various tribal or ethnic groups of origin, which as time passed became of decreasing importance.¹⁵⁵

Throughout Jamaican history, religion played an important role in the slave rebellions and, after emancipation, in black lower-class protest. African religious ideas and traditions survived the atrocities of the Middle Passage and slavery on the sugar plantations. Initially, there were sharp divisions along ethnic and tribal lines. According to Alleyne, these were the result of the lack of a “large-scale political organization among slaves, so that religious practitioners had no political and little social support and were dependent on what recognition they could gain through personal initiative and self-assertion.”¹⁵⁶

The planters did not regard their slaves as being capable of understanding Christianity and thus made little or no effort to propagate their own religious ideas. The continual arrival of new slaves from Africa

also facilitated the survival of African religious traditions. But they had to be adapted to the difficult conditions of Caribbean slavery. As Dale Bisnauth writes: “African religious ideas were to undergo significant changes, but they remained recognizably ‘African’ in structure.”¹⁵⁷

As in many other parts of the Caribbean, the slaves in Jamaica worshipped a supreme deity, creator of the universe, known as Nyame or Nyankopon. Nyame was perceived as an omnipotent, good power, associated with the sky. His female counterpart was known as Asaase or Asase Yaa, the goddess of the earth. Below Nyame were a series of lesser gods (sons of Nyame) and the various ancestral spirits. After death the spirit of the deceased departed from its body and was believed to wander around for some time, before returning “home” to the ancestors. Initially home was Africa, but later the idea of the ancestral spirit returning to Africa faded. Burial rites were of great importance to appease the spirits of the ancestors. Other spirits, associated with trees, rivers or rocks and known as *duppies*, could haunt the living and do all sorts of harm. Priests (*okomfo*), almost always African-born, acted as mediators between the people and the gods and spirits, and provided protection against the machinations of sorcerers (*obayifo*) and *duppies*. The sorcerers, on behalf of their clients, secretly used their skills to inflict harm.

The planters regarded the religious activities of their slaves as extremely dangerous. The organizers of rebellions and uprisings were often strengthened and inspired by their religious beliefs, and in the minds of the planters, African religion and rebellion became closely linked. The planters were especially afraid of the sorcery aspect, known in Jamaica and elsewhere in the Caribbean as *obeah* (from *obayifo*). To the whites, all African religion was sorcery and laws to ban religious practices and rituals as well as gatherings were passed as early as the seventeenth century. After the Tacky rebellion of 1760 a law was passed specifically forbidding every act of *obeah*. In effect, this meant a ban on African religion, as a result of which the slaves and priests had to worship and practice in secrecy.

As Alleyne points out, African religion in Jamaica took two directions, a “conservative” path among the Maroons and an “evolutionary” path in the wider society.¹⁵⁸ After 1760 the evolutionary path led to the emergence of “the first Creole religion,” known as Myal or Myalism.¹⁵⁹ Tribal divisions had faded and the number of Creole slaves had increased. Slave revolts became intertribal and later Creole-dominated.¹⁶⁰ Myalism, in the words of Monica Schuler, “was the first Jamaican religion known to have addressed itself to the affairs of the entire heterogeneous slave society rather than to the narrower concerns of separate ethnic groups.”

Myalism stemmed from a dynamic African religious tradition possessing age-old functions of explanation, prediction, and control. ... This present-world-oriented tradition refuses to accept as natural dissension, poverty, corruption, illness, failure, oppression - “all the negative, disappointing, tragic experiences of life.” Believing that sorcery causes these evils, this religious tradition claims to possess weapons with which to eradicate them, an arsenal that includes not merely ritual techniques, but constant assertion of community values, positive responses to social change, and maintenance of social order.¹⁶¹ After the 1790s Myalism became more and more influenced by Christianity.¹⁶²

Since the mostly Anglican planters believed Christianity to be an exclusively white religion, the first efforts to bring Christianity to the black population of Jamaica were made by missionaries of dissenting sects. In 1783 some 400 white Loyalists, together with over 4,000 slaves, fled the War of Independence in the United States and settled in Jamaica.¹⁶³ Among them was the freedman George Lisle, who had been one of the first black Baptist ministers in the United States, and had established independent black congregations in Georgia and South Carolina.¹⁶⁴ In 1784 Lisle began to preach at open-air meetings in Kingston and almost ten years later opened a chapel in the town, where he taught reading and Christianity to a congregation of some 800 members, both slaves and freedmen. Although Lisle remained close to orthodox Baptist teaching, he preached an “African” version of Christianity in which there was no room for a white God. Other black Baptist preachers, among them George Lewis, Thomas Nicholas Swigle, Moses Baker and George Gibb, became active in other parts of the island and soon they, too, were attracting a considerable following.¹⁶⁵ The cellular organization of the Baptist groups into class-and-leader groups gave rise to many different, unorthodox interpretations. Members left their congregation (“class”) to establish themselves as leaders of their own classes.

As a result, Baptist teachings were incorporated into Myalism and led to the emergence of informal or Native (Black) Baptist congregations. According to Alleyne:

The Native Baptist groups stressed the spirit at the cost of the written word. Followers of leaders like Baker or Lewis could only be baptised after they had been possessed by the spirit, which descended on the follower in a dream. To experience this dream, adepts first fasted according to a set canon and then spent some time alone in the bush. The

ceremony of baptism also acquired new importance and took the form of complete immersion. Christ became a secondary figure to John the Baptist.¹⁶⁶

Schuler maintains that this “blend of African and European beliefs and practices was really Myalist, not Baptist.”¹⁶⁷ But whatever the label, the adaptation of notably Baptist ideas enabled the black population to continue Myal practices under the guise of Christianity. The influence of the Baptists on the formation of religious ideas among the black population was considerable, if only because it took several years before the Anglican Church missions began to devote their attention to the slaves. As Philip Curtin writes:

In Jamaica there was no widespread orthodox teaching until the 1820’s, either by dissenters or by the Established Church. Thus the Native Baptists were given forty years without serious competition. During this period a reinterpretation of Christianity was created, organized, and spread throughout the island. By 1830 the doctrine and organization of the Native Baptists had become a thoroughly integrated part of Negro culture¹⁶⁸

The work of the Black Baptists and the Wesleyan Methodists, who had arrived in 1789 and had since concentrated their missionary efforts on the free coloreds in the towns, was anything but appreciated by the white ruling class. The idea that black men could be - or could even regard themselves to be - Christians and thus equal before God, was too much to bear. Lisle and Baker were arrested for sedition and in 1807 the Assembly passed a law forbidding dissenters to preach, but allowing instruction of slaves in the Anglican Church. The Baptist and Wesleyan chapels were closed and the missionaries were forced to continue their work illegally, though sometimes supported by individual planters.¹⁶⁹

After 1814 the missionaries’ work became somewhat easier. London forced the Assembly to tolerate dissenting preachers. In particular the membership of the Baptist missions, who received assistance from the British Baptist Missionary Society in the person of Thomas Burchell in 1824, increased. By the early 1830s there were in Jamaica some fourteen Baptist missionaries, along with sixteen Wesleyans and eight Moravians, leading a combined flock of some 27,000 faithful.¹⁷⁰

The 1820s were a difficult period in Jamaica. Economically, the island was backsliding. Jamaican sugar was expensive and the planters were unable to compete with large producers of cheaper sugar, like Cuba, Brazil, Louisiana or Mauritius. Protective measures for export to England were necessary to keep the Jamaican sugar economy going. Slavery on the sugar plantations was not only becoming less profitable, it was also increasingly under attack in England. The Anti-Slavery Society, which carried on the work of earlier activists like Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce and many others, was gradually becoming more influential than the West India interest.¹⁷¹ By 1830 the anti-slavery propaganda had given many slaves the impression that they had already been freed by the Crown, but were being denied their freedom by the planters. This belief gave large numbers of them new courage: between 1824 and 1834 some 2,500 to 3,000 slaves ran away from the plantations each year.¹⁷²

In December 1831 the belief in an alleged denial of freedom resulted in what became known as the Baptist War. The leader of the rebellion was “Daddy” Samuel Sharpe, a slave on the Retrieve Estate near Montego Bay and a Native Baptist class-leader, described by Leonard Barrett as “a man of extraordinary authority over his fellow slaves - a man of charisma, a religious leader, and an orator who commanded the attention of his audiences.”¹⁷³ In protest against the alleged refusal of the planters to abolish slavery, many slaves from the western part of Jamaica refused to return to work after Christmas. What had been intended as a peaceful “strike,” soon developed into widespread rebellion, in which thousands of slaves participated. Estates were burned down throughout the northwestern part of the island and the planters’ militia was forced to retreat to the towns. Martial law was declared and the army rushed to the scene. General Cotton declared an amnesty for all who laid down their arms, but many of those who did so, were executed on the spot. The slaves who refused to surrender were unable to withstand the superior military power of the army and militia. They fled to the mountains and soon faced the Maroons, “who were paid to kill the fugitives and bring their victims’ ears as proof.”¹⁷⁴

After several weeks the rebellion was over. Although only two cases of violence against whites had been reported during the Baptist War, numerous estates had gone up in flames. In St. James alone 45 estates, fourteen cattle pens and 53 plantations had been burned down. The planters and the militia took bloody revenge and killed hundreds of slaves, without bothering about whether or not they had actually been involved in the rebellion. Over 300 slaves were formally tried and executed in Montego Bay, among them Sam Sharpe.¹⁷⁵

The abolition of slavery finally came on 1 August 1834, but the 311,000 former slaves were compelled to

work on the plantations, without pay, for another four years. The British Crown compensated the slave owners in the Empire for the loss of their slaves with £ 20 million, an act around which many myths were later to develop. The Jamaican planters received some £ 6 million, but they “owed so much money in the form of mortgages and other debts to creditors in England, that little of that sum came to the island.”¹⁷⁶ From the perspective of the black population, however, it was hardly possible to understand that the slave masters were the ones to receive compensation, and not the slaves.

The end of “apprenticeship” four years later, marked the beginning of an unstable period which saw the emergence of a new class of black peasants. Many former slaves immediately left the plantations and settled on the less fertile, uncultivated lands in the valleys or went to the mountains, where they tried to support themselves and their families as best they could. Independently or with the help of Baptist preachers like William Knibb, many “free villages” were established. But although the black population had its freedom, life did not become much easier. Poverty and misery continued to dominate the lives of the majority, certainly of those who were unable to obtain a piece of land for subsistence farming and were forced to stay on the plantations, working for their former owners for extremely low wages or merely the right to use the huts and provision grounds. The abolition of slavery did, however, enable more open, structured and organized worship in the various Myal/Black Baptist groups, and there was less need for maintaining relations with the missionaries. In 1841 and 1842 Jamaica witnessed a number of Myal outbreaks, especially in the western and southern parts of the island, where the Black Baptists had their strongest support.

The exodus from the plantations resulted in a shortage of (cheap) labor for the struggling planters, and as soon as slavery had been abolished, indentured laborers, including some Europeans, were brought to Jamaica. They soon turned out to be unable to endure the hard work in a tropical climate and instead Indian, Chinese and African indentured and free laborers were brought to the island. However, indentured labor in Jamaica, in comparison to Trinidad or Surinam, remained of minor importance and was no substitute for slavery, simply because the planters could not afford to bring in significant numbers of indentured laborers. After 1841 some 36,000 Indians came to Jamaica, along with an estimated 10,000 African and 5,000 Chinese migrants.¹⁷⁷

The final blow to the plantation economy was dealt in 1846, when Britain dropped its last protective measures favoring colonial sugar imports. Jamaica suddenly had to compete on an open market. As a result, sugar prices fell rapidly, bringing more hardship to the many former slaves still depending on paid labor on the sugar plantations and bankruptcy to many estate owners on the island. While there were 670 sugar estates in 1836, by 1880 their number had declined to 202 and by 1920 only 66 were left.¹⁷⁸ The House of Assembly in the meantime continued to engage in conflict after conflict with the British government, obstructing almost all laws and regulations from London. Political power was still restricted to the whites and, after 1830, a few wealthy mulattos.

In this difficult period, the colony was administered by Governor Edward John Eyre, an authoritarian man who fanatically supported the interests of the white/ mulatto ruling class, and did little or nothing to improve the difficult social and economic conditions of the desperate black population. On the contrary, Eyre was responsible for a deterioration of their situation by passing laws which prescribed excessive punishment for minor offenses. Opposition to Eyre and the planter elite was widespread. There was general discontent with the low wages, the heavy taxation and the refusal of the elite to provide farming land despite an abundance of waste land. On top of that, the island experienced several droughts and epidemics, while the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States caused a considerable price hike for imported food. When destitute peasants from St. Ann petitioned Queen Victoria, they were told that hard work was the solution to their problems.¹⁷⁹

As Schuler writes, “it is no exaggeration to say that as the 1860s approached, the mood in Jamaica bordered on the apocalyptic.”¹⁸⁰ In 1860-1861 thousands of black Jamaicans suddenly turned to Baptist, Wesleyan and Moravian preachers to confess their sins and request baptism. The missionaries, who hoped that what became known as the Great Revival would be the beginning of a mass conversion to orthodox Christian teachings, organized crowded meetings to serve all candidates. The Great Revival, however, soon “turned African” when drumming, dancing and spirit possession became an integral part of the meetings. After the 1860s the name Revival gradually replaced that of Myalism.¹⁸¹

In 1865 the general misery and sense of injustice culminated in the Morant Bay rebellion, which eventually marked the end of Jamaica’s partial self-government. Key figures in the rebellion were George

William Gordon and Paul Bogle. Gordon was a mulatto, a member of the Assembly, successful in business and active as a Black Baptist preacher. He constantly criticized Governor Eyre and the social and economic situation of the black population in the colony. Paul Bogle was a small farmer and a Native Baptist leader from St. Thomas, who had been ordained a deacon by Gordon.

In October some two hundred armed peasants, led by Bogle, staged a protest in Morant Bay. The police opened fire and seven were killed. The crowd attacked the police and the court building was set on fire, killing several more people. Disorder immediately spread throughout the eastern part of the island, at the expense of the lives of several planters. Martial law was declared and the rebellion was crushed within a few days. Eyre had over 430 peasants executed, some 600 flogged and about a thousand homes destroyed. Both Gordon, whom Governor Eyre held responsible for the Morant Bay rebellion, and Bogle, caught by Maroons, were hanged. It was, as Ken Post terms it, “the last vicious spasm of a dying ruling class.”¹⁸² Shortly after the Morant Bay rebellion a schizoid Assembly, still haunted by Haitian nightmares, surrendered the constitution, delivering Jamaica to the Crown. Eyre was later commended for his quick repression of the rebellion, but suspended from duty because of excessive cruelty.¹⁸³

As a Crown colony Jamaica embarked upon more stable times. Governors like Sir John Peter Grant (1866-1874) carried out important reforms and improvements in the administrative and judicial system, in health and education. Sugar cultivation, however, declined alarmingly. The planters had great difficulties hiring a large enough labor force, both because of their inability to pay the laborers a decent wage and because of a general unwillingness among the black population to work on the estates. Sugar cultivation in Jamaica was hardly profitable any longer and, as a result, the island’s economic basis became extremely weak.

Bananas rescued Jamaica’s economy. The fruit proved to be a very profitable export crop, both for large United States-owned corporations like the United Fruit Company and, as a cash-crop, for small farmers. It first brought relative prosperity to Portland and later to other parts of the island. By the end of the nineteenth century the cultivation of sugarcane gradually started to revive, although it was never to reach the levels of production of earlier times, partly because of the rise of sugar beet production in Europe. Nevertheless, the British West Indies Sugar Company bought a number of estates, improved production methods and made sugar cultivation profitable again.

In the meantime, the Jamaican population had continued to grow at a fast rate, resulting in increased unemployment and demographic pressure on scarce agricultural resources, as a result of which the number of landless grew steadily. Migration provided some relief. In the 1860s and 1880s Panama, where the French were constructing a railway and the famous canal, became the first destination. The French enterprise failed, but in 1900 the United States revived the project. Between 1881 and 1911 about 43,000 Jamaicans migrated to Panama’s canal zone, and when the project was completed in 1914 many Jamaicans stayed in Panama.¹⁸⁴ Cuba, where sugar cultivation still flourished, as well as Costa Rica and Honduras, where the banana plantations required a huge labor force, soon became other important destinations for Jamaican migrants. The largest number of migrants, however, left for the United States, where there were virtually no immigration restrictions at that time. Up until 1921 some 46,000 Jamaicans took passage on banana steamers heading for New York, Boston or Philadelphia to find employment in the booming industry of the United States.

The late nineteenth to the early twentieth century was a period of relative prosperity and apparent social stability. The colonial authorities were firmly in control, the economy progressed steadily and riots and rebellions were rare. While in England West Indian poverty had become almost proverbial, visitors to the island began to report positively on the situation in Jamaica. That the vast majority of the black population lived in horrible poverty or that the colonial oppression and uneven distribution of wealth and power continued to be a breeding ground for social unrest and resistance was something those reports did not mention. On the contrary, in her “book about Jamaica for visitors and home-stayers,” Bessie Pullen-Burry, a fellow of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, wrote: “The happy, irresponsible character of the Jamaican negro, together with his docility and his politeness to strangers, produces favourable impressions upon visitors to the colony.”¹⁸⁵

But the superficial prosperity and tranquility soon came to an end. In 1907 Kingston was completely destroyed by an earthquake in which about a thousand people lost their lives. When seven years later World War I broke out, sugar and banana exports ceased and migration came to a halt. The colony of Jamaica

found its economy once again in ruins.¹⁸⁶

Back-to-Africa and Ethiopianism

“Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.”

Africans captured by slave traders and transported to the New World as slaves, logically longed for - and often also believed in - a return to Africa within their own lifetime. It only gradually became clear that the separation from home was irrevocable and, as time passed, the expectation of a return within one's lifetime, gave way to the belief in a return home after death, when the spirit would “fly home” to the ancestral ground.

For a long time, the images and memories of Africa were kept alive by stories and the continuous arrival of newly captured, African-born slaves. But with the creolization and the decline in the numbers of new arrivals from Africa, knowledge of Africa and African culture faded, and probably also the wish to return. Legends and myths became more and more important and, with the introduction of Christianity during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, the belief in deliverance in Africa gave way to the belief in salvation in Heaven.

Quite apart from that, a return to Africa was hardly a practical option, except maybe for some freedmen. The majority of them, however, had few or no ties with Africa. Creole slaves had few memories and little knowledge of Africa, except maybe from stories of older, African-born slaves and new arrivals, and had logically little interest in a return to a continent they knew so little about. What they, and certainly the mulatto freedmen, aspired to, were equal civil rights in the New World. Most of the slaves, on the other hand, were no doubt first of all interested in achieving freedom, whether in the New World or in Africa. Since a return to Africa was by far the more difficult and unlikely option, freedom had to be achieved within the New World, either individually through manumission or running away, or collectively through rebellion and insurrection.

Attempts to create independent, free black communities within the New World were numerous. In almost every slave colony in the New World individual or small groups of runaways managed to survive in inaccessible areas. In Jamaica, and also in Surinam, the Maroons had succeeded in creating something like a state within a state, and until the treaty of 1738-1739, they provided a haven for runaway and rebellious slaves. In Haiti the revolution of 1791 even led to the emergence of the first black republic in the Western Hemisphere. But rebellions were hardly ever as successful as that. In Virginia, for instance, some 200 slaves, led by Gabriel Posser, organized an insurrection in 1800 with the aim of establishing a black state and of putting an end to slavery. They were, however, betrayed and hanged. Some 22 years later South Carolina witnessed a similar rebellion, led by a deeply religious member of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, Denmark Vessey, who also dreamed of founding an independent black state on the American mainland. Vessey and his men suffered the same fate as Posser and his followers.

For those who had already secured their freedom, a return to the land of their fathers was - however complicated - a possibility and several organized efforts were made. Some of these attempts were inspired or at least supported by whites, who thought that deporting blacks to Africa was a convenient way of getting rid of dangerous elements, who hoped to make money out of the scheme, or otherwise believed that New World blacks could be useful in Africa.

One of the first back-to-Africa programs was initiated as early as 1786, when the British merchant and traveller Henry Smeathman proposed to the Committee for the Black Poor to resettle the impoverished blacks of London in Sierra Leone. There were at the time an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 black people in England, some slaves, others freedmen. Though quite a few had attained a degree of prosperity, a large number lived in desperate poverty. Since the American War of Independence and the arrival of hundreds of black Loyalists - former slaves who had supported the British - their numbers had rapidly increased. By the 1780s they were increasingly seen as posing a social problem.¹⁸⁷ Smeathman offered to transport them to Sierra Leone at the cost of £ 4 a person, but he died that same year. However, not long afterwards the Committee received a petition from a group of black people, supported by Granville Sharp, with the request to proceed with this plan.

So, in 1787, over 400 blacks left England to establish the Province of Freedom. It turned into a disaster.

Most of the settlers died of hunger and disease. Those who survived were chased away by the Temne in late 1789. A second group of almost 1,200 black settlers arrived in Sierra Leone in 1792. The group consisted of black Loyalists from Nova Scotia. As we have already seen, the British shipped over 500 rebellious Maroons from Jamaica to Nova Scotia in 1796 and - four years later - from there to Sierra Leone, where they were the third group of black settlers to arrive from the New World. After the British abolished the slave trade in 1807 some 40,000 “recaptives” or “liberated Africans” - slaves destined for Cuba or Brazil, but captured by the British and transported via Sierra Leone or St. Helena to the West Indies as indentured laborers - were resettled in Sierra Leone over a period of 50 years.¹⁸⁸

In 1816 a successful black businessman from Massachusetts, Paul Cuffee, succeeded in settling 38 black Americans in Freetown. In 1820 another 88 black Americans sailed from New York and settled on Sherbro Island, off the coast of Sierra Leone. But illness and hardship forced the survivors to retreat to Freetown in 1821.

Inspired by the British resettlement program in Sierra Leone, a number of Americans founded the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1816. The goal of the organization was “to colonize, with their own consent, on the coast of Africa ... the people of colour in our country, already free and those others who may hereafter be liberated.”¹⁸⁹ Although the ACS was not officially sponsored by the United States government, it received considerable support from whites, especially from the protestant churches.¹⁹⁰ In the 70 years following Cuffee’s failed project, the ACS transported some 16,000 free blacks to Liberia. Most were manumitted just so that they could be sent to Liberia. Others were born free and some purchased their freedom. In contrast to the situation in Sierra Leone, only a comparatively small number were so-called recaptives.¹⁹¹

The vast majority of the free blacks in the United States were, however, fiercely opposed to the idea of deporting black Americans to Africa:

... with persistent regularity, national, state and local meetings from Washington to Pittsburgh, from Boston to Baltimore, resolved against the society’s thrust, which, as they saw it, strengthened slavery by exiling free black dissidents and intensified prejudice by arguing that free Negroes could not exist with whites. Their goal, conversely, was not deportation to Africa, but equality in America.¹⁹²

The Negro Convention Movement (NCM) in particular was radically opposed to the ACS’s repatriation program. During the 1830s and 1840s influential black leaders, like Henry Highland Garnet and Frederick Douglass, spoke out against the resettlement of blacks in Liberia. But during the 1850s dissenting voices were heard, some urging a more militant approach to achieve equal rights, others endorsing emigration as the only solution. One such initiative, outside the ACS, came from Lewis Putman, who, supported by white interests, founded the United African Republic Emigration Society in 1851. The repatriation faction in the NCM was led by the black American physician Martin Robinson Delany and his Jamaican assistant, the chemist Robert Campbell. Initially, Delany thought that Canada would be the logical destination for black emigration from the United States, but later he concentrated on the Caribbean and Latin America. Supporters of black migration to Africa formed the African Civilization Society in 1858. Even Garnet changed his mind and began to propagate emigration to Africa, in order to establish an independent economic base for the black population. “Liberia will become the Empire State of Africa,” he once predicted.¹⁹³ Delany formed the Niger Valley Exploring Party in 1859 and advocated the foundation of an independent black state in Africa. He never succeeded in settling black Americans in the Niger region because of the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, but in 1878 Delany and a small group of other black leaders did send some 200 settlers to Liberia.¹⁹⁴

After 1865 support for the American Colonization Society dwindled. The victory of the Northern Union over the Southern Confederates, the abolition of slavery, the Reconstruction and *The Civil Rights Act* of 1866 all contributed to the expectation among the black population that equality, justice and prosperity could be accomplished in the New World. But by the 1890s interest in repatriation to Africa was already peaking again. Black people, especially in the South, had lost most of the civil rights they had enjoyed during the brief period of Reconstruction and encountered increased repression and persecution. In an effort to maintain white supremacy, white racists in the South had founded the Ku Klux Klan in 1866. For many blacks, its reign of terror shattered the last hopes for equality and justice.

One of the main advocates of the back-to-Africa ideology in those days was Henry McNeal Turner, bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Turner had traveled to Liberia in 1891 and had ever since relentlessly promoted emigration, urging black Americans to apply for a passage with the fledgling ACS.

In 1892 a few hundred poor blacks from the South made their way to New York City to board a small ACS boat destined for Liberia. Only 50 could be accepted. It was the last, heavily criticized transport of the American Colonization Society, which was dissolved in 1912.¹⁹⁵ Turner, however, continued to propagate emigration and founded the International Migration Society in 1894. It sent two ships with several hundreds of settlers to Liberia, but the conditions they encountered were so unfavorable that many died or decided to return to the United States.

Back-to-Africa programs were not a uniquely American phenomenon. About one hundred black Brazilians were repatriated to Ghana, where they successfully integrated with the indigenous population.¹⁹⁶ Some 350 blacks were deported from Barbados to Liberia in 1865. White missionaries in the British West Indies also supported the resettlement of black people in Africa. The Swiss Evangelical Mission Society sent eight black Jamaican Moravians to the Gold Coast colony (Ghana) in 1843. White missionaries had not only failed to make converts, but had also succumbed under the hard, tropical conditions in West Africa. It was hoped that black evangelicals would be more successful.¹⁹⁷ The same expectation led the Baptists and Presbyterians to send a black Jamaican mission to Cameroon in 1840 and Nigeria in 1846. The Baptists were expelled from Cameroon and fled to Zaire, but the Presbyterians were more successful.¹⁹⁸ Numerous black evangelists, not only from Jamaica, but also from other Caribbean territories and the United States, have since made their way to Africa.

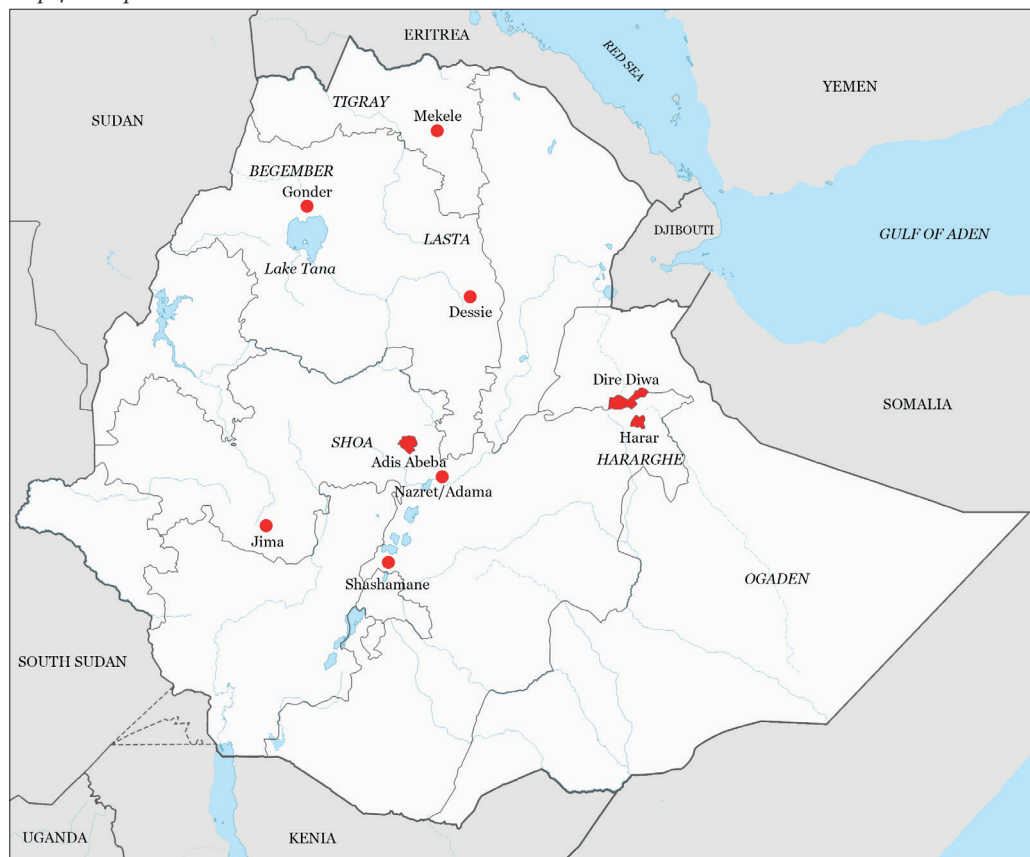
So the idea of a return to Africa, one of the central themes in the Rastafarian ideology, was neither new nor unique in the New World around the turn of the century. But whereas in the United States it resulted in various - more or less successful - organized endeavors, in Jamaica it largely remained a latent ideological factor. Except for the missionary efforts to send black preachers to Africa, no collective action is known to have been undertaken. Yet the idea of a return was very much alive and probably strengthened by the arrival of an estimated 10,000 African laborers on the island after 1841.

As noted before, the abolition of slavery in 1834 and the end of apprenticeship four years later created a new demand for cheap labor. Thousands of Indians, Africans and Chinese, free as well as indentured laborers, were brought to the island between 1841 and 1865. The influx of these groups had a profound impact on Jamaican society. Most of the Africans were so-called recaptives.¹⁹⁹ They not only brought the Jamaican lower classes in closer contact with African culture again, but also with the idea of a return to the continent of their forefathers. Initially, the planters recruited free laborers from Sierra Leone, who came with the intention of returning home as soon as their contract expired. As soon turned out, however, the passage back was not as easy to obtain as had been suggested by the recruiters. Only several hundred indentured laborers actually managed to return to Sierra Leone.²⁰⁰ The others were left with little more than dreams about Africa and, as Monica Schuler writes, "the evidence is strong that many longed for Africa with such a feeling that ... they would have walk foot and go back to Africa."²⁰¹ Both the actual return of the several hundred Africans who were lucky enough to cross the Atlantic once again and the yearning for a return of those thousands who found themselves separated from home, must have had their impact on those who had been brought to the West Indies long before. They undoubtedly heard stories about the land of their forefathers, the land where the white man's control was limited, the land of abundance, the land of real freedom.

For many different reasons Ethiopia became *the* symbol of African glory, both past and future, and a focus of hope for many black people, not only in the United States, but also in many parts of the English-speaking Caribbean and in Africa itself. One reason derived from the fact that during the sixteenth century Ethiopia had been the name commonly used to designate the whole of the African continent, especially south of the Sahara. In the Authorized King James version of the Bible, which had first appeared in 1611, many of the Hebrew and Greek references to "black men" had been translated as "Ethiopians."²⁰² When Christian preachers later began their missionary work among the slaves in the Anglophone parts of the New World and Africa, many black people began to identify with the frequent references to Ethiopia and the Ethiopians in the Bible, often the only book the black population had access to. What must have struck them, was the parallel between the biblical Israelites and themselves: taken away from their homeland, exiled and enslaved in a strange country. Was the diaspora of the House of Israel not very much like the scattering of the black people by the Atlantic slave trade? And would not the next step be the end of exile and slavery, and the return to the Promised Land? In fact, were the African people in the West not very much like, perhaps even, the true Israelites?

From the Bible and its references to Ethiopia, black people in the United States, Jamaica and South Africa concluded that Ethiopia had figured prominently in ancient times. There was, for instance, Jeremiah

Map 4. Ethiopia



13:23, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” But, the passage that was most important of all was Psalm 68:31, “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” Psalm 68:31 was interpreted as the biblical promise of an Ethiopian/African resurrection. Ethiopia would once again rise to become the powerful civilization it had been in ancient times. And with the resurrection of Ethiopia, the Africans would enter a period of glorious freedom and prosperity.

This tradition of religious glorification of Ethiopia has been termed Ethiopianism. As Barrett writes: “The emergence of the Rastafarians will remain a puzzle unless seen as a continuation of the concept of Ethiopianism.”²⁰³ We should therefore briefly turn our attention to Ethiopia and the significance of this ancient Empire for black people throughout the New World.

Knowledge of the earliest history of the region today known as Ethiopia is still limited. One thing, however, seems to be certain: the first inhabitants of this region were black people. Not so long ago, this was questioned, even denied, by many European scholars, who regarded the fair complexion of today’s Ethiopian people as proof of a Semitic origin.

From approximately the seventh century B.C. Ethiopia experienced a constant flow of immigrants who crossed the Red Sea from Southern Arabia (see Map 4.). This Semitic import, which included Hebrew groups, slowly but surely merged with the original African inhabitants to become the Ethiopian population as we know it today. Already in the first century A.D. a powerful civilization, known as Aksum, evolved in the northern part of today’s Ethiopia. The Empire was ruled by a *Negusa Nagast*, chosen from among the kings of the several provinces.²⁰⁴ Aksum became wealthy from trade with its Arab neighbors and eventually came to rule over the southern part of Arabia for two brief periods.

The introduction of Christianity during the first half of the fourth century was often viewed, with considerable Euro-centrism, as one of the most important events in early Ethiopian history. While there remained a strong Hebrew influence, mainly among the northern Agaw, under the reign of Ezana,

Christianity became the official religion in the Aksum Empire. The adoption of the faith meant that the Ethiopian heartland came into closer contact with the Byzantine Empire and with Egypt, as it became a province of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. But after 700 the power of Aksum rapidly declined as a result of the expansion of Islam. Aksum was thrown back into isolation within the natural fortress of the Ethiopian mountains for almost half a millennium, mainly because it had lost its access to the sea. During this period the region became known to the Europeans as Abyssinia. Due to the pressure of Islamic tribes its center gradually shifted south, while the northern part of the old Aksumite Empire was Islamized. During this long period of isolation, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia not only had to cope with Islamic pressure from the outside, but with pressure from the inside as well. Although reliable historical data are scarce, it appears that the early tenth century “saw a dangerous, and quite unforeseen, revolt of the Agaw peoples intent on overthrowing Christianity and on re-establishing the old Hebraic-pagan cult.”²⁰⁵ As a result, Christianity lost ground.

It was only during the Zagwe dynasty (1137-1270) that the decline of Abyssinia came to a halt. Under the Solomonic dynasty, which succeeded the Zagwe kings, Abyssinia slowly regained ground from its Amhara basis in the central highlands. A whole series of rulers fought an equally large number of wars against Islamic tribes and sultanates, eventually breaking the long isolation and expanding their territory. During the reign of Zara Yacob (1414-1468) Abyssinia reached the height of its power.

Meanwhile, in Europe interest in Abyssinia had grown, if not for the lucrative trade in spices, then because of the legend of Prester John: according to medieval fantasy a white, Christian king ruling over a white, Christian nation deep in black, heathen Africa. In 1487 King John II of Portugal sent two explorers on separate missions to find the kingdom of Prester John. Both men reached Abyssinia. One probably died there, while the other, Pedro do Covilham, was generously received, but never allowed to leave the country again. In 1520 another Portuguese mission arrived at the Abyssinian court. They were more fortunate than Do Covilham and were allowed to return six years later. In the meantime, however, the Islamic threat had increased and after 1528 Abyssinia was once again overrun, this time by the armies of the sultanate of Adal.

The holocaust enveloped most parts of Ethiopia and brought in its train misery and murder, ruin and devastation. Much of the literary and intellectual heritage of Abyssinia was irretrievably lost, and the barbarism and brutality had an effect far transcending that age.²⁰⁶

It was only with the help of a Portuguese army under Christopher da Gama that Abyssinia escaped total destruction. Da Gama and most of the 400 men in his army were killed in battle, but their intervention contributed much to the prestige of the Portuguese in Ethiopia.

After the threat of an Islamic conquest of the Abyssinian heartland had been eliminated, the country entered a period dominated by Galla invasions, which eventually led to another era of isolation. The Galla population came to dominate the Shoa, Lasta and Begember regions, as a result of which Gondar became the Abyssinian capital. Abyssinia was divided into numerous more or less autonomous regions where local kings and warlords ruled, established their own dynasties and, above all, fought one other. The central authority and power of the *Negusa Nagast* were reduced virtually to nil.

It was not until 1855 that Negus Kassa, after a series of wars, brought the better part of Abyssinia under his control and had himself crowned Emperor Theodore. Initially, Theodore tried to reform and modernize the country by putting an end to the slave trade and by breaking the power of the feudal monarchs in the various provinces. This, naturally, met with resistance from the warlords. In the end, Theodore tried to govern Abyssinia by absolute power, regarding himself as “the divine instrument in the deliverance of Ethiopia.”²⁰⁷ The Emperor made a fatal mistake, however, when he imprisoned a number of Europeans, among them the British Consul Captain Cameron, because he suspected the British of supporting Egyptian attempts to attack the country. An impressive 32,000 men strong military expedition, commanded by Sir Robert Napier, was sent out from Bombay to free the captives. With great efficiency the expedition made its way through Abyssinia and successfully stormed Magdala, where the captives were held. It was a humiliating demonstration of European power for Theodore, who committed suicide. Together with the captives, Napier took several treasures back to England, among them the Emperor’s crown and scepter.

As a result of the British intervention of 1868 yet another power vacuum ensued, as always accompanied by civil war. After a series of battles Negus Menelik of Shoa came to control the South, while Yohannes

IV of Tigre governed the northern part of Abyssinia and was later crowned *Negusa Nagast*. Meanwhile, the European colonization of the African continent proceeded rapidly and Abyssinia once again faced tremendous external pressures. In 1875 Egypt launched three attacks on the Empire, but all were fought off. Apart from that, and further wars against the Galla and the Mahdist armies from Sudan, the Abyssinians also had to cope with the Italians, who already controlled the border of the Red Sea, today's Eritrea and Somalia, and craved for more African possessions. Abyssinia, the last non-colonized monarchy on the continent, was a logical choice, also because Britain had declared itself not interested in the region and Egypt's aspirations had waned after three successive defeats. Italy thus considered herself to be the rightful "protector" of Abyssinia.

On 1 March 1896 the colonial army of General Oreste Baratieri and the armies of the various warlords and their Emperor Menelik II, who had brought the country under his control after Yohannes had died, clashed near Adowa. By the end of the day, thousands had been killed and the Italian army was in retreat. According to Anthony Mockler, "it was the greatest single disaster in European colonial history."²⁰⁸. At the same time, it was also the most glorious military event in Ethiopian history. Forty years later Italy was to make a second attempt.

Before continuing to review the role of Ethiopia in the religious experience of many black people in the New World, we should also briefly turn our attention to the teachings and history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In 1970, after it had founded branches in Trinidad, Guyana and New York, this ancient orthodox Christian church established a branch in Jamaica and many Rastafarians became members.

Christianity was brought to Ethiopia during the first half of the fourth century. According to Rufinus' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, two brothers from Tyre, Frumentius and Edesius, introduced Christianity at Ezana's court in Aksum. Having converted the court, Frumentius, nowadays known as *Abba Salama* or "Revealer of the Light," went to Alexandria, where he was consecrated Bishop of Aksum in either 341 or 346. From then on, the conversion of the Ethiopians to Christianity proceeded slowly but surely and the new Christian beliefs mingled with older religious practices, thus creating the unique theology and ritual of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

One of the doctrinal differences with the western churches revolved around the question of the nature of Christ. At the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the Roman church officially adopted the so-called dyophysite nature of Christ, meaning that Jesus Christ was considered both human and divine in nature. Many Christians rejected this interpretation and of those who believed Christ to have only one divine nature (monophysitism) many later fled to Egypt, Arabia and Ethiopia. Among the fugitives who came to Ethiopia were the legendary Nine Saints. During the fifth century they founded monasteries and began to translate the Bible into the Ethiopian language *Ge'ez*.

Until well into the twentieth century the Ethiopian church was closely connected with the Coptic Church of Egypt. The *Abuna* (Archbishop) of Ethiopia had to be an Egyptian Copt, resorting directly under the authority of and consecrated by the Egyptian Patriarch. Although strong objections were raised against the primate of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church being a foreigner, unacquainted with local language and culture, it was not until 1959 that Ethiopia became an independent (autocephalous) Patriarchate.²⁰⁹

The Bible of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church consists of 81 books. Next to the 30 of the Old Testament and 29 of the New Testament, it includes a number of apocryphal books, such as the Books of Enoch, Jubilee, Judith and Ecclesiasticus, all written in *Ge'ez*. The church claims to possess the Ark of the Covenant with the original Ten Commandments, brought to Ethiopia by Menelik I, the legendary son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The seven sacraments are accepted, although confirmation and extreme unction have fallen into disuse. Baptism and the Eucharist are the most important sacraments. Services are accompanied by singing, drumming and dancing, and priests make use of a prayer stick, known as the *Makwamiya* (or *Makutaria*). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church does not believe in original sin, nor is confession practiced, save in exceptional cases. Circumcision, on the eighth day, is considered a religious obligation.

Although it was not until the early years of the twentieth century that Ethiopianism began to manifest itself in the form of both secular and religious movements - a development that was no doubt influenced by the victory of the Ethiopians over Italy in 1896 - Ethiopianist tendencies were present in several parts of Africa and the New World during the nineteenth century.

In the last decade of the century several independent Bantu churches had emerged in South Africa, all of them referred to as “Ethiopian” or “Zionist.” Among these was the Ethiopian Church of Mangena M. Mokone, a former Wesleyan minister who had left the Methodist church in 1892 and founded an Ethiopian Church in Witwatersrand. As Bengt Sundkler writes, Mokone understood Psalm 68:31 to mean “the self-government of the African church under African leaders.”²¹⁰ The leaders of the Ethiopian churches in South Africa, including another Wesleyan preacher James M. Dwane, decided at a conference in 1896 to seek affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Dwane traveled to the United States and in 1898 Bishop Henry McNeal Turner visited South Africa. Many of the independent Bantu churches remained affiliated with the AME Church, even after Dwane left the Church in 1900 to establish the Order of Ethiopia. In the subsequent years, numerous Ethiopian churches sprang up. During the Italian-Ethiopian war (1935-1941) the independent churches were to receive a great boost. Ethiopianist churches also sprang up in Nyasaland and British Central Africa, where, according to George Shepperson, the dominant influence came from the American National Baptist Convention.²¹¹

The central concept in the Ethiopian churches was “Africa for the Africans” (including Africans in the New World), according to some under the Christian leadership of the Ethiopian Emperor. As such the Ethiopianist groups were an important catalyst for African nationalism. But not all of these churches could be designated Ethiopianist. Although some focused specifically on the Ethiopian Empire and its important role in the Bible, many, as in the United States, were merely the African equivalent of Western churches and denominations, and they used the adjective Ethiopian in the general sense of African. There was, however, in all these groups a strong repugnance for colonialism and white European domination, sometimes with revolutionary implications.²¹² In Natal Ethiopianist leaders were among the initiators of the Zulu (Bambata) rebellion of 1906 and during the 1920s some Ethiopianist leaders became active in the African National Congress (ANC).

Ethiopianist tendencies were also noticeable in the numerous independent black churches in the United States. One of the earliest and most influential was the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, founded in 1816 by Richard Allen, born a slave in Philadelphia and manumitted in 1777. His motive for establishing the AME Church lay in the racial discrimination he had encountered within the (white) Methodist Church. Allen preached a black version of Methodism and organized the National Negro Convention in 1830.

In Jamaica, Ethiopianism took the form of a latent ideology without manifest organizational structures, even though George Lisle, when he established his congregation in 1793, had named it the Ethiopian (or Black) Baptist Church. The element of protest in Ethiopianism was, even in those early years, far from absent. In 1789, Thomas Coke, the superintendent of the American Methodist Church, visited Jamaica and preached on the text of Psalm 68:31. “He was rudely interrupted and mobbed by the whites in his congregation because of his favorable reference to the Negroes.”²¹³

But although Ethiopianism and back-to-Africa ideologies were an important phenomenon in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, the majority of the black population believed in a future in the New World. Wider support for the ideas of repatriation, pan-Africanism and black nationalism came only during the twentieth century. As David Jenkins writes:

Only comparatively recently can Africa-awareness be said to have become a mass awareness. It was always a simmering cultural factor in black life, but those who boldly and specifically invoked Africa were a minority, and usually appealed to minorities. Only in this century, with the rapid development of sophisticated information and propaganda media - not least of which was the Negro press - has this myth been accessible to a majority. Even so, that majority has invariably, and rightly, preferred not to take refuge in an illusory Afro-American nationalism, but to use it as a means to assert their rights as Americans.²¹⁴

Alexander Bedward and the Jamaica Native Free Baptist Church

“This is a black man’s country and the black man must rule it.”

While the beliefs of the Rastafarian movement - the idea of a return to Africa, black people as the true Israelites and Ethiopia as the Promised Land - should no doubt be placed in a long tradition of back-to-Africa ideologies and Ethiopianism, they were also firmly embedded in the tradition of Myalism or Revival. Several authors, notably Barry Chevannes, Robert Hill and Leonard Barrett, point out direct and indirect

continuities between Revival and Rastafari.²¹⁵ The direct traces mainly concern the structure of ritual, the use of ritual instruments, divination and the power ascribed to herbs. Among the indirect traces are the belief in the power of the spoken word, the designation of women as a source of evil, the belief in the divinity of man and in the contamination of death.²¹⁶

The extent of the influence of Revival on Rastafari is, however, a matter of debate and will be discussed at length in the final chapter. Suffice to say here that Revival certainly influenced elements - though not the most basic ones - in Rastafarian belief.²¹⁷ And for this reason we should turn our attention to one of the forerunners of Rastafari: Revival Shepherd Alexander Bedward and his Jamaica Native Free Baptist Church, the largest Revival group in Jamaica during the first two decades of the twentieth century and a movement with strong anti-colonial and black nationalist tendencies.

Alexander Bedward was (probably) born in 1859 and grew up on the Mona estate, nowadays the site of the University of the West Indies. During his early life he apparently suffered from an illness but, according to one of Martha Warren Beckwith's informants, that did not prevent young Bedward from committing "every sin but that of murder."²¹⁸ Later he moved to August Town, a small community east of the Mona estate. In 1883 Bedward left his home and family to go to Colón, where numerous Jamaicans had gone to work on the Panama canal project. After two years, having made some money, he returned to August Town only to leave again within days. The reason seems to have been a recurrence of his illness. Once back in Colón, Bedward had a vision in which he was told to return to August Town, where there was "a special work" for him.²¹⁹

Thus, in August 1885 Alexander Bedward was once again back in Jamaica. Some three years later August Town was visited by a black American preacher, Harrison E. Shakespeare Woods, who had been living in a cave on nearby Dallas Mountain for some years. Shakespeare left his cave to predict the destruction of the community. In April 1889 he called a meeting at which he told the inhabitants of August Town that the only way to escape their doom was to follow and obey him. Many were only too glad to accept this and, before disappearing again, Shakespeare formed a group of elders whom he left in charge. It was later said that Bedward was one of these elders. Whatever the case, not long after Shakespeare left, Alexander Bedward had another vision, in which it was revealed to him that the water of nearby Hope River had healing powers. He thereupon went to the river, filled a jar and took it home. He gave some of the water to a woman who had long suffered from an illness. She recovered after drinking the water and within a short time Bedward was making several trips a day to Hope River. Scores of people visited his home for a healing drink and his fame as a spiritual healer spread rapidly.

By 1891 Bedward thought it more convenient to take his clients to the river, instead of carrying the heavy jars of water to his home. Already his following was so large that on 22 December that year some two hundred faithful gathered at Hope River for a healing bath. Bedward not only provided healing water, but also prescribed fasting on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from midnight to one in the afternoon, and started baptizing his followers in the river. Baptism "undertook to remove the oppression forced upon them by the white people and the Government," Bedward declared.²²⁰ Scores of people from all over Jamaica came to August Town. On one occasion in 1893 as many as 12,000 were said to have gathered at a meeting. At about the same time Bedward had a church, Zion Chapel, erected along with other buildings, known collectively as Union Camp, to house his congregation, the Jamaica Native Baptist Free Church.

Bedward's preaching was clearly anti-colonial and black nationalist. His most quoted words were: "There is a white wall and a black wall, and the white wall has been closing around the black wall; but now the black wall has become bigger than the white wall. Let them remember the Morant War."²²¹ According to *The Daily Gleaner* Bedward also proclaimed, less metaphorically: "This is a black man's country and the black man must rule it."²²² But, as Chevannes remarks, Bedward also believed that the black people's skin color would be transformed to white after their ascent to heaven.²²³

The colonial government, in the meantime, took the potential threat of the Baptist preacher seriously and had the "Shepherd," as he was referred to by his followers, arrested on a charge of sedition on 21 January 1895. He spent three months in jail before, and another month in the Mental Asylum after, his trial. According to Roscoe Pierson, "Bedward came out of this episode a martyr to his followers, and his fame was rather spread than tarnished by his trial and imprisonment."²²⁴ By then Bedward seemed to be telling his followers that they had unlimited powers and could accomplish virtually everything, including walking on water and flying. It is said that several of his followers climbed trees and made attempts to fly. Once

they were back on the ground, some with broken bones, the prophet explained away their failure with the simple remark that their faith was apparently not strong enough.

By December 1920 Alexander Bedward was beginning to claim divinity for himself, telling his followers that he was Jesus Christ. He announced that on 31 December, just like Elijah, he would ascend to heaven in a chariot of fire. He would remain in heaven for three days before returning to collect the faithful and “take them with him into Glory.”²²⁵ Immediately afterwards he would destroy the world and all the unfaithful. Many of his followers sold their possessions and traveled to August Town to be among those to be saved. Martha Warren Beckwith visited Bedward, who was now addressed as “Lord,” five days before D-day and wrote: “In Kingston the wildest rumors were afloat. Even the intelligent whites believed that something out of the ordinary was about to happen ... some feared a Negro uprising.”²²⁶

Meanwhile, followers from all over the island and even from abroad gathered in August Town. When 31 December came, Bedward sat down in a replica of the chariot, watched by thousands of anxious followers. Several hours went by, but Alexander Bedward did not take off for heaven. The failure of prophecy was, however, explained. God, the “Lord” told his followers, had instructed him to postpone his departure until April, in order to give them more time to prepare for their own journey to heaven. There is no reason to believe that his followers were disappointed or that they deserted their prophet. On the contrary, most are said to have welcomed the delay.

Shortly after Bedward’s aborted ascent, the colonial government undertook to evict the Lord and his flock from the premises they occupied. On 27 April 1921, in the month in which he was to take his congregation to heaven, Bedward staged a protest march on Kingston. Hundreds of Bedwardites marched down Mona Road. At Matilda’s Corner they were met by a large police force. No fewer than 685 marchers were arrested and brought to the Half Way Tree police station, among them Robert Hinds, who, some ten years later, was to become one of the founding fathers of the Rastafarian movement. The majority was soon released, but 208 followers were imprisoned.

Bedward’s trial was set for 4 May 1921. Shortly before this date, five of his disciples, who were also on trial, insisted that Alexander Bedward was Christ. The Resident Magistrate of the Half Way Tree Court was reported to have said to them: “I may tell you at once that Bedward your leader, is going to the Asylum and when that person whom you believe is Jesus Christ is locked up in the Asylum, you will realize how foolish is your belief.”²²⁷ And that is how things turned out. Bedward was declared insane, got no chance to defend himself, but stuck to his claim that he was Christ, the savior of the black race. Before he was convicted and taken away, he assured the Magistrate and his audience that Kingston would soon be destroyed by a tidal wave. Only August Town and his congregation would be spared.

Alexander Bedward spent the rest of his days in Bellevue Mental Hospital, where he died on 8 November 1930. Three days later *The Daily Gleaner* reported his death on its front page. The prophet who had ascended to heaven “in the spirit, not in the flesh” was taken from the Mental Asylum to August Town, “the remains ... followed to the grave by an enormous gathering.”²²⁸ His congregation had been waiting for his return ever since his imprisonment and refused to believe that their Lord had passed away. As late as 1963 there were still a large number of Bedwardites living in and around Union Camp. Some people claim that even today there are still a number of faithful in August Town, but this could not be verified.

While Alexander Bedward was “dipping” his followers in Hope River, there were other colorful figures preaching among the black masses of Jamaica. Shortly after the turn of the century, for instance, there was the Royal Prince Thomas Isaac Makarooroo of Ceylon. Prince Makarooroo came to Kingston on a ship from England in April 1904. He demanded that he be accorded the respect due to his royal status and was very angry that neither the Governor nor the Mayor of Kingston had come to welcome him. Nevertheless, he declared that he had come “to lift up the people of Jamaica.” Within a few days, however, the Royal Prince Thomas Isaac Makarooroo of Ceylon was unmasked by one of his own brothers as Isaac Uriah Brown from the parish of St. Elizabeth, who had left Jamaica in 1891. As soon as his real identity had been established, Prince Makarooroo vanished.

However, not long afterwards he was reported to be preaching in several rural districts, publicly denouncing the government and the unjust laws of the country, calling on his audience to strike and not to pay taxes any longer. He demanded an end to the oppression of the black people and threatened to stir a revolution. The police took swift action and in February 1905 Prince Makarooroo was arrested on a charge of sedition. He was lucky to receive the relatively light sentence of one month imprisonment with

hard labor.

Within days of his release the Prince left Jamaica. Two years later he surfaced in England where, in April 1907, he called on the Mayor of Grimsby. This time he claimed to be the King of Zululand, the nephew of Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia and the only legitimate heir to the throne of the Empire. The King of Zululand told the Mayor that he was on his way to a meeting with King Edward VII. However, while travelling in Europe he had been robbed of all his belongings and therefore requested the Mayor to lend him a few pounds. The Mayor, apparently a suspicious man, called on the police to investigate the Zulu King's credentials. It was not long before the alleged King was recognized as "Khaki" Brown, a resident of Grimsby during 1900 and 1901. He was sentenced to three months behind bars and nothing more was heard of Isaac Uriah Brown.²²⁹

Prince Makarooroo was one of the many street preachers active in Jamaica during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Most of them concentrated on healing practices, but some definitely had a social message. Claims of royal descent and other colorful stories about their life history were not uncommon among street preachers and prophets. There was a need to legitimize their message and prophetic powers by creating a mysterious, sometimes superhuman aura. Several Rastafarian prophets, as we shall see, were to do the same.

Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association

"One God, One Aim, One Destiny or Africa for the Africans."

Bedward and to a lesser extent other Revival leaders were important forerunners of Rastafari in the general sense that they preached a millennial message of salvation for the black man. Also, early Rastafarian leaders adopted elements of Revival belief and ritual. By far the most important forerunner of the movement, however, was another Jamaican leader, Marcus "Mosiah" Garvey.²³⁰ Today one of Jamaica's seven National Heroes, but in his own day despised by the nation's elite, Garvey became the prophet of the Rastafarians, who consider themselves to be the only legitimate inheritors of his ideology. It was Garvey who allegedly prophesied the advent of Haile Selassie, constantly highlighted the distinctive role and position of Ethiopia, initiated a new back-to-Africa scheme, preached awareness of and pride in black, African history and identity, and continuously agitated for the autonomous development of the black population.

As the initiator and leader of the first black mass movement in the United States and the Caribbean, Garvey became one of the first and most influential advocates of Black Power. As such he not only inspired the Rastafarians, but numerous other religious and political movements, notably in the United States, as well as numerous political leaders in Africa.²³¹

Marcus "Mosiah" Garvey was born on 17 August 1887 in St. Ann's Bay, the youngest of eleven children. His father was a relatively well-to-do Jamaican, proud of his descent from the Maroons. He was also a man of some intellectual standing who acted as the local lawyer. Garvey Junior received his education in St. Ann's Bay, until he had to leave school when his father ran into financial problems. He was sent to Kingston to work in a relative's printing office. Before he left St. Ann's Bay, young Garvey had already been confronted with the social implications of his dark skin color.

One of his best friends was a little white girl, the daughter of the neighboring Methodist minister. When Garvey was fourteen, she was sent to school in Scotland and in saying goodbye she told him that she must no longer see or write to him because he was a "nigger."²³²

In Kingston Garvey did fairly well. At the age of twenty he was the youngest black supervisor in one of the capital's largest printing offices. He had also developed a keen interest in politics and journalism, and became more and more committed to the cause of the black population. A strike, in which Garvey acted as one of the leaders, put an end to his career as a printer, however. He was fired and placed on a *persona non grata* list.

Soon after he was fired, Garvey began to publish his first newspaper, in which he took a firm stand against racial discrimination and the social inequalities in colonial Jamaica. It was a short-lived and unsuccessful enterprise, and in 1910 Garvey decided to travel to Costa Rica, where he worked on one of the banana plantations of the United Fruit Company. Here, Garvey encountered the same racial discrim-

ination as in Jamaica. Again, he established a newspaper and again it foundered. In the following year, Garvey traveled through Central America. Everywhere he went, he found the same situation: the mass of poor black workers, among them many Jamaican migrants, exploited by a small white or near white elite. Back in Jamaica, he made a futile attempt to bring this to the attention of the colonial authorities.

Garvey did not stay long in Jamaica. In 1912 he left for London “to learn what he could do about the condition of Negroes in other parts of the British Empire,” as he later declared.²³³ In the very heart of the British Empire, Garvey met the Egyptian nationalist Duse Mohammed Ali, a great admirer of Booker T. Washington.²³⁴ Ali taught Garvey about Africa, its history and culture, and the oppression of its people under the colonial rule of the European states. After reading Washington’s autobiography *Up from slavery*, Garvey had, as he later stated, a vision in which God ordered him to lead his people in the struggle against injustice and racial exploitation.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War I, Marcus Garvey returned to Jamaica. Within days of his arrival in Kingston, on 1 August 1914, he established the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League, for short known as UNIA. Part of the Universal Negro Improvement Association’s ambitious goal was:

To establish a Universal Confraternity among the race; to promote the spirit of race pride and love; to reclaim the fallen of the race; to administer to and to assist the needy; to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa; to strengthen the imperialism of African States; to establish Commissioners or Agencies in the principal countries of the world for the protection of all Negroes, irrespective of nationality; to promote a conscientious Christian worship among the native tribes of Africa; to establish Universities, Colleges and Secondary Schools for the further education of the race; to conduct a world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse.²³⁵

Following the example of Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institution, Garvey established educational and industrial programs. His initiative met with little success. After a year, the UNIA had only about a hundred members and encountered a lot of resentment and opposition from the white and mulatto elite. Especially the mulatto middle class strongly opposed Garvey’s ideas, not least because of his emphasis on race and skin color. Garvey later remarked:

I really never knew that there was so much colour prejudice in Jamaica, my own native home, until I started the work of the UNIA. ... Men and women as black as I, and even more so, had believed themselves white under the West Indian order of society. I was simply an impossible man to use openly the term “Negro;” yet everyone beneath his breath was calling the black man a nigger.²³⁶

To seek the support for the UNIA he could not find in Jamaica, Garvey traveled to the United States in March 1916. He had hoped to meet Booker T., but learned that he had died in November the year before. Meetings with other black leaders throughout the United States only disappointed Garvey. He considered the majority of them to be completely dependent on white support and goodwill, while largely neglecting the black masses. Although he had intended to return to Kingston, the President of the UNIA decided to stay in New York City and to establish a branch of his organization there.

New York City and especially Harlem, where Garvey established his UNIA branch, was an ideal environment for his message. The northern cities of the United States were receiving thousands of poor black immigrants from the Deep South (and to a lesser extent the Caribbean), all trying to escape poverty and unemployment, and hoping to find a job in the booming war industry up North, where racism was believed to be negligible compared with the revived Ku Klux Klan terror experienced in the South. Initially, the UNIA branch attracted predominantly West Indian migrants, but within only a few years Garvey and his ideas rapidly became popular among American blacks, many of whom had discovered that their hopes had been illusions. Garvey found an especially receptive audience among the black men who had fought for democracy and freedom on the battlefields of Europe. Upon their return to the United States, they found that those two principles still applied to whites only. Many of them were not even able to secure a job since what jobs there were went to returning white soldiers.

In 1918 Marcus Garvey started publishing an official weekly organ, *The Negro World*, which was soon appearing in French and Spanish as well, and eventually reached a circulation of some 200,000.

Every issue carried a front page polemic by Garvey, and articles on black history and culture, racial news and UNIA-activities. Garvey’s ideological statements in *The Negro World* spread the UNIA message not only throughout the United States, but also in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa - much to the consternation of the colonial powers.²³⁷

From 1919 on the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League developed into an organization with many faces. One of its most spectacular initiatives was the founding of a shipping company under the name Black Star Line. The UNIA issued US\$ 5 shares to finance the enterprise and bought an old steamer, later to be followed by two other ships. The Black Star Line was a prestigious commercial venture, and became the pride of the organization, although contrary to what many Garveyites thought, the Black Star Line was never intended to ship all black people back to Africa.

The success of the UNIA was such that Garvey was also able to purchase an unfinished church in Harlem, which he had redesigned to provide room for some 6,000 people. Liberty Hall, as the building was baptized, became the center for all UNIA activities, meetings, conventions, rallies, religious services and concerts in Harlem.

The UNIA reached the zenith of its popularity during the First International Convention of Negro Peoples of the World, which started on 1 August 1920. The convention was opened with a parade through the streets of Harlem. For the first time the UNIA and its various divisions presented themselves to the world. The Black Cross Nurses, the Africa Legion, the Black Eagle Flying Corps, the Universal African Motor Corps, the Garvey Militia and other divisions of the UNIA proudly marched in their colorful uniforms. At the convention, attended by representatives from 25 countries, the UNIA drew up *The Declaration of the Rights of Negro Peoples*. Garvey himself was elected Provisional President of the African Republic, and a score of other functionaries were installed. In addition, the UNIA flag (red, green and black) and the official UNIA-hymn, *Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers*, were adopted. Garvey and his organization received tremendous publicity and the UNIA boomed into what was probably the largest-ever black organization in the United States. The Provisional President of the African Republic claimed no fewer than six million members, but historians usually cite much lower figures. Nevertheless, there may have been one or even two million members in the early 1920s. As Thomas Blair remarked: "No other black organization in history had been able to reach and stir so many black people and receive from them the generous support that Garvey obtained."²³⁸

But Garvey and the UNIA soon ran into troubles. The Black Star Line turned into a financial debacle and the organization lost all three of its ships. Another UNIA project, the settlement of several thousand black American families in Liberia, also failed. In 1920 representatives of the organization had negotiated a deal with the Liberian government and the UNIA had already sent experts and building materials to the country. But the heavily indebted Liberian government was under great pressure from the United States and several European states, who feared a take-over by the UNIA and unrest in their African colonies. In 1924 Liberia canceled the deal, confiscated the building materials and deported all UNIA representatives. The reason, so the Liberian government claimed, was a negative report on UNIA discrimination against native Liberians. The lands set aside for the UNIA settlement were sold to the American Firestone Rubber Company. The failure of the settlement in Liberia was a major setback and represented a serious loss of prestige for Garvey.

Meanwhile, Garvey himself had been accused of fraud and arrested, then released on bail. The Provisional President of the African Republic had also made an error of judgment in 1921 when he held talks with the Imperial Giant of the Ku Klux Klan, Edward Young Clarke. Garvey apparently thought he might get support from the Klan for his back-to-Africa program. "I was speaking to a man who was brutally a white man, and I was speaking to him as a man who was brutally a Negro," Garvey later declared.²³⁹ However, both in and outside the UNIA the talks with the Klan were regarded as a betrayal. Opponents of Garvey, including W.E.B. DuBois of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), took every opportunity to discredit the President of the UNIA, organized "Garvey-must-go" campaigns and pressed for investigations in the fraud case.

In 1923 the fraud case against Marcus Garvey was reopened. Garvey insisted on defending himself, made mistake after mistake and was sentenced to five years imprisonment. From behind the prison bars in Atlanta, Garvey desperately tried to keep his fledgling organization together, but largely in vain. Opposition to Garvey had increased, his critics were relentless and without his presence many members deserted the UNIA. In 1927 the government of the United States decided to release Garvey and deport him to Jamaica.

By the late 1920s there was widespread dissatisfaction in Jamaica with direct rule from London, in spite of the fact that the number of black representatives in the Legislative Council had increased sharply. Their influence, however, was limited by the Governor's veto-right, so the island's administration de-

pended largely upon the personality and competence of its Governors. The Wall Street crash of 1929 and the subsequent worldwide economic recession, struck the Jamaican economy almost immediately. The price of sugar, which had already begun to fall in the early 1920s, reached a historic low in 1934, ruining many more estates and contributing to increased unemployment, lower wages and poverty on the island. The banana-export also experienced difficult times. On top of that migration almost came to a halt and thousands of superfluous Jamaican workers were forced to return.²⁴⁰ As usual, the effects of the economic decline had their most devastating impact on the black population.

In Jamaica Marcus Garvey was welcomed by a huge crowd of supporters. He immediately started to reorganize the UNIA, but during the Sixth International Convention in Kingston the organization broke apart. Garvey insisted that the headquarters should be where the President resided, but the American delegates refused to transfer the UNIA headquarters from New York City to Kingston. Garvey established a new Universal Negro Improvement Association - in his view the only legitimate one - but it never attained the success of the old days. Most of Garvey's other activities also turned into failures. He founded the People's Political Party and contested the local elections, but won only one seat, which he never occupied, because he was sentenced to three months in prison for contempt of court. Upon release, he found that his right to the seat had been withdrawn. Garvey's subsequent participation in the general elections resulted in humiliating defeat. In 1935, disillusioned by all these failures, Garvey left Jamaica to settle in London, where he died on 10 June 1940.

It is difficult to summarize Garvey's philosophy in only a few words, but essentially he preached Black Power in the sense of racial pride and self-help under the motto "One God, One Aim, One Destiny!" In his opinion, the liberation of the black race could only be accomplished through black consciousness and pride. The New Negro, as Garvey used to say, would uplift his race. Garvey was strongly opposed to racial integration and racial intermarriage, and unlike DuBois' NAACP, he refused any financial assistance from white philanthropists. The New Negroes had to create an independent black society and economy by their own efforts.

Garvey, not unlike other black leaders in the New World during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, held that the black Americans and West Indians had a responsibility for the liberation of Africa, a responsibility which they apparently believed the Africans themselves could not bear. Although their position was later often dismissed as arrogant, black leaders like Garvey certainly contributed to the emergence of black nationalism on the African continent. Several African leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria and Joseph Mobutu of Zaire, later acknowledged that they had been inspired by Garvey.²⁴¹

The back-to-Africa element in Garvey's teachings has been given a great deal of attention and has sometimes been exaggerated. Though his ultimate goal was to establish an independent African republic, he never intended to ship all black people living in the United States and the Caribbean to the African continent.

The thoughtful and industrious of our race want to go back to Africa, because we realize that it will be our only hope of permanent existence. ... We do not want all the Negroes in Africa. Some are no good here, and naturally will be no good there.²⁴²

Nevertheless, the slogan "Africa for the Africans," Garvey's constant focusing on Ethiopia and Africa and his subsequent activities in Liberia, together with the Black Star Line enterprise were sometimes regarded as elements in a total and final repatriation scheme, and many Garveyites believed in the biblical prophecy of Psalm 68:31. As the *UNIA catechism* put it:

Q. What prediction made in the 68th Psalm and the 31st verse is now being fulfilled?

A. "Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."

Q. What does this verse prove?

A. That Negroes will set up their own government in Africa, with rulers of their own race.²⁴³

To many of its supporters Garveyism was almost religion and in spite of the fact that Garvey never claimed divine qualities, he was regarded as the Black Moses, who would lead his people to the Promised Land.

Religion played a crucial role within the UNIA. In 1920 Garvey had appointed the Antiguan Episcopalian priest George Alexander McGuire as the first Chaplain-General of the Universal Negro Improvement

Association.²⁴⁴ McGuire, according to Ernle Gordon, “started to revolutionize Christian tradition, exhorting all negroes to remove pictures of the white Christ and the Virgin Mary from their homes and instead put up the Black Madonna and the Black Christ.”²⁴⁵ In September 1921 McGuire formed the African Orthodox Church (AOC), of which he became the first bishop. He strove to make the AOC the official UNIA-church, but encountered strong opposition from among the association’s members, many of whom preferred to remain faithful to their own denominations. Garvey was quick to assert that “the UNIA favours all churches, but adopts none as UNIA church.”²⁴⁶ The AOC, nevertheless, was to develop into an influential church which, by the early 1940s, could claim a membership of some 30,000.

In Jamaica many myths developed around Garvey. Barry Chevannes recounts several of these, which not only describe Garvey’s “divine characteristics,” but also “confirm the messianic role of Haile Selassie.” As one of his informants recalled:

[Garvey] always pass sentiments informing us that there shall be a coronation of an African King, but he never gave the full details. He spoke at Edelweiss Park with an open speech that there’s a prince in Africa to be crowned king for the black people of the world, and when such a king is crowned then Garvey’s work will be finished.²⁴⁷

Religious black nationalism after Garvey

“The Ethiopians do not belong here and should be taken back to their own country.”

When the UNIA began to fall apart, many members in the United States sought refuge in the numerous, often religious black nationalist movements which already existed or which sprang up in the 1920s and early 1930s.²⁴⁸ Not all of these groups strove for a return to and salvation in Africa. Some believed in salvation through dedication to a self-declared Messiah. Several former Garveyites became members of the Peace Mission Movement of Father Divine (George Baker), a black evangelist from the Deep South, who had declared himself to be God and had settled with a small group of followers in a luxurious neighborhood in New York City during the 1920s. His Peace Mission Movement provided free meals and shelter. When the economic depression of the early 1930s hit the United States, Father Divine’s generosity began to attract thousands of both black and white Americans. During the 1930s numerous Heavens, as the Peace Mission Movement’s branches were called, were established all over the United States.²⁴⁹

Another group which attracted former Garveyites was the Moorish Science Temple of America, founded in 1913 by Noble Drew Ali (Timothy Drew) in Newark. Drew claimed that he was a messenger of Allah, sent to make the black population in the United States rediscover its real identity as Moors and Muslims, an identity of which they had been stripped by the white man. According to Drew, the black people in the United States were citizens of Morocco, but he never propagated a return to Africa.

Like Garvey, he insisted that the black American must have a nation, but Ali held that North America was but an extension of the true African homeland, and that a Moorish nation should be built in America.²⁵⁰

Until considerable numbers of former UNIA members joined the messenger during the late 1920s, the Moorish Science Temple was a small cult. But at its height in 1929, the branch in Chicago alone claimed a probably exaggerated membership of 10,000. Internal rivalries and the sudden death of Noble Drew Ali, under questionable circumstances while in police custody, led to the collapse of the Temple that same year. Immediately after his death, two members claimed to be Drew’s incarnation. Little was heard of the first, Drew’s chauffeur El Green, but the other was to surface in Detroit within a year.²⁵¹

This mysterious preacher, who later introduced himself in the ghettos of Detroit as Wallace D. Fard, held that the white man was the devil and responsible for the desperate situation in which so many “so-called Negroes” found themselves in “the Wilderness in the West.” Allah was the God of the black population and Islam its true and natural religion. Fard soon attracted a following and founded the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the West, an organization with many divisions, including the University of Islam, the Muslim Girls Training Class and the para-military security force Fruit of Islam. Among the estimated 8,000 members were quite a number of Garveyites. However, after three years Fard disappeared as mysteriously as he had surfaced. The Nation fell apart, but the prophet’s close associate Elijah Muhammad founded a new Lost-Found Nation of Islam in Chicago, which until the late 1950s remained a small and inconspicuous group.

Muhammad declared Fard to be the reincarnation of Allah and claimed that the black people were the descendants of the tribe of Shabazz, whom Allah had predestined to suffer for 6,000 years under the oppression of the blue-eyed devils. But the torment was nearing its end and the white race would soon be destroyed in the war of Armageddon, after which the perfect and heavenly New World of Islam would be established. Nevertheless, the Black Muslims, as the members of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam became known, also demanded an independent black territory.²⁵² As their spokesman Malcolm X was to formulate it several years later:

We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendants from slaves, to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of our own - either on this continent or elsewhere. We believe that our former slave masters are obliged to provide such land and that the area should be fertile and minerally rich. We believe that our former slave masters are obliged to maintain and supply our needs in this separate territory for the next 20 to 25 years.²⁵³

But while the Moors and the Black Muslims expected redemption through the establishment of a black state within the United States, there were others who, like the Rastafarians were to do, either continued to advocate or actually realized a return to Africa. For most of them Ethiopia remained the focal point. As William Scott related, "it was after the glorious victory of Ethiopia over the Italian armies at Adowa in 1896 that the first black American migrants had traveled to the ancient Empire."²⁵⁴ But the numbers of those who actually made the journey home were, at least until the 1930s, relatively small. For the majority "repatriation" to Ethiopia remained a dream.

In Chicago, Detroit, Washington and New York City there were branches of the Star Order of Ethiopia and Ethiopian Missionaries to Abyssinia, commonly known as the Abyssinians. This group was founded in 1919 by a certain J.D. Jonas and led by "prophet" Grover Cleveland Redding, a black man from Georgia, who claimed to have been born in Ethiopia. The Abyssinians held that they were Ethiopians rather than Negroes and their ultimate goal was to return to Africa. The establishment of an independent black state on the African continent was to be realized by force of arms. They sold Ethiopian flags and pictures of the "Prince of Abyssinia." Members could also "sign up to return to Ethiopia," because as their leader later declared:

My mission is marked in the Bible. Even if they have captured me, some other leaders will rise up and lead the Ethiopian back to Africa. ... The Ethiopians do not belong here and should be taken back to their own country. Their time was up in 1919. They came in 1619. The Bible has pointed out that they were to appear in three hundred years. The time is up.²⁵⁵

In June 1920 Redding and another member of the Abyssinians, Oscar McGavick, were involved in a shooting in which two persons were killed. They were sentenced to death and nothing more was heard of the Star Order of Ethiopia and Ethiopian Missionaries to Abyssinia.

A more secular back-to-Africa group active in Chicago a decade later was the Peace Movement of Ethiopia (later Ethiopia Pacific Movement), founded in 1932 by Mittie Gordon, a former President of the local UNIA division. In 1939 they supported *The Negro Repatriation Bill* of Mississippi's right-wing extremist Senator Theodore G. Bilbo. Some 300 members launched a march on Washington D.C., but never arrived there because their cars broke down.²⁵⁶ One year after the formation of the Peace Movement of Ethiopia, two other small and short-lived Ethiopianist groups were founded. One Menelik K.O. Kande-kore established the Universal Black Confraternity Association, probably in an attempt to create a new UNIA, while obscure admirers of Ethiopia founded the Ethiopian Guild and Brotherhood Mission.

Far more influential, however, were the several groups of Black Jews or Black Hebrews, which emerged during the first decades of the twentieth century.²⁵⁷ Their ideas and beliefs, as one of these Black Hebrews later told David Jenkins, were "rather similar to that of the Rastafas [sic], although we were not so much involved in doctrine."²⁵⁸ And just like the Rastafarians, the Black Hebrews had rather diverse aspirations and beliefs. Some wanted to return to Africa, others to Israel; some accepted Jesus as a prophet, others rejected Jesus; some were seeking cooperation with orthodox Jewish communities, others regarded the Jews as nothing but impostors; some claimed to be the descendants of the biblical Patriarchs while others claimed to be related to the Falashas of Ethiopia.²⁵⁹

One of the first groups of Black Hebrews in the United States was the Church of God in Philadelphia, led by prophet F.S. Cherry and founded some time around 1915. Cherry came from the Deep South and as a seaman, laborer and railway employee had traveled widely. He spoke Hebrew as well as Yiddish. During

one of his trips he claimed to have had a vision in which God appointed him as his true and only prophet. Arriving in Philadelphia, he established his Church of God.²⁶⁰

Cherry maintained that the black people were the original inhabitants of the earth, the descendants of Jacob (Israel) and thus the true biblical Israelites. The “white race” descended from the sinner Gehazi, who became “a leper as white as snow” as the result of a curse. The “red race” was descended from Esau and the “yellow race” from the contacts between Gehazi and black people. Consequently, the followers of prophet Cherry considered the so-called (white) Jews to be frauds and impersonators. But - somewhat un-Jewishly - they also believed in Jesus Christ, who was a black man, just as God, too, was black. Jesus would return to earth in the year 2000.

Members of the Church of God, who called each other “brother” and “sister,” had to follow the Ten Commandments. The eating of pork was forbidden, as was divorce and having oneself photographed. Although they celebrated the Sabbath and practiced baptism, Christmas and Easter were not observed. During services prophet Cherry used a drum, and there was singing, prayers and Bible reading, both by prophet and members. During some prayers, the members of the congregation had to turn to the east and raise their right arm. At these services the prophet Cherry spoke out against the white Jews, for not acknowledging Jesus, and against the Gentiles, the whites, for taking away the black man’s land, freedom and identity. The prophet was especially strong in his condemnation of the clergy and the Pope for “condoning the rape of Ethiopia, a reference to the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1935-1941.”²⁶¹ The similarities with Rastafarian groups are striking.²⁶²

In 1930 Rabbi Wentworth A. Matthew founded the Commandment Keepers Congregation of the Living God in New York City, a group also known under the names Royal Order of Ethiopian Hebrews and Sons and Daughters of Culture. Matthew and his flock, many of whom came from the British West Indies, claimed to be related to the Falashas of Ethiopia. Unlike Prophet Cherry’s Church of God, the Commandment Keepers developed close links with (white) orthodox Jews. The followers of Rabbi Matthew had to observe strict moral codes and attend up to four religious services a week. Apart from the many religious activities, the Commandment Keepers also initiated social programs and gave financial assistance to the needy. During the 1930s the congregation became one of the largest and most influential groups of Black Hebrews. They not only founded branches in several cities in the United States, but also in Jamaica.²⁶³

Another prominent group of Black Hebrews was the Betn B’nai Abraham congregation led by Arnold J. Ford - prominent mainly because Ford and a large number of his congregation were affiliated with Marcus Garvey’s UNIA. Ford was born in Barbados, taught music in the British Navy and was a clerk in Bermuda before he came to Harlem. Like F.S. Cherry, Ford knew Hebrew and was familiar with the Talmud. In the early 1920s he became the Musical Director of the UNIA’s Liberty Hall and composed the official hymn of the Association, *Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers*, which the Rastafarians later adopted as their *Ethiopian Anthem*.

Ethiopia, thou land of our fathers,
Thou land were the gods loved to be,
As storm cloud at night suddenly gathers
Our armies come rushing to thee.
We must in the fight be victorious
When swords are thrust outward to gleam;
For us will the vict’ry be glorious
When led by the red, black and green.²⁶⁴

Ford had hoped that Judaism would become the official UNIA religion. When this did not happen, many Black Hebrews deserted the organization.

Ford “disappeared” in 1930 and the Betn B’nai Abraham congregation dissolved. His disappearance from the Harlem scene led some authors, notably Howard Brotz, to speculate that the mysterious W. Ford or Farrad (Wallace D. Fard), who established the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the West in Detroit during the summer of 1930, was actually Arnold J. Ford.²⁶⁵ But in fact Arnold Ford and his wife had migrated to Addis Ababa, apparently because they wanted to witness the coronation of Ras Tafari Makonnen (Haile Selassie I) and to visit the Falashas. Whether or not Ford was actually present at the coronation remains obscure. In the Ethiopian capital he discovered that it was almost impossible to contact the Falashas. Until his death during the Italian-Ethiopian war, he worked as a music teacher and repairer of instruments.²⁶⁶

While in the United States many former members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association became involved in various black nationalist movements and organizations, several ex-Garveyites remained active in Jamaica as well. Unfortunately, little is known about their activities. In July 1920 Alfred Mends and J. Mannasseh Price established the Ethiopian Progressive and Co-operative Association. In 1925 Grace Jenkins Garrison and the Barbadian Reverend Charles F. Goodridge founded the Jamaican branch of the Afro-Athlican Constructive Gaathly (AACG) or Hamitic Church of Robert Athlyi Rogers from Newark, which had its headquarters in Kimberley, South Africa. Rogers was an admirer of Marcus Garvey and the author of *The Holy Piby*, a book that became known as the Ethiopian or Black Man's Bible. The creed of the AACG was:

We believe in one God, Maker of all things, Father of Ethiopia, and in his Holy Laws as it is written in the book Piby, the sincerity of Angel Douglas and the power of his Holy Ghost. Who did Athlyi, Marcus Garvey and colleagues come to save? The down-trodden children of Ethiopia that might rise to be a great power among the nations.^{267.}

In 1927 Reverend Fitz Balintine Pettersburgh published *The Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy*, a book comparable with and probably based on *The Holy Piby*, and which was later imitated by one of the first Rastafarian leaders, Leonard P. Howell.

As Ken Post reports, the African Methodist Episcopal Church also had a strong presence in Kingston. In particular a certain Reverend Churchstone Lord from St. Vincent was, as a leading member of the UNIA, active in promoting "Africa for the Africans." And in 1931, another of Garvey's followers, C.G. Moulton, established the Istmo-African Bureau and Pioneer Club, which propagated the migration of black Jamaicans to Ethiopia.^{268.}

So, by the early 1930s, the basic elements of Rastafarian ideology were all firmly rooted among large sections of the black population in the New World. The notion that the black people were the true biblical Israelites, the conviction that the West was the modern-day Babylon, the desire to return to Africa and the belief that Ethiopia was to play a prominent role in the resurgence of Africa and the Africans were by no means uniquely Rastafarian. Indeed, it appears that these ideas were particularly well-represented in the United States and Jamaica, although it should immediately be added that we often lack adequate information on the situation elsewhere in the Caribbean. A combination of several factors may, however, explain why back-to-Africa and Ethiopianist sentiments had such an apparently strong impact in the United States and Jamaica. One factor is the King James Version of the Bible, which, with its many references to Ethiopia, might explain why these ideas were limited to the English-speaking part of the New World. Another factor, no doubt, was the long uncontested influence of black (Baptist) preachers from the United States in Jamaica. Furthermore, the close contacts between black Jamaicans and black Americans ensured a constant exchange of ideas. The single most important factor, however, remains the work of Marcus Garvey. It was his alleged prophecy of the coronation of a black king in Africa, which seemed to come true in November 1930.^{269.}

The coronation of Ras Tafari Makonnen

"King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah."

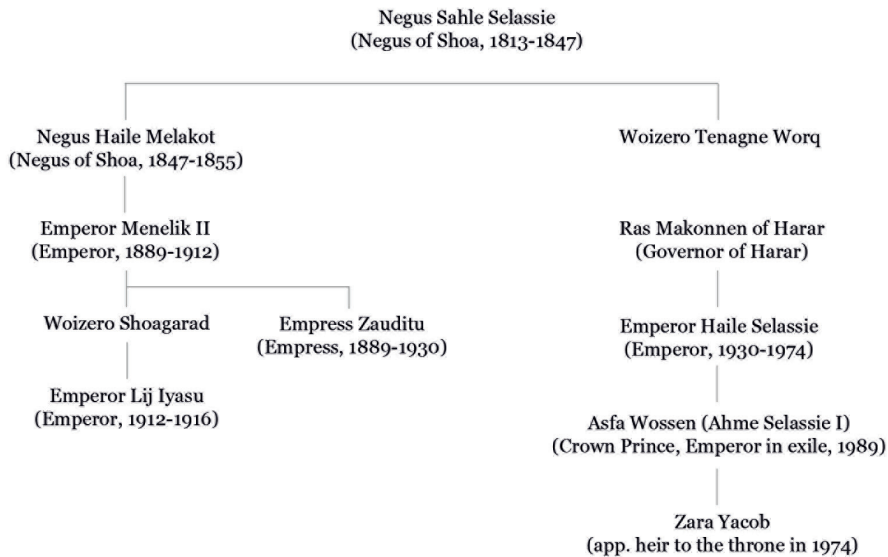
After the defeat of the Italian army at Adowa in 1896, Ethiopia and Italy had signed the Treaty of Addis Ababa. Eritrea was to remain an Italian possession and in return Italy recognized the independence of Ethiopia. Menelik II ruled with great competence until 1909, greatly enlarged the Ethiopian territory to about its present size and initiated important reforms, notably in the administration of the country. Once again a new capital was chosen, this time Addis Ababa. When Menelik abdicated due to illness, the young noble Lij Iyasu was appointed heir to the throne. The new *Negusa Nagast*, however, was too pro-Islam (claiming descent from the prophet Muhammad) and pro-Turkish for the Ethiopian warlords. In the ensuing power struggle, Dejazmatch Tafari Makonnen, the district chief of Harar, turned out to be the most influential opponent. In 1916, Lij Iyasu was toppled and Menelik's daughter Zauditu was crowned Empress. However, in an effort to counterbalance the power of the traditionalists, the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Matteos, appointed a Regent - the young, progressive-minded Ras Tafari Makonnen (see Graph 4).

Tafari Makonnen was born on 23 July 1892 in Harar.^{270.} His father Ras Makonnen, cousin and trusted

assistant of Emperor Menelik II, was one of the heroes of the battle of Adowa and had been rewarded with the governorship of Harar. He died in 1906 and five years later his son succeeded him as Governor. Tafari Makonnen was 25 when he was appointed regent alongside Empress Zauditu and heir to the throne. Ras Tafari Makonnen was a diplomat *par excellence*. In an environment where power was never taken for granted,

Ras Tafari was always prepared to play a waiting game; but he was also skilled in acting immediately when a power vacuum became apparent. His ability as a political manoeuvrer put him head and shoulders above his more emotional or slower-witted rivals.²⁷¹

Graph v. Oversimplified family tree of Emperor Haile Selassie.



It took Ras Tafari more than ten years to slowly but carefully expand his power. He was responsible for having Ethiopia accepted into the League of Nations in 1923 and abolished slavery a year later. Tafari Makonnen traveled to Europe in 1924, visiting Rome, Paris and London. On 27 October 1928 he was crowned *Negus* and when on 2 April 1930 the already powerless Empress Zauditu suddenly died, Tafari Makonnen was proclaimed *Negusa Nagast*, whereby his absolute power was established.

The coronation of Ras Tafari Makonnen on 2 November 1930 was a most splendid and, by European standards, exotic affair, designed along the lines of the coronation of King George V, at which Tafari Makonnen's father had been present. Addis Ababa was partially rebuilt for the occasion. The ceremony was attended by all the warlords of the Empire, along with scores of foreign VIP's. Representatives from every major political power were present. The most impressive delegation, according to Anthony Mockler, came from England and was led by the Duke of Gloucester, the son of King George V. One of the gifts presented by the Duke was the crown of Theodore, which had been taken to London by Sir Robert Napier after the British expedition in 1868. Also present was the Prince of Udine, a cousin of King Vittorio Emmanuele. With the rulers of the world came journalists from every major press agency and newspaper to cover the coronation of the only independent monarchy on the African continent.²⁷² Even *National Geographic Magazine* featured a sumptuously illustrated article, written by the American ambassador and representative at the coronation, Addison E. Southard.²⁷³

Ras Tafari Makonnen was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie I (the Power of the Trinity). He not only took a new name, but also a whole series of titles, based on an ancient Ethiopian legend known as the *Kebra Nagast* (Glory of the Kings), which traced the origin of the Ethiopian monarchs directly to King Solomon

and the Queen of Sheba, and thus to the house of Judah, from which Christ was descended. According to the *Kebrä Nagast*, the Ethiopian Queen Makeda (the Queen of Sheba), after her visit to Israel's legendary King Solomon, gave birth to a son of Solomon. This son, Menelik I, became the first King of Ethiopia and the founding father of the Solomonic dynasty, which according to the legend had ruled Ethiopia ever since.²⁷⁴ The newly crowned Emperor claimed to be the 225th in line and therefore assumed the titles "King of Kings," "Lord of Lords" and "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah," titles which were taken from Revelation (19:16 and 5:5) and, according to the Bible, would be borne by the Messiah upon his final return to earth.

Chapter 2.

The worst evil of all: Rastafari and Jamaican society, 1930-1960

On 4 November 1930 Jamaica's most widely read newspaper, *The Daily Gleaner*, featured the coronation of Ras Tafari Makonnen in its editorial. But while for many black people this event could not but have a particular significance, the *Gleaner*, commenting on the new Emperor's title "Light of the World," was less impressed:

We respectfully submit that this light seems to be somewhat dark. We are not alluding to complexion; colour questions are not permitted in these columns. But what has Abyssinia done to enlighten any of us, and how shall we be illuminated by the actions or dicta of this particular gentleman?²⁷⁵

Although "colour questions" were apparently not allowed in the *Gleaner*, color was certainly a "question" for the black population in Jamaica, whether the editors of the newspaper liked it or not. Political power was still the exclusive domain of the white and mulatto elite, and a dark skin generally meant low social and economic status.

Later that same month, on 14 November, the *Gleaner* supplemented the coverage of "this particular gentleman" by publishing photographs of the newly crowned Emperor and his wife, Empress Menen, together with a map of Ethiopia.²⁷⁶ The news certainly left some black Jamaicans wondering how to interpret the splendid coronation of this black Emperor in Africa's only independent monarchy, a country, moreover, of such special significance for so many black people in the New World. Logically enough, the Bible was consulted and some eventually came to the conclusion that Ras Tafari Makonnen, Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, was the Messiah returned.

There were several reasons for this belief. As noted earlier, the Emperor, claiming direct descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, had taken the titles "King of Kings," "Lord of Lords" and "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah," which, according to Revelation 19:16 and 5:5, were the titles the Messiah would bear upon his final return. There was also the famous passage in Psalms 68:31, which, like Isaiah 43, promised the restoration of Ethiopia (Africa) and its scattered sons and daughters. Other passages "proved" that God was black.²⁷⁷ Then there was the prophecy of Marcus Garvey, who was alleged to have said: "Look for Africa, when a Black King shall be crowned deliverance is near." Whether or not Garvey actually spoke these words - there is no proof he ever did - was of no great importance. The early believers were convinced that he had and that he had even predicted the name Ras Tafari.²⁷⁸ The fact that Garvey never intended that all black people should go back to Africa, that he later more than once warned against black cults and sects, and severely criticized Haile Selassie for cowardly behavior in the war with Italy, was similarly irrelevant. What was relevant was that his message, and in particular his focus on Africa and Ethiopia, was interpreted as a prophecy about the coronation of a black King, a black Messiah.

The first Rastafarian preachers

"I was permitted to go root out, pull down, to destroy, to build and to plant."

Among the first to conclude that Haile Selassie I was the black Messiah returned, who would deliver the suffering black people from white oppression and bring justice for the black race, were Leonard Percival Howell, Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert, Henry Archibald Dunkley and Robert Hinds.

Leonard Percival Howell, who was soon to become the most influential Rastafarian preacher in Jamaica, was living in the United States when Haile Selassie was crowned. Thanks to Robert Hill, Howell's life and early activities as a preacher are relatively well documented.²⁷⁹ Howell was born on 16 June 1898 in the Jamaican parish of Clarendon, the eldest of ten children. His father was a peasant and tailor. Howell later claimed to have traveled twice to Panama, after which he had served as a cook with the United States Army Transport Service from 1918 until 1923. He came to New York City in October 1918 and later spent some time in San Francisco. After obtaining his American citizenship in 1924, Howell lived in New York City for several years and earned a living as a construction worker and by running a tea-room in Harlem. In New York City Howell was a member of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, but

there seem to have been objections to his membership on the grounds of suspected “obeah practices.” Although it seems that Howell apparently acted as a faith healer, Hill suggests that he may also have been influenced by George Padmore, a prominent black member of the Communist Party.²⁸⁰

Howell, according to Smith, Augier and Nettleford, was also said “to have fought against King Prempeh of Ashanti (1896).”²⁸¹ The reference here is probably to the fourth war the Ashanti fought against the British in 1895-1896. Since Howell was born two years after this war ended, it follows that either Howell’s claim was a status-enhancing falsehood or that the information provided to Smith *et al.* was incorrect. From later court evidence it appears that Howell also claimed - falsely - to have witnessed the coronation of Haile Selassie.

According to a 1957 secret intelligence report by the Special Branch of the Jamaican Constabulary Force, Howell was in January 1931 arrested and tried on “a charge of Grand Larceny.” He was sentenced to four years imprisonment, but after eighteen months was released and deported to Jamaica, where he arrived on 17 November 1932.²⁸² Once back in Jamaica, Howell almost immediately contacted Marcus Garvey. He wanted permission to sell photographs of Haile Selassie at the organization’s headquarters at Edelweiss Park. Garvey refused and Howell deserted the UNIA.²⁸³ Some time during January 1933 he began to sell his pictures of the Ethiopian Emperor in Kingston, at a shilling each, preaching to the public the coming of the black Messiah. He established the King of Kings Mission and presented himself as Haile Selassie’s ambassador in Jamaica. “Without much success,” according to Hill, but “satisfied with the success,” according to Leonard Barrett, Howell soon shifted his activities to the parish of St. Thomas.²⁸⁴ It was here that he was to establish his fame.

Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert, who may have been the first to preach the doctrine that Haile Selassie was the Messiah returned, was born on 16 March 1894 near Bull Bay in the parish of St. Andrew. Little is known about his early life, except that he migrated to Costa Rica on 8 July 1911. There, according to Ken Post and Smith *et al.*, he became a member of the Ancient Mystic Order of Ethiopia, a masonic group, probably of North American origin.²⁸⁵ Hibbert grew bananas and was also said to have been a Justice of the Peace.²⁸⁶ In Hibbert’s own words he had spent

twenty years and three months working and studying the Bible and other mystical terms. I then became a certified and chartered member of the G.A.B.O.S. [Great Ancient Brotherhood of Silence]. I was permitted to go root out, pull down, to destroy, to build and to plant. Jeremiah 1-5 and 10 verses.²⁸⁷

On 12 October 1931, at the age of 37, Hibbert returned to Jamaica. Apparently he came into contact with Howell one or two years later. While the latter was away preaching in St. Thomas, Hibbert is said to have tried to organize Howell’s following in Kingston under the name Ethiopian Coptic Faith (also known as Ethiopian Coptic Church) and to introduce some of his own ideas. Howell, upon returning to the capital, rejected Hibbert’s reforms and withdrew his following, after which both men went separate ways.

From the scant material available, it appears that Hibbert was a very spiritually and mystically oriented man. The exact contents of his teachings are not known, but he is said to have based them on a text known as the Ethiopian Bible of St. Sosimas.²⁸⁸ Hibbert later said that he was “teaching the people about the Coptic Church ... built by a man whose name was Corponishus ... a few months after Phillip and the Eunoch departed.”²⁸⁹ He declared himself to be “the incarnated body,” but of whom is not completely clear. From the reference to Jeremiah and the fact that he later called himself Josiah Nathaniel Hibbert, one would assume that Hibbert regarded himself to be the incarnation of Josiah, King of Judah. Unfortunately, Hibbert’s activities have not been researched or documented in detail, perhaps because he kept a relatively low profile. Hibbert surfaced again in the mid-1950s when the Ethiopian World Federation, an American-based group which aimed to provide assistance to Ethiopia during its war with Italy, flourished among the Rastafarians. Later he was actively involved in the preparations which led to the establishment of a branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Jamaica, which will be discussed in chapter 4.

The third of the early preachers was Henry Archibald Dunkley, a former seaman who had worked for the Atlantic Fruit Company, but left this job in December 1930. According to Smith *et al.*, Dunkley studied the King James version of the Bible for almost two-and-a-half years before he finally came to the conclusion that Haile Selassie was indeed “the Messiah whom Garvey had prophesied.”²⁹⁰ But unlike some other preachers, Dunkley considered Selassie to be the son of God, rather than the Father himself. In mid-1933, somewhat later than Howell and Hibbert, he took his message to the streets of down-

town Kingston. While Howell preached in rural St. Thomas, Hibbert and Dunkley concentrated their efforts among the urban poor in the slums of West Kingston, “sometimes working together, sometimes separately.”²⁹¹ In 1938 Dunkley, together with Hibbert, was involved in founding the first Jamaican branch of the Ethiopian World Federation, but this group, known as Local 17, soon fell apart.

Robert Hinds, as noted in the previous chapter, was a former adherent of Alexander Bedward and had joined the Shepherd in his march on Kingston in April 1921. He was among those arrested, but was not, as he later claimed, sent to the mental asylum.²⁹² Little is known about his early life, but Hinds said he had heard about the coronation of Haile Selassie from someone returning from Cuba with a picture of the Emperor. Hinds also referred to a magazine, most likely the June 1931 issue of the *National Geographic Magazine*.²⁹³ Although he may independently have reached the conclusion that Haile Selassie was the Messiah returned, Hinds soon became Leonard Howell’s deputy.

Except for Hinds, all the early preachers of the new faith were men who had traveled. The first Rastafarians were all from a lower-class background, “persons of the small producer and labouring class,” as they were later described in *The Daily Gleaner*. In spite of the fact that none of them had received much education, all seem to have been literate, and their convictions were based on sometimes extensive study of the Bible. They also seem to have been considerably influenced by Garveyite teachings, although this is hard to document. They arrived at their conclusions independently, but soon met others who were thinking along the same lines. Although there was some cooperation, the early preachers did not join forces. Instead, they competed with one another, probably not only for leadership, but also over differences in interpretation of the exact nature of the newly crowned Emperor. From the very beginning, therefore, the Rastafarian movement developed without central leadership, without an overall formal organization and without a unanimously shared doctrine.

Leonard Howell and Robert Hinds on trial

“People, you are poor, but you are rich, because God planted mines of diamond and gold for you in Africa your home.”

In April 1933, not long after Leonard Howell had begun to preach in St. Thomas, he was reported to the police for seditious language. The offense had occurred during a meeting in Trinityville, but no action was taken “since it was felt that Howell was ‘a ranter who would revel in the advertisement of a prosecution’.”²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, a circular advised the Jamaican police to keep an eye on him.²⁹⁵ They did so until, on 16 December 1933, *The Daily Gleaner* featured Howell’s activities in a front-page article entitled: “Blatant swindle being carried on in parish of St. Thomas.” Part of the article read:

A blatant swindle has been proceeding in the parish of St. Thomas, if reports reaching the *Gleaner* office are accurate. It is stated that during the last few months largely attended meetings have been convened at which seditious language and blasphemous language is employed to boost the sale of pictures of “King Ras Tafari of Abyssinia, son of King Solomon by the Queen of Sheba.” From the tale told to a reporter by one who attended one of the meetings, one would almost conclude that the sleek young Jamaican dressed in full black - vest and all - has lost his reason; but the facts remain, our informant assures us, that the photographs are being sold at 1/ per copy and members of the cult are called upon to pay and are paying anything from 2/ to 5/ each. Devilish attacks are made at these meetings, it is said, on Government, both Local and Imperial, and the whole of the proceedings would tend to provoke an insurrection, if taken seriously. Our informant tells us that meetings have been held at Pear Tree Grove and Leith Hall in the parish of St. Thomas and there are already some 800 followers of the new teaching. “King Rasta,” according to the pictures, has the face of a Turk, and the said sleek young Jamaican is saying that the spirit of our Lord has returned in this mythical figure.²⁹⁶

The press report on Howell’s “swindle” was sufficient reason for the authorities to order action against the “Ras Tafari cult.” On 1 January 1934 both Howell and his deputy Robert Hinds were arrested by Detective R.T. Scott. The charges laid against them were two counts of sedition, one on the basis of a speech held at Seaforth on 10 December 1933, the other for a speech delivered in Trinityville six days later. The speech in Trinityville had, in the absence of Leonard Howell, been delivered by Hinds. During the meeting a police Corporal named Martin had intervened, as the result of which Hinds and some of his followers allegedly assaulted Martin, “the Corporal injuring one of his fingers.” Brought before court two days after his arrest, Robert Hinds was charged on two counts of sedition, while two other members of the King of Kings Mission, Osmond Shaw and Theophilous Jackson, were each charged on one. Furthermore, Hinds and eight others were charged with disorderly conduct and assault, which earned Hinds 30 days imprisonment with hard labor, while all the others were fined 40 pence or 30 days.²⁹⁷

The speech made by Leonard Howell at Seaforth on 10 December 1933, in the presence of some 300 people, was not brought before court until 13 March 1934 and in the meantime Howell had been granted bail. Robert Hinds, after serving his 30 days behind bars, was also on trial again. The event attracted a large number of people anxious to hear what would be said, but only a few could be admitted to the small court room. *The Daily Gleaner* followed the proceedings in the Morant Bay court room closely. According to the newspaper reporter, the case “provoked much hilarity” and a “great deal of amusement [was] afforded by the fanatical utterances” ascribed to Howell and Hinds. Leonard Howell was described as:

an athletic figure in black, with a beard not dissimilar to that worn by the King of Abyssinia. [Howell] was undefended by counsel. He took with him into the dock sheaths of documents and a few books of unusual proportions. He wore a rosette of yellow, green and black similar to that worn by a large number of men and women who accompanied him to court.²⁹⁸

Chief Justice Sir Robert William Lyall-Grant, who almost two decades before had presided over the trials against the rebels of John Chilembwe in Nyasaland (Malawi), summarized the charge against Leonard Howell and Robert Hinds as:

a seditious speech, in which he abused the Sovereign, the Queen, Queen Victoria, the Governor of Jamaica and both the Governments of Great Britain and this island, “thereby intending to excite hatred and contempt for His Majesty the King, and for those responsible for the Government in this island and to create disaffection among the subjects of His Majesty in this island and to disturb the public peace and tranquillity of this island.”²⁹⁹

The speech in question had been overheard by two police officers, Corporal Isaac Ebenezer Brooks and Constable Enos Gayle, both of whom claimed to have taken notes of the seditious words. Howell pleaded not guilty, denied having used seditious or abusive language and claimed that no notes were or could have been taken at all. He added that the jury was prejudiced and should not be composed of inhabitants of Seaforth and Morant Bay. Howell and his following were not on very good terms with their neighbors in St. Thomas, most of whom apparently considered the Rastafarians to be a blasphemous nuisance. Three years later this hostile relationship was to result in a violent clash between Howell and the inhabitants of Morant Bay.

From the *Gleaner’s* reports of the trial, it appears that it was difficult to prove either that Howell had actually used seditious language and abused Government and Royalty or that the meeting had been “a public disorder.” Cross-examining Constable Gayle about the speech, Howell, in his own defense, asked him:

Were the people excited?
Not at the time.
Everybody was perfectly orderly?
At times.
At what times were they disorderly?
They cheered.
That is not disorderly!
No.³⁰⁰

The Constable seemed to be no match for Howell, who continued his examination with the question:

Did they feel as if they were being discontented with the British Government?
Likely not.
How often have you heard of sedition?
Several times.
How many?
I can’t say.
You don’t know what it is, do you?
I certainly do.
What was the nature of the meeting that afternoon?
I don’t understand.
What was the topic of the meeting?
Political.
Did you hear anyone speak disrespectfully of the laws and Government of Britain?
Yes.
Who?
You were.
Who else? Were the 300 people doing something?
They cheered.³⁰¹

The Constable was unable to say exactly what Howell had said that was seditious or abusive; at least no reference to any such remarks can be found in the *Gleaner* coverage of the trial. What the policeman did record, however, was the chorus of a hymn sung during the meeting:

Leonard Howell seeks me and he finds me
Fills my heart with glee
That's why I am happy all the day
For I know what Leonard Howell is doing for my soul
That's why I am happy all the day³⁰².

Leonard Howell also tried to prove that Constable Gayle and Corporal Brooks could by no means have taken notes of the speech. First of all, they were not able to write shorthand. Secondly, Howell said that he had spoken very fast and claimed that the notes were "too perfectly carved" to have been taken then. Howell put the Constable to a dictation test and submitted the writing to the Judge. Several witnesses for the defense, all of whom had been present at the meeting at Seaforth, declared that they had not seen the policemen taking notes. One witness stated that, according to her judgement, Corporal Brooks was "intoxicated" and another said that when she had spoken to Constable Gayle, he had told her that an earlier charge of sedition against Howell (at Morant Bay), had been too weak. This case, however, was strong, and he added that the Inspector had instructed him and Brooks to make the case.

The proceedings in the Morant Bay court room soon focused on Howell's preaching of the return of the Messiah in the person of the King of Abyssinia. On Thursday 15 March 1934 *The Daily Gleaner* screamed: "Leonard Howell, on his trial says Ras Tafari is Messiah returned to earth." Almost a full page was devoted to the trial, which, according to the newspaper had "assumed even more than parish-wide importance." Constable Gayle told the jury that Howell had sold photographs of the Emperor and that he obtained one from him. But, according to the Constable, the accused wanted his name and address. Asked why, Howell said the photographs "would be used as passports when the time came for the people to go back to Africa and some might have the same name but not the same nature." Howell then added that the plainclothed Constable looked like a "police informer" and took the photograph away from him. Cross-examining Howell, the Assistant to the Attorney-General, H.M. Radcliff, asked Howell:

What is the good of the picture?
To know Ras Tafari their king.
Not as a passport?
No Sir.
What do you do with the money you get for selling them - send it to Abyssinia?
No Sir.
What do you do with it?
Help a lot of poor people.³⁰³

In his defense Howell gave a detailed exposition of his faith. He refused to swear on the Bible, claiming to be a Muslim. He then also refused to swear on the Koran, but later gave in.

[Howell] denied having used the words he was said to have used. The nature of the meeting, he explained, was "to tell of Jehovah's Kingdom." ... Howell said he began his meeting with a popular hymn. "Holding up a picture of King Ras Tafari," he demonstrated, "I told the people that he was a descendant of the same man who told Peter: 'Put up thy sword. He who lives by the sword, shall perish by the sword,' and 'My Kingdom is not of this world.'"³⁰⁴

Howell continued saying:

That we were told that we were Gentiles, but thanks be to God we had awakened from our sleep by the coming of the Messiah, to a fuller understanding to know that we were the Jews. That the reason why we were sleeping was just because our last King of Israel, Hesekiah, had his eyes plucked out by Nebuchadnezzar and the head of his two sons taken off, and we went blind from then, and could never see the light of the Lord God of Israel, until the Messiah in the person of Ras Tafari came back in this world. That his Kingdom shall have no end - a kingdom that all kings of the earth had to bow down to as he was the only king in the world to-day as an ancient king. I told them that at his coronation, all the powers of the earth sent down deplomatical [sic] presentations, namely, Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, to denote Marriage, Death and Birth. That the King of England sent down his third son with great gifts. These gifts had never left England before; such wonderful and glorious gifts had never been given to other kings of the earth as were sent to Rastafari. ... I told them that as Etheopians [sic], we were worshipping the god of idolatry - the king which Nebuchadnezzar set up in Babylon for the people to worship after he overthrew King Zedekiah.³⁰⁵

Howell went on to talk about Nebuchadnezzar and the Messiah, and the *Gleaner* reporter, unlike the two policemen apparently well able to take shorthand notes, wrote it all down. Somewhat later Leonard Howell gave notice of his millenarian expectations:

I told the people ... that the same God had come back on earth to lead mankind in the path of righteousness. His kingdom was not in those days. He was 33 years and six months when He was crucified. He must come back on earth and take up his full power to reign when the same 33 years and six months had expired. I told them: "As it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the end." The same 33 years and six months had come back. Now they were standing in 33 and the six months would start in the month of April - which would soon be coming. He promised to come back in the same way as He went away - Jerusalem was troubled. ... He told the people that the return must be identical and be along the lines of David's descendants. The world was to last 2,520 years. It started in 606 [B.C.] and should end in 1914.³⁰⁶

The self-declared ambassador of Ras Tafari made several more statements about the end of the existing world order, which had begun with the great war of 1914-1918, and about the signs of the approaching transformation to a completely new order under the Messiah returned. After a lunch break, Howell finished his testimony, with the assurance to "the much amused audience:"

[t]hat England, the mother of all the nations, promulgated the identical religion over the earth, but a stone of gigantic power shall come and smash it to pieces. ... he said that at no time he had it in mind to speak words disrespectful to anyone, at Seaforth. "I said: 'People, you are poor, but you are rich, because God planted mines of diamond and gold for you in Africa your home.'" He told them that 700 billion pounds had been sent from Africa to England, and urged them to go back to Africa, the home of their forefathers. ... That there was a vast amount of people who believed that they were British subjects, but the British Government were only protecting them until their King came, the Crowned Head of England would turn them over to their King. 1934 was the starting of a better turn of success for you.³⁰⁷

It is, of course, difficult to assess whether the testimony of Howell as reported in the *Gleaner* really reflected his ideas and beliefs. It is likely that he avoided all remarks and statements that might have been considered "seditious." But the millenarian message itself already implied a political threat to the Jamaican status quo. After all, it meant that the Rastafarians no longer recognized the authority of the Crown or of the colonial government.

Chief Justice Lyall-Grant and the jury were not impressed by Howell's defence. On 16 March 1934 he received a two-year prison sentence for sedition. His Honor the Chief Justice called Leonard Howell "a fraud" and was quoted as saying:

You pretend to have been to Ethiopia, when you have never been near the place. ... You say you are a Mohammedan, when as far as I can see, and I have had experience of Mohammedans, you are nothing like one.³⁰⁸

Robert Hinds received the lighter sentence of one year, like Howell without hard labor. Sir Lyall-Grant thought that the "ignorant" Hinds was "to a considerable extent led away" by Howell. The Chief Justice may not have been impressed by the accused, but the accused seem to have been hardly more impressed by either the Chief Justice or his verdict. Confident that the Emperor would shortly come to their rescue and liberate the oppressed black people from the white, colonial exploitation, "both men took their sentence calmly. Howell thanked the Judge with a courteous bow; Hinds saluted and bowed."³⁰⁹

The expansion of "the dangerous cult"

"This thing is getting worse and worse, and St. Thomas is getting a bad name. No wonder we are called 'dark'."

Even without Howell and Hinds, the Rastafarians continued to make the press. Under the difficult social and economic conditions of the early 1930s, there was great unrest among the Jamaican peasantry and the Rastafarians only added fuel to the fire. In August 1934 *The Daily Gleaner* reported that members of "the dangerous cult" of Rastafari in St. Thomas were preparing to march to Abyssinia across the waters. The danger, however, was not so much in the planned march of "those silly persons of the small producer and labouring class," as in their belief

that those who own holdings in that parish must not pay taxes to the Government, neither must others who rent lands from the Government and property owners pay rent for plots on which they squat and cultivate. Their belief is that the land belongs to the black people: no longer are they accountable to Government or property owner.³¹⁰

A *Gleaner* editorial called for “early attention and action” against the “silly persons” - and there was plenty of attention for the Rastas. Ken Post remarks that “only two weeks after his arrival on the island, the new Governor, Sir Edward Denham, took note of the Rastafarians. On 6 November 1934 he wrote in his diary:”

Ras Tafari or Rasta people - a sect in St. Thomas - round Morant Bay. Wear beards and believe that land will be found for them in Abyssinia and that on Aug. 1st a ship would take them there - Part of the Back to Africa movement the future of the Black man when he will come of his own - ganja smoking among this sect.³¹¹

Action was taken as well. Within a year, *The Daily Gleaner* was able to report that the activities of the Rastafarians had been successfully suppressed in St. Thomas.³¹² The faith had spread to Portland, however, where local authorities were already beginning to fear increased unrest. But Rastafarian activities also continued in Kingston. By the time the *Gleaner* was able to report the successful crushing of the “dangerous cult” in St. Thomas, Hinds had already been released, while Hibbert and Dunkley were continuing their work in the slums of Kingston, where they did not go unnoticed. They regularly organized meetings and marches, but had to be careful not to attract too much attention, as both the police and groups of citizens often harassed them. Hibbert, known among his followers for his “occult powers,” was nevertheless arrested three times during 1935.³¹³ Archibald Dunkley, who did not restrict his preaching to Kingston alone, was arrested and sent to jail in St. Thomas some time during 1934. In February 1935 he was again arrested and confined for six months to Bellevue Mental Hospital.³¹⁴ Unfortunately, details of the activities of both men remain vague.

By the mid-1930s other Rastafarian leaders were emerging in Kingston. There was one Altamont Reid (also spelled Read) who, according to Post, led the small Israelite Group, which combined “religious Rastafarianism with belief in a violent earthly ‘day of reckoning’.”³¹⁵ Reid was sentenced to four months penitentiary on charges of sedition in May 1938. Some time around 1940 he became a bodyguard of Norman Manley, the future Prime Minister.³¹⁶

Others of a more secular conviction were men like Ferdinand Ricketts and Paul Earlington. Ricketts, who by the early 1960s was calling himself Ras Arsa Mohammed Gabralah, organized his first meeting in the Dunchill area of West Kingston some time during 1935 and later claimed to have been the first Rastafarian in Jamaica. Howell, as Ricketts explained in 1961, “was more interested in a revivalist religious movement,” while he himself thought along political lines.³¹⁷ Paul Earlington, who also lived in the slums of West Kingston, is said to have been influenced by Robert Hinds, whose teachings inspired him in 1934 to accept Haile Selassie as the living God.³¹⁸ Hill, however, maintains that Earlington never considered himself to be a Rastafarian.³¹⁹ In 1938 Earlington and Ricketts, together with Dunkley and Hibbert, were to become co-founders of the first Jamaican branch of the Ethiopian World Federation, which will be discussed further on in this chapter.

During the first two years of their activities, Howell and Hinds had collected a following of several hundred persons. Judging by the fact that no large meetings were reported, it seems that Hibbert, Dunkley, Reid, Ricketts and Earlington had relatively small followings. After all, it seems unlikely that regular meetings of large numbers of Rastafarians would have escaped the attention of the colonial authorities. The meetings and public speeches organized by Howell and Hinds in St. Thomas were almost immediately monitored by the authorities, although they were initially somewhat reluctant to move against them, afraid that this would only strengthen the position and appeal of the preachers. It was only after *The Daily Gleaner* brought the Rastafarian activities in St. Thomas to public attention that the police arrested Howell and Hinds: the arrest and conviction of Hibbert, Dunkley and later Reid soon followed.

On 3 October 1935 the fascist regime in Italy made an important, though unintentional contribution to the development of the Rastafarian movement when, almost forty years after the Italian defeat near Adowa, some 100,000 Italian troops commanded by General Emilio de Bono invaded Ethiopia. The Ethiopian armies under the various warlords resisted the invaders as best they could and although the Italians had once again underestimated Ethiopian courage, strength and intelligence in warfare, the outcome was not as disastrous as in 1896. Adowa fell within four days. Yet Mussolini’s soldiers advanced slowly in the face of heavy resistance, and in spite of the large-scale use of mustard gas, it was not until May 1936 that *Il Duce* could announce the conquest and annexation of the Ethiopian Empire.

Haile Selassie managed to flee the country and went into exile in Bath, England. Marcus Garvey, also in England and bitterly disappointed both by the decline of his UNIA and the defeat of Ethiopia, blamed the

Emperor for the shameful conquest of the last independent African monarchy, the focus of hope for so many black people.

The Emperor of Abyssinia was not only Emperor in himself, but he held a trust as Emperor of the surviving Negro Empire in Africa, and by his behaviour he has betrayed that trust consciously or unconsciously.³²⁰

But such criticism either went unnoticed or was completely neglected by those black Jamaicans (and Americans) who had come to regard the Emperor as the symbol of African awakening.

Of course, the Italo-Ethiopian war was front-page news all over the world. The Ethiopians and their monarch received a lot of sympathy in Europe, but the League of Nations failed to impose any effective sanctions, afraid of possible repercussions. On 19 October 1935 the League declared an economic boycott of Italy, but not a total embargo. Oil was still available and the Suez canal remained open to Italian military transports. After the fall of Addis Ababa, the League of Nations lifted the sanctions and, despite a passionate plea by Emperor Haile Selassie, most member states recognized the Italian annexation.

Sympathy among the black population of the United States and the Caribbean was not only confined to words, although the ability to do something meaningful was extremely limited. In the United States black organizations collected money and supplies, and organized rallies in support of the besieged Ethiopians. In Jamaica rage and fury dominated, and, as Ken Post writes, “it was primarily ideas which emerged from the Ethiopian crisis, not organisation.” In October 1935 there was a large protest-meeting in Kingston, while some 1,400 Jamaicans signed a petition asking the British Crown to grant permission for Jamaicans to enlist in the Ethiopian army. A collection organized by a group known as the Ethiopian Medical Aid Fund seems “to have collected very little money.”³²¹ Nevertheless, the Italian attack on the last independent monarchy in Africa provoked strong Ethiopianist sentiments in both the Caribbean and the United States.

For the Rastafarians the Italo-Ethiopian war was the fulfillment of the prophesy of Revelation: the final battle with the beast. Just as it had been Rome which had brought Jesus to the cross, it was now Mussolini, sanctioned by the Pope, the anti-Christ, who had tried once again to destroy the Messiah. Instead of shaking their faith in the invincibility of their Messiah, the war confirmed it. The Rastafarians found confirmation not only in the Bible, but also in several press reports. When in January 1936 *Illustrated London News* published a photograph of the Emperor, posing with one foot on a huge, unexploded Italian aircraft bomb, it was just one more piece of evidence that Haile Selassie was immortal and invincible.³²²

On 7 December 1935, about a month after the invasion, an article appeared in *The Jamaica Times*, which described a worldwide conspiracy of the black race, organized in the Nyabinghi Order, “whose adherents or friends now number 190,000,000 blacks.”³²³

Up from the depths of the jungle and out of the hearts of modern cities, from all parts of the African Continent and from countries where coloured people live, the blacks are flocking to the standard of an organisation which dwarfs all similar federations. Hitherto, diverse religious beliefs coupled with the stupidity of primitive peoples prevented such an amalgamation. But today it is a fact! The blacks are welded into an ominous secret league, most remarkable of which is that its existence is scarcely known.³²⁴

The aim of the Nyabinghi Order was “to starve out the whites, and then destroy them with arms.” The head of the Nyabinghi Order was none other than the Emperor of Ethiopia.

The negro, Haile Sellassie was unanimously voted supreme powers in the Nya-Binghi. He accepted the position and swore to make war on the Europeans. ... Haile Sellassie is regarded as a veritable Messiah, a saviour of the coloured people, the Emperor of the Negro Kingdom. Wherever one mentions the word “Negus” the eyes of the black gleam with a mad fanaticism. They worship him as an idol. He is their God. To die for the Negus is to ensure admission to paradise.³²⁵

The story was without doubt an invention of Mussolini’s propaganda machine, an effort to justify the attack on the Ethiopian Empire. For some Rastafarians, however, Nyabinghi became a reality, and some radical adherents of the movement began to call themselves Nyaman.³²⁶ However, it was to be six long years before Jah overcame.

Robert Hinds, in the meantime, had decided not to wait for Howell’s release from prison and had started his own King of Kings Mission with headquarters in downtown Kingston, first on North Street and later, after his landlord had ordered him to leave, on Laws Street. By the end of the 1930s there was a consider-

able concentration of Rastafarian activity downtown, with Dunkley's headquarters on Oxford Street and Howell, after his release, taking up quarters on Princess Street, where he began to operate a bakery to finance his spiritual activities.

According to Barry Chevannes, "Hinds was undoubtedly the most successful of all the early Rastafari, in terms of membership."³²⁷ Total membership of his King of Kings Mission seems to have reached some 800 in Hinds' best days, when frequent meetings and marches were organized, and many new members were baptized in the Ferry River.³²⁸ Robert Hinds' message was much the same as that preached by Howell. With the advent of the Messiah in the person of Emperor Haile Selassie, the exploitation of the black race by the white slave master had come to an end. Britain had surrendered to the Ethiopian Emperor and the descendants of the black slaves in the West would soon return to the land of their fathers.

A crucial myth among the Rastafarians held that King George V had sent his son, the Duke of Gloucester, to the coronation ceremony in Addis Ababa in order to pledge allegiance to Haile Selassie and to surrender world power, symbolically represented by the return of the Imperial scepter which Sir Robert Napier had brought to England after storming Magdala in 1868. As Leonard Howell described it:

In 1930 the Duke of Gloucester undertook one of the most interesting duties he had been called upon to execute up to this date. ... The Duke was to represent his father The Anglo Saxon King. The Duke handed to His Majesty Rastafari the King of Kings and Lord of Lords a Scepter of solid gold twenty seven inches long which had been taken from the hands of Ethiopia some thousand years ago.

The Duke fell down bending his knees before His Majesty Ras Tafari the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and spoke in a loud tone of voice and said, "Master, Master, my father has sent me to represent him sir. He is unable to come and he said that he will serve you to the end Master."³²⁹

The legitimacy of the British Crown as the constitutional power in Jamaica was of great concern to the Rastafarians. After Edward VIII had abdicated the British throne to marry Wallis Simpson in December 1936, Hinds argued that since the new King, George VI, was not properly crowned, the British Empire no longer had a King at all, which implied that the colonial government was illegitimate and thus had no power over its former subjects in Jamaica.³³⁰ The black people of Jamaica now owed allegiance to Haile Selassie, who had assumed world power after his coronation. His doctrine, like that of all early Rastafarian preachers, was clearly anti-colonial and thus earned him considerable police attention.

Several of Chevannes' informants, both members and non-members of Hinds' Mission, recalled that at least one of his meetings ended in a violent clash with the police, who kept the events under close surveillance and apparently tried to break up the meeting. When it eventually came to a fight, some twenty members were arrested.³³¹ But Hinds and the other Rastafarian preachers not only had to face the police. They also frequently clashed with their lower-class neighbors, both verbally and physically. Youth gangs attacked the headquarters of the Rastas and occasionally broke up their meetings and parades; during one of these confrontations Archibald Dunkley was shot and nearly killed.³³²

After serving his two-year prison term, Leonard Howell had been released in mid-1936. He did not immediately settle in downtown Kingston, but took up quarters in St. Thomas again, where he was quite successful in reorganizing what was left of his following. For those who had not flocked to Hinds' King of Kings Mission, Howell's time in jail, suffering for the good cause, had only strengthened his position as the ambassador of Ras Tafari.

But the citizens of Port Morant were sick and tired of the regular Rastafarian meetings. As one resident told an eager *Gleaner* reporter:

This thing is getting worse and worse, and St. Thomas is getting a bad name. No wonder we are called "dark." And so long as Howell keeps within the Law, the police can do nothing; they cannot interfere with a man that keeps the peace. Every member is advised by Howell to keep quiet and he permits no disorderly conduct. At times hundreds of his followers will congregate in the yard and you never hear the slightest noise³³³

When on Saturday 9 January 1937 some 400 to 500 followers from all over the island gathered at Howell's headquarters at Harbour Head, a short distance east of Port Morant, to celebrate the Ethiopian New Year, the local inhabitants decided to chase Howell and his following away.³³⁴ As more and more of Howell's followers arrived, some from as far away as Clarendon, Port Morant residents began to intimidate the Rastafarians. The intimidation soon turned into merciless beating and jostling. The Rastafarians had to run for their lives, while Howell and some members of his congregation fled inside his house. While the police looked on, the angry crowd tore down the zinc fence surrounding Howell's house. But despite

the crowd's demands to "give us the Ambassador," the police prevented the mob from taking Howell outside. "The citizens of Port Morant had rebelled against the machinations of a fanatic organisation that had well-nigh over-run the parish," wrote a delighted reporter.

It was not until the following day that the police escorted Leonard Howell and those who had hidden out in the house, away from the furious crowd. Howell later insisted that the ministers in St. Thomas had been behind the mobbing and that the police, instead of defending the Rastafarians, had taken part in the beatings. He added that he would not be chased away from St. Thomas, but within a few months he had transferred his headquarters to downtown Kingston.³³⁵

Shortly after the mobbing of Howell and his flock at Harbour Head, a group of Kingston citizens petitioned the Governor to take action against the "most pernicious and demoralising" cult of Rastafarians. As Post writes, it was a kind of 'middle class backlash', against an outspoken, indeed vituperative working class group which appeared to be threatening [the] social and economic system."³³⁶ The citizens noted that the Rastafarians, having been driven out of St. Thomas, were busy "establish[ing] a haven in the metropolis" and warned that "men and women in this community who love their Christian teachings and precepts are certainly not going to tolerate much longer the open defiance to God and a campaign of atheism as is known only to barbarians."³³⁷ To many middle and upper-class Jamaicans alike the Rastafarian movement had, within a few years of its emergence, become an irritating, blasphemous plague that had to be curtailed as soon as possible.

Only three months after he had been chased away from Harbour Head, Howell already found himself in trouble again in Kingston. In April, together with fourteen followers, Howell was tried for involvement in a fight on Princess Street. At his trial Howell was said to have spoken in an unknown tongue.³³⁸ He was sentenced to imprisonment, but on 25 October 1937 was sent to the Bellevue Mental Hospital. He was discharged on 11 January 1938, but "re-admitted" on 15 February 1938. Leonard Percival Howell remained in Bellevue until the end of that year.³³⁹

With Howell in the mental asylum, his following broke up into several small groups. One of these fled what they called "the City of Sodom," Port Morant, to establish a camp at the edge of Golden Grove, where they erected a "booth in which meetings were held." The group consisted of several dozen "Israelites," led by a man known as King Silver. As in Harbour Head, the local residents soon began to express their annoyance over the "real nuisance" caused by the Rastafarians. When in March 1938 the King Silver group organized "festivities surrounding the coronation of the King and Queen of the Ras Tafarians," the police moved in. Some of those present managed to disappear into the hills, but sixteen members were arrested, including King Silver. A few days later one of the leading members of the group, Lansford Hope, was declared insane and transferred to Bellevue. Hope, like Howell during his trial in April 1937, had spoken in an unknown tongue. The remaining fifteen Rastafarians were charged with disorderly conduct and tried before the Resident Magistrate's Court in Bath.³⁴⁰

Another influential adherent of Howell was an East Indian known only as Lalloo. Little is known about Lalloo, who is said to have been one of Howell's trusted lieutenants, but also to have led his own group in Trinityville. According to Hill's informants, Lalloo may have been responsible for introducing both the notion of Black Supremacy and various Hindu religious concepts into Howell's teachings.³⁴¹ The influence of Hindu beliefs on Howell was becoming increasingly apparent as he established his Pinnacle commune.

Leonard Howell's Pinnacle commune

"I very much regret that I have not the power to order you to be flogged. I would have ordered you to receive 18 lashes."

After being released from the asylum on 20 December 1938, Leonard Howell again took up residence in Kingston, this time on Heywood Street. Not much later, in March 1939, he formally registered his Ethiopian Salvation Society, a branch, he claimed, of an American-based organization. As its President-General, Howell was once again successful in re-organizing his following, which was still largely based in the parish of St. Thomas. On 3 December 1939 he held a street meeting at Port Morant, which was attended by some 500 people. The ambassador of Ras Tafari reportedly told the crowd that "the white man's time was ended and that soon the black man would sit on the throne of England, further Hitler is in charge of

Europe and all European powers will be overthrown.” Another meeting was held on 7 January 1940, also at Port Morant. But, as an officer of Jamaican Constabulary Force Special Branch later wrote: “After this, steps were taken by the Government to prevent Howell from holding any more public meetings for the duration of the war as it was considered that these meetings would evoke racial feelings.”³⁴²

In May 1940 Howell, on behalf of the Ethiopian Salvation Society, purchased a former estate of almost 500 acres named Pinnacle, in the vicinity of Sligoville, St. Catherine. Chased away from St. Thomas and constantly harassed in Kingston, the ambassador of Ras Tafari had decided to retreat inland, and was soon followed by a large number of faithful from all over the island: 1,800 according to police reports, 1,600 according to informants of Smith *et al.*³⁴³

Howell turned Pinnacle into a commune, which soon became one of the main centers of Rastafarian activity. According to Chevannes, Rastafarians from Kingston regularly visited Pinnacle for celebrations. Later, Pinnacle became a more isolated commune, sometimes compared with the old Maroon settlements. Howell’s followers worked on the land, cultivating several crops. Although no one knows for sure how Howell obtained the financial resources to purchase and maintain Pinnacle, it may be that the commune was partly financed by the ganja trade. According to Chevannes, Howell appeared to have been “the first ganja farmer.”³⁴⁴ If we are to believe *The Daily Gleaner*, reporting on the camp a year later:

Pinnacle is a property noted more for rocks and weeds than cultivation. On it are several huts - the majority made of thatch - which are occupied by hundreds of men and women (children turn up in the course of time) all of whom swear allegiance to Howell. Corn is planted in small quantities but the yields are meagre. Ganja flourishes - the land seems fertile for such a growth The men of the camp work hard and long from day to day ... it is known that the rod is not spared in the determination to maintain a high standard of labour by the male of the species.³⁴⁵

Needless to say, the *Gleaner* reports, reflecting the attitudes and opinions of the ruling class, need to be treated cautiously. Ganja was cultivated, but until 1941 probably only a very small scale. Yet it does indeed appear that life at Pinnacle was hard. As one Chevannes’ Rastafarian informants recalled:

There were certain restrictions that not even the Government was pleased about, such as punishment. Suppose you disobey [Howell], im order you fi get lash [to be lashed] And sometimes it is a fact that im keep away the people-them too long from having a bath. That’s why the people always call Rastas at those times ram goat, say you smell like ram goat, billy goat.³⁴⁶

A police intelligence report prepared for the Colonial Office in London later stated that the “migration to St. Catherine presented considerable problems to the authorities. Howell was supposed to feed eighteen hundred people who had settled there and the result of this was that a large number of persons were in a state of near starvation.”³⁴⁷

At Pinnacle Howell became more than a preacher or spiritual leader. By 1940 he had begun to claim divinity for himself, using the name Gangunguru (or G.G.) Maragh, Gong to his followers. Hill notes that Gangunguru was probably a combination of three Hindi words: *gyan*, *gun*, and *guru*, meaning respectively “wisdom,” “virtue” or “talent,” and “teacher.” Gangunguru thus meant something like “famous teacher of wisdom,” while *maragh* is Hindi for “King of Kings.” At Pinnacle Gong was worshipped as a god, no longer a mere ambassador of Haile Selassie, but Haile Selassie in person.³⁴⁸

In 1935, under the name G.G. Maragh, Howell had published a booklet entitled *The Promised Key*, which a columnist of *The Jamaica Times* three years later described as “the greatest farrago of blasphemous nonsense it was ever my lot to wade through.”³⁴⁹ In *The Promised Key* Howell attempted to validate the divinity of Ras Tafari and the special place of Ethiopia in the Bible, and tried to expose the evils of the established churches and the colonial system.³⁵⁰ Unlike many other Jamaicans, the *Times* columnist took “this extraordinary system of ignorance” seriously and warned his readers: “We may laugh at it but we shall be unwise if we ignore it, for it is accepted as gospel truth by thousands.”³⁵¹

Pinnacle soon attracted the attention of the law enforcers. During the second half of 1940 and the first months of 1941, the commune was repeatedly visited by Public Health officers who, to their disappointment, found that “there is not enough [reason] to press action under the Public Health Law.”³⁵² In June 1941 the police tried to arrest one of the Howellites. They failed, but shortly afterwards received a letter from the wanted man, who wrote that he had been “away making preparation with some Fire Arms.” From now on he could be found at Pinnacle again. The security forces interpreted this as preparations “to declare War against the police.”³⁵³

As Michael Hoenisch demonstrates, various other grounds for action against Pinnacle were considered by the authorities, but none of these was apparently strong enough to justify a raid.³⁵⁴ Then, in early July 1941, police officers from the Spanish Town Station picked up two men and a woman who claimed to have been severely flogged by the Howellites.

One of them, a neighboring peasant by the name of Nathaniel Osborne, had been robbed of several bags of coal by three members of Howell's Pinnacle commune. It appeared that this was not the first time residents from Pinnacle had stolen property from their neighbors, and thus, on 6 July, Osborne, together with two other victims, Jeremiah Simpson and Evelyn Maggee, had gone to the commune to inquire about the thefts and to demand the return of their belongings. They were brought before Howell, who listened to their protests and told them that the land belonged to him and that they therefore had no reason to complain. According to the newspaper's report, the three were then tried, found guilty and sentenced to receive a large number of lashes. After the sentence had been carried out, they were thrown out of the camp, where they were later picked up by a police patrol and taken to hospital. Two days later another peasant living near Pinnacle was also admitted to hospital, after allegedly having received punishment with a whip at Pinnacle.³⁵⁵

On 9 July 1941 *The Daily Gleaner* reported the incidents on its front page. "The people of Sligoville," the newspaper reported, "are passing through a period of fear, as other such incidents are said to have taken place." A few days later the police moved to clear out the "Rastafarian den." Early on the morning of 14 July no fewer than 173 heavily armed policemen, most of them brought from Kingston, raided Pinnacle and arrested 70 male Howellites, including Cecil Delahaye, said to be "second-in-command." But the "chief" himself, as the *Gleaner* called Howell, had escaped. According to the newspaper report:

Most of the men at present in the Spanish Town jail seemed glad that they were taken prisoners, for they were certain of substantial meals for a few days at least, and sleeping quarters of some stability. Tattered and torn are most of the garments which cover their ill-fed bodies, and the people of Sligoville and surrounding districts are deeply grateful that what was regarded by them as a sore-spot and serious menace to safety of life and limb has been broken.³⁵⁶

The next day *The Daily Gleaner* had to report that no trace had yet been found of Leonard Howell. The reporter, however, did have some details about his disappearance:

It will be interesting to note that James Salmon, one of the members of the camp, who gave valuable information to the police told a "Gleaner" reporter yesterday that Howell who was known as "Gong" in the camp, on Sunday afternoon told the assembled cult members that the police would be visiting them in the morning; that he had a bad dream; and that when they did not see him they should not lose heart; and above all not to offer any resistance to Government. Soon after he was not seen by anyone.³⁵⁷

Howell was able to evade the police for another nine days. But around midnight on 24 July he was arrested by six police officers in his home at Pinnacle. The Pinnacle sensation was covered in full by the *Gleaner*:

The house dogs started barking and Howell, who had just got into his pyjamas looked out to see the cause. Corporal Samuels dashed through the door and held Howell in the centre of the room after a struggle.³⁵⁸

Howell's wife "clung unto him," but was not arrested. Gong was allowed to get dressed, slipped into a long black robe and was transported down to the Spanish Town police station.

By the end of the month, 28 of Howell's disciples, charged with "assault occasioning bodily harm," were each sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labor. At the request of his lawyer F.A. Pixley, Howell's trial was postponed until August. He was released on a £ 100 bail.

On 18 August 1941, on the first day of his trial at the Spanish Town court, Howell faced four charges of "assault occasioning bodily harm." In spite of repeated allegations in the press, there were no charges of ganja cultivation. The prosecution asserted that three neighboring farmers had received 96, 110 and 50 lashes respectively, in the presence of and on the orders of Howell himself. The Gong denied the allegations and insisted that the men were wounded in "a free-for-all fight," and that he had neither ordered anyone to be flogged nor been anywhere near the scene of the fight. But Resident Magistrate C.M. McGregor had no difficulty in reaching a verdict. When the trial was over, he told Howell:

I very much regret that I have not the power to order you to be flogged. I would have ordered you to receive 18

lashes. Unfortunately I have not the power in law to do so. You will receive the maximum sentence I have power to give.³⁵⁹

Leonard Howell was once again sentenced to two years in jail, this time with hard labor.

In the mid-1940s, Hinds' King of Kings Mission began to decline. Some of the reasons mentioned by Chevannes' informants were that Hinds departed from the teachings of Marcus Garvey, became involved in politics (campaigning for Alexander Bustamante) and had sexual relations with his followers' women. Several members left the Mission, including a group led by Brother Dawkins, who went on to form the Afro-West Indian Brotherhood. Robert Hinds, impoverished and bereft of followers, died at the Kingston Hospital on 12 May 1950.³⁶⁰

The reference to Hinds' political campaigning allows for a brief review of the political developments in Jamaica during the early years of the Rastafarian movement's existence. In 1938 Jamaica and other British West Indian colonies had witnessed a wave of labor unrest and riots.³⁶¹ The Rastafarians had played no direct role in the rebellion, but their constant agitation against colonial rule and oppression had certainly contributed to the social unrest on the island during the 1930s. The events of 1938 had resulted in the founding of the first national labor unions and political parties, while London ordered an investigation into social conditions in the colony and finally agreed to a new constitution for Jamaica. It marked the end of Crown colony status and allowed for general elections based on universal adult suffrage in 1944.

Two Jamaicans played a key role in the strikes and subsequently emerged as popular (and populist) leaders: the cousins Alexander Bustamante and Norman Washington Manley.³⁶² Bustamante, whose primary concern was the improvement of labor rights and conditions, had founded the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) in 1938. Manley, whose chief aim was independence, established its political wing, the People's National Party (PNP). "Busta," however, could not subscribe to the radical course of the PNP and founded his own political party, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) in 1943. Manley, in turn, founded a new PNP-related trade union, the Trade Union Congress (TUC), thereby laying the foundations for the sharp political divisions that were to dominate much of Jamaica's recent history.³⁶³

Bustamante and his JLP won the first general elections with the slogan "Bread and Butter." The new government opened the doors to foreign investors, as a result of which the United States in particular began to invest heavily in local "screwdriver-type" industries and the emerging tourist market. There was a gradual improvement in the economy, partly because of rising sugar prices, and in 1949 the Jamaica Labour Party was re-elected.

Amazingly little is known about the Rastafarian movement during this period. One obvious explanation may be that hardly any research has been carried out into the movement during the 1940s. Another reason appears to be that the colonial government intensified its repression of Rastafarian activity. As we have already seen, Howell was forbidden to organize street meetings after World War II broke out, "as it was considered that these meetings would evoke racial feelings." It may safely be assumed that other Rastafarian preachers, who also regularly held meetings and marches, received the same message. Yet when the war was over, the Rastas continued to keep a low profile.³⁶⁴ A somewhat speculative explanation is that the movement experienced a period of stagnation or even decline. The harsh repression of the movement during the 1930s and early 1940s had forced Howell's Ethiopian Salvation Society into isolation in St. Catherine, while Hinds' King of Kings Mission was falling apart for reasons mentioned above. At the same time, the emergence of labor unions and political parties, the realization of general elections and partial self-government could have contributed to new hopes among the lower classes for improvement of their situation through political reforms, and hence a declining Rastafarian influence. Perhaps Robert Hinds' campaign for Bustamante was itself a sign of such a development.

In the second half of 1943, after two years of hard labor in prison, Howell returned to Pinnacle. According to one of Bishton's informants, the estate had been plundered by intruders; all fields had been ruined. It was then that Howell decided to go into the ganja-business full-force.³⁶⁵ However, some time during 1945 he was evicted from Pinnacle for "failing in his obligation to Mr. Chang," the man from whom he had purchased the estate four years earlier.³⁶⁶ Later that same year he apparently succeeded in settling his debt and returned to Pinnacle. But apart from a this brief interlude and a change in main crop, Howell is said to have continued along much the same lines. Pinnacle once again became a center of Rastafarian activity, where hundreds of faithful lived permanently and many more stayed for shorter

or longer periods. The occupants toiled in the fields, while The Gong is said to have spent his days in the Great House, high on a hill, with - as rumor had it - thirteen wives. Smith *et al.* describe Pinnacle as a state within a state: "It's internal administration was Howell's business, not Government's."³⁶⁷

Surprisingly, Pinnacle was left largely undisturbed for over ten years. There are claims that the commune was occasionally "visited" by the police, but no reports of any interferences are known. Smith *et al.* argue that being a state within a state, it is "understandable" that Pinnacle could thrive "without the people or the Government of Jamaica being aware of it."³⁶⁸ In view of the continuous persecution Howell had experienced between 1932 and 1941 and the authorities' persistent efforts to break up the commune during the early 1940s, lack of awareness seems a highly unlikely reason for the undisturbed continuation of Pinnacle. It has thus been suggested that Howell had somehow managed to ensure the protection of persons in high places. According to Rastafarian columnist Arthur Kitchin, writing in *The Daily Gleaner* four decades later:

It is claimed that Howell was one of the major ganja exporters during this period, with confederates among the colonial establishment and the fledgling government led by National Hero, Sir Alexander Bustamante. Hence, he was allowed to operate without fear of arrest for nearly a decade until his activities were curtailed.³⁶⁹

But such views naturally remain speculative at best. Yet Howell's second period at the estate did indeed roughly coincide with the JLP government of Alexander Bustamante (1944-1955), a phase of increased self-government and subsequent decline in influence of the colonial authorities. It could, however, also have been a conscious choice to leave Pinnacle for what it was. After all, it may have been considered that the Rastafarians could do less harm concentrated in an isolated commune, than dispersed throughout the island.

Whatever the cause, by the early 1950s The Gong appeared to have loosened his grip on Pinnacle. He had acquired property in Kingston and St. Thomas. When in April 1954 Leonard Howell made headlines again, he resided on East Queens Street in downtown Kingston. *The Daily Gleaner* reported that he had been arrested "on a charge of unlawful possession of thermometers, a stethoscope and other medical instruments," apparently a serious crime. The Judge of the Sutton Street court, L.L. Murad, ordered Howell to be placed under medical observation.³⁷⁰ Some time later, however, he was released,

following a medical report that he was of sound mind. Looking over the report, His Honour Mr. L.L. Murad wanted to know what was the reason for the strange behaviour and language of the accused on the last occasion.³⁷¹

That question remained unanswered, but his lawyer argued that Howell had bought the instruments because he was "very concerned about medical supplies in connection with his Back-to-Africa movement."

Again, we can only speculate about the reasons why Howell seems to have withdrawn from Pinnacle. Smith *et al.* maintain that the former ambassador of Ras Tafari was "discredited by the brethren because he had made claims to divinity," a view uncritically repeated by several later authors.³⁷² Many other motives for a withdrawal may be suggested, but so far information is simply absent.

In the meantime, however, the government had become increasingly concerned about the large-scale ganja cultivation in the hills of St. Catherine. Occasionally, the police had arrested individual Rastafarians from Pinnacle for possession of ganja or, as in the case of one Isaac Dixon, for assault.³⁷³ While it must have been a public secret that large quantities of ganja were produced at Pinnacle, it was not before Saturday 22 May 1954 that the curtain fell for the Rastafarian stronghold. Early on the morning a large joint police and military force raided the commune and arrested 140 Rastafarians. The Gong was not among them.³⁷⁴ But during what was described as "the biggest raid in local police history" eight tons of ganja were seized. The Rastas were locked up in the prisons of Spanish Town, Ferry and Old Harbour.

In the following days the police repeatedly searched the area. On Monday, according to *The Daily Gleaner*, 9,000 more ganja trees were discovered, on Wednesday no fewer than 140,000, along with 800,000 seedlings, and on Thursday another 600,000 along with 135,000 "suckers" and some five quarts of seed. Spokesmen estimated that the police would need a month to search the 500 acres and burn its crop.³⁷⁵ Pinnacle turned out to be one of the largest-ever ganja-plantations.

On 25 May the 140 arrested were taken to the Spanish Town court room, where they were charged with either possession or cultivation of ganja. While outside an estimated 400 curious onlookers had gathered, the accused pleaded not guilty. They were refused bail, since the police was still searching for more

evidence at Pinnacle. Among the arrested were also two of Leonard Howell's teenage sons, Martinal and Silbert, both charged with unlawful possession of watches and a cloak. Resident Magistrate H.P. Allen granted them bail of £ 50. Trial was set for 1 June, but later postponed because one of the chief police-officers involved in the raid had been injured in an accident.

When the trial of the 140 arrested opened on 12 June, Resident-Magistrate Allen made it clear that he had no intention to waste time. One after another the accused were found guilty and sentenced to the maximum of 12 months in prison, as usual with hard labor. Among them were quite a few couples. Most of the women were jointly charged with their men, because the prosecution argued that they must have had knowledge of the ganja. The Rastafarians' attorney, H. E. Rickards, countered that the charge was not knowledge, but possession or cultivation, for which the evidence was totally insufficient. Some charges were withdrawn, but in the remaining cases the Resident-Magistrate swiftly handed down his verdicts. Some of the accused realized that since it was their word against that of the police, they had little or no chance. As one of the female defendants said to the Judge: "Since the police say they found ganja, do as you please, Sir." Only in a few cases did the court show compassion. Olivia James, 70 years of age, received a mere six month, on hard labor. Anne Jarrett, even older and ill, was sentenced to a similar term. "In prison," the Resident-Magistrate maintained, "she would get the attention she obviously needed."³⁷⁶

Martinal and Silbert Howell were acquitted. They produced receipts to prove that the goods they had allegedly stolen were rightfully their. They also assured the court that they were "in no way associated" with the commune, despite the fact that they occupied the house in which their father, described as the "one time self-styled king of Pinnacle" had lived before he had moved to Kingston.

Neither during or after the trial further mention was made of Leonard Howell. Despite the fact that the police had torn down the Great House, he is said to have eventually returned to Pinnacle. But the great days of both The Gong and his commune were over. In as far as they were not imprisoned, his flock scattered. Only a handful of followers remained faithful to their Black Christ. In 1960, according to Smith *et al.*, Howell was confined to Bellevue Hospital. Why and how long he had to stay there is not clear, but he certainly did not die in Kingston's mental asylum, as Barrett assumes.³⁷⁷

After his release Leonard Howell once again returned to what was left of Pinnacle. He and a few dedicated adherents were to live in almost total seclusion, occasionally disrupted by police raids. In 1978, for instance, some 15 pounds of ganja were discovered. Howell claimed that the weed was strictly for personal use, but was nevertheless fined £ 1,200, which apparently he was able to pay without any problem. The estate was, however, also repeatedly ransacked by burglars. In May 1979 a group of eight gunmen invaded the property and demanded ganja and money. Howell, 81 years old by then, was molested, but despite threats of the gunmen to shoot a child living in his house upheld that he had not what they demanded. The intruders eventually left with a small amount of weed and several valuables.³⁷⁸

One year later, Howell lost Pinnacle in a court case, the details of which remain obscure. His success in the ganja trade enabled him to take up residence in one of Kingston's most luxurious hotels, where in February 1981 The Gong quietly passed away.

The 1951 murder case and the rise of the radicals

"The worst evil of all are the members of that bearded cult who style themselves the Ras Tafariites"

Ever since the days of the early preachers, the Rastafarians had been regarded as a "lunatic fringe," a "most pernicious and demoralising cult." They were seen as a general nuisance, but dangerous only in as far as their message carried in it the seeds of social unrest and distracted and misled the "ignorant" peasants and ghetto-dwellers. Several commentators had warned that the movement could become a threat if allowed to grow and prosper unrestricted. The police had carefully monitored their activities and the authorities had regularly reacted with harassment and imprisonment. But although the early preachers had attracted hundreds of followers and had every now and then caused concern, nothing had happened that could not be controlled by the security forces. In the summer of 1951, however, a tragic event radically changed this perception of the Rastafarians. In a sense, it was the first sign of the mounting tension between the Rastafarians and the wider Jamaican society during the 1950s, tensions that were to culminate

in a series of violent incidents in 1959 and 1960.

On the night of Monday 11 June 1951 a young couple, 19-year-old Sidney Garrell and 18-year-old Bernadette Hugh, went for a swim at Palisadoes. While they were in the water, they were attacked by a bearded man. Without any apparent reason, he clubbed and stabbed Garrell to death, and seriously wounded his girlfriend. Bernadette Hugh was stabbed in the breast, but survived because she pretended to be dead and hid for several hours behind a boat.³⁷⁹ When the murder became public on the following Wednesday, it resulted in unprecedented public outrage against the Rastafarians.

In Jamaica during the 1930s and 1940s beards were commonly associated with criminals, vagabonds and other outcasts.³⁸⁰ Quite a few Rastafarians also wore beards. But although beards were at the time certainly not uncommon among the Rastafarians, it was not until the mid-1950s that they became somewhat of a mark for the Rastafarians. Many of the early Rastas had objected to beards. Leonard Howell, who was described as having worn a beard “not dissimilar to that worn by the King of Abyssinia” in 1934, had not worn it for long.³⁸¹ A 1937 photograph shows him clean shaven and with a short hair cut. And one of Chevannes’ informants reported that another leading Rastafarian, Brother Dawkins, “used to lick out against a man who carry beard for him don’t carry beard - him shave clean.”³⁸² When George Simpson conducted his field research during the early 1950s, he found the question of beards a controversial and hotly debated issue among the Rastas. Simpson listed various arguments for and against the desirability of wearing beards:

Ras Tafari arguments for beards include: (a) the beard is a part of Creation; (b) Haile Selassie wears a beard; (c) a beard indicates that a man belongs ‘to a certain philosophy’ and (d) some men cannot afford to shave. The main arguments of those who oppose beards are: (a) they are hard to keep clean; and (b) some criminals wear beards as a disguise, and Ras Tafari members get the blame for their misdeeds.³⁸³

Nevertheless, by the late 1940s, early 1950s the general public had already begun to identify beards with Rastafarians and, as soon as it became known that it was a bearded man who had murdered Sidney Garrell, the police began to round up every Rastafarian in Kingston.

Within two days they had arrested a 42-year-old “Rasta,” who was positively identified by Bernadette Hugh. But that far from satisfied the public. The popular wrath was such that *The Daily Gleaner* in its editorial thought it necessary to warn, although weakly, against jungle justice:

Public resentment and hostility to bearded men of the city and to their anti-social cult has become violently focused in the last two days. Letters to the editor have been coming in demanding a campaign to clean out the dens of these Ras Tafariites. ... Indeed we are well on the way to a very necessary outbreak of public clamour for an end to be put to these queer sub-social and inimical groups. ... But the *Gleaner* bids the community to avoid even the first example of an outbreak of mob feelings in the matter.³⁸⁴

The editors added, however, that “in general these Ras Tafariites who ... have created dark kraals of wickedness in the city are given too loose a reign by the police.” But although the newspaper maintained that one could not make all beards and Rastas responsible for the savage actions of one or two, it provided every opportunity to propagate the opposite of what its editorial called for.

On the very same page, columnist Vere Johns called on the authorities to “stamp out” the Rastafarians once and for all. The author drew a distinction between ordinary bearded criminals and an especially dangerous species.

The worst evil of all are the members of that bearded cult who style themselves the Ras Tafariites and claim some kinship with Abyssinia. In reality this group has no religious significance, do not even know where Ethiopia is, and merely adopted the untidy habit of letting hair and beards grow through laziness and filthiness and a desire to appear more terrifying. ... I think that if a start is made by cleaning out these so called Ras Tafariites it will have a salutary effect on the remainder of the wrong doers.³⁸⁵

A few days later Johns elaborated on his ideas of how to “stamp out” the Rastafarians. “On behalf of all the respectable citizens of the city,” he demanded that all the squatters be expelled from the areas they occupied, in those days the Wareika Hills, the Palisadoes and the Foreshore Road area commonly known as the Dunghill. Instead of moving them to other spots, the columnist recommended “the setting up of prison camps on fertile Crown lands far removed from any town or city.” Here, the squatters should be treated with humane, but firm discipline. Those who “persisted in disobeying rules and indulging in acts of violence ... should be tamed at the point of the tamarind switch or the Cat.”³⁸⁶

Another reaction came from a certain H.S. Burns, who claimed: "I know these bearded men." His knowledge turned out to be based on a few days census-taking in the Dunghill in 1943. Burns wrote:

I have moved among them and discussed their way of life. The average one is either ganja smoker, idler or criminal. Some are true Christians, with a definite doctrinal belief. They profess the Coptic Faith Most of the bearded men only pretend to a belief in the Coptic Faith because it suits their idle temperament and offers some security from the eyes of the law. But there are genuine believers and they are Christians, not criminals. Ganja smoking has no part in the religion.³⁸⁷

To the general public the murder of Sidney Garrell by a bearded "Rasta" living in a squatter area, proved that all squatters were criminals, all criminals wore beards and all bearded men were Rastafarians. Dock workers at Kingston's Waterfront refused to work with bearded men or Rastas any longer and told them "to go away, shave their beards and mend their ways."³⁸⁸

The government, in the meantime, took swift action. Within a few days after the tragic death of Garrell, the Minister of Finance, L.C. Bloomfield, also responsible for Security, announced that harsh measures would be taken against an estimated 1,500 Rasta squatters living on government land in the Wareika Hills, and an unknown number of Rastafarians living along Palisadoes Road. All the inhabitants of the Wareika Hills received notice of eviction a few days later. Their protests were in vain and their pleas for delay fell on deaf ears. The squatters claimed that they had been there for three years, had erected homes, cultivated crops and had no place to go - but all to no avail. In an effort to calm the public, the Minister further announced that the police force would be strengthened. He also launched a massive campaign against ganja, the alleged root of all evil.³⁸⁹ In the following weeks the newspapers were able to report numerous arrests.

The first half of the 1950s was an important period in the development of the Rastafarian movement and its relationship with the wider Jamaican society. It was not only the murder of Sidney Garrell and the subsequent explosion of popular outrage that contributed to the growing tensions, but also a gradual process of radicalization in certain sections of the movement.

By the early 1950s the influence of the earliest preachers had diminished. Robert Hinds was dead and Leonard Howell had already lost much of his prestige, before losing control over his following altogether. Archibald Dunkley still led his small King of Kings Mission and Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert continued to work with his Ethiopian Coptic Faith congregation, then located on Fisher Street in the Jones Town area. Their influence and following, however, appear to have been rather limited.

Yet many other groups had emerged over the years in the slums of Kingston. Simpson estimates that there were about twelve different groups in Kingston around 1953, with memberships ranging from "twenty to one hundred and fifty or more. Among these groups were: United Afro-West Indian Federation, United Ethiopian Body, Ethiopian Youth Cosmic Faith, Ethiopian Coptic League, and the African Cultural League."³⁹⁰

Simpson also pointed to the fragmented organizational structure of the movement: groups "form, split, and dissolve, and some individuals accept cult beliefs without attaching themselves to an organization." Unlike the earliest groups under the charismatic leadership of men like Leonard Howell, most of these groups knew all kinds of offices and ranks, such as President, Vice-President, Chairman and Secretary. Although, as Simpson notes, "the organization of Ras Tafari groups varies to some extent," leadership was clearly defined and connected with the various offices, while members were registered and usually had to pay a fee.

Many Rastafarians, however, were not affiliated to any of the more or less formalized groups. There were many informal groups, consisting of a few believers, who occasionally came together in the yard or camp of one of the leading brethren to "reason," read their Bibles or just to smoke ganja and pass some time in the company of friends. Chevannes suggests that the selling of ganja was one of the main reasons for the existence of these camps. The herb had to be smoked secretly because of the harsh laws against drugs, as a result of which strict codes of behavior had evolved for smoking the herb in the camps.³⁹¹

It appears that the majority of these groups, whether formal or informal, kept a low profile and did not organize too many activities outside their private yards. They tried to avoid open confrontations, especially with the police, who scrutinized the Rastafarians closely. According to Simpson, "leaders main-

tained well-disciplined control over members during street meetings, and police regulations on marching and on the duration of meetings were observed.”³⁹² But confrontations could not always be avoided, neither with the police nor with the Rastas’ lower-class neighbors. As we have already seen, Leonard Howell and his following were chased out of St. Thomas by an angry crowd in 1937 and several months later were involved in a fight in downtown Kingston. Other early Rastafarian preachers, like Robert Hinds, had also clashed frequently with their neighbors. Relations with the Revivalists were especially tense. As Simpson notes:

One Revivalist leader was especially vehement in his denunciation of Ras Tafarians. He reported that during a week-night service in June, 1953, five Ras Tafari members ... came to his church and denounced him, saying that the worship of Christ is a false religion. ... According to this informant, Ras Tafarians are thieves and rapists who fear no one. His point of view is: “This is a crown ruled land; Negroes are subordinate and Haile Selassie can’t do anything for us.”³⁹³

One of Kingston’s most influential Revival Shepherds, the healer and sculptor Kapo Reynolds, later even approached the press to complain about harassment by Rastafarians, which he attributed to his healing practices and his preaching of a white god.³⁹⁴

In spite of such occasional clashes, most Rastas wisely tried to stay out of trouble. The waning control of the earliest preachers, however, created room for the emergence of a new, younger and far more militant generation, which increasingly began to demonstrate its open defiance of the law. During the 1930s Howell and Hinds had bowed and thanked the judge after being sentenced to two years in prison and many others had seemingly remained indifferent upon hearing their sentence. But these young Rastas fiercely defended themselves in court or threatened the judge with “fire and brimstone.” Sentenced to six months and twelve strokes for praedial larceny in March 1953, Ezekiel Frankson, the leader of a group of bearded Rastafarians from Old Harbour, responded with a barrage of threats and oaths. One week later, seven “burly” policemen could barely constrain Louis Cantero, a “heavily-bearded cultist” from the Dunghill, who put up “a fierce struggle” on the precincts of the Spanish Town court, where he had been taken to face a charge of ganja possession.³⁹⁵ A growing number of such and other incidents during the mid-1950s signaled the rise of a young generation of Rastafarians, who were no longer prepared to accept repression passively or to withdraw in isolation, as the Howellites had done.

Many of these radical Rastas made a point of wearing beards. Several bearded Rastafarians working for bakeries in Montego Bay, chose to quit rather than shave when their employers demanded a clean-shaven appearance.³⁹⁶ By the mid-1950s, however, the whole matter of hair had become not just a question of whether or not to shave, but whether or not to trim and comb as well. And it were, of course, the radical adherents of the movement who first began to grow their hair in the long, wild and matted “dreadlocks,” which were to become so characteristic of Rastafari during the 1970s.

The dreadlocks, according to Smith *et al.*, were an innovation that had originated in the Pinnacle commune. After the police had broken up the commune in May 1954 and those of Howell’s followers who had not been imprisoned dispersed over the city, dreadlocks had become increasingly visible.³⁹⁷ Chevannes, however, argues that none of his Howellite informants was able to confirm that dreadlocks were ever worn at Pinnacle and that therefore the trend probably originated in Kingston.³⁹⁸ It may be added that nowhere in the newspaper reports about Pinnacle long hair was mentioned, which would surely have been the case if dreadlocks had been characteristic of the Howellites. Moreover, *The Daily Gleaner’s* Rasta columnist Arthur Kitchin, writing in 1981 (when he still wore the locks himself), recalled that Howell “displayed a personal dislike for dreadlocked Rastafarians.”³⁹⁹ It seems likely, therefore, that the dreadlocks were introduced by young and radical Rastafarians in Kingston, perhaps, as Horace Campbell suggests, inspired by the hairstyle of the Kikuyu Mau Mau warriors in Kenya. The Jamaican press took an exceptional interest in the developments in Kenya and for years reported extensively on the war between the Land and Freedom Army and the British colonists. And while the island’s elite shared the view that the Kikuyu peasants were savage terrorists, the Rastas regarded the Mau Mau, whose pictures regularly appeared in newspapers and magazines, as an important inspiration in the struggle for a free Africa.⁴⁰⁰

Whatever the precise origin of the dreadlocks, one group in particular has been associated with their rise. Some time during 1949 several Rastafarians from Trench Town, among them Brothers Taf, Firsup, Williams and Pete, founded an organization called Youth Black Faith.⁴⁰¹ They were, to quote Chevannes, “activists,” dissatisfied with the older leadership and its use of all kinds of Revivalist and superstitious rituals.⁴⁰² These Rastafarians took a radical position towards Jamaican society. As Chevannes writes:

Whereas Hinds and Howell encountered police harassment in the course of their missionary activities, the dreadlocks seemed bent on inviting confrontation. Whereas Howell and Hinds were not afraid to stage pitch combat with the enforcers of the law, the dreadlocks were contemptuous of the Court itself, and seemed to delight in demonstrating it.⁴⁰³

According to Chevannes, some members of Youth Black Faith went on a march “early in the fifties.” They were arrested and brought before the court, where each received an initial sentence of thirty days for contempt of court: all had given their name as Ras Tafari. This demonstration of contempt was apparently repeated twice at two subsequent hearings, before they were sentenced to no less than one year in prison for “creating a disturbance.”⁴⁰⁴

Youth Black Faith took to the streets again on 14 April 1954, shortly before the final raid on Pinnacle. *The Daily Gleaner* reported the march on its front page: “Policeman among 30 held in ‘Back-to-Africa’ march.” A “crowd” of 22 men and 8 women, “with banners and bibles, many dressed in robes,” had marched along North Street. The police arrested the Rastafarians, who were marching without official permission, under *The Public Processions Law*.

Some were taken to the station on foot, while others went in the police wagon. All along the route, the crowd shouted “We want to go to Ethiopia” and “Now, now, freedom.” The marchers also had drums and tambourines. At the station they continued to shout and make a noise. They were annoyed when told to keep quiet, and continued shouting, even when they were placed in cells.⁴⁰⁵

According to the *Gleaner*, the policeman (a mechanic) among the demonstrators was on his day off. Nevertheless, he was immediately suspended from duty, without pay. Brought before court two days later, he told the Judge: “My name is Ras Jackson, C. Jackson was my name when I was in Babylon, but now my name is changed.” All the other men, “sporting beards and heavy tufts of hair,” refused to give their real names and introduced themselves as “Freedom,” “Rastafari,” or “King David.” One of the protesters was brought up in a straight-jacket. The Rastafarians were charged with contempt of court and placed behind bars. The prison authorities, however, apparently considered the loudmouthed Rastas a terrible nuisance and after two weeks discharged them. Ras Jackson was examined for lunacy, but found to be completely sane.⁴⁰⁶

Youth Black Faith was not only radical, it also developed a new kind of organization, without the many formal ranks and offices common in the other Rastafarian organizations. Only two positions survived: that of chairman (in fact the leader) and tableman (a kind of secretary), who had to be one of the usually few literate members. Leadership was no longer connected with an office or rank, but rather with personality. The leaders were always the most strict in principles and behavior, the most outspoken and voluble in reasoning, the most firmly convinced in religious beliefs. They were referred to as warrior, dread or bongo.⁴⁰⁷ As Chevannes remarks:

Membership was at first open to all those whose names appeared on the register, but the practice was discontinued because, “We say everyman have free access to the tree of life”. The concept, therefore, of being “free” to come and go, solely on the basis of one’s conviction, became institutionalised.⁴⁰⁸

Youth Black Faith developed into what became known as a “House,” a group without a formal organizational structure and without restricted or registered membership. However, aside from the many informal sessions, there were regular Wednesday night meetings. Also, the fact that no fixed organizational structure existed, by no means implied that the leaders of the House did not enforce strict discipline.

The abating influence of the earliest preachers resulted within a few years in the dreadlocks becoming the norm, and not only the norm, but also *the* trademark of the Rastafarian movement and the single most important mark of identification for the wider society. Many Rastas wore neither a beard nor dreadlocks, but these “combsomes” or “baldheads,” as they were contemptuously known, were destined to lose more and more ground to their hirsute brethren.

The Ethiopian World Federation and the land grant

“There was a land grant now in Ethiopia and black people could go there and claim a bit.”

In September 1955, not long after the members of Youth Black Faith had marched through downtown

Kingston with placards like “We want to go to Ethiopia” and “Now, now, Freedom,” the Rastafarians received news from the Promised Land. As an officer of the New York City-based Ethiopian World Federation informed them, Emperor Haile Selassie himself had made “five hundred acres of very fertile and rich land” available to “the Black People of the West, who aided Ethiopia during her period of distress.” Twenty years after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, it seemed that the Rastafarians’ millennial dream was about to come true after all.

Immediately after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 several groups - some with honorable, others with dubious motives - had been established in the United States to raise money and send all kinds of aid to the besieged Ethiopian people.⁴⁰⁹ The actions were spontaneous, but unorganized and ineffective, and so, in 1936, a number of Afro-Americans, organized in a group known as the Menelik Club, had called on Emperor Haile Selassie, then living in exile in Bath, to inform him about these activities. They proposed to establish an official, centralized organization to raise funds and coordinate aid. The Emperor followed their advice and sent one of his trusted assistants, his personal physician Dr. Malaku Bayen, to the United States.

Malaku Bayen was born on 29 April 1900 in the province of Wollo. Since he was related to the Makonnen family, he grew up at their Harar palace, as a page or personal attendant of the young Ras Tafari Makonnen. In 1921 Bayen had left Ethiopia to study in the United States, first for a short period at Ohio State University and later at the Medical School of the prominent, black, Howard University. When the Emperor later sent him back to the United States to coordinate the war relief, Bayen started out working with the United Aid for Ethiopia group, one of the many organizations trying to raise funds for the Ethiopian people. But when members of the American Communist Party became involved in this organization, Bayen and a few of his colleagues, on 25 August 1937, founded the Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. (EWF). The preamble of the 30-page *Constitution and By-Laws of the Ethiopian World Federation* read:

We, the Black Peoples of the World, in order to effect Unity, Solidarity, Liberty, Freedom and self-determination, to secure Justice and maintain the Integrity of Ethiopia, which is our divine heritage, do hereby establish and ordain this constitution for the Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. We affirm that Ethiopia is the ancestral home of more than four hundred million black people of the world dating back to the Garden of Eden, which was the ancient land of Ethiopia, and later as the race increased they spread out over the entire continent of Africa. We affirm that Ethiopia is the oldest Empire on the earth today, and that we black people are direct descendants of the prophet Moses, King David, King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. We affirm that His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, of Ethiopia is the only living King. A direct descendant of King David sitting on the throne of Ethiopia today, and the Ark of the Covenant which was taken to Ethiopia by Menelik son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, is still under the protection of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, who is a great prophet and the true representative of the Spirit of Jesus Christ on earth this day.⁴¹⁰

Within three years, the Ethiopian World Federation had over twenty branches, known as Locals, in the United States and the Caribbean. The New York City headquarters, known as Local 1, issued the newspaper *Voice of Ethiopia*, which was clearly an attempt to fill the void left by the once so successful UNIA paper *The Negro World*.

The first Jamaican branch, Local 17, was established as early as August 1938, under Paul Earlington and L.F.C. Mantle. Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert and H. Archibald Dunkley were founding members of Local 17, but withdrew when it became clear that their position in the leadership was not as influential as they thought it should be. Paul Earlington, as already noted, was a prominent figure in West Kingston. Though reputed to have been influenced by Robert Hinds, he never regarded himself as a Rastafarian. Earlington was probably one of those many Jamaicans - perhaps a former Garveyite - who shared the Rastafarian focus on Africa and admiration for Ethiopia, but not their belief that Haile Selassie was God.

L.F.C. Mantle was a rather curious figure. In 1935 he had come to public attention when he submitted a series of letters to the editor of *Plain Talk*. As Ken Post relates:

Mantle claimed to have served with the British army in Palestine during the First World War, and then to have gone to the USA; there, by his own account, he had earned a Doctor of Divinity degree, and returned to Jamaica as faith healer in the “Divine Science of Jesus the Christ.” He also claimed to have travelled in Ethiopia, and even, as his fame mounted, in Tibet.⁴¹¹

Mantle described himself as a Rabbi, but was soon confronted with an investigation by the paper’s editor, who revealed that Mantle had never been to Ethiopia and Tibet and had not earned a degree in Divinity either. Instead, he turned out to have worked in Cuba as a vendor and railway worker.⁴¹²

The defeat of the Italian armies in Ethiopia in 1941 did not lead to the discontinuation of the Ethiopian World Federation, although the death of Malaku Bayen in 1940 and the outbreak of World War II resulted in diminished activity and a waning influence. In Jamaica, Local 17 soon fell apart, due to internal rivalries. Paul Earlington left for the United States, but a certain William Powell established a new Local, number 31, of which Ferdinand Ricketts and another early Rastafarian leader, Vernal Davis, were co-founders. As members of the EWF itself described it many years later, the new group soon

caused controversy within the Movement as this Local barred their Brethren, who wore beards and were Rastafarians, from joining. By this time, the majority of the followers of the Rastafarians [sic] Movement, which pays homage to Ethiopia, wore beards, and this discrimination against the bearded Brethren caused a number of informal and unrecognized groups to spring up. Adverse propaganda was also launched against Rastafarians by members of Local 31 and as a result the group Locals did not receive recognition or support from the Ethiopian World Federation Incorporated headquarters in New York, and a most unsatisfactory stage in the development of the Movement ensued.⁴¹³

After this troubled start, during which Davis and Ricketts left the group, the presidency of Local 31 was assumed in 1942 by Cecil G. Gordon, who remained in this function for several years. But the influence of the EWF on the Rastafarian movement during the late 1940s and early 1950s was minimal.⁴¹⁴

Then, in September 1955, Maymie Richardson, International Organizer of the Ethiopian World Federation, came to Jamaica to expound the organization's ideas. More importantly, Richardson brought a message from Ethiopia concerning a land grant. She told the members of the various EWF Locals that His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I had made land available in Ethiopia for those who wanted to settle there. The news also reached *The Daily Gleaner*.

Mrs. Maymie Richardson (international organizer of the EWF) told the large audience that there was a land grant now in Ethiopia and black people could go there and claim a bit. But they had to go in groups.⁴¹⁵

Shortly afterwards Local 31 received a letter, dated 24 September 1955, from the New York City headquarters. Part of it read:

I was instructed by the Executive Council to forward to you, for your guidance, the following information relative to the Land Grant in Ethiopia.

1. Five hundred acres of very fertile and rich land has been given, through the Ethiopian World Federation, Inc., to the Black People of the West, who aided Ethiopia during her period of distress.
2. This land is the personal property of H.I. Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. The land is given on a trial basis, the way it is utilised will be the touchstone for additional grants.⁴¹⁶

The letter went on to state that Ethiopia was not yet ready for mass migration, that those who wanted to go to Ethiopia should preferably be skilled professionals and should be of a pioneering character, willing to work in a cooperative spirit. It closed as follows:

6. Since the Ethiopian World Federation, Inc., at the present time are not in a position to assume the financial burden of members who are desirous of going to Ethiopia to settle on the Land Grant, we urge that the local start a fund-raising campaign for the purpose of aiding those members who meet the qualifications required. Be assured that in the very near future a more positive program for the Land project will be in motion.⁴¹⁷

The Ethiopian World Federation and the Rastafarian movement boomed. It was not the exact message of the letter that spread, but rather the rumor, which grew wilder and wilder. Repatriation to Ethiopia would become a reality for all. The millennial dream would come true. The Emperor was preparing for the return of his lost sons and daughters. A fleet of ships was already on its way. It would only be a matter of days, maybe weeks, before they would appear at the Jamaican shores. Smith *et al.* recount that in late 1955 and early 1956 several groups of Rastafarians sought passages on boats in the Kingston harbor. Census-takers of the University College of the West Indies, who were carrying out a survey on labor and employment in St. Elizabeth, were thought to be registering those persons who wanted to go to Africa.⁴¹⁸

As a result of the message and the heightened expectations of an imminent return to Ethiopia, several new Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation were founded. While she was in Jamaica, Maymie Richardson met with a number of Rastafarians, who told her of their desire to form a new Local of the EWF, since bearded brethren were still excluded from becoming members of Local 31. Rastafarians with beards, as we have already seen, had come to represent the more radical section within the movement. Although their influence was rapidly increasing, the wearing of beards, and everything it stood for, was still a controversial issue.

Nevertheless, the request of the bearded Rastas was granted and a new branch established, Emperor Haile Selassie I Local 37, which according to Smith *et al.* was largely made up of members of the Brotherhood Solidarity of United Ethiopians and the African Cultural League.⁴¹⁹ The President of the new Local was Sam B. Spence, who had founded the Brotherhood Solidarity fourteen years earlier. Born on 22 April 1922 and employed by the Yellow Fever Mosquito Eradication Section of the Ministry of Health, he was to become one of the most influential spokesmen of the EWF during the second half of the 1950s. Local 37 was, however, not the only new Local to be founded in the wake of Maymie Richardson's visit. Since it was the EWF which had been assigned to administer the land grant, many Rastafarians sought affiliation with the organization, probably in the hope of getting some say in its affairs or of being among the first to leave for Ethiopia. Other new Locals, most of them not formally recognized by EWF's headquarters, included Local 27, formed by Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert and his Ethiopian Coptic Faith. Hibbert later also founded the African Descendants United Association, which was officially registered and described as a "complimenting [sic], spiritual side to the political organ of the Ethiopian World Federation Incorporated."⁴²⁰

Archibald Dunkley dismantled his King of Kings Mission and formed Local 77 with headquarters on Wildman Street in downtown Kingston. The United Afro-West Indian Brotherhood, led by Raphael Downer, became Local 7. Other Locals established in Kingston included Locals 19, 33, 40, 43 and the all-female Local 41. Local 11 was established in rural St. Andrew, Local 32 in Montego Bay and Local 25 in Spanish Town. Cecil Gordon soon left Local 31 to establish Local 19, the only two EWF Locals to be formally registered with the Jamaican government. There was a constant forming and splitting up of groups. Some flourished, but the majority soon became defunct, due to internal dissension, defection of leaders and members, or due to financial troubles. Leaders and members of one group were also often involved in the activities of other groups.⁴²¹

However, in spite of all these activities, immediate repatriation to the Promised Land failed to materialize. The EWF did not have the financial resources to arrange for the settlement of its members in Ethiopia and much the same was true for the many different Jamaican Locals. But the news about the land grant in Ethiopia certainly reinforced the conviction that repatriation was imminent and that the Lion of Judah was working to bring back his scattered people to the fathers' land. Since it demonstrated that the Rastafarians were indeed welcome in Africa, the land grant provided them with a powerful argument for repatriation.

From the mid-1950s onwards the EWF and the Rastafarian movement remained closely related and the Ethiopian World Federation was often regarded as an integral part of the Rastafarian movement. Smith *et al.* describe the Ethiopian World Federation as representing the moderate wing within the Rastafarian movement, but the EWF cannot be regarded as a mere wing of the movement.⁴²² Barrett points out some differences between the EWF and the Rastafarian movement:

The EWF, Inc., is more culturally oriented toward Ethiopia; the Rastafarians are more religious. Both groups honour the King of Ethiopia. While the Rastafarians see him as god-figure, the EWF, Inc., honour him as spiritual head, both aspire returning to Ethiopia, although in different ways. The Rastafarians have always claimed that Ethiopia is their rightful heritage and their ultimate goal is to sit under their own 'vine and fig tree'. The Land Grant therefore was considered by the Rastafarians to be a direct fulfilment of prophecy. They were convinced that the time had come for the sons of Africa to return. In short, to the EWF, Inc., the Back-to-Africa movement meant migration; to the Rastafarians, repatriation.⁴²³

Yet it appears that even in the United States the EWF was not just "culturally oriented toward Ethiopia." Essien-Udom notes that in Chicago "the EWF holds regular religious meetings and relies on the same biblical references to 'Ethiopia' as the Abyssinians of the early twenties."⁴²⁴

In any case, in Jamaica one needs to differentiate between the formal Ethiopian World Federation and the many unofficial, unrecognized Rastafarian groups calling themselves Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation. The first would reject the designation Rastafarian, whereas the latter are composed of self-declared Rastafarians, many of whom strive towards organizing and centralizing the Rastafarian movement under the banner of the Ethiopian World Federation. The dividing lines between formal and informal, recognized and unrecognized Locals are, however, far from clear because of the constant fission and fusion of groups, as a result of which there are also Rastafarian members in official EWF Locals.

Escalating violence in the late 1950s

“A one-way group ticket on a slow boat to Africa might be one solution acceptable to all concerned, and cheap at the price.”

The years following the EWF’s message about the land grant in Ethiopia not only stirred hopes for imminent repatriation to the fathers’ land, but also witnessed a number of violent confrontations between the Rastafarians and the police. For while the Rastafarians experienced a period of heightened expectations and activities, confident that the moment for a return to Africa had arrived, the colonial government of Jamaica was becoming more and more alarmed about the growth and radicalization of the movement.

As was disclosed in 1990, when secret British government papers were released, the colonial government’s concern about the Rastafarian movement during the second half of the 1950s was grave indeed. No less a person than the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Hugh Foot, personally wrote a letter, dated 16 August 1956, to the British ambassador in Addis Ababa. In his letter the Governor, on behalf of “the authorities in Montego Bay,” asked the ambassador to relay the request for “a refutation of the claim that Haile Selassie is God.” Apparently the Governor and the authorities in MoBay believed that a denial of divinity by Emperor Haile Selassie would undermine the Rastafarian movement or, at least, halt its growth. However, the ambassador in Addis Ababa, “evidently failed to reply.”⁴²⁵ There was to be a sequel to the Governor’s action some three years later.

Governor Foot was so concerned about the Rastafarian movement that he requested the Local Standing Intelligence Committee of the Jamaica Constabulary Force to keep “a special eye ... on Rastafari activities.” Yet Foot also felt some compassion for the Rastafarians. As he wrote to the Colonial Office three months later:

The Rastafaris have long been a source of some concern and anxiety and those who like to make use of violence have previously attempted to engage the Rastafaris for their own evil purposes. ... But it would be a mistake to assume that all Rastafaris are criminals. I was talking the other day to Henzell, the Manager of the Caymanas Estates, who employs about a hundred Rastafaris from the Rastafari settlement in the mountains above Caymanas. He says that many of them are good and regular workers who respond to fair treatment and sympathetic handling. On the other hand there are pockets of Rastafaris in the slums of Kingston and Montego Bay which seem to be centres of various forms of crime and vice. Certainly the Rastafaris provide an interesting example of reaction against the normal conventions and they also illustrate a commendable desire to escape from squalor and poverty by evolving some new pattern of communal life. There may well be some good in the Rastafari cult as well as the obvious bad.”⁴²⁶

Little was heard of the Rastafarians during 1957, the year in which Sir Kenneth Blackburne succeeded Hugh Foot as Governor of Jamaica. However, before long the new Governor faced grave problems with the Rastafarians.

Unaware of the government’s attempts to have His Imperial Majesty deny his divinity, Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards, a Rastafarian leader from West Kingston, organized “the first and last” universal Rastafarian “grounation” (convention), to be held from 1 to 21 March 1958 at his Coptic Theocratic Temple.⁴²⁷ Prince Emmanuel, whose real name was Smith, was born in Black River, St. Elizabeth in 1909 or 1911, but like so many others later came to Kingston. When he settled in the ghettos of the capital in 1933, the first Rastafarian preachers had just emerged. Prince Emmanuel worked as a painter and delivered bread for a bakery, but in 1943, by his own account, he had a vision of the Emperor, who told him to start to work for the liberation of his people. As “the Lord’s Servant, the Black Shepherd as the fundamental leader of the Black people by Sovereign Right,” he was to lead his followers out of Babylon, back to the Promised Land. The Lord’s Servant soon became one of the most prominent Rastafarian leaders in Kingston.⁴²⁸

The 1958 grounation was announced in widely distributed pamphlets and, according to informants of Smith *et al.*, even attracted the attention of the new Governor, Sir Kenneth Blackburne, in office for a mere three months. The Governor was said to have paid a visit to Prince’s headquarters shortly before the convention began.⁴²⁹ The grounation was declared the “first and last” because the majority of the Rastafarians expected to be in Ethiopia within a very short time. In any case, it was the first time in the history of the movement that Rastafarians from different groups assembled together. Hundreds of Rastas from all over the island came to the slums of West Kingston to attend the grounation. Some had even sold their possessions, convinced of their immediate repatriation at the end of the gathering.⁴³⁰ Soon *The Jamaica Times* and *The Star* carried reports on their front pages.

Over 3,000 members of the Rastafarian cult - men, women and children - were having the time of their lives when I called at Industrial Terrace, Kingston Pen, this week. They were in the first week of their four-week "convention" and were fasting, praying, singing, jumping and jiving in a frenzy to the sound of sea-shells, drums and cymbals. Now and then an annoyed "brother" had to be disciplined for using profane language. They call where they are keeping the convention the Coptic Theocratic Temple. There is no temple, however; not even a building - only a dusty open place surrounded by shacks. ... They are dressed in long red, yellow, white, green and black gowns with head wraps to match. In the centre of the yard is a table set up like a cross with framed photographs of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia hanging on flag poles. Asked why they used so much profanity, one of the preachers said that there was no place in their hearts for evil, so they had to spit it out with their tongues. ... Asked if they were not afraid of being turned off the land which they do not own, a spokesman of the group let go a barrage of obscene language and then added calmly: "Perfect love driveth away all fear."⁴³¹

The shocked reporter, although somewhat side-tracked by the "profane" language of the Rastafarians, was further informed that the Rastas had

"summoned" the Governor and the Chief Minister to meet them this week-end on the question of their repatriation back to their "orient homeland," Ethiopia. They termed the West Indies "a pit of hell" and they want to return to "David's Royal Kingdom."⁴³²

At first, the authorities paid little attention to the Rastafarian grounation. The Kingston Fire Brigade came once to put out a campfire, which they did "with considerable enthusiasm, dousing the environs at the same time."⁴³³ But as the grounation continued, the press began to devote more and more attention to the unusual assembly of Rastas. There were even rumors that the Rastafarians intended to ritually sacrifice a policeman.

The militant behavior of the Rastafarians, their open defiance of the Jamaican authorities and the publicity in the press soon resulted in increased police harassment. Apparently it became so frequent that Prince Emmanuel and another Rastafarian, called King Priest Abraham, went to Police headquarters and demanded a meeting with the Commissioner, Colonel Reginald Townsend Michelin. They were granted the opportunity to make their complaints and Colonel Michelin promised to investigate the incidents brought to his attention.⁴³⁴

When the convention was nearing its end, Prince Emmanuel sent a telegram to Queen Elizabeth II, in which he bluntly stated: "We the descendants of Ancient Ethiopia call upon you for our repatriation for this is the 58th year emergency answer." The telegram, the first one the Rastafarians had sent to Buckingham Palace, caused some confusion in Her Majesty's Private Secretariat. One of the staff members despatched a copy of the telegram to the Colonial Office and in the accompanying memo asked: "Who are these ?!" The Colonial Office, which had just begun to gather information about the movement, briefly explained who the Rastafarians were, and Queen Elizabeth's Private Secretary requested them to "please deal officially" with the telegram and to inform Prince about the proper procedures with regard to addressing the Queen.⁴³⁵

When the convention was over, no-one returned to "David's Royal Kingdom." Some of those who had reportedly sold their belongings in the firm belief that they would embark on ships heading for the Promised Land, were too ashamed to return home. However, on Saturday 22 March, some 300 Rastafarians tried to "capture" Kingston in the name of Haile Selassie. Shouting slogans and armed with red, gold, green and black banners, they assembled in Victoria Park (commonly known as the Parade). The police quickly chased them away and arrested several Rastas for possession of ganja.⁴³⁶

In spite of the fact that it did not result in the journey home, the grounation was a success in the sense that it had brought together many Rastafarians from all over the island and from different groups. It also lent prestige to Prince Emmanuel, although he did not succeed in his aim of organizing and centralizing the movement under his own leadership. According to Smith *et al.*, it was also "the decisive point in the deterioration of relations between the Government and the public on the one hand, and the Ras Tafari movement on the other."⁴³⁷ After the grounation police harassment increased and numerous Rastafarians were arrested on charges of ganja possession, beaten, abused and forcibly trimmed. On 7 May 1958, Prince Emmanuel's camp was burned down by the police and Prince arrested and tried, but soon released.⁴³⁸

The convention in West Kingston was but the first in a chain of confrontations between the Rastafarians and the authorities. Hardly a month after the police had taken revenge on Prince, another incident occurred. In the second week of June 1958 a group of nine Rastafarian families, squatters on lands

belonging to an estate in the vicinity of Spanish Town, had their shacks demolished on the orders of the Parish Council. With their belongings in a handcart they went to Old Kings House, once the residence of the Governors of Jamaica, and sat down on the steps, demanding a meeting with Mayor Leslie. The police ordered them to leave but they “growled something that was not pleasing,” and refused to go.⁴³⁹

The Mayor agreed eventually to meet them. “The general complaint of the cultists,” as the *Gleaner* reported, “was that the property owners were prejudiced against them and would not employ them even during crop.” Leslie told the Rastas that they should respect private property, but promised to see the estate owners on their behalf. The Rastas remained where they were. Apparently the Mayor’s intervention failed, if he kept his promise at all. At the end of the month, the police returned. As *The Tribune* reported:

In a short time Kings House was again liberated. Not a shot fired, not a head broken. Once the job was done the police retired. But the bearded brethren with their womenfolk and children lingered on outside the building, and indeed made their beds on the open pavement for a few nights before they were eventually hustled out of town.⁴⁴⁰

The Rastafarians moved to a cemetery outside Spanish Town.

Later that same year, in October, the police raided a Rastafarian community in Geneva, Westmoreland. The unnamed leader of the group was arrested and later sent to prison, which according to the Jamaica Constabulary Force led to a decline in the activities of Rastafarians in that part of the island.⁴⁴¹ On 16 October, Kingston’s Fire Brigade once more treated a group of Rastafarians to a free shower. A “small bonfire” - according to the *Gleaner* part of “some sort of Rasta Farian [sic] ritual” - was reported along Spanish Town Road. The firemen came, “but soon found themselves the target of a hail of stones, bottles and other missiles flung by the ‘bearded brethren.’” Police reinforcements were called in and fired tear gas at the Rastas, who replied with more stones and bottles. Under police cover, the firemen managed to connect their hoses and directed the water not at the small fire, but at the Rastafarians, which efficiently “brought an end to the skirmish.”⁴⁴² G.St.C. Scotter, commenting on the event in his *Gleaner* column “Today,” compared the problem of the “small but irritating minority [of] ‘bearded men’” with the problems the British were experiencing at the time with Cypriot “terrorists.” Somewhat disappointed he wrote: “but if we were to consider deporting them I suppose the only place we could send them to would be Abyssinia, who probably would not want them anyway.”⁴⁴³

Nine days after the clash at Spanish Town Road there was yet another, more serious confrontation between Rastafarians and the police, this time near Linstead, St. Catherine. Early on the morning of 25 October 1958, according to *The Daily Gleaner’s* report, two policemen were attacked and injured by Rastas armed with sticks. Other Rastafarians threw stones at passing cars and a bus, smashing windshields and injuring several passengers. Alerted police reinforcements hurried to the troubled area, where they were allegedly met by Rastas armed with sticks, stones and machetes. The police thought it necessary to shoot and kill one of the Rastafarians, 32-year-old Herman McKenzie.⁴⁴⁴ Two days later policemen from the Linstead, Spanish Town and Bog Walk stations carried out a raid in Byndloss, where the Rastafarians were assumed to live. After a search of several hours four were arrested.⁴⁴⁵ Their fate remains unknown.

The radicalization of at least some sections of the Rastafarian movement cannot be explained by the diminishing influence of the early preachers and the emergence of a new generation of younger Rastas alone. Of course, increased police persecution, following the murder of Sidney Garrell, the destruction of Pinnacle, the 1958 grounation and other incidents, may have contributed to a hardening of positions. The message about the land grant and the rumors about imminent repatriation no doubt gave the Rastafarians new confidence to demonstrate open defiance of the law. But other developments, both in and outside Jamaica, also contributed to this process of radicalization.

During the 1950s Jamaica had moved closer to independence. London was no longer in a position to maintain its former sugar colony - nor had it any desire to do so - for which the costs were now considerably higher than the revenues. In the cynical words of Morris Cargill, then a representative of the Jamaica Labour Party and later a member of the West Indian Federation’s Parliament:

Britain was dying to get rid of the West Indies ... and when people tell you that they fought for independence, it’s bull shit. They had it, whether they wanted it or not ... and they let the Old British off. They never paid us off, they fired us and never gave us a gold watch for all our years of service.⁴⁴⁶

In 1953 a ministerial system was introduced and in 1959 Jamaica achieved full internal self-government.

The People's National Party government, led by Norman Manley and in office since 1955, devoted much of its energies to the establishment of an independent British West Indian Federation, together with several "smaller" British colonies in the region, but paid little attention to social reforms.

Economically, however, Jamaica was experiencing a relatively prosperous period. Sugar prices had risen after World War II and in 1952 a start was made with the mining of bauxite by the Aluminum Limited of Canada (ALCAN) and the American companies Kaiser and Reynolds. The tourist industry also showed a remarkable expansion. Whereas in 1950 some 75,000 visitors had been registered, in 1959 their numbers had increased to over 190,000.⁴⁴⁷ Both the Jamaica Labour Party and the PNP governments followed a policy of what has been called "industrialization by invitation." Foreign, notably American, investors were attracted to promote and stimulate industrial production for the export market and the local manufacturing industry. Between 1950 and 1960 Jamaica experienced an average growth of its Gross Domestic Product of 6.5%, one of the highest in the region. As a result of the step by step process towards self-government and the economic progress, a "vibrant, new and increasingly wealthy and influential entrepreneurial class" emerged of mostly mulatto Jamaicans.⁴⁴⁸

The benefits of all this, however, were largely restricted to the middle and upper classes; the black lower classes still had to endure poverty and hardship. As Governor Foot had reported to London in 1955: "The slums of Kingston and Montego Bay are probably the worst in the world and conditions in many of the country districts, particularly in the sugar areas, are little better."⁴⁴⁹ The population had grown rapidly, in spite of large-scale emigration to Britain, and un- and underemployment were rampant. In 1955 62% of all males and 36% of all females in the rural areas of Jamaica were looking for work, although officially the average unemployment rate for Jamaica stood at approximately 10 to 12%. The demographic pressure on the scarce agricultural resources accelerated the drift to the urban centers, notably Kingston, and thus led to the rapid expansion of slums and squatter areas. Unemployment, however, was even more widespread in the capital and living conditions for the newly arrived migrants were no doubt worse. A 1951 survey had counted some 3,700 squatters, most of them concentrated in Trench Town, the Dungle area and Back-O-Wall (Kingston Pen). But by 1960 the police estimated that there were as many as 20,000 squatters in the metropolitan area. And those not living on "captured" land were not always better off. Almost 70% of Kingston's households lived in one-room accommodation, many lacking even the most basic facilities.⁴⁵⁰ The growing gap between the rich and the poor, the uneven distribution of the benefits of progress, and the increased pressure on and suffering of the ghetto-dwellers and the landless peasantry undoubtedly created fertile soil for the growth and radicalization of the Rastafarian movement.

International developments also played their part. Of great importance was the revolution in nearby Cuba, where Fulgencio Batista was rapidly losing ground. After a disastrous landing in late 1956, a handful of rebels led by the brothers Fidel and Raoul Castro had retreated to the Sierra Maestra. From there their *Movimiento de 26 Julio* (M-26) continued the guerrilla war against the regime of Batista with growing success. Against a background of intensified popular protest and rioting, the Cuban army suffered a decisive defeat in the summer of 1958, enabling the swelling ranks of M-26 fighters to celebrate their victory with a march into Havana on 1 January 1959. For many Rastafarians the Cuban revolution was a most welcome development. From their perspective it was the defeat of an (American-backed) colonial regime by the original Amerindian inhabitants of the island, a step closer towards the fulfillment of the repatriation prophecy in its broader sense. Just as Cuba had now been recaptured by the Amerindians, so Jamaica would ultimately be returned into the hands of its original inhabitants, after the Africans had settled in Africa, the Europeans in Europe, the Chinese in China, etcetera.

In the United States the black population increasingly challenged white domination during the 1950s. In May 1954 a team of NAACP lawyers won the famous *Brown versus The Board of Education* case of Topeka, Kansas, when the US Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The ruling was soon followed by similar ones, outlawing racial segregation in other spheres of public life. One year later Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat in a whites-only section of a Montgomery bus, sparked a 381-days boycott of public transport in Alabama, concluded with another victory in court for the black population. Despite the white backlash in the Deep South, where the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Councils reacted with lynchings and bombings, the struggle for equal civil rights came gradually closer to its aim. In early September 1957 riots broke out in Little Rock, Arkansas, over the admission of nine black school children to the all-white Central High School, forcing President Eisenhower to send in federal troops. But while the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People continued its court cases and Martin Luther King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference staged non-violent protests in the South, young blacks in the urban North became increasingly radical. Black Power

organizations like the Nation of Islam enlisted growing numbers of militants within its ranks.

But the developments in Cuba and the United States were not the only significant events of the decade. In Africa - focus of Rasta hopes - nationalist leaders were able, to quote Basil Davidson, "to take the political initiative from one colonial power after another. The decade of the 1950s became the great period of campaigns for regained independence."⁴⁵¹ Everywhere on the African continent the struggle for internal self-government and independence was gaining momentum. Although most African colonies did not achieve independence before the 1960s, the 1950s did witness some early successes. Sudan became an independent republic in 1956 and the Gold Coast colony of Ghana achieved the same status one year later and under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah rapidly became a symbol of independent modernization in Africa. The Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau) in Kenya fought a bitter guerrilla war against the colonial settlers between 1952 and 1956, which caught the imagination of the Rastafarians. France experienced especially difficult times during the 1950s. It not only suffered a humiliating defeat at Dien Bien-Phu in Vietnam in 1954, but also had to cope with Ben Bella's liberation army in Algiers and insurrections in Madagascar, and was forced to concede independence to Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, and internal self-government to Togo two years later. For the Rastafarians, always keenly interested in developments in Africa, these events were proof that elsewhere, oppressed black people were also rebelling against colonial authority and ruling elites, and with success. The struggle for a free and independent Africa was in full swing and in all this the Rastafarians saw, of course, the hand of the Almighty. Many no doubt reasoned that once Africa was liberated from white, colonial oppression, the repatriation of the Africans from the West would be only a matter of time. As Sam B. Spence, by then Secretary of the EWF's King Solomon Local 13, later wrote to *The Daily Gleaner*: "with the birth of 'Ghana' and other independent African nations, the movement is growing."⁴⁵²

In May 1959 the Rastas once again clashed with the law. On Thursday 7 May a dispute between a Rastafarian gatekeeper, Sidney Maitland, and a market policeman at the downtown Coronation Market, turned into a full-scale battle. The Rastafarian was arrested by a Special Constable for "indecent language." There was some pushing and shoving, the Rasta was "struck by a baton" and the police called for support. A large number of market vendors chose to side with the Rastafarian and gathered outside to greet the police reinforcements with a barrage of stones, bottles, fruits and vegetables. Another man was arrested, fights broke out and a police-van was set on fire. The Fire Brigade rushed to the scene, but had to retreat because of the shower of stones and bottles. Riot police arrived and dispersed the crowd with tear gas. The police chased the protesters into the slum areas of Ackee Walk and Back-O-Wall, where more stones and bottles were thrown and more tear gas was used. Numerous homes went up in flames, deliberately set on fire by policemen. No fewer than 87 persons, most of them Rastafarians, were arrested. At Coronation Market, in the meantime, a Fire Brigade unit had returned to put out the fires; it received the same treatment as the police-van.⁴⁵³

The following Saturday two representatives of the United Rases Organization, a Rastafarian group from Jones Town, made a futile request to Chief Minister Norman Manley for an enquiry. The *Gleaner* described them as admirers of Fidel Castro, wearing their hair "Cuban revolutionary style." The two delegates, who claimed to represent 65,000 Rastafarians, also demanded repatriation to Ethiopia.⁴⁵⁴

When the over 80 arrested and handcuffed protesters were marched to the Sutton Street courtroom on 11 May, they were cheered by a large crowd, which had been gathering near the courtroom since early in the morning. The many Rastafarians in the assembly shouted "fire, thunder and earthquake!" at the policemen. Inside the courtroom, the Judge offered the accused bail of £ 100 each, an amount which - hardly surprisingly - none of them was able to raise. Sidney Maitland, the Rastafarian gatekeeper, was fined £ 2 or 30 days in prison with hard labor for using indecent language, and another £ 10 or 60 days jail for assault.⁴⁵⁵ Later that month the trial of the remaining 87 arrested was, for obscure reasons, but perhaps deliberately, postponed until 15 June. Bail was reduced to £ 50 for men and £ 25 for women, but again few were able to raise the money. Lawyer Peter Evans, who had defended Mau Mau fighters in Kenya, acted on behalf of 63 of the accused. He claimed that "his clients had been subjected to unjustified assaults by the police while in custody." Evans threatened to bring the police to justice should this ever happen again.

Five days after the scrimmage at the Coronation Market, *The Daily Gleaner* published an article by Clinton Parchment, in which he discussed the "problem" of the Rastafarians. In Parchment's opinion the reaction of the police was "not unnatural, given the turbulent nature of the protagonists and the amount of tolerance that has been shown in the past." He commented that the attitude of the general public and

the government's towards "the hairy fraternity" had been ambiguous and ambivalent, and he agreed with an earlier publicist, who had concluded that "not all bearded men are villains" (or rather "there have been shaven and completely hairless villains" as well). Parchment concluded that bearded men were also citizens of Jamaica, "however hairy, dirty and turbulent they may be."

Still and all, as the Irish are said to say, a very large proportion of the bearded men of Jamaica are Rastafarians, and a large proportion of these are dirty, lazy, violent, ganja-smoking, good-for-nothing rascals using religion as a cloak for villainy, having no regard for the law or other people's property, loudmouthed and a general nuisance.⁴⁵⁶

At the end of the article the author asked "what to do with them" and offered his readers some suggestions:

A one-way group ticket on a slow boat to Africa might be one solution acceptable to all concerned, and cheap at the price, but I cannot help thinking that not only have the Africans enough troubles of their own just now ..., but that the cargo would be refused and we would soon have them all back on our hands again. It is not improbable that the "virtue" - and part of the attraction - of the Rastas is, like Sampson's, in their hair, and that if the wearing of beards and/or hennaed ringlets were made an offence and any offenders sentenced to three to five years' service (preferably overseas; say in Barbados where a disinclination to work is frowned upon) in a special battalion of the West India Regiment, it would soon solve the problem - though hardly that of Federal Defence. Perhaps the solution lies elsewhere, but anyway here are a couple of ideas to start the ball rolling. But it had better not roll too long or no one will be able to field it.⁴⁵⁷

G.St.C. Scotter, in his *Gleaner* column "Today," also addressed the problem of "the unkempt cult of the Lions of Judah," and thought that it was about time to take the matter "more seriously than we have done so far." After all, "the disgraceful riot at the Coronation Market, ... it is the general opinion, was due to the activities of the 'Ras' men." His proposal, however, was not to send them with "a one-way group ticket on a slow boat to Africa" or for a few years hard labor to Barbados, but rather to change the law and give the courts

the power to award a thorough hot bath and a haircut as a measure of punishment for offenders of this type, [which] might have a salutary, at any rate a sanitary, effect on them. Like Sampson, shorn of their matted locks, they might lose some of the muddled enthusiasm.⁴⁵⁸

While the two *Gleaner* columnists offered their various solutions to the Rastafarian nuisance, Governor Sir Kenneth Blackburne was secretly making another attempt to undermine the Rastafarians' central beliefs. On 10 June 1959 he followed in his predecessor's footsteps and wrote two long letters about the Rastafarian movement to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd. Three years earlier Foot had written to the British ambassador in Addis Ababa and never received a reply; Blackburne tried to enlist support at the highest level.⁴⁵⁹

The Governor, however, did not believe in repressive measures, or at least not in repressive measures only. "In the long term there is little doubt that the only method of suppressing the movement will be by sociological means," wrote Blackburne to Lennox-Boyd, to which he added:

The purpose of this dispatch is to enquire whether Her Majesty's Government would be able to approach the Government of Ethiopia in order to secure a definite statement that Government and the Emperor of Ethiopia have no interest whatsoever in these unfortunate and misguided people in Jamaica; and that there can be no question of them being admitted to Ethiopia either now or in the future.⁴⁶⁰

The Governor also had a plan of his own and expressed "optimistic hopes of getting the Moral Rearmament movement (MRA) to convert the Rastas."⁴⁶¹

The Moral Rearmament - or Oxford Group movement, as it was known until 1938 - had come into being during the early 1920s as an intercollegiate evangelical movement headed by Frank N.D. Buchman, a Lutheran minister from Pennsylvania.⁴⁶² Born in 1878, Buchman had studied and lectured at several colleges and theological seminaries in the United States, England and Germany. In 1908, as secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Pennsylvania State College, he began actively and successfully to evangelize students.

Buchman resigned his post in 1915 and in the following years traveled to Europe and Asia, lecturing at Hartford in between his journeys and organizing conversion "house parties" at campuses around the world.⁴⁶³ He propagated a fundamentalist version of protestantism according to the four "moral abso-

lutes:” Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love. “Individual conversion, confession of sins, adherence to a strict code of morality, and listening to God for guidance in daily life” would lead to personal salvation and this, it was believed, would ultimately solve all mankind’s problems.⁴⁶⁴ Buchman’s strategy was to convert what he called the “key men,” the formal or informal leaders in social and political life.

By the early 1920s he headed an extensive, but relatively unobtrusive and unpublicized evangelical movement. Groups of “life-changers,” as Allan Eister described them, traveled from college to college proselytizing students, but Buchman and his associates also managed to obtain the support of numerous influential politicians and businessmen, including (former) Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover, Henry Ford and Louis Mayer, to name only a few. The Oxford Group made skillful use of modern propaganda techniques and in addition to the “house parties” regularly organized mass rallies around the world.⁴⁶⁵ During the 1920s and 1930s the Oxford Group movement experienced a period of rapid growth, mainly in urban centers, though not without provoking controversy.

To many Christians this movement came as an eloquent and compelling testimony to the power of God in the world - a “rebirth of the spirit of First Century Christianity,” a resurgence of “vital religion,” capable of meeting and solving the bewildering problems of the time. ... From outside the ranks, the Oxford Group movement has been viewed variously as a sinister instrument of Fascism, a tool of reactionary business, an emotional orgy, a pacifist crusade, an elaborate “escape mechanism,” and an entertaining show.”⁴⁶⁶

In 1938 Buchman launched the slogan “moral rearmament,” the name by which the movement eventually became known. Buchman’s “battle for peace” during the late 1930s and early years of World War II earned the MRA the image of being “clearly sympathetic to Hitler and at least marginally anti-Semitic.”⁴⁶⁷ After the war, the impact of the Moral Rearmament movement declined somewhat, although it remained an influential force, especially in the United States and Northern Europe. It established its international headquarters in Caux-sur-Montreux, Switzerland, and maintained several training and conference centers in other parts of the world. In the United States one of its major centers was on Mackinac Island in Lake Huron, Michigan.⁴⁶⁸

Governor Blackburne’s hopes that the Moral Rearmament movement might convert the Rastafarians were based on action taken by the Custos of St. James, Francis M. Kerr-Jarrett, a member of one of Jamaica’s most prominent and wealthy families. The Custos was one of the MRA’s patrons in Jamaica, had paid passages to America for prospective converts and had even handed over his Fairfield Hotel to the movement.⁴⁶⁹ In late May or early June 1959, when he was about to attend a MRA conference on Mackinac Island, Kerr-Jarrett had been approached by Brother Aubrey Brown, leader of the Orange Street Gulley group, the largest Rastafarian group from Montego Bay.

Rastafari was a relatively recent phenomenon in Montego Bay. The Orange Street Gulley group was probably the first local Rasta organization, established sometime during the early 1950s. As elsewhere on the island, its (bearded) members were repeatedly harassed by the security forces. In May 1954, for instance, the police had raided the yard where the group regularly met. All twenty Rastafarians present, including Aubrey Brown, were arrested and charged with unlawful possession of ganja, a Bible and a bicycle. Appearing before court three weeks later, Brown produced proof that the articles allegedly stolen rightfully belonged to him. The ganja charge was dropped, but Brown was charged with unlawfully holding a public meeting instead. Before acquitting the accused, Resident Magistrate G.E. Waddington issued a stern warning that the Rastas would get twelve months with hard labor when ever found guilty of ganja possession. He also ordered those not native in St. James to leave the parish immediately.⁴⁷⁰

When Aubrey Brown approached Kerr-Jarrett five years later, he expressed his wish to visit Mackinac Island and to learn more about the Moral Rearmament movement. Kerr-Jarrett promised to “give the matter serious consideration” and a few weeks later informed Brown that he had arranged (and financed) a visit to Mackinac for seven members of the group, including Brother Aubrey Brown himself.⁴⁷¹

It is quite conceivable that Kerr-Jarrett informed or consulted Governor Blackburne about the possibility of converting Rastafarians with the help of the MRA. The Governor wrote his letter to Lennox-Boyd on 10 June, one or two weeks after Brother Brown had approached the Custos. Whatever the case, a columnist of the *Gleaner*, referring to Kerr-Jarrett’s decision to finance the Rastafarians’ visit to Mackinac, considered it “one good way of tackling this urgent problem.”⁴⁷²

When the seven Rastafarians returned from the Moral Rearmament conference on 22 August 1959, they were welcomed by Montego Bay’s Mayor and Kerr-Jarrett at an official reception in the Town Hall.

Judging by the fact that an estimated 300 Rastafarians, in “full regalia,” waving flags and banners, and supported by a group of ten drummers, squeezed themselves into the hall, it appears that Rastafarian interest in the Moral Rearmament movement was not limited to a small fringe. The press in any case considered it “a history-making occasion,” if only because it was the first time that the Rastafarians of Montego Bay had been allowed to enter the Town Hall. The Mayor made several optimistic remarks when he welcomed the returning Rastas “on behalf of the City of Montego Bay,” adding: “For it’s my city and it’s your city ... there are no two classes of citizens Let us, therefore, build together in peace and freedom.”⁴⁷³ After a few more speakers, it was the turn of Brother Aubrey Brown, who reportedly told the audience: “I do not have tongue to tell you how greatly respected we all were by the nations there.” In a cable sent to Frank Buchman the response to Brother Brown’s words was described as “tumultuous.” Brown’s address, however, was very short. He promised to say more about his experience at Mackinac Island at a meeting scheduled for the next day, “as he was very tired.”⁴⁷⁴

Somewhat later an MRA enthusiast and eye-witness of the welcome-home reception, reported the contents of Aubrey Brown’s second speech to the newspaper:

[B]efore we can do anything at all, we have to be morally re-armed - no thieves, no liars, can enter there and I want you to understand that we don’t want lazy men or women What I saw there (at Mackinac) is the greatest thing I have seen in my life - a mighty force I have never seen anything as big as this before, and I am proud to be a son of St. James to represent to my people I was treated like a son of God. Men of every nation wanted to talk with me. Dr. Buchman gave me a seat at his right hand.⁴⁷⁵

Brown was obviously impressed and had clearly enjoyed the respect paid to him. Many members of his group, however, thought otherwise. Shortly after Brown’s return, some forty Rastas, led by Leonard Morle, deserted the Orange Street Gully group. As the Jamaica Constabulary Force reported to the Colonial Office, there were “considerable ill-feelings against Brown who is accused of abandoning their original object of fighting for the right to go back to Africa and selling himself to build a new Jamaica.”⁴⁷⁶

Unfortunately, little more was heard of this somewhat surprising liaison between the MRA and the Rastas.⁴⁷⁷ And the mere fact that little or no attention was paid to the issue seems to suggest that no large-scale conversion took place. But it is possible that some Rastafarians incorporated elements of the MRA philosophy into their own beliefs. The Moral Rearmament movement’s four “absolute” key issues - Honesty, Purity, Love and Unselfishness - were after all far from alien to the Rastafarian world view.⁴⁷⁸

In the meantime, there was frequent correspondence between the Governor of Jamaica and the Colonial Office. Blackburne tried to convince London of the seriousness of the situation and bombarded the Colonial Office with information: the Jamaica Constabulary Force produced one intelligence report after another. But in order to approach the Ethiopian government, the Colonial Office needed to enlist the cooperation of the Foreign Office, and they were not particularly quick to respond. Long before Governor Blackburne had received a reply, he had more serious developments to report to London.⁴⁷⁹

Claudius Henry and the announcement of “deadline date”

“We want to assure the General Public that this good tidings of Repatriation, stands for peace ... NO VIOLENCE.”

Compared to what lay ahead, the grousation, the scrimmage at the Coronation Market and the various clashes between Rastafarians and the police during 1958 and early 1959 had been minor disturbances. The chain of events which took place between October 1959 and the summer of 1960 was to send relations between the Rastafarian movement and the wider society plummeting to their lowest point yet. The key figure in these events was Claudius Henry.

Born in Coleyville in the parish of Manchester on 28 April 1903, Henry had received little formal education, having left school in second grade. He was a member of the Anglican Church and as a young man worked in the fields near his birthplace. But by the time he was about eighteen, young Henry had also begun to preach and in 1921 claimed to have had the first of several visions. Henry had been arrested for preaching without a license and, in accordance with established colonial tradition, was examined for lunacy.⁴⁸⁰ While under arrest, he had a vision in which “God the Father in the form of an eagle, His Son in the form of a brown man and the Holy Spirit in the form of a black man,” told him that he was the Repairer of the Breach referred to in Isaiah 58:12: “And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste

places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.”⁴⁸¹.

The doctors nevertheless found him to be in “perfect senses” and Henry was released. Although he thereafter considered himself to be a prophet, it was some years before he was successful in spreading his message. In 1927 he left for Cuba, where he spent two years as a laborer before returning to Manchester. In early 1945 he left Coleyville again, this time for the United States. Later that same year, he returned briefly to Jamaica to take his wife and son Ronald back with him to the United States, where he intended to settle permanently. Henry later claimed to have been ordained a minister in the Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio in 1953.

It appears that Henry’s conviction that Haile Selassie was God did not come until some time during the mid-1950s. In 1957, in yet another vision, God told him to return to his country. Henry did so and arrived in Jamaica on 9 December 1957.⁴⁸² Once back on the island

[h]e let it be known that he had brought back with him two pictures, one of the true Jesus, the other of his virgin mother. Both were black. It was also believed that he had recently been to Africa and had obtained them there, but that alleged trip was not verified.⁴⁸³

According to Leonard Barrett, Henry returned to Jamaica, at the invitation of Prince Emmanuel, to attend the 1958 grounation.⁴⁸⁴ Whether or not this was actually the case, in April 1958 Henry was introduced to Edna Fisher, a hard-working 50-year-old fish vendor, who also happened to be the leader of a small group of followers of the Ethiopian World Federation. In 1951 Fisher had used the money made from her business to build a house at 78 Rosalie Avenue in West Kingston. Here the 30-odd members of her group met regularly to discuss their beliefs. Claudius Henry presented himself to this group as “God’s Anointed,” the son and special envoy of the Father.⁴⁸⁵ Henry preached the divinity of Haile Selassie, repatriation to Africa and the holiness of the Sabbath, and claimed to have visited Ethiopia in January 1958, which had allegedly cost him some £ 500. Although he had gone in order to see Haile Selassie, he had never met the Emperor.⁴⁸⁶ Edna Fisher and her friends were impressed.

It was not long before Henry, claiming to be the prophet Cyrus, “God’s Approved and Anointed Shepherd and Leader,” sent by God to liberate the oppressed black population, assumed control over the group at Rosalie Avenue. From there he rapidly gained a wider following. Within a few months his regular Wednesday and Saturday night sermons were attracting several hundred people, many of them Rastafarians. Henry also traveled throughout Jamaica to organize public meetings in various parishes. One such meeting in Manchester, in September 1958, attracted the attention of the police. They reported the “inflammatory remarks” made there to the Attorney General, “who advised against prosecution.”⁴⁸⁷ By the end of that year, unobstructed by the police, Henry was drawing up plans for a church on the Rosalie Avenue site and on 9 December 1958, exactly one year after his return to Jamaica, he opened the African Reform Church of God in Christ.⁴⁸⁸

Then, in the spring of 1959, Claudius Henry distributed thousands of light blue membership cards, in which he announced a conference in April and a repatriation deadline in October. The cards read:

God’s righteous kingdom

Certificate of membership “the Leper’s Government”

From the Ancient and Mythical realm of Neptune, Rex, Court of the Dawn, “the Rod and the Star.” “Ensign” “The Red, Gold and Green” with the morning star in the Centre.

Know all ye by the present that I And my family of Address are registered members of The African Reform Church of God in Christ, The first fruit House of Prayer. Founder and Pastor, Rev. C.V. Henry, R.B. with “The Seventh Emmanuel’s Brethren.” Administering “The Lepers Government” under the United Ethiopian Pilgrim’s Pioneer Movement.

Pioneering Israel’s scattered children of African Origin back home to Africa, this year 1959, deadline date Oct. 5th., This New Government is God’s Righteous Kingdom of Everlasting Peace on Earth, “Creations Second Birth”. Holder of this certificate is requested to visit the Headquarters at 78 Rosalie Ave., off Waltham Park Road, April 1st, 11. a.m. through April 7th. Please preserve this Certificate for removal. No passport will be necessary for those returning to Africa. Bring this Certificate with you on April 1st, for “Official Stamping” We are Sincerely, “The Seventh Emmanuel’s Brethren” gathering Israel’s Scattered Children for removal, with our Leader, God’s Appointed and anointed Prophet, Rev. C.V. Henry, R.B. Given this 2nd day of March 1959, in the reign of His Imperial Majesty, 1st Emperor of Ethiopia, “God’s Elect”. Haile Selassie. King of Kings and Lord of Lords. “Israel’s Returned Messiah.”⁴⁸⁹.

As a result of this announcement and a whole series of similar pamphlets distributed throughout Jamaica, between 200 and 600 people gathered at Rosalie Avenue in early April. Henry “informed his hearers that he was chosen by God to deliver them out of bondage and lead them back to Africa,” as the Jamaica Constabulary Force later reported to the Colonial Office. Henry had sent letters to the Chief Minister, the Governor and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, summoning them to provide transportation to Africa by October. The blue cards were to serve as passports for the journey back home. If the authorities failed to comply with the demands, Henry warned his audience, they “should prepare for bloodshed, as they would take charge of the Government.”^{490.}

Henry’s following increased rapidly and the meetings at the African Reform Church began to attract more and more people, both Rastafarians and non-Rastafarians, all anxious to leave for the Promised Land on 5 October. Yet there were many Rastafarians who distrusted and denounced the clean-shaven, self-declared prophet. On 5 April Archibald Dunkley and his members in EWF Local 77 held a meeting at the corner of Spanish Town Road and Maxfield Avenue during which Henry’s activities were denounced as “a racket.” According to Dunkley it was impossible for anyone to leave the island without a passport. Henry’s activities and his threats of violence would only foil the movement’s own repatriation efforts. The crowd agreed.^{491.}

We have already seen that the Ethiopian World Federation’s announcement that the Emperor had made land available for African descendants living in the West, had stirred expectations of imminent repatriation. Henry’s announcement led to a climax of such hopes, at least in some sections of the movement. Many Rastafarians and other back-to-Africa enthusiasts thought that it was only a matter of time before all those who wished to exchange Jamaica for Africa could board eastbound ships and make the Middle Passage under more fortunate conditions than their forebears.

Somewhat surprisingly, Smith *et al.* and Chevannes link this surge in expectations of imminent repatriation to the large-scale migration to Britain that occurred during the second half of the 1950s, when thousands of Jamaicans left the island each year to start a new and, they hoped, better life in England.^{492.} It is a weak explanation, however, because for the past hundred years (with the exception of a brief period between 1930 and 1945) Jamaicans had continuously and in large numbers migrated to various destinations. Although the outflow to Britain during the 1950s was certainly considerable, it was hardly exceptional.

Between 1881 and 1911 no fewer than 43,000 Jamaicans had migrated to Panama to work on the construction of the railway and canal. Thousands had gone to the banana plantations in Costa Rica and Honduras, and to the sugar plantations in Cuba during the early years of the twentieth century. Some 46,000 Jamaicans had migrated to the United States in the decades before 1921. Only during the depression of the 1930s and World War II did large-scale migration come to a halt. The “exodus” to Britain between 1953 and 1962 saw almost 175,000 Jamaicans leave the island. The largest numbers (some 71,000) left in 1960-1961, the two years *following* the 1958 and 1959 repatriation initiatives of Prince Emmanuel and Claudius Henry. During 1958-1959 a “mere” 23,000 Jamaicans migrated to Britain.^{493.}

If rising expectations of repatriation to Africa and millenarian outbursts among the Rastafarians were linked to the volume of migration to Western (Babylonian) destinations, one would expect to have witnessed such outbursts during other periods as well. Maymie Richardson’s message about the land grant, the activities of the various Locals of the EWF, Prince Emmanuel and later Claudius Henry as well as the developments in Africa itself, seem a far more likely explanation for the heightened expectations of an imminent return to the land of the fathers.

To reinforce his demand for transportation, Claudius Henry announced a march from his headquarters to the city center on 1 August 1959. The police reported that Henry had threatened that if his demands were not heeded, 1 August would become “Bloody Saturday.”^{494.} On 11 May 1959 Henry issued yet another pamphlet to inform his following about the march:

[Y]ou will obtain further knowledge regarding our “Miraculous Repatriation” back home to Africa, this year 1959, deadline date October 5th. We will also announce officially the Freedom of all nations, and the declaration of Human Rights, which is ordered by Jehovah God. ... On the 1st day of August, Israel will begin to make a new History, which will be remembered throughout all the rising Generations. ... So come in your hundreds and thousands and see the beginning of Israel’s Restoration and God’s plan for our Miraculous Repatriation. We want to assure the General Public that this good tidings of Repatriation, stands for peace and “Freedom of Speech,” every step of the way. “NO VIOLENCE”.^{495.}

During August and early September 1959 increased unrest was reported throughout Jamaica. Henry had been actively campaigning in the rural parishes as well, and rumor had it that Rastafarians were threatening “to burn down Kingston” if their demands for ships to Africa were not met. Meanwhile, the Secretary of State for the Colonies informed Henry that his request for transportation should be made through the proper channels, that is via the Governor.

On 17 September Claudius Henry left Jamaica for New York. He claimed that he was going to meet several African and American leaders to discuss his plans for the “Miraculous Repatriation.” In the meantime, the rumors of imminent repatriation were so persistent that L.G. Newland, writing in *The Daily Gleaner* in early October 1959, thought the time “ripe for official pronouncement” on the matter of migration to Africa. According to Newland:

[A]ll over the country, public meetings and demonstrations, are being sponsored by various factions of the “Back-to-Africa” movement and it is even being said that a number of natives are gearing to be “shipped” to Africa some time in October this year. All around one hears that promises were made (by whom is not quite clear) that a number of persons interested in the venture would be sent to Africa shortly, and it is of striking interest that a number of bearded brethren and their womenfolk have been busy making purchases of items necessary for the pilgrimage. In some country districts there is talk among some people of selling out their belongings to join the crusade I do not think that an issue of such grave importance should be shelved and I believe that it will be generally agreed that Official light should be thrown on the subject for the general information of one and all.⁴⁹⁶

Three days before the 5 October “deadline date” Claudius Henry returned to Jamaica. He claimed to have made a second visit to Ethiopia. The *Gleaner* reported his return on its front page, adding that Henry had had talks with government officials there, but “declined to comment on the results of his mission.”⁴⁹⁷

Within a few days, the full effect of the distribution of the thousands of blue cards, viewed as a passage to Africa, became clear. On 4 and 5 October 1959 “hundreds” of Rastafarians and others longing to return to their fathers’ land gathered at Henry’s Rosalie Avenue headquarters, ready to leave for Ethiopia. Many had indeed sold their belongings. Henry ordered them to “shave their beards, cut their hair and clean up themselves in preparation for the trip.”⁴⁹⁸

But the deadline date passed without anyone leaving for Africa. “A representative of the *Gleaner* who visited the church [on 6 October 1959] was told by the Rev. Mr. Henry that yesterday was not the day on which the people would leave for Africa, as commonly believed.”⁴⁹⁹ The bearers of the blue cards were, of course, bitterly disappointed, but no disorder was reported. Most returned home as soon as it became clear that there were not going to be any ships, but “hundreds” had to stay around, either because they had no money for their bus fare back home or because they were too ashamed to face families and friends.⁵⁰⁰ Henry, in the meantime, failed to put in an appearance and, according to Chevannes, “many agreed with the press branding him a fraud. A faithful core, however, became even firmer in its convictions.”⁵⁰¹

Henry was arrested shortly after this debacle and, before being released on bail, was ordered to keep quiet for at least a year.⁵⁰² The police had little to act upon, in spite of the fact that already in June Governor Blackburne had ordered the Constabulary to keep a close eye on the Repairer of the Breach. The Governor had no doubt that “Mr. Henry is a charlatan and rogue of a dangerous kind,” and in his reports to London had expressed his hope that the police would “shortly be able to obtain evidence to justify prosecution.”⁵⁰³ But Henry had not violated any laws and could only be fined £ 50 for disturbing the peace.

While many in Jamaica no doubt thought that another folly of the “hairy fraternity” was over and returned to business as usual, on 26 December 1959, Claudius Henry officially hoisted the red, black and green of “the Leper’s Government,” which was to prepare the establishment of “God’s Righteous Government of Everlasting Peace on Earth, Creation’s Second Birth.” Redemption and the end of days were still believed to be close at hand, but Henry had dropped the idea of repatriation. In one of his pamphlets, issued in January 1960, he wrote:

Be it known also to all people of Jamaica and the world that, as the Repairer of the Breach of the Nation, I have received official communications from Britain through the Jamaican Government advising me not to preach anything to my people regarding repatriation back to Africa. For this reason there is no country in Africa, willing to accept any great amount of West Indians to settle down. Also they have no reserve funds to sponsor such a Movement. We as Rastafarians who are not wanted in Jamaica; If there is no place in Africa for us; No jobs or work for us here in Jamaica. What then must we expect in an over populated country were the majority of us Black, and fully starved?

... Whereas the “Lepers Government” which is God’s Righteous Government of EVERLASTING PEACE, “Creation’s Second Birth”. Our only hope for world peace and everlasting freedom is now organising to reconstruct and to build a new and Righteous Jamaica. A Government which will be approved of by Jehovah God, the world’s Creator, A Righteous Government ...⁵⁰⁴

From this and other pamphlets it becomes clear that almost immediately after the fiasco of 5 October Henry had changed his mind. He later told Rex Nettleford that he had abandoned the idea of repatriation and had decided instead to build Africa in Jamaica,

since he had been told by the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs on a visit to Ethiopia in 1958 that black Jamaicans should stay and build the country to which they had contributed so much and which, if abandoned by them, would fall into the hands of the white man.⁵⁰⁵

In November 1959, undaunted by the failure of the deadline date, Henry had begun to train his remaining followers and had introduced black uniforms, caps and armbadges. Later, during his trial, his reasons for doing this were recorded as:

He [Henry] wanted to change his people, he said, that was why he issued those things He thought, he said, that it was a way to get the poor people out of dirt “In my heart of hearts, God knows I did not mean any intention to do any evil or hurt anyone, I just wanted to help my people look good.”⁵⁰⁶

The renewed activities at Rosalie Avenue immediately drew the attention of the authorities, who now kept Henry and his church under close surveillance. In December 1959 the Commissioner of Police wrote to Henry demanding that the drilling exercises be stopped; Henry went to see the Commissioner and subsequently ordered that the training be discontinued.

On 25 February 1960 Henry again left Jamaica for the United States. Five days earlier *Public Opinion* had reported that the Rosalie Avenue headquarters were for sale at a public auction, because “the landlady has fallen in arrears with her mortgage payments.”⁵⁰⁷ Whether Henry’s visits to the United States had anything to do with Edna Fisher’s financial problems is unknown. But whatever the case, the Repairer of the Breach, who had intended to stay in the States for six months, returned within two weeks because, as he later declared, he had “no confidence in his congregation without his leadership.”⁵⁰⁸ As it soon turned out, Henry’s fears were not unfounded. During his absence his congregations had split, and several members of his Church, led by his secretary Calvert “Thunder” Beckford, had retreated to the Red Hills outside Kingston to continue the drilling exercises.

Not long after his return, on Thursday 7 April 1960, Claudius Henry was front-page news again. The day before, the police had raided his African Reform Church and, according to *The Daily Gleaner*, seized “over 2,500 electrical detonators, 1,800 ordinary detonators, a shot gun, a .32 calibre revolver; a large quantity [70 to be more precise] of machetes sharpened both sides like swords ... cartridges, several sticks of dynamite, and other articles.”⁵⁰⁹ A small quantity of ganja was also said to have been found. Henry, Edna Fisher and eight others were arrested. Several wanted members, among them Thunder Beckford, managed to evade the police. One day later, the police also raided a branch of the African Reform Church in Banks, Clarendon, where several more machetes (rather common tools in Jamaica) and some ganja were reportedly seized, and six more persons arrested.⁵¹⁰

This time the authorities decided to play it the hard way. Now that arms had been discovered, Henry and his following were branded as dangerous revolutionaries, apparently intending to stage a coup on the island. Claudius Henry and fifteen others were charged under *The Treason Felony Amendment Act*, a quite unusual decision, if only because the last treason case dated back to the nineteenth century.

In May 1960 the preliminary inquiries began. The accused were defended by Peter Evans, the same lawyer who had previously defended Prince Emmanuel and 63 Rastafarians involved in the skirmish at the Coronation Market. The charges were, in essence, intention and conspiracy to overthrow the Jamaican government.⁵¹¹ On 2 May, the first day of the hearings, a large group of followers of the Repairer of the Breach gathered outside the Half Way Tree courtroom, carrying signs like: “Give us our leader or else be prepared to take 20,000 of us into your lock-up” and “Fire and blood, freedom or death.” When they returned the following day, the police dispersed the Henry supporters, many of whom were wearing black uniforms and allegedly throwing stones, with tear gas and batons.⁵¹²

For several days *The Daily Gleaner* covered the trial on its front page. In a typical “nod” to Jamaican

elite interests, the news of the trial was relegated to the second page on 7 May when the front-page article was on the marriage between “radiant bride” Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones.⁵¹³ But the day before the *Gleaner* had announced in giant print: “Letter to Castro in court.” It was revealed that among the “other articles” seized at the Rosalie Avenue headquarters there had been a letter addressed to Fidel Castro, which read:

Dear Sir, This serves as a medium to inform you, that we the undersigned members of the Back to Africa movement here in Jamaica, is informing you on behalf of our leader Rev. C.V. Henry, R.B., with 20,000 members are now organizing a government known as the “Lepers Govt.” Hence we wish to draw your attention to the conditions which confronts us today as poor, underprivileged people which were brought here from Africa by the British slave traders over 400 years ago to serve as slaves. We now desire to return home in peace, to live under our own vine and fig tree, otherwise a govt. like yours that give justice to the poor. All efforts to have a peaceful repatriation has proven a total failure. The greater nations that occupies Africa is bitterly against our returning home. Hence we must fight a war for what is ours by right. Therefore, we want to assure you Sir, and our government that Jamaica and the rest of the British West Indies will be turned over to you and your Government, after this war which we are preparing to start for Africa’s freedom is completed; and we her scattered children are restored. We are getting ready for an invasion on the Jamaican Govt. therefore we need your help and personal advice. We have the necessary men for the job. Since cannot know sir without our information, the Black people of Jamaica are with you and your Govt. one hundred percent and desire Jamaica gets into your hands before we leave for Africa. Therefore this fight is also your responsibility. Trusting that you will accord our leader Rev. C.V. Henry and his son Mr. Ronald Henry the opportunity of an interview. Assuring you that we will do all in our power to be helpful to you and to make our appointment a success. We would be very grateful if you look into these matters as they are of paramount importance. We hope therefore, sir, this little information about what we think of you and your Cabinet will meet your approval.⁵¹⁴

In a footnote Castro was asked to inform the Soviet leaders about their plans and the letter was signed by Commander Calvert Beckford, Lieutenant L. Stone, Brigadier Edna Fisher and nine others.

The news about the letter to Castro sent shivers through many a Jamaican citizen. Anti-communist paranoia was almost as strong among the Jamaican elite and middle classes as among the followers of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the United States in the early 1950s. Already in 1952 the - officially socialist - People’s National Party had expelled four leading members who were suspected of Marxist leanings. Only the previous year on neighboring Cuba the Castro brothers and their M-26 rebels had marched into Havana. And whereas many Jamaicans had experienced the revolution in Cuba as a most terrifying event, the Rastafarians, as noted before, had viewed it as a positive and justified coup.

The letter to Castro, which to the general public established a firm link between the Rastafarians and the Marxist revolutionaries, was a bombshell. Those who had warned against the danger the movement posed, were able to enjoy the accuracy of their prediction, and those who had dismissed the Rastafarians as a harmless nuisance, now had to admit that they did indeed seem to present a real threat to the island’s internal security. When the hearing was over, Henry and the fifteen other accused were denied bail and their treason felony trial set for October.⁵¹⁵

The desperadoes in the Red Hills

“A strange submarine had landed arms on the North coast”

During the 1950s the Jamaican elite’s concern and annoyance about the Rastafarian movement had increased steadily. The cruel murder of Sidney Garrell in 1951, the break-up of Pinnacle in 1954, the grounation and the various clashes between Rastas and the police in 1958 and the “Henry fiasco” of 1959 all seemed to be part of a chain of incidents, following one upon the other, within ever shorter periods. The discovery of arms and a Cuba-connection was more than most Jamaicans were willing to bear. Incidental violence caused by a handful of “bearded lunatics” was one thing, preparations for an armed coup, a Marxist-backed revolution and a treason felony case were quite something else. But only a month after the preliminary inquiries for the treason trial had ended, something happened that exceeded even the worst possible expectations of the nation’s elite. Before the Rasta problem and its solutions could be thoroughly discussed at Upper St. Andrew cocktail-parties and business lunches, Jamaica was in for another terrifying experience with Rastafari. And this was the very last straw.

Ever since the announcement of the “deadline date” in October 1959, the police had kept a close eye on the activities of the Rastafarians and other groups possibly associated with Claudius Henry. Police

investigators had even traveled to New York City to get information on Henry's United States contacts, especially on a para-military organization known as the First Africa (or Ifrika) Corps commando (FAC), led by Claudius' 26-year-old son Ronald Henry and a certain David "Kenyatta" Ambrister. Ronald Henry had been a member of a group called the First Africa Pioneer Movement in New York City, but was expelled in 1958. Under the banner of the First Africa Corps, he later gathered around him a small number of young black Americans, some of them born in Jamaica. They met regularly in his apartment on Beekman Street in the Bronx. It appears that Ambrister and Ronald Henry propagated the use of violence to achieve a return to Africa. They did not, however, stop at propagation. According to Terry Lacey, the First Africa Corps had purchased modern automatic weapons with the money from several bank robberies in the United States.⁵¹⁶

In September 1959, shortly before his father's abortive repatriation scheme, Ronald Henry had made a short trip to Jamaica, during which he visited the African Reform Church. Father and son were in close contact, as confiscated correspondence later proved. Some time during the first months of 1960, Ronald Henry and his group decided to go to Jamaica to train members of the African Reform Church in the use of guns. Whether that happened with his father's knowledge and consent remains unknown, but is far from unlikely, if only because Claudius had visited the United States in late February and early March. As later became clear, ten members of the First Africa Corps traveled secretly and separately to Jamaica during April and May 1960.

The first to arrive in Kingston, on 5 April, the day before the raid on Claudius Henry's headquarters, was Eldred Morgan, a 22-year-old welder and electrician born in Montego Bay. All the others arrived after the arrest of Claudius Henry and his companions. Morgan was followed by Howard "Quasim" Rollings and on 26 April by George "Doc" Damons, a 29-year-old welder from South Carolina. A man known only as "Bostie" also flew into Kingston, but flew out again immediately. In late April and early May six more members of the First Africa Corps commando arrived. Laurence Rechberg, a twenty-year-old pattern maker, Albert Gabbidon, a 28-year-old Jamaican who had worked as a delivery man, William Jeter, a 23-year-old electrician from New Jersey, Al "Watusi" Thomas, an illiterate 24-year-old mechanic from Mississippi, and finally Ronald Henry and Donald Harper, who used the name Leroy Malachai, a 23-year-old machine operator from North Carolina.⁵¹⁷

While the members of the First Africa Corps commando were arriving in Jamaica one by one, police and army squads were carrying out routine raids on Rasta camps, including one in the Wareika Hills.⁵¹⁸ During the weekend of 18 and 19 June 1960 rumors surfaced about "subversive activities" of Rastafarians in the Red Hills, northeast of Kingston. The paranoia following the treason felony hearings was such that there were even rumors that "a strange submarine had landed arms on the North coast."⁵¹⁹ The Jamaican police was on Red Alert and early on the morning of Tuesday 21 June, a security force raided a camp in the Red Hills.

When the soldiers arrived they found the camp deserted. What they did find, however, were maps of Kingston's military headquarters at Up Park Camp and floor plans of several police stations.⁵²⁰ Four soldiers of the Royal Hampshire Regiment were left behind and the others proceeded further into the area. Shortly after the others had disappeared into the woods, those who had stayed behind were surprised by four or five "desperadoes," three of them bearded, as the *Gleaner* added the following day. As a result of the attack, one soldier was killed outright, another later died in hospital and two were seriously wounded.

When the news broke, Premier Norman Manley immediately ordered a massive manhunt and declared a state of emergency. In an address to the nation, Manley asked the shocked population "to report any unusual movements you may see of Rastafarian people: wherever they are going; in one or twos or in groups, wherever they suddenly appear under suspicious circumstances." Only the editors of *Public Opinion* permitted themselves a critical remark:

Let us not be carried away by any mass hysteria that will call this an uprising or a revolution. ... Fanatical as the Ras Tafarians are, it is to be proved that they have the intention or the resources to attempt something of this nature.⁵²¹

But the government thought otherwise. Hundreds of soldiers and policemen, assisted by helicopters and dogs, were rushed to the Red Hills. The desperadoes, however, had already fled. They had stolen a car and headed for Spanish Town. Near Ferry they dashed through a police road-block, shooting at the security forces. Jamaica held its breath.⁵²²

On Wednesday 22 June the hunted men were identified as a group of Rastafarians and black Americans led by Ronald Henry. A small airplane spotted the rebels in the vicinity of Sligoville, not far from the place where Leonard Howell had once ruled over his Pinnacle commune. But before the over one thousand policemen and soldiers could arrive at the spot, the men had disappeared into the bush again. In the meantime, the police arrested large numbers of Rastafarians and black Americans.⁵²³ A police spokesman stated that it was believed that the men wanted to free Claudius Henry, still in jail awaiting trial.⁵²⁴ Later that same day, the police arrested one of the wanted men, Donald Harper a.k.a. Leroy Malachai, who was in the possession of a gun.

In the following days the *Gleaner* carried photographs of the wanted Americans. The four “desperadoes” remained on the loose.⁵²⁵ Two of them were spotted on Friday and the troops “flushed the bush with gunfire,” but without success.⁵²⁶ The Minister of Home Affairs, William McSeivright, told the press that the Rastafarians were merely being used as “pawns in a bigger game,” but the police continued to arrest every Rasta they could lay their hands on.⁵²⁷

By the following weekend, the desperadoes had still not been found. What the soldiers did discover, however, were the dead bodies of three Rastafarians, buried close to the site of the camp in the Red Hills. The three turned out to have been killed several days before the raid. They were identified as Calvert “Thunder” Beckford, second-in-command in Claudius Henry’s African Reform Church, R. McDonald and Gerald Scott, both members of Claudius Henry’s organization. Thunder, who had led the group of Henry supporters drilling in the hills and had co-signed the letter to Fidel Castro, had been wanted for treason since April.⁵²⁸

The manhunt ended almost a week after the raid on the Red Hills camp. Early on the morning of Monday 27 June Ronald Henry, Al Thomas, William Jeter and Howard Rollings were found asleep in a shop in Orange Grove, near Sligoville. During a brief shoot-out Rollings was wounded. All four were taken into custody and Jamaica could breathe again.⁵²⁹

In the days that followed the police also arrested Eldred Morgan, George Damons and Albert Gabbidon. Laurence Rechberg was caught by the police in Clarendon on 8 July, in possession of a handgun. Ronald Henry and his fellow desperadoes were charged with the murder of the soldiers Brian Mettherell and David Philpot, and the three Rastafarians. The shopkeeper who had tipped off the police about the hiding place of the four men, received a reward of £ 1,200 and Premier Norman Manley told the press that the rebels were “aliens rather than Rastas.”⁵³⁰ Speaking in the House of Representatives, he later added that although the Rastafarian movement was “a potential breeding ground for communists, for violent revolutionaries and was indeed a shelter for criminals, ... there was a section of the movement which stood for peace.”⁵³¹ *The Daily Gleaner* published a letter to the editor from Sam B. Spence “speaking on behalf of the Ethiopian World Federation, Inc.,” in which he firmly denied any alliance with the rebels: “I am to state categorically that this organization ... has not and will not condone acts of violence nor aggression.” Neither Manley’s remarks nor Spence’s letter had much influence. Most Jamaicans considered the whole sequence of events to have been a Rastafarian revolution and in their minds the Rastafarians had become murderous guerrillas. The police continued its island-wide raids and arbitrary arrests of Rastafarians.

But while a large part of the Jamaican public was infuriated and terrified by anybody with a beard or dreadlocks, others were more concerned about the negative impact of the events, which had received considerable attention in the United States and elsewhere, on Jamaica’s reputation abroad.⁵³² The Jamaican Tourist Board, afraid of a decline in the number of visitors, reassured its potential customers in the United States with a little lie and the assurance that

[the] presence in the island of American visitors, either as tourists or businessmen, means nothing to the Rastas. The glamour world of the North Shore, with its gay resort hotels and stimulating vacation atmosphere, makes no impact on their consciousness. And certainly the visitors see nothing of the Rastas.⁵³³

The relations between the Rastafarian movement and the wider Jamaican society were at their lowest point ever.

Chapter 3.

A problem of grave magnitude: Rastafari and Jamaican society, 1960-1969

During the first two decades after the emergence of the Rastafarian movement, Jamaican society had regarded the Rastafarians as a relatively harmless nuisance, except for the occasional incidents in which “those silly persons of the small producer and labouring class” announced a march to Abyssinia, were tried for a seditious speech or were involved in a street fight. Apart from for one or two columnists, who warned against the dangers of the cult, the nation’s elite considered the Rastafarians to be a pitiful bunch of ignorant peasants and largely neglected them. The government confined itself to imprisoning or hospitalizing those leaders who became too voluble in their denunciation and abuse of Crown and government.

The chain of incidents in the 1950s and the radicalization of the movement gradually led to revision of these attitudes. After the murder of Sidney Garrell, the middle and upper classes began to call for harsh measures against the Rastafarians, proposing variously to give them a hot bath and a haircut, to hand out one-way tickets to Africa, to set up prison camps or to tame the “hairy fraternity” with the whip. The Rastafarians became “the worst evil of all,” a social problem which threatened to get out of control. The government reacted with increasing repression and the police intimidated, arrested and frequently molested Rastafarians. The clashes intensified when, during the late 1950s the security forces retaliated with raids on and destruction of Rastafarian homes and communities. Yet there were also the first signs of another strategy. The Custos of St. James and the Governor believed that undermining the basic beliefs of the Rastafarians might be more effective and acted accordingly by asking Haile Selassie to deny his divinity and by enlisting the help of the Moral Rearmament movement. Subversion, however, proved as ineffective as repression. The Rastafarian movement continued to grow and some sections became even more radical.

It was only after the events surrounding father and son Henry that in the perception of the general public the Rastafarians became dangerous revolutionaries, a threat to national security and to political stability on the island, a social and political problem that could no longer be solved with a hot bath, a hair cut and a few lashes. A few progressive intellectuals and politicians realized that the reaction to the Rastafarian movement could no longer be one of repression, but that other, more constructive means had to be employed to deal with the situation. They proposed a strategy of rehabilitation, combined with subversion of the movement’s beliefs, although the latter was, of course, never publicly acknowledged. Rather, it was presented as a form of official recognition. More conservative minds, however, thought that only more repressive action could solve the problem and so the 1960s were to witness a mixture of old and new strategies.

The report of the University College of the West Indies

“It would be rather interesting to read a report drafted by Doctors Royes, Cooke and Williams of Bellevue Hospital.”

Following the incidents with father and son Henry, several Rastafarian elders had become more than a little concerned about the extremely negative attitudes and harsh reactions towards the movement. Professor Arthur Lewis, Principal of the University College of the West Indies (UCWI), and the social scientist Dr. Rex Nettleford, attached to the same University, received several requests from these brethren to publish the truth about the movement and its beliefs. Early in July 1960, only a few days after the “guerrillas” in the Red Hills had been caught, a meeting between these scholars and the elders was arranged in the Jones Town area. It was decided that, with the assistance of the Rastafarians, three UCWI researchers would write a report about the nature and aspirations of the movement. Within two weeks the social scientist Michael G. Smith, the historian Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford had finished the report, which was presented to the Premier and published, in twelve parts, in *The Daily Gleaner*.⁵³⁴

Report on the Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica became a milestone in both the history of and the literature on the Rastafarian movement. It was the first time that the movement had received serious scholarly attention in Jamaica and also the first time that its history, organization, beliefs and demands

had been comprehensively recorded. Earlier research on the movement had been carried out by the American social scientist George E. Simpson, who had published the first articles on the Rastafarians.⁵³⁵ These, however, were written from an academic interest and had been published in scholarly journals.⁵³⁶

One of the strengths of the *Report* was that it not only described the true nature of the Rastafarian movement and its beliefs without bias, but that it also clearly demonstrated that the movement was anything but homogeneous. The authors emphasized that there were numerous doctrinal differences and that there were considerable numbers of fakes, impostors and criminals hiding behind a Rasta-mask.

The general public believes in a stereotype Ras Tafari, who wears a beard, avoids work, steals, smokes ganja, and is liable to sudden violence. This type exists, but it is a minority. The real danger is that if all Ras Tafarians are treated as if they are like this, more and more will become extremists.⁵³⁷

The distinction between true, peace-loving Rastafarians and fake, criminal Rasta-look-alikes was, however, a mixed blessing for the movement. On the one hand, it suggested that most Rastas were not at all violent or criminal, but on the other hand it proved to those who wanted to believe so that there were indeed violent and criminal Rastafarians.

Apart from providing a description of the history, organization and beliefs of the Rastafarian movement, the university team also recorded the aspirations and demands of the Rastafarians, which they summarized as follows:

1. The Ras Tafari brethren all want repatriation.
2. All the brethren want local recognition and freedom of movement and speech, which are essential human rights.
3. All want an end of "persecution" by Government and police.
4. Some brethren want improved material, social and economic conditions until repatriation.
5. Some brethren want educational provisions, including adult education and technical training. Many brethren are skilled men seeking employment.
6. Some brethren have suggested that a special fund be set up, to be known as the Ras Tafari Rehabilitation Fund.
7. Others have asked for a radio programme to tell Jamaica about their doctrine; some for Press facilities.⁵³⁸

On the basis of these seven points, Smith, Augier and Nettleford made ten recommendations to the government:

1. The Government of Jamaica should send a mission to African countries to arrange for immigration of Jamaicans. Representatives of Ras Tafari brethren should be included in the mission.
2. Preparations for the mission should be discussed immediately with representatives of the Ras Tafari brethren.
3. The general public should recognise that the great majority of Ras Tafari brethren are peaceful citizens, willing to do an honest day's work.
4. The police should complete their security enquiries rapidly, and cease to persecute peaceful Ras Tafari brethren.
5. The building of low-rent houses should be accelerated, and provision made for self-help cooperative buildings.
6. Government should acquire the principal areas where squatting is now taking place, and arrange for water, light, sewerage disposal and collection of rubbish.
7. Civic centres should be built with facilities for technical classes, youth clubs, child clinics, etc. The churches and the U.C.W.I. [University College of the West Indies] should collaborate.
8. The Ethiopian Orthodox Coptic Church should be invited to establish a branch in West Kingston.
9. Ras Tafari brethren should be assisted to establish cooperative workshops.
10. Press and radio facilities should be accorded to leading members of the movement.⁵³⁹

The *Report*, as Rex Nettleford writes, was written from the firm "belief by the study team in the adherents' capacities to be rehabilitated into the wider society."⁵⁴⁰ The majority of the recommendations thus aimed at improving the socio-economic situation of the Rastafarians and, in fact, the black lower classes as a whole. The movement, according to the scholars, was

rooted in unemployment. If the supply of jobs in Kingston were to catch up with the demand for jobs, a hard core of religious belief would remain, but the movement would cease to have mass significance.⁵⁴¹

Whether that conclusion was correct is doubtful. The late 1960s and 1970s were to witness a growing appeal of the Rastafarian movement among the young from the middle and upper classes, which could

hardly be explained by unemployment.

But to avoid “incurring the wrath of the movement,” the university team probably had no other choice than to take the desire for repatriation seriously and to recommend a mission to Africa. But even that recommendation conformed to the idea that all efforts should be directed towards the rehabilitation of the Rastafarians, even though it could not be openly presented as such. In any case, the quintessence of the recommendations was that, as Nettleford later said, “the society [should] adjust to the Rastafarians, as the Rastafarians had to adjust to the society ... a mutual give and take until you reach that middle ground which is tolerable and acceptable to all.”⁵⁴²

The UCWI *Report* was presented to the Prime Minister, or Premier as he was then called, in late July 1960. In the accompanying letter Principal Arthur Lewis wrote that the movement was “in a state of great unrest” and that “its problems require priority treatment.” After studying the *Report*, the government decided that it was willing to give the Rastafarian quest for repatriation to Africa the same official support and facilities as applications for migration to England, the United States and other traditional destinations. By referring to migration, Manley carefully avoided acknowledging any claims to moral rights to repatriation. But the acceptance of the first two recommendations completely overshadowed the other points.

The decision to follow the recommendation of the university team to send a mission to Africa to investigate the possibilities of migration to Africa, was announced by Premier Norman Manley in a news release on radio and in the *Gleaner* on 2 August 1960. He stated two conditions, however. First, that the Rastafarians should select a representative delegation for the mission and, second, that the delegates should return to Jamaica to inform their brethren about their findings. Apparently, the government took into account the possibility that the Rastas would take the opportunity to stay in Africa. The Premier called on the Rastafarian movement to send a delegation to an exploratory meeting scheduled for 17 August at his office. Aware of the possibility that this decision would probably boost expectations of an immediate return to Africa once again, Manley warned that this was only an exploratory meeting and that it would take considerable time to work out the details and make all the necessary arrangements.⁵⁴³

The university's *Report* and the government's willingness to accept its recommendation of a mission to Africa had a tremendous impact, on both the Rastafarians and the wider society.⁵⁴⁴ The Rastas were generally satisfied with the *Report*, the first official recognition for their movement. The fact that the government had decided to send a mission to Africa was seen as an unprecedented victory. For the first time in their history the demands of the Rastafarians had been given serious attention. On 28 August Samuel Brown, speaking to hundreds of Rastafarians, noted that although the Rastas traditionally had little or no confidence in politicians, he wanted to express his gratitude to both Norman Manley and - in an effort to be non-partisan - Alexander Bustamante, the Opposition Leader of the Jamaica Labour Party.⁵⁴⁵ At long last the Rastas' desire for repatriation had been taken seriously and although it did not drastically change their opinion of Babylon, it may have helped to temporarily restore at least some confidence in “the shit-stem.” Nevertheless, there were some Rastafarians who strongly opposed the recommendations regarding the rehabilitation or integration of the movement into mainstream society. “We readily, violently, internally denounce the word ‘rehabilitation’,” was the reaction of Ras Shadrack, the leader of a militant Rastafarian organization from West Kingston.⁵⁴⁶ As the authors of the *Report* had already concluded:

All the brethren want to be repatriated to Ethiopia. There is no agreement, however, on what should happen in the meantime. The majority recognize that they have to live, and would welcome efforts to provide employment, housing, water and other amenities. There is, however, a very vocal minority which regards any effort to help Ras Tafari brethren in these ways as a plot to keep them in Jamaica.⁵⁴⁷

It also appeared that the *Report* and the newly gained recognition had given some Rastafarians a bit too much confidence, although this may perhaps also have been related to recent developments in Africa, where one colony after another was achieving independence. In January 1960 Cameroon had been the eleventh African country to gain independence. In April and June Congo Kinshasa (Zaire) and three other French possessions had followed: Togo, the Federation of Mali and Madagascar. And in August “the Year of Africa” culminated in the independence of Dahomey, Niger, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville and Gabon. Elsewhere on the continent black people were demanding equal rights and freedom from white oppression. Rhodesia was the scene of continuous black protest, riots and demonstrations, while in South Africa protest against Apartheid had in March culminated in the Sharpsville massacre in which 72 people were killed and another 180 wounded. The age-old dream of numerous black people not only in Africa, but certainly also in the New World, seemed

to be coming true: a free, independent Africa for the Africans, though at the cost of many lives. For the Rastafarians the liberation of Africa and the rapidly declining might of the European colonial powers were the fulfillment of prophecy. The prospects for repatriation seemed to be better than ever before.

In any case, on 26 August a policeman patrolling along Spanish Town Road, arrested a Rastafarian woman for using indecent language. However, a group of Rastafarians managed to set her free. The policeman went for assistance, and when he and a colleague returned to the scene, they encountered a Rastafarian who asked them: "Why you arrest I wife?" When the policemen tried to arrest him, they again faced a group of Rastafarians who forced the officers to release the wanted man.⁵⁴⁸ The incident led Norman Manley to make a statement in which he warned the Rastafarians that the *Report* and the preparations for the mission were not "a license ... to behave as they pleased," adding the threat that this kind of behavior could result in the cancellation of the mission.

I repeat my request to the leaders of the Ras Tafari movement to make it quite plain to their followers that they are putting their own hopes in jeopardy and danger and that this is a time to maintain good conduct and not a time to indulge in wrong ideas about attempting to do as you please in this country or to disregard law and order and the observance of ordinary good manners.⁵⁴⁹

A considerable part of the Jamaican establishment, on the other hand, was outraged by the sympathetic tone of the *Report* and even more so by the government's decision to send a mission to Africa. Some even questioned the academic proficiency of the *Report* and its authors. Many still considered the Rastafarians as suffering from a weird and above all dangerous mental illness, lunatics best transferred to Bellevue Hospital. One opponent noted that "Rastafarians as a whole were fanatics ... 75% are lazy, middle-aged men, expect to get everything free and [who] even disregard the laws of cleanliness." After remarking that "some are habitual criminals," he concluded:

It would be rather interesting to read a report drafted by Doctors Royes, Cooke and Williams of Bellevue Hospital, if they had gone on the mission Doctors Augier, Smith and Lewis went. I guess their recommendation would be something of the sort "send these fanatics to Bellevue instead of Africa."⁵⁵⁰

A "fair native" wrote that "only a fool as they could believe that they are wanted elsewhere," and agreed that the Rastafarians suffered from an aberration which would make rehabilitation "impossible, my dear sir. Nature is incurable. Enforce our laws: get them off the streets lest by their filthy appearance and foul words they drive visitors away and make life unsafe for people who are unlike them."⁵⁵¹ Yet another concerned Jamaican proposed a combination of a legal and Christian solution:

We need today a law to prohibit idol-worshipping in this island. We need missionaries, voluntarily, from all our churches and from every Christian home to teach these Rastas all the truths of the Bible, to lead them to Christ, and for good citizenship.⁵⁵²

Although, as a *Gleaner* editorial expressed it, most Jamaicans would be glad to see every last Rastafarian leave the island, the idea of sending a mission of Rastas to Africa was generally considered as a "wicked waste of taxpayers' money." Many middle and upper-class Jamaicans agreed and felt that "the problem will not be solved that way." As one of the newspaper's readers wrote: "The Rastas are Jamaicans and they shall always be here. They should be told so in plain words, and all efforts should be made to turn them into normal human beings with normal thinking."⁵⁵³ This commentator also felt that the government should "make a direct attack on the unemployment question." Some adversaries added that apart from "a wicked waste of taxpayers' money," it was anything but decent to present the already troubled African nations with Jamaica's "dirty, lazy" problem. As one citizen from Kingston expressed it, it would be "a wee bit impertinent on Jamaica's part to unload our problem 'citizens' on other countries." Instead, he proposed to give the Rastafarians the same rights as the Maroons 300 years before.

send a couple of our Government-paid land surveyors to survey a section of land, similar to the Accompong, and then transfer the Rastafarians to this area. It would most certainly cost the taxpayers a whole lot less. Furthermore, Jamaica would not be aiding to create an embarrassing situation in an already most troubled land - Africa.⁵⁵⁴

Some regarded it as unfair not only to the African countries, who would be landed with the Rastas, but to the Rastafarians as well, by raising unrealistic expectations. Others believed that "sending a delegation to Africa to ask a question to which we already know the answer" and having a Rastafarian mission return empty-handed, would only lead to more problems.⁵⁵⁵

Coincidentally, these commentators found an ally in a Ghanaian diplomat, Mr. Cann. On 11 August 1960 he delivered a speech at the St. Andrew Parish Library, which was attended by a large group of Rastafarians, as always anxious to get first-hand information about Africa. Much to their disappointment, Cann told his audience that there were serious problems in Africa as well, that it would be unfortunate to increase these problems with a massive influx of unskilled laborers and that if all black people left Jamaica, the island would fall into the hands of the white man. In the expectation that the Rastafarians would be more inclined to listen to an African, the Jamaican press gave extensive coverage to the Ghanaian diplomat's speech. But the Rastafarians bluntly dismissed his opinion as that of a collaborator of the colonial elite. During his lecture, the diplomat was interrupted by shouts of disapproval: "Not so brother!" and "Imperialist stooge."⁵⁵⁶ Ras Boanerges, a leading Rastafarian present during Cann's speech, later insisted in a radio broadcast:

I have heard his wordical operation that he give unto the people and it wasn't acceptable unto I ... for he speak of an immigrant, and we does not deal upon immigrants, we deal upon repatriation. We deal upon the ransom of Israel by moral laws of Almighty God. If he were of my place in Africa, he would speak as an African. But he speak as a traitor of Israel.⁵⁵⁷

As far as the government was concerned, the purpose of the mission was to examine the possibilities for *migration*. But Manley did not intend that this should be the first step in a large-scale emigration program to Africa. With general elections coming up in 1962, some Jamaicans suspected that electoral motives had played a role in the decision to agree to a mission. It was, however, a very controversial decision and any political advantage to be gained from it was probably negligible. No doubt the most essential consideration was the assumption, or at least the hope, that the Rastafarian leaders in the delegation would get a more realistic idea about Africa, which it was hoped would lessen their appetite for repatriation and shift their attention and loyalty back to Jamaica. As Roy Augier recalled many years later:

What we expected probably did result, namely that the eyes of the more prominent among them would be opened to the real conditions of life in Ethiopia. ... Although this did not remove repatriation as a slogan, it certainly ... had the result of diffusing it into an indefinite future. ... The less well-informed among them really thought of Africa as the land of milk and honey. And I think the trip did give them a better understanding of it.⁵⁵⁸

At least one columnist of *The Daily Gleaner* realized that this was the main objective from the government's perspective.

I disagree that it would be a waste of money (as some commentators have written) to send a Ras Tafari delegation to various African States. Africa, at present, is for the Cult a kind of fantasy Promised Land. The sooner all this pie-in-the-sky is brought to earth the better.⁵⁵⁹

A few of the many letters to the editor writers on this controversial subject agreed with the idea of a mission, either out of sympathy for the Rastafarians or from other motives. "I personally can not see what harm can be done except to the Government who is unfortunate enough to get the good-for-nothings who are among the Rastafarians," wrote one them.⁵⁶⁰ A "Jamaican of African descent who does not want to go to Africa," also understood why Norman Manley wanted to go ahead with the mission, in spite of all the criticism.

Let us not fool ourselves, these Rastafarians are now becoming a serious danger to Jamaica. Our Premier has done the right thing in agreeing to send a delegation to Africa It is a known fact that no African Government will receive lazy, dirty men, who keep unkempt beards, refuse to work and by peddling ganja and molesting decent citizens cause fear in the country. If those who go to Africa will return and tell others the true picture, and they on the whole decide to change their ways, then taxpayers' money will be well spent.⁵⁶¹

However, the writer did not really expect that the Rastafarians would change their ways, in which case "Premier Manley will have to use brute force to quell them."

But while the *Gleaner* printed scores of letters on the pros and cons of the mission, the Rastafarians had another problem to solve: who to send for talks with the government and who to send on the mission.⁵⁶² The Rastas expected to be in Africa shortly and did not bother too much about negotiations with the government or other necessary preparations. It soon turned out that reaching agreement on the representatives alone was a major problem for the unorganized and divided movement.

With the first meeting with the Premier scheduled for 17 August 1960, the Rastafarians of West Kingston called an assembly for Sunday 7 August, in order "to select a committee of about 20, from whom a deputation of about four will be chosen to meet with the government."⁵⁶³ Thousands of Rastas gathered

at the corner of Spanish Town Road and Chestnut Lane in Back-O-Wall, singing “Jamaica no, Africa yes.” But apparently things did not work out as planned. A few days later the Rastafarians announced that they had formed a delegation of no fewer than nine, including their spokesman Samuel Brown, and another leading Rastafarian, Mortimo Planno. A committee of eleven others was to advise and assist the deputation.⁵⁶⁴

In the meantime, there had been a change in the time set for the meeting, from eight o’clock in the evening to ten in the morning. It was announced on radio and in the newspapers, but somehow the Rastafarians failed to notice this and when the time came for the meeting, the representatives did not show up. The Premier and his advisors, including Michael Smith and Roy Augier, were, however, unexpectedly called upon by ten other Rastafarians representing other groups and factions. Among them were several representatives of the Church Triumphant of Jah Rastafari, a militant Nyabingi group from the Foreshore area, and the organizer of the 1958 grounation, Prince Emmanuel, on behalf of the Ethiopian National Congress. All claimed the right of a place in the delegation. As Roy Augier recalled:

Among other things, we had explained to the Prime Minster that there were no leaders, that the [movement] tended to be fissiparous and that it divided like cells anytime there was a discussion. But he wanted something that he could call representative. He started with the number being small, but at the meeting at the Cabinet Office more [Rastafarians] made the claim and in the end he had to concede a larger number than he intended originally.⁵⁶⁵

When the delegation led by Sam Brown and Mortimo Planno arrived at the Premier’s office around eight o’clock in the evening, they were told that the meeting had been rescheduled and that Manley was at the House of Representatives.⁵⁶⁶

In yet another news release the Premier informed the Rastafarians that he would try to arrange a new meeting as soon as possible. Eventually, the meeting with Sam Brown and Mortimo Planno’s group took place on Saturday 21 August. During the meeting, which lasted some two-and-a-half hours, the Rastafarians informed Manley that the repatriation program should be financed with the £ 20 million provided by the British Crown for the passages of emancipated slaves in 1834. All efforts to explain that the Crown had allocated the compensation money to the slave masters rather than the slaves fell on deaf ears. The Rastas wanted swift action and demanded to know when the mission to Africa was to leave, so they could make their arrangements.⁵⁶⁷

The discovery that Premier Norman Manley had met with other representatives of Rastafarian groups was not a pleasant one for the Brown/Planno group. Having managed to agree on a nine-man delegation and eleven advisors, the dreadlocked Rastafarians from West Kingston claimed to represent the whole movement. They considered the mission to Africa to be theirs exclusively. In a news release, revealing the sharp divisions in the movement, they declared:

We will tolerate no amalgamation, no untrustworthy people travelling in this delegation, and we will operate of the mandate of the people. The people will not accept any discredited leaders imposed on them by Government. So, for a speedy and a just decision of this most delicate problem, it is for the Premier to make an announcement of the date expected for departure that we can make the necessary preparations of travel.⁵⁶⁸

There was, however, yet another unpleasant surprise for the dreadlocked representatives of West Kingston in that the government did not mean the mission to be a Rastafarian affair only and intended to include other interested parties and non-Rasta back-to-Africa organizations as well. Furthermore, while the government proposed to visit four African countries, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, the Rastas wanted to include four other countries as well. They expected to make a quick visit to Africa and then start a large-scale repatriation program immediately. Aware of this, Norman Manley once more stressed that government was only financing a mission and not providing “money for ships and repatriation as rumour has it.”⁵⁶⁹

The trials of Claudius and Ronald Henry

“A wicked doctrine which had been allowed to take a hold on the poor, illiterate people.”

While the Rastafarians were busy preparing for the mission to Africa, the persons who had caused the turmoil which had led to the *Report* and subsequently to the preparations for the mission, were due

to appear before Judge Sir Colin McGregor in the Home Circuit court. On 16 September 1960 Ronald Henry, Eldred Morgan, George Damons, Howard Rollings, William Jeter, Al Thomas and Albert Gabbidon were accused of the murder of the Rastafarians Calvert “Thunder” Beckford, Gerald Scott and R. McDonald on 15 June in the Red Hills. Henry, Rollings, Jeter, Thomas and Donald Harper (alias Leroy Malachai) were also charged with the murder of the British soldiers Brian Mettherell and David Philpot. Harper and Laurence Rechberg were charged with illegal possession of firearms as well. Finally, all were charged under *The Treason Felony Act*. They pleaded not guilty.⁵⁷⁰

When the trial got under way the following week, it began with the murder of Gerald Scott. The primary witness for the prosecution was a certain Irving, one of the two Rastafarians who had also been in the camp at the time of the executions. It soon turned out that after the raid on Claudius Henry’s church in early April 1960, Beckford and several others had fled to the Red Hills, where one of them had a hut. They built a few more and later the American members of Ronald Henry’s First African Corps commando had joined them one by one, apparently with the intention of training the Rastafarians in the use of guns. The “commander” himself was the last to arrive. Shortly after his arrival in the camp, Gabbidon told him about Thunder’s plans to poison Kingston’s main water supply, the Mona Reservoir, and to kill both the Americans and several Jamaican members of the group in the Red Hills camp. Henry then accused Beckford, Scott, McDonald, Irving and a fifth Rastafarian of “plotting against the black race” and ordered them to lie down on the ground to be executed. It was Albert Gabbidon who actually pulled the trigger and killed the first three with a gun shot in the ear. The other two, for one reason or another, escaped execution.⁵⁷¹

On 30 September Ronald Henry, Albert Gabbidon, Eldred Morgan and William Jeter were sentenced to death for the murder of Gerald Scott. The jury had recommended mercy for Morgan and Jeter, who felt remorse for what had happened and insisted they had been “taken for a ride” by Ronald Henry. They appealed, but the Federal Court upheld the verdict. Damons, Thomas and Rollings were found not guilty of the murder of Scott, but were later charged with “being accessories after the fact in the killing of Calvert Beckford.” Damons and Thomas were found guilty, sentenced to ten years and deported to the United States. Rollings, however, was also accused of the murder of George Lue, the son of a grocer in Kingston, shot and killed during a robbery shortly before the execution of the three Rastafarians. He was convicted and sentenced to death. Harper and Rechberg, who had already been in custody for over four months, received six weeks for the illegal possession of firearms and were later also deported to the United States.⁵⁷²

Ronald Henry and Albert Gabbidon were executed by hanging in the St. Catherine District Prison on 28 March 1961. According to the priest who accompanied Henry on his last walk, he “maintained that his chief aim in returning to Jamaica was to gather an army to liberate Africa.” William Jeter and Eldred Morgan did not receive clemency as recommended by the jury and one day later suffered the same fate as Henry and Gabbidon.⁵⁷³

The case against Ronald Henry and his fellow “desperadoes” had scarcely been concluded, when, on 5 October 1960, exactly one year after “deadline day,” Claudius Henry and fifteen of his followers appeared before the Supreme Court. They were charged with “intent to excite insurrection against the Government of this island in order to intimidate and overawe the Governor, Legislative Council and House of Representatives.”⁵⁷⁴ The accused pleaded not guilty.

In the course of the following days several witnesses told of Henry’s activities. One stated that the Repairer of the Breach had promised that “blood shall run in this country,” and another told about eight self-made, but non-functioning bombs found at Henry’s headquarters.⁵⁷⁵ Peter Evans, Henry’s lawyer, stressed the fact that the leader of the African Reform Church had preached peace, love and righteousness. Besides, Henry had been off the island since 25 February 1960 and only returned on 5 March, shortly before the raid on his headquarters, and thus had no part in the “insurrection” whatsoever.

During Henry’s absence, Calvert “Thunder” Beckford, one of the Rastafarians found dead in the Red Hills, had assumed control at Rosalie Avenue. Thunder had given the order to make the bombs, swords and other weapons found during the raid and had also resumed the drilling exercises at Henry’s premises. Beckford had apparently behaved like an autocrat. Several witnesses indicated that he had punished followers with beatings and “imprisonment.” The letter to Fidel Castro was also said to have been Thunder’s idea. The others who had signed it, claimed to have been told that it was “a letter of congratulations to Henry.” When Claudius Henry returned from his visit to the United States, a split had occurred in his group. He found Calvert Beckford and several others drilling in the hills and claimed to know nothing

about bombs or dynamite.⁵⁷⁶ It thus appeared that either Henry was trying to blame Thunder or he had indeed lost control over part of his following.

After all the witnesses had been heard, Peter Evans rhetorically asked “whether there was any threat to the stability of the Government of this island from this collection of carpenters, fishermen and a preacher.”⁵⁷⁷ Justice Duffus and the jury apparently thought there was indeed a threat and all fifteen accused were found guilty. Henry was sentenced to ten years and his followers to terms of imprisonment ranging from three to five years. In handing down the verdict, Duffus described the Rastafarian faith as “a wicked doctrine which [has] been allowed to take a hold on the poor, illiterate people of this country. For too many years people have looked upon it as a crackpot movement among a few people.”⁵⁷⁸ The Judge added that he had found that among the Rastafarians “kindness is mistaken for weakness.” Therefore, he had given all the accused prison terms. “It is a wicked, wicked doctrine and the people that prey on the unfortunate, illiterate persons like a number of you persons here, persons with poor education, I can have no sympathy for them whatsoever.”⁵⁷⁹

While the Rastafarians and the government continued to argue about who to include on the mission and where to go, and while the courts were reviewing the evidence against father and son Henry, there were several confrontations between Rastafarians and the police. In September 1960 thirteen Rastafarians from Clarendon, charged and sentenced for obstructing the police, “became boisterous” in court. A Rasta from West Kingston, arrested for assaulting a police officer, gave his name as I God Rastafari and was sentenced for contempt of court.⁵⁸⁰ A police raid on a Rasta camp in Trench Town resulted in the arrest of four Rastafarians for the possession of bullets and chilium pipes.⁵⁸¹

The recommendation of the university team that “the police should cease to persecute peaceful Ras Tafari brethren,” seemed to have made hardly any impression. In October Kingston’s police shot and killed a 37-year-old Rastafarian, named George Henderson. The policemen claimed that the Rasta had approached them with a knife.⁵⁸² An inquest into Henderson’s death concluded that the police had acted in self-defence. According to one of the officers involved, Henderson and two other men were in a field when they came by and went to check them out. The three men immediately ran away, but Henderson turned around and pulled a knife. One of the policemen told him to drop the knife, but he continued to approach the officers, who then shot him. However, another witness told a completely different story. Henderson had been shot while climbing a fence in an effort to escape and the policemen later went to a nearby store to buy a knife. The medical expert gave evidence that Henderson “had not been shot directly from behind ... but from behind and a little to the left.”⁵⁸³

In spite of such incidents, there were still Rastas who were prepared to help policemen. A few days after the death of Henderson, a Rastafarian rescued a police officer who had got stuck with his car in a river and was about to drown. The terrified policeman left without a word, but the Rastafarian said: “Rasta is God and the man I saved is a black man.”⁵⁸⁴

Some Magistrates, however, had taken seriously the charge that Rastafarians were arbitrarily harassed by the police. In November 1960 the court made a quite unusual decision in favor of a Rastafarian from Spanish Town, who had been molested and subjected to an involuntary haircut by the security forces. Judge Edward Zacca awarded the victim £ 20 compensation for the beating and another £ 40 for the loss of his locks.⁵⁸⁵

Now that the decision to send a mission to Africa was the most hotly debated issue on the island, *The Daily Gleaner* reported every incident involving Rastafarians. It sometimes seemed as if the reports not only served to inform the public, but were most of all meant to suggest mental instability among the adherents of the movement. Considerable attention, for instance, was devoted to a police search for a Rastafarian from Hunts Bay, who was believed to have attempted to burn his girlfriend as a ritual sacrifice. She was rescued by neighbors, but had sustained serious injuries.⁵⁸⁶ The *Gleaner* also related the case against a Rastafarian sentenced to three years in prison for arson in a boiler house located next to his home, an act presumably motivated by the noise of the machinery. He pleaded guilty “in the name of the Lord.”⁵⁸⁷ The case against a Rasta in May Pen, who received a sentence of five years imprisonment for sacrilege, also received ample attention. He had broken into the St. Xavier Anglican Church in Milk River, had ransacked the place and burned church records, prayer books and Bibles.⁵⁸⁸ The public was constantly reminded of the doubtful nature of those who were about to be sent on a mission to Africa financed by taxpayers’ money.

The nominations for the mission to Africa

“Stop such follies at once, or receive dreadful judgement of swift destruction.”

In November 1960 Premier Norman Manley once again invited representatives of the Rastafarian movement and non-Rastafarian organizations for discussions about the mission to Africa. Probably aware of the attitudes of the Rastafarians towards the candidates from non-Rastafarian groups, Manley invited them on separate occasions. Among the delegates from the Rastafarian movement were the representatives of the Rastas of West Kingston, the Rases of East and Central Kingston, the Church Triumphant of Rastafari, the United Rases Organ and the Ethiopian National Congress. It was decided that there would be ten delegates, including two advisors, on the mission. Manley proposed that the five Rastafarian groups each select one candidate, four of whom he would appoint to be included in the mission. Four others would be selected from the non-Rastafarian organizations. Prince Emmanuel of the Ethiopian National Congress, however, pulled out because the Premier was treating the issue as a migration mission. “We are seeking repatriation, not job-seeker level migration,” he told the press. “We want to go home and no man needs to ask his father if he will receive him. Therefore a mission is not a necessity,” Prince added.⁵⁸⁹

The Rastafarians from West Kingston, represented by Samuel Brown, Mortimo Planno and seven others, were not satisfied either. They strongly opposed the inclusion of non-Rastafarian representatives, “discredited people who command no public following whatsoever.” On behalf of the 85,000 people they claimed to represent, the Rastas demanded another meeting with Norman Manley as well as the right to have all their nine representatives included in the mission.⁵⁹⁰ In a reaction to their protest, Zephania Munroe Scarlett, President of the (non-Rasta) Afro-West Indian Welfare League and the self-declared “spiritual leader of the back-to-Africa movement,” urged both Prince Emmanuel and Samuel Brown “to be wise and disciplined.” Scarlett was annoyed by the behavior of the Rastafarians, whom he told: “Do not forget that innate decency and strict discipline are principal requirements of those who would aspire to leadership in any worthy cause.”⁵⁹¹ Because the group of Samuel Brown and Mortimo Planno did not react to Manley’s request to appoint one delegate for the West Kingston group, the nomination of the delegates was postponed for several weeks. The Ethiopian World Federation, one of the non-Rasta organizations, could not agree on the choice of its representative either.⁵⁹²

In the meantime, the cabinet discussed and approved the plans for the mission, while the opposition Jamaica Labour Party remained surprisingly silent.⁵⁹³ The plan continued to draw criticism from the Jamaican public, however. A concerned Jamaican, writing to *The Daily Gleaner*, proposed to start a series of articles or broadcasts about “living in Africa,” similar to information provided for migrants to England. “I feel sure a true picture may very well scotch the idealistic yearnings of some troublemakers in our midst.”⁵⁹⁴ Another Jamaican suggested that the churches devote their attention to converting Rastafarians, an opinion expressed in a poem:

The doctrine that the Rastas teach
Would seem to have a wider reach
Than rival views,
To half-filled pews,
That flow from preachers when they preach.
Why not a “Church-Rasta” debate,
To prove which one is running late?
The fight is on
It must be won!
It’s on the Church a people wait:
Rise up ye men and make her great.⁵⁹⁵

Norman Manley also expressed his concerns about the Rastafarian movement. In his address to the 22nd annual meeting of the People’s National Party in November 1960, he listed “the explosiveness of this back-to-Africa movement which threatens the good name of this country” among the four major problems facing Jamaica. The three other problems were identified as the socio-economic situation, the question of the Federation of the West Indies and the sudden emergence of “movements that preach race hatred and bitterness in this country.”

When you hear about young men, intelligent young men, joining the Rastafarian movement, repudiating Jamaica and looking to some other country to receive them, other countries with their own problems of development, then

you realise that you are dealing with a problem that could become a problem of grave magnitude.⁵⁹⁶

Gleaner columnist Clinton Parchment, however, thought that Manley and his government were themselves responsible for stimulating the behavior and ideas of members of the Rastafarian movement:

... so long as they are encouraged in their attitudes, Rastafarians will remain what they are, mental juvenile delinquents with no will to do, hiding a fundamental inferiority complex behind anti-social habits and full of the flatulence of silly dreams. As such they are valueless alike to themselves, to their race and to Jamaica.⁵⁹⁷

Manley's determination to go on with the mission spawned a lot of anger, especially among the Jamaican middle and upper classes. One British citizen living in Jamaica proposed to start a back-to-Britain movement:

So much prominence has been given to the impertinent demands of the unshaven, the unwashed, the undesirable and the unproductive that they be transported, at other people's expense, to an imaginary Utopia ... that the real and pressing needs of a sorely tired section of the community are being completely ignored. I refer, of course, to those hardworking, overtaxed, long-suffering people, the backbone of Jamaica, and the fountain of its wealth yes, the Europeans. ... It is therefore, I think, time to organise a back-to-Britain Movement.⁵⁹⁸

While the Rastafarians continued to quarrel over their nominations for the mission and the Jamaican elite continued to criticize Manley, a coup occurred in the Promised Land. During Emperor Haile Selassie's visit to Brazil in December 1960, several high-ranking soldiers and government officials forced what became known as the Bodyguard Coup. They appointed Haile Selassie's son, Crown Prince Asfa Wossen, as the new monarch. It was several nerve-racking days before the newspapers could announce that the coup had been crushed and that Haile Selassie was in control again.⁵⁹⁹

Shortly before the end of the year, on 22 December 1960, and in spite of the bitter condemnations, Norman Manley announced the names of the delegates on the mission to Africa, which was to visit five independent African countries to explore "their migration policies and the possible movement of persons from this island to settle in those countries."⁶⁰⁰ It was once again stressed that the mission was an unofficial one, merely sponsored by the government. Samuel Brown and Mortimo Planno, for the Rastafarians of West Kingston, and George Williams, a 24-year-old artist and painter, for the United Rases Organ, were appointed as the Rastafarian delegates.⁶⁰¹ Another place had been offered to the Rases of East and Central Kingston, but they had refused, arguing that since their group was made up of several factions, they could only accept if they were allowed to have two delegates on the mission.⁶⁰²

The other, non-Rastafarian delegates included Cecil G. Gordon of the Ethiopian World Federation, Z. Munroe Scarlett of the Afro-West Indian Welfare League, Westmore Blackwood of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and Dr. M.B. Douglas of the Afro-Caribbean League. Journalist Victor Reid and medical practitioner and leader of the mission Dr. L.C. Leslie were to act as advisors. The selection of these delegates had been difficult as well. A committee representing three groups had broken up almost immediately. Severe criticism and all kinds of accusations were aired publicly among both delegation members and prospective delegates, all of whom contested the others' right to be on the mission.

Protest against the process for selection of Rastafarian candidates was widespread as well. Brother Justice from the Foreshore area, for instance, informed Norman Manley of his "protest against the action of some of the Brethren in the nine-man delegation" and demanded the right "to choose who is to go."⁶⁰³ Ras Shadrack (Frank Dixon), also from the Foreshore area and initially a member of the nine-men delegation, declared that there were "wolves among the sheep" and warned "those people in this country who try to show themselves as leaders of Rastafari Brethren to stop such follies at once, or receive dreadful judgement of swift destruction."⁶⁰⁴

By March 1961, however, the whole situation had changed again. On 23 December 1960, one day after his nomination to the mission, George Williams had been arrested on a ganja charge. He was granted bail and attended another meeting with Manley, but in February Williams was sentenced to two terms of four months in prison, and thereby lost his place in the delegation.⁶⁰⁵ Ironically, only a few days before Williams' arrest, Parliament had discussed the penalties for offenses under *The Dangerous Drug Law* and during the debate the young JLP politician Edward Seaga had remarked that "it was common practice for persons suspected of other offenses to be charged with ganja offenses when other suspected breaches of the Law cannot be proven."⁶⁰⁶ In fact, Rastafarians were habitually charged with breaches of *The Dangerous Drug Law* without being suspected of any offense other than of being a member of "the smoking class." Whether Williams had actually been in the possession of ganja remains unknown, but even if he

had not, he would most probably have been convicted anyway. In the Jamaican courts the words of a police officer usually carried more weight than the words of a Rastafarian. Whatever the case, the United Rases Organ refused to appoint someone else and informed Manley that they were no longer interested in taking part in the mission.⁶⁰⁷

Meanwhile, the dreadlocks representation from West Kingston had fallen apart as well and Sam Brown and his followers withdrew their support for the mission. In an open letter to Manley, Brown gave as the main reason the fact that “the Premier ... created an amalgamated mission comprising people of different racial outlook from the Rastafarians, in other words a bunch of trip seekers.” Another objection related to the compulsory vaccinations for the delegates of the mission, because “the true Rastafarian outlaws all mutilation of the flesh, or the cutting of the skin.” Brown wrote that the £ 20,000 to be spent on the mission could better be given to the Rastafarians.⁶⁰⁸ Mortimo Planno, however, remained a delegate, now representing Local 37 of the Ethiopian World Federation. Because of Sam Brown’s withdrawal and George Williams’ imprisonment, two places had become vacant. Manley, who had by then no doubt lost his patience, worked with a system of signatures expressing support for candidates, and subsequently offered the vacancies to the Rases of East and Central Kingston, who had previously refused to accept a single place. They were, according to the Premier, a group with considerable support. The Rases chose Filmore Alvaranga and Douglas Mack to represent them.

Eventually then, the mission included only three Rastafarians and these were unsupported by several major groups. In the space of a year, many hopes had been shattered. The Rastafarians had been unable to overcome their differences and to agree on a representation acceptable to all or even the majority of Rastas. It would have been difficult enough if there had been fourteen places available, with only four it was impossible. Every minor group had claimed the right to be represented with at least one or two delegates. Larger groups had demanded as many as nine places. All claimed to be the only true and legitimate representatives of the Rastafarian movement. Accepting others than their own leaders as delegates, in the interest of the mission, was out of the question. Surrendering principles or temporarily setting aside doctrinal differences was equally impossible. It should be borne in mind, however, that some of the groups and delegations involved, like the Rastafarians of West Kingston and the Rases of East and Central Kingston, were formed for the occasion and consisted of small, loosely connected and informal groups, led by one or two prominent elders. There was no organizational basis whatsoever.

In the end, the attempt to select a representative delegation for the first time in the history of the movement, had only intensified the struggles for leadership and emphasized the doctrinal differences, and thus led to even sharper divisions in the movement. At the same time, the mission to Africa, which had stirred the expectations of imminent repatriation and had been so warmly welcomed by the Rastafarians less than a year ago, had lost so much support that it was doomed to become a failure before the delegation had even left the island. A failure, at least from the perspective of the Rastafarian movement, which wanted to ensure repatriation, and of the government, which saw the crucial part of its rehabilitation plan shattered.

The mission to Africa and its aftermath

“I think they got the message, but he never said, lets abandon repatriation and lets stay here.”

On 4 April 1961, not as “speedy” as the Rastafarians had expected, the colorful delegation of Rastafarians and other back-to-Africa enthusiasts left Kingston via New York City and London, where Z. Munroe Scarlett immediately took the opportunity to petition the Queen and British Parliament for a £ 50 million grant, an advance on a total of £ 300 million for repatriation of black West Indians to Africa.⁶⁰⁹

The delegation arrived in Addis Ababa on 16 April. On the same day they were received by the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Basilios. The *Abuna* presented the delegates with “a complete Ethiopian national costume.” As the Rastafarian delegates later recorded in their *Minority Report* on the mission:

We discussed H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie, being the returned Messiah. His Holiness the Abuna told us at the conclusion of the discussions that the Bible can be interpreted that way. We had tea and honey wine with him.⁶¹⁰

The non-Rastafarian delegates, in their *Majority Report*, mentioned this point in an appendix and as

being reported to the other delegates by Filmore Alvaranga. It was only one of the many points on which the Rastafarians were to differ with their non-Rastafarian companions.

On 21 April at ten o'clock in the morning, the delegates were granted an audience with Haile Selassie. We can only speculate about the Emperor's thoughts - a Messiah against his will. It is likely that he had been informed about the beliefs of some of his visitors by either the Jamaican government or the Colonial Office, perhaps with a request to deny his alleged divinity. If so, the Emperor did not comply with the request and the Rastafarians did not bother to ask. They *knew* that Haile Selassie was the Messiah returned.

In any case, it was a truly historical moment for the Rastafarian movement. For the first time, three of their representatives, although discredited as "a bunch of trip seekers" by most of their fellow Rastas, met their Living God, their Messiah returned. Aware of their position, the three Rases later wrote in their report:

Our meeting with H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I is likened spiritually to the visit of the three wise men who journeyed from the West to the East to visit the Baby Jesus, bringing with them gold, frankincense and myrrh to offer H.I.M. When Herod heard of the newborn King of Kings he gave orders to kill all the babies of the land, 3 year old and under.⁶¹¹

Haile Selassie spoke encouraging words. During the short meeting "the Emperor said that Ethiopia would always be open to people of African origin who lived in the West and desired to return." But His Imperial Majesty added that he hoped Jamaica would send "the right people." In their *Minority Report*, the three Rastafarian members of the delegation noted that Haile Selassie also said that "Ethiopia was large enough to hold all the people of African descent living outside Africa." After the other delegates left, the three Rasta representatives presented the Emperor with several gifts and had a short private talk with Haile Selassie.

Alvaranga presented H.I.M. with a wood-carved map of Africa with a portrait of the Emperor on one side of the wooden case. The Emperor then spoke in English for the first time to us. He said, "That's Africa. Is it from the Rastafari Brethren?" (That showed that he knew us before) We said "Yes". Brother Mack presented photographs of the Rastafari Brethren in Jamaica. H.I.M. said again in English, "Photographs; Thank you". Mack also gave H.I.M. a painting of Errol Flynn's island in Jamaica. Brother Planno gave H.I.M. a woven scarf in red, gold and green. H.I.M. said "Is it you that wove it" He said "Yes". He said "Thank you again". We also gave H.I.M. a photograph of a widow and six children - her husband, a Rastafari Brethren, was shot and killed by the Police in Jamaica. H.I.M. asked us who was taking care of them now. We told H.I.M. that we took the case to Jamaica's Premier but left the island before it was settled. The Emperor said that he would do what he could to help. Then we took leave.⁶¹²

Before and after this highlight of the mission, the delegates met with various Ethiopian government officials and visited several parts of the country, including the settlement at Shashamane, where the Emperor, through the Ethiopian World Federation, had in 1955 made 500 acres of land available for "the people in the west who aided Ethiopia during her period of distress." At the time of their visit, James and Helen Piper, members of the EWF's New York City branch, but originally from Montserrat, were the only occupants of the land grant. Cecil Gordon and Munroe Scarlett were baptized into the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Emperor paid all the expenses of the mission while in it was Ethiopia.

Two days after their audience with H.I.M., the members of the unofficial mission to Africa left for Nigeria where they were received by the Governor-General, Nnamdi Azikiwe. Later in Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the delegates were received respectively by Kwame Nkrumah, William Tubman and Milton Margai. In Ghana the mission ran into two Jamaican Rastafarians who had gone to Africa eight years earlier. They still hoped to make it to the Promised Land.⁶¹³

In spite of the internal differences between the various groups within the Rastafarian movement, the mission to Africa raised the hopes of imminent repatriation among at least some Rastas. In May 1961, for instance, while the delegates were still in Africa, airport officials at Kingston's Palisadoes Airport were twice confronted with Rastas sneaking through security and, without a ticket, attempting to board an airplane. The first one was caught on the tarmac, waiting for "the next plane to Ethiopia." The other, a young Rasta from Sligoville, was found on a British West Indies Airline (BWIA) plane. When the alerted police arrested him, he declared: "I am flying to Ethiopia. It is my destiny." Both were sentenced to £ 40 or 28 days imprisonment.⁶¹⁴ The fact that the government had now sponsored a mission to Africa, was apparently making some Rastafarians a little too bold, at least in the minds of the Jamaican elite. As one

distressed Jamaican wrote to the *Gleaner*:

There are incidents almost daily, too numerous to mention, whereby those people go around on King Street of all places molesting people and being a general nuisance and nothing, apparently, seems to be done about it. If it continues much longer then I am afraid decent people, who have actually more rights on the roads than these people, won't be able to come out of their homes, if they have any left.⁶¹⁵

A few days later, on 3 June 1961, the delegates of the mission to Africa arrived at Kingston's airport, where they were welcomed by "about 5,000 persons with banners, flags, singing and shouting with joy as the mission members landed in their robes," according to the Rastafarians' *Minority Report*. *The Daily Gleaner* estimated the crowd to be about 3,000, but there was no disagreement about the enthusiasm at the scene.

When the eight members of the mission were cleared by Immigration the welcoming crowd surged forward, climbed through windows, pushed through doors, jumped over partitions and invaded the customs area. ... Outside hundreds more danced oblivious of the heavy shower of rain which soaked their robes and flags of red, yellow and green. The pulsating beat of drums provided a constant accompaniment to their chants.⁶¹⁶

The main task of the delegates now was to write a report about their findings and inform their following. Although details had to wait until they had presented their report to Premier Norman Manley, who was in London for negotiations about the Federation and independence, the delegates made it abundantly clear that their mission had been an immense success. All African countries visited had given them a warm welcome and had expressed their readiness to accept West Indian immigrants. Newspaper comments about the mission were suddenly much more positive than a year earlier. As the editors of the *Gleaner* later wrote: "The Mission to Africa has shown there are opportunities for West Indians of African descent to return to the homeland of their forebears." But they also warned: "It would be foolhardy, however, to exaggerate the practical immediate scope for repatriation."⁶¹⁷ The mission, having been successful, gave a major boost to the prestige of the Rastafarians.

The preparation of the report was not without problems. The Rastafarian members thought that the delegates would compile the report together and were quite disturbed to find out that Victor Reid, a journalist and one of the advisors, had been entrusted with that task. When the Rastafarians were called to a meeting on 24 June 1960, Reid had already written a draft on which they were asked to comment. No agreement was reached and after another meeting two days later the Rastafarians were still not satisfied. Reid re-wrote his draft and during a third meeting, on 3 July, Alvaranga, Mack and Planno were told that this was the final report and were asked to sign it. They refused and announced that they would submit their own report. The main reason for their objections was that they did not agree with the recommendation that a technical mission should be sent to Africa to make more detailed arrangements about repatriation. The Rastafarians considered it unnecessary and too time-consuming. And delays in repatriation were, of course, unwanted. Furthermore, the Rastas disagreed with the description of the welcome given to them in Ethiopia, notably by the Emperor.⁶¹⁸

Norman Manley, who had returned from London on 18 June, began to lose patience, but had to wait another month before the Rastafarians presented him with their report. Because government and parliament had to be presented with the report first, it was not until the very last day of July that the full report, complete with photographs and the delegates' personal impressions, were published in a special supplement of the *Gleaner*.⁶¹⁹

The atmosphere within the delegation had been far from good. The Rastafarians considered Dr. L.C. Leslie, the formal leader of the mission, to be authoritarian, while Leslie thought the Rastas had repeatedly misbehaved. According to Leslie, one of the Rastafarians had told the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs that "if his demands and those of his group were not met by the Jamaican government then 'heads would roll and blood would flow'." Leslie also denied that the Rastafarians had had a private meeting with Emperor Haile Selassie. The Rastas just "lingered behind and spoke to him."⁶²⁰ There were more negative reactions. Sierra Leone's Minister of External Affairs, Dr. John Karefa-Smart, was quoted in *The Daily Gleaner* as saying that his "Government is aware of the nature of the West Indies Rastafarian movement and will be cautious in considering any applications for immigration into Sierra Leone by any groups or individuals."⁶²¹ Despite such critical notes, the Rastafarians involved considered the mission a major breakthrough in the quest for repatriation for all.

After the delegates had presented their *Minority Report* to the government, they were, of course, obliged

to communicate their findings in full detail to their followers. Roy Augier went to one of the meetings organized for that purpose.

Mortimo Planno was making a public speech in the Coronation Market area. Not only do I remember the speech, for a long time will I remember it, because it was the most masterly political speech that I have heard. He wanted to convey to that crowd - and it was a very large crowd - that Africa was not what it had been trumped up to be. But those words never left his mouth, he just circled it, approached it, retreated, but gradually hinting ... I think they got the message, but he never said, lets abandon repatriation and lets stay here, we are better off over here: Jamaican society is better organized. He never said anything like that.⁶²²

The mission to Africa then was one of the first events which contributed to the gradual weakening of the repatriation doctrine among the Rastafarians. Of course, a hard core of orthodox Rastas, notably those who had withdrawn their support for the mission, remained convinced that repatriation to Africa would be realized through divine intervention. But a more realistic and moderate section no doubt "got the message" not only that Africa was less of a land of milk and honey than they had believed it to be, but also that organizing mass-repatriation was a complex affair. It would require extensive negotiations between the Jamaican and African governments, if the latter were indeed prepared to accept significant numbers of Jamaican migrants at all.

But the growing awareness among the more realistic sections that an imminent return to Africa was not as easily organized as many had thought, did not cure their longing for the Garden of Eden "with an overdose," as Rex Nettleford put it. After all, the mission had proved that although difficult and complex, repatriation was not impossible. The heads of several African governments had expressed their readiness to consider migration, especially of skilled workers. Furthermore, the Rastas had apparently not seen anything that gave grounds for abandoning the doctrine altogether. On the other hand, apart from contributing to realism about the possibilities and impossibilities of a return, the obvious recognition of their wishes by the government and the goodwill it had shown in sponsoring a mission, no doubt contributed to a somewhat more positive attitude towards Jamaican society among the Rastas. However much remained to be desired, it was no longer possible to maintain that Babylon completely neglected them and absolutely refused to care. Part of the movement and the wider society were now on speaking terms. The *Report* and the mission to Africa had conveyed the message that arrangements of whatever kind were to be made in negotiations and consultations, and not on the streets.

Thus the mission was an important step towards improving relations between some sections of the Rastafarian movement and the wider Jamaican society. In the end it was first and foremost the government which won out. The mission had been partially effective in initiating a gradual shift of focus among Rastafarians towards Jamaica instead of Africa, it had contributed to a lessening of tensions and, no less important, though probably unintended, had accentuated the internal differences and conflicts within the movement. The mission had challenged the movement to organize and form a block for the first time. But the movement had responded with further divisions and a considerable part of the Rastafarians' attention had been diverted to internal struggles.

The events surrounding the mission to Africa had given Clyde Hoyte, editor of the progressive weekly *Public Opinion*, an idea, though it was not as original as he thought. Hoyte was apparently amazed by the fact that the Rastafarians considered Haile Selassie to be God. After the delegates had returned to Jamaica, he contacted Mortimo Planno and asked him if the matter had been brought to the attention of the Emperor personally. Planno said no and Hoyte asked him what he would have said if His Imperial Majesty had denied his divinity. Planno answered: "I would have faced him and said: 'You, Haile Selassie I, are God'." The question of whether the Emperor was God or not had not even entered the minds of the three Rastafarian delegates and a denial, even from His Imperial Majesty himself, would not have shaken their belief. The Rastafarians did not believe, they knew.

But just like the Governors Foot and Blackburne a few years earlier, Hoyte was convinced that a denial could not but have a devastating effect on the Rastafarians and so, on 26 July 1961, he wrote a letter to Haile Selassie's personal secretary. After explaining the situation, he stated:

It had been hoped here that one of the things which would have been achieved by the recent visit to Ethiopia was a disposal once and for all of this belief. ... As a responsible newspaper we desire to do what we can to restore this group in our community. To this end we ask you to assist us by asking His Imperial Majesty to favour us with answers above his signature to the questions listed on the attached page.⁶²³

The questions on the page attached basically asked whether Haile Selassie considered himself to be God.

Where the Governors had been unsuccessful, Hoyte was more fortunate. In August he received a reply from Meba Selassie Alemu, Director General of the Press and Information Department of His Imperial Majesty's Private Cabinet. The letter, dated 4 August 1961, read:

I have received your letter, dated July 26, 1961, together with your questionnaire and the article that appeared in the *Public Opinion*, in regard to the belief of the Ras Tafarians. My August Sovereign, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Has read the article with great interest, and thereby Has ordered me to convey to you and to the Ras Tafarians, His deep appreciation of the warm feeling tendered by the Ras Tafarians, towards the Ethiopian people and its Emperor. Nevertheless, my August Sovereign Desires to make a citation from the words of the Bible, in which it is said that Man should not worship Man, and there is one, and only one God - the creator of the Universe. Consequently, it is the fervent desire of his Imperial Majesty that the Ras Tafarians should discard this belief. On the other hand, My August Sovereign wants the Ras Tafarians to understand that He is always willing to maintain a friendly, fatherly and brotherly attitude towards them, and also to be on their side whenever they need his help.⁶²⁴

Although the Emperor had not personally signed the letter or answered Hoyte's questions specifically, the editor of *Public Opinion* considered the reply to be a clear enough denial of Haile Selassie's alleged divinity. Hoyte published the letter on the front page of his weekly, along with photographs of both letter and envelope. With unconcealed satisfaction, he concluded:

My part of the job is done. But another, and far greater, task has to be undertaken by persons and organizations prepared for such work. For those who were serious in their declaration that they believed Haile Selassie to be God will now have a vacancy in their lives which must be filled. Who will take it from here?⁶²⁵

Hoyte was unable to get a reaction from Mortimo Planno. Eager to confront the Rastafarian leader with the contents of the letter, he had rushed to his home within an hour of receiving it. Planno, however, was in New York City to attend the 22nd Annual Conference of the Ethiopian World Federation.⁶²⁶ But Hoyte did manage to get a comment from Dr. Monsell B. Douglas, member of the mission to Africa as a representative of the (non-Rastafarian) Afro-Caribbean League, who remarked:

I hope good sense and reason will prevail and that the brethren will now cease to regard him as their Messiah. ... We must understand that Ras Tafarians belong to our community like all other people. I therefore once more appeal to the Ras Tafarians to rehabilitate themselves in our community. I appeal to the community to accept them gladly.⁶²⁷

There was little or no follow-up on this letter. *The Daily Gleaner*, Jamaica's most widely read newspaper, did not carry the news and *Public Opinion* apparently failed to get any reactions from the Rastafarians. The island was preoccupied with the developments surrounding independence and the fledgling Federation of the West Indies, and those Rastafarians who read *Public Opinion* probably dismissed the news as one of those many Babylonian lies printed in the press.

Meanwhile, the Moral Rearmament movement, which in 1959 had financed the visit of a group of Rastafarians from Montego Bay to one of its conferences in the United States, once more got involved with the Rastafarians. In November 1961 Samuel Brown claimed that the MRA had offered him £ 250 and a daily allowance of £ 10 if he were to attend an MRA conference in Canada. A spokesman for the Moral Rearmament movement denied this. According to him twelve Rastas had contacted the MRA, after seeing the movie *Freedom*, with the request to attend a conference. The Custos of St. James, Francis M. Kerr-Jarrett had once again expressed his willingness to pay for their fares and cover their expenses; a local businessman had agreed to provide "suitable clothing." Eight of the Rastafarians, however, failed to get a visa for the United States. When the other four left, those who had failed to get a visa had demanded money, according to the MRA spokesman.⁶²⁸

Some progressive ministers in the established Christian churches also tried to develop better relations with the Rastafarians. In early February 1962 Ras Shadrack and twelve members of his group were invited to attend a Sunday service at the Constant Spring Church. After the service, they played their drums and discussed their beliefs with church-goers.⁶²⁹

Independence and the 1962 general elections

“Queen Elizabeth done with. Is fi we time now. Unno white bitch mus’ leave we country now.”

While the Rastafarians concentrated their thoughts and activities on the return to their fathers’ land, the colony of Jamaica was moving towards complete independence. Constitutional changes had followed one upon the other, increasing internal self-government. Norman Manley had played an important role in the founding of the British West Indian Federation with thirteen other British Caribbean territories in 1959. But the Federation was short-lived; by 1961 it was so shaky that Manley was forced to hold a referendum on Jamaica’s continued membership. The Jamaican population demonstrated unexpectedly strong nationalist feelings, combined with a fear of being hindered in its economic development by the smaller Caribbean islands. Jamaica withdrew from the West Indian Federation and was soon followed by Trinidad. The Federation collapsed. In February 1962 Jamaica and Britain agreed on Jamaican independence within the British Commonwealth and general elections were set for April of that year.

Based on the general feeling that the chances for development were far better without British control, expectations of a bright future were high. The island had experienced a period of economic growth throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. Though the importance of agriculture (notably sugar and bananas) as a foreign exchange earner had continued to decline rapidly, it still provided employment for some 30% of the population. Bauxite exploitation had provided many new opportunities and earned the country much needed foreign exchange. At the same time, the tourist industry was booming and was expected to keep booming, especially now that Cuba was no longer a destination for Americans.

But there were problems as well. A very large part of the population still lived under conditions of extreme poverty and the population had continued to grow at an ever faster rate. According to the population censuses of 1943 and 1960 Jamaica’s population had increased 30% in seventeen years, despite large-scale migration.⁶³⁰ The birth rate was calculated at 42, the death rate at 8.8 per thousand. All this resulted in growing pressure on the island’s agricultural resources and in an increased drift towards the cities, notably Kingston. The Kingston Metropolitan Area experienced a population growth of no less than 85% between the census years 1943 and 1960. Rising unemployment (and underemployment) and the rapid expansion of the ghettos were the subsequent effects. A small, mainly mulatto elite had benefited from the economic progress and political gains associated with self-government. The overwhelming majority, the black masses, had not been able to profit from these developments. On the contrary, many were worse off than ever before.

The elections of April were to bring Alexander Bustamante and his Jamaica Labour Party back to power again. For the Rastafarians it was a choice between two evils. Manley and the People’s National Party could of course be given credit for their willingness to sponsor the mission to Africa, but many Rastas had already concluded that nothing good would come out of it. Bustamante and the JLP were best remembered for their harsh oppression during the 1950s. While the vast majority of the Rastafarians refused to take part in the elections, Ras Samuel Brown decided to contest the seat of West Kingston. He had to compete against the JLP’s rising star Edward Seaga, the PNP’s asset Dudley Thompson and against Byron Moore, the candidate of the People’s Political Party, a Garveyite group led by Millard Johnson which aimed to break the power of the ruling parties for the first time in Jamaican history.

Born in the parish of Trelawny in 1925, Ras Samuel Elisha Brown had by the early 1960s become one of the most prominent Rastafarians. Brown had attended elementary school until the eight grade and won a scholarship to Excelsior College, but was unable to accept it because his family lacked the financial means. He had worked at various jobs and ended up in one of the “dungles” of West Kingston, where he lived for the rest of his life. As we have seen, he was the spokesman for the dreadlocks of West Kingston at the time of their meetings with Norman Manley to prepare for the first mission to Africa. Brown had been assigned a place in the delegation, but later withdrew his support for the mission. In 1961, with the help of one Reverend E.B. Rodgers, he was admitted to the Kingston Technical School, but dropped out after eight weeks. Leonard Barrett, who saw in Ras Sam Brown the most important figure within the Rastafarian movement at the time of his research (the mid-1970s), describes him as follows:

Ras Brown is one of the most complex personalities within the Rastafarian movement. He combines in his person the attributes of a mystic, poet, orator, saint, painter, and what a government official called ‘a lovable rascal.’ In his presence at one moment, one feels free and relaxed, and in the next moment tense and frightened. Since the early beginnings of the movement he has been one of the most ardent Rastafarians and is today one of its most

important poets, if not the best.⁶³¹

Sam Brown was convinced that the only way to realize the ideals of the Rastafarians was through political action or Black power. He listed his ideas in a famous document, *The Foundation of the Rastafarian Movement*, consisting of 21 clauses. The most important of these were:

1. Members of the Rastafarian Movement are an inseparable part of the Black people of Jamaica.
2. As such we cannot and do not proclaim any higher aims than the legitimate aims and aspirations of the Black people of Jamaica.
3. The Rastafarian Movement consists of the most advanced, determined and uncompromising fighters against discrimination, ostracism and oppression of Black people in Jamaica. ...
11. The Rastafarian Movement has as its chief aim the complete destruction of all vestiges of white supremacy in Jamaica, thereby putting an end to economic exploitation and the social degradation of the black people.
12. The Rastafarian Movement stands for Repatriation and power and for the fullest co-operation, and intercourse between the Governments and people of Africa and a free and independent people of Jamaica.
13. The Rastafarian Movement for the furtherance of these ends must have the backing of its support to, or lead, a political movement, of its own. ...
15. The Rastafarian Movement has lent its support to the two big Parties, this support has been in vain because no improvement has taken place in our condition. Neither are we offered or do we see any hope.
16. The Rastafarian Movement therefore has decided to actively join the political struggle and create a political movement with the aim of taking power and implement measures for the uplift to the poor and depressed.
17. Because we have no other aims than the legitimate aims of all black people in this Island as stated in clause 2, this movement is open to all black people, irrespective of class, religion or financial means. ...
21. Suffering black people of Jamaica, let us unite and set up a righteous Government, under the slogan of Repatriation and power.⁶³²

Brown formulated several ideas which at the time were completely alien to the majority of the Rastafarians. The unconditional acceptance of the idea that the Rastas were “an inseparable part” of Jamaican society and could as such demand only those privileges enjoyed by other Jamaicans, was a radical departure from the Rastafarian claim to Ethiopian nationality and citizenship, in spite of the fact that Brown did not abandon the goal of repatriation altogether. The idea of using political means to achieve influence and the idea of cooperation with other groups were equally alien to most Rastafarians, who desperately tried to avoid involvement in any Babylonian affairs while awaiting repatriation.

On 10 April 1962 Ras Samuel Brown and his Black Man’s Party got a mere 81 votes.⁶³³ His participation in “politricks,” however, caused him to be rejected by many Rastafarians. During the campaign the tensions between the few politically-minded supporters of the Black Man’s Party and their adversaries had on one occasion erupted into a violent fight during which one Rastafarian was seriously wounded.⁶³⁴ The group of which Brown was one of the leaders, the Rastafari Movement located at “1000” Marcus Garvey Drive, fell apart. According to Barrett, the religious wing of his group, including three priests and Mortimo Planno and his followers, departed. The priests set up their own group, while Planno and several others were said to have gone over to one of the Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation.⁶³⁵ It appears, however, that the tensions were not exclusively due to Brown’s political adventure. The choice of delegates and representatives for the mission to Africa and the mission’s outcome may have played a role as well. Whatever the case, Ras Samuel Brown was way ahead of his time. He was advocating many ideas and developments which would be accepted by a substantial part of the movement ten to twenty years later.

As far as can be ascertained, the British decision to concede independence to Jamaica did not directly shift the Rastafarians’ attention away from Ethiopia, although it was no doubt interpreted as yet another sign of the rapidly declining power of colonial Europe and the impending restoration of the black race to its former glory. The world was moving closer to its Armageddon. In the view of many Rastafarians, however, independence had merely replaced a white man’s elite with a brown man’s elite. Perhaps independence had the effect of making the Rastafarians bolder towards British citizens and foreigners. A few cases of harassment of visitors and whites were reported, but whether these were linked to independence or the newly gained recognition following the university *Report* is unclear.

Some time in April 1962, the wife of a white upper-class Jamaican from Highgate had her first shocking encounter with a Rastafarian, causing her husband to write a wrathful letter to Thomas Wright, the pseudonym of Morris Cargill, one of *The Daily Gleaner’s* most popular columnists. The author demanded that the Minister of Home Affairs “put an end to the molestation of respectable citizens by the hordes of lazy perverts roaming about and besmirching the good name of Jamaica.” The letter went on to describe the “molestation” of his wife, who had been

held up in a brief traffic jam in Kingston. A Ras Tafariian seized the opportunity of poking his head in her car and demanded that she should purchase his wares. My wife told him that she was sorry she did not wish to purchase anything. The Ras Tafariian became abusive and among other things told her "Queen Elizabeth done with. Is fi we time now. Unno white bitch mus' leave we country now."⁶³⁶

The outraged husband added:

These ganja smoking social misfits who the Communists and others at the University College of the West Indies wish us to handle with kid gloves and waste taxpayers' money on are telling decent citizens in one breath to "get out a wi country" and in the next breath they are declaring that Africa is their country to which they wish to be repatriated at the expense of our Government. ... This is our country too.⁶³⁷

The letter led Wright/Cargill to devote his column "Candidly Yours" to these "gentle crackpots at best and hooligans or criminals at worst," arguing for rehabilitation "with compassion" and a little force.

The Ras Tafari have no special license to make a nuisance of themselves simply because they are a product of unfortunate circumstances. ... When a people have gone beyond a certain point of recalcitrance, poverty and lack of hope, some kind of compulsory re-habilitation seems inescapable.⁶³⁸

For the Rastafarians rehabilitation, in so far as it implied recognition, an end to persecution, jobs, houses and training-facilities, was one thing. Rehabilitation in the sense of changing their ideas, beliefs or behavior was quite another matter. Certainly if others tried to "rehabilitate" them by force, it would be nothing else but oppression. Their major concern remained repatriation, not in some indefinite future, not after extensive and useless negotiations, but as soon as possible, or even better, right now.

But little or no tangible results had come out of the unofficial mission to Africa of 1961, except for another, this time official, technical mission in early 1962.⁶³⁹ This delegation, which included no Rastafarians, was to work out further details for the migration of Jamaicans to Africa and to explore the possibilities for expanding trade and cultural relations. The delegates visited Ethiopia, Ghana and Nigeria, and found that these countries would welcome skilled professionals only. Ethiopia, however, would also be willing to accept selected farmers "willing to work hard toward the development of the country." For the Rastafarians it once again confirmed that they were certainly welcome in Ethiopia. But when the technical mission returned to Jamaica on 31 March, it found the island preoccupied with the general elections and with preparations for independence. Within days of its return there was a change of government and the technical mission's report was never published.⁶⁴⁰

Not without reason, the Rastas were worried that the change in government would affect the progress towards repatriation. Ras Shadrack, on behalf of the brethren from West Kingston, expressed this anxiety in a letter to the *Gleaner* and called upon the newly elected Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante "to remember the question of Repatriation." He also asked "the Government of Jamaica to send another mission to Ethiopia, to make the necessary arrangements for free transportation, to take us back to Ethiopia" and added that "we would like all this to be done in a loving and peaceful way."⁶⁴¹ Ras Peter the Great of the Militant Church in Haile Sellassie, also from West Kingston, not only demanded a new Rastafarian mission to African, but "true respect" from the government as well, "for we are born again people and we know peace and love."⁶⁴² But the Jamaica Labour Party government was not at all interested in such anti-nationalist and unpopular programmes like repatriation to Africa.

In the meantime, however, there continued to be differences of opinion about how to achieve the return to the fathers' land. One of the Ethiopian World Federation Locals, represented by Cecil Gordon, Nathaniel Hibbert and others, had announced that it was preparing to organize chartered flights to Ethiopia. They had no intention of waiting for government action and wanted to settle at least some of their members right now in Shashamane, the town in the vicinity of which the land grant was located.⁶⁴³ This provoked a cynical reaction from Mortimo Planno, speaking on behalf of EWF Local 37. He stated that "we were amused to observe that people are doing more harm to themselves than good," and argued that His Imperial Majesty was anything but pleased with the way in which the Shashamane land grant had been managed by the EWF so far. Selassie wanted the "right persons" and, according to Planno, these were none other than the Rastafarians. He dismissed the EWF's announcement as merely propaganda. So, like Ras Shadrack, he demanded that the government send another Rastafarian mission to Ethiopia to make the final arrangements for repatriation. There were continual conflicts over the land grant between the Rastafarian and the non-Rasta members and executives of the Federation, since the Rastas felt that the EWF was discriminating against them and trying to monopolize the land grant.⁶⁴⁴

With all the excitement and nationalist feeling triggered by independence, there was little room for anti-nationalist forces like the Rastafarian movement. On 14 July 1962 Filmore Alvaranga and Douglas Mack sent a telegram to Chandra Shekhar Jha, the chairman of the United Nation's Special Committee on Colonialism, in which they urged the UN to take immediate action on "the situation" in Jamaica.⁶⁴⁵ They felt that the Rastafarians were being denied their human and civil rights, and claimed that the black population on the island was still being oppressed. The editors of *The Daily Gleaner* reacted furiously:

The pure and unadulterated Ras Tafarian movement, being a movement for "repatriation" to Africa, has no desire to participate in the political situation here: and it does not appear that it can have anything to request of the United Nations, except possibly shipping. ... Evidently, some people feel that an agitation must be kept up which will focus attention on Jamaica as a land groaning under oppression, when in fact its political life is a great deal better than that enjoyed by at least two-thirds of the human race.⁶⁴⁶

On 6 August 1962, after more than three hundred years of British colonial rule, Jamaica became politically independent.

The Holy Thursday massacre

"Observers who had predicted an average of one Rasta death a week were proved wrong - there were two."

While Kingston had traditionally been the center of Rastafarian activity, during the 1950s Jamaica's tourist capital Montego Bay had also witnessed a growing adherence to the movement. It had been the Custos of St. James, Francis Kerr-Jarrett, who in 1956 had urged Governor Hugh Foot to contact the British ambassador in Addis Ababa to see whether Haile Selassie could be induced to deny his alleged divinity. Three years later Kerr-Jarrett had financed the trip of seven Rastafarians to the Moral Rearmament movement's training center in Michigan. As a result of the trip, the main Rasta formation in Montego Bay, the Orange Street Gully group, had fallen apart. Yet the split had not resulted in a decline of Rastafarian activities in MoBay. On the contrary, by early 1962 the Rastafarian presence in Jamaica's second city was so strong that the local Chamber of Commerce thought it necessary to accuse the police of pampering the Rastas. Tourists, the Chamber claimed, were continuously harassed and many did not even dare to leave their hotels any more, "because of Rastafarians wielding machetes."⁶⁴⁷

The already widespread fear of "the hairy fraternity" in Montego Bay reached a climax in April 1963, when there was a violent incident involving six bearded men, said to be Rastafarians. The incident, in which eight persons lost their lives, sent shockwaves of panic and horror through the entire island, and once more convinced many Jamaicans, with the Ronald Henry "guerilla" fresh in their minds, that the Rastafarians were extremely dangerous.

Early on the morning of 11 April, Holy Thursday, six bearded men, armed with machetes and guns, attacked a gas station in Coral Gardens, and set the place and two automobiles on fire. The attendant managed to escape and ran to the nearby Edgewater Inn Motel. The attackers followed him, ransacked the motel and hacked a guest, a salesman from Kingston, to death. A watchman had to run for his life and narrowly escaped. By the time the police had rushed to the scene, the Rastafarians had already taken to the hills. A group of policemen and a few civilians gave chase, driving in five cars to the Rose Hall estate, one of the major tourist attractions near Montego Bay. On the road leading up to the Great House they were ambushed from an overhanging cliff. A Corporal and a civilian were slashed to death, and two of the six attackers were shot and killed. The rest escaped with three police guns.

Not long afterwards it became clear that the Rastas, before they ambushed their pursuers, had also killed the property headman of the Rose Hall estate and had attacked the house of the overseer who, after firing several shots at them, had escaped with injuries. Later in the morning numerous heavily armed policemen and soldiers, with two armored units, were brought to the area. Near Cassava Piece a second group of pursuers ran into the Rastafarians, who killed another policeman. Not much later the Rastas were spotted again. One of them was killed and three policemen were injured, one seriously, during the exchange of fire. By noon the three remaining Rastas had vanished.⁶⁴⁸

In the meantime, the two major radio stations on the island, the government-owned Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) and Radio Jamaica Rediffusion (RJR), created widespread fear and panic with their repeated announcements of an island-wide "Rastafarian uprising." Prime Minister Alexander

Bustamante, two Ministers and the top of the police force and military were flown to Montego Bay, and hundreds of police and army reinforcements were transported to the area. "Busta" assured the trembling nation that there was "no cause for alarm," since "the incident is entirely local." But apparently the Prime Minister was not at all convinced of his own words and, as Rastafarians later insisted, gave orders "to bring in every Rastafarian, dead or alive."

By noon the security forces had started to round up every Rasta they could find, not only near Montego Bay, but in the parishes of Trelawny, Hanover and Westmoreland as well. The raids continued throughout the evening and night. No fewer than 170 Rastafarians were arrested on every charge the police could think of, ranging "from vagrancy, unlawful possession, being a suspected person, being in possession of dangerous drugs to being in possession of dangerous weapons."⁶⁴⁹ An unidentified government spokesman was quoted as saying: "If jail cannot hold the Rastafarians put them on Bogue Hill [Montego Bay's cemetery]."⁶⁵⁰ Despite a massive manhunt, "wholeheartedly" assisted by many citizens and two private airplanes, the three fugitives remained at large.

Meanwhile, the editors of *The Daily Gleaner* demanded that "the Rastafarian question," described as a problem of "the lunatic fringes," be solved once and for all. That the security forces continued their large-scale and arbitrary persecution of innocent Rastafarians, did not concern them at all. The editors were, however, outraged by "the frantic irresponsibility [of the] radio news staffs." According to the *Gleaner*, the radio coverage had:

cost Jamaica an untold amount in prestige, reputation and income. The adverse effects on tourist trade, on business and on finance will be felt for months to come To describe what happened on the outskirts of Montego Bay on Thursday as an "uprising" was a national crime.⁶⁵¹

Edward Seaga, the JLP's Minister of Development and Welfare and as such responsible for broadcasting, completely agreed with the editors of the *Gleaner* and harshly reprimanded the heads of the JBC and RJR, threatening to place their stations under censorship.⁶⁵²

While the ruling class worried about Jamaica's image abroad, the policemen and soldiers carried on with both their search for the three murderers and their raids on Rastafarians. In an effort to justify the arbitrary arrests of Rastas, a spokesman for the Montego Bay police declared that there had been "numerous reports of Rastafarians stealing food from homes in the suburbs of Montego Bay, and holding up and robbing persons in the area."⁶⁵³ The witch-hunt of Rastafarians was not restricted to the western part of the island. A few days after the massacre a correspondent for *The Daily Gleaner* in St. Thomas reported that "almost all" Rastafarians in Leonard Howell's former stronghold Leith Hall had shaven their beards and cut their locks.⁶⁵⁴ *Gleaner* cartoonist Leandro depicted an encounter between two Jamaicans, one carrying a rifle and reacting to the other's remark, "But bird season come early," with, "No man, is beard season."⁶⁵⁵

Around Montego Bay, the search had continued relentlessly and on Saturday two of the three Rastas were tracked down near Flower Hill by a patrol of civilians and police. One of them was shot in the foot (which later had to be amputated). Two days later the last fugitive was also caught, shot and injured.

Jamaica was appalled by what became known as the Holy Thursday or Coral Gardens Massacre. The newspapers presented two "theories" on the motives for the murders. The first - and most widely accepted - explanation was that the Rastas were "high on the weed," as the attendant of the burned-down gas station testified.⁶⁵⁶ It was a convenient explanation and readily accepted by the JLP government. On 16 April, five days after the massacre, Minister of Home Affairs Roy McNeill, speaking in the House of Representatives, announced a sweeping campaign to eliminate the cultivation and use of ganja once and for all. The action, the Minister told his audience, was

the direct result of last week's incidents of violence in the Rose Hall area near Montego Bay, in which eight people were killed and others injured through members of the ganja-smoking Rastafarian cult going wild with guns and machetes.⁶⁵⁷

Just as after the murder of Sidney Garrell in 1951, the government's only response was yet another offensive on ganja. In the perception of many Jamaicans, including those in the island's administration, it was as simple as ABC: ganja makes people violent, Rastafarians smoke ganja, Rastafarians are violent. Since it was impossible to eradicate the users, one therefore had to eradicate the weed.

The second “theory” about the motives for the massacre, although not necessarily incompatible with the first, was far more plausible than the simple “high-on-the-weed” explanation, but was completely ignored by the police. Details were not available, but the *Gleaner* related that

the leader of the gang, Rudolf Franklin, was bent on vengeance after being shot and sentenced to a prison term last year over a dispute about lands in the Rose Hall area. Mr. Hubert Stewart, the overseer of the Tyrall Farm on the estate, and a Police Corporal had challenged Franklin in February last year for attempting to cultivate the land without permission. During the argument the corporal shot Franklin in the abdomen and the shoulder. He was admitted to the Montego Bay hospital and subsequently charged with having ganja in his possession. He got six months imprisonment.⁶⁵⁸

It thus appeared that the attacks on the overseer and the property headman of the Rose Hall estate were motivated by revenge and intentional rather than random as the police reports had suggested. The same seemed to be true of the attack on the gas station where the bloodshed had started. Franklin, killed in the shoot-outs with the police, had, according to the second theory, once been overheard to say that someone at the gas station had “betrayed him to the police.”

But the nation’s elite was not interested in this type of explanation and demanded action. Outrage was not only directed at the six murderers as individuals, but at the Rastafarian movement as a whole. Speaking at the funeral of one of the policemen killed during the manhunt, the Baptist Reverend E.H. Greaves undoubtedly expressed the feelings of many Jamaicans, when he demanded “legislation right away to rid this community of the Rastafarian menace which he said was not good for any civilized country.”⁶⁵⁹ Calling for steps “to exterminate this evil movement,” the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, concerned about the effects of the event on tourism and trade, declared:

It is certainly not in the national interest for anyone to encourage or pamper this cult, adopted by some Jamaicans who are unwilling to work and whose evil way of life has unfortunately been accepted for too long in this country.⁶⁶⁰

In a letter to the editor of the *Gleaner* an angry Jamaican citizen proposed “the establishment in Jamaica of at least three work camps, one in each county,” once again a proposal similar to one made after the murder of Sidney Garrell in 1951.⁶⁶¹

On behalf of, as he claimed, the entire Rastafarian movement, Samuel Brown expressed the “profound sorrow at the rashness and impetuosity of a few people,” and urged the government “not to embark on a campaign of wholesale reprisals or a witch hunt.”⁶⁶² But Brown’s plea was in vain. As *Public Opinion* reported a few days later, it was still “open season on beards.”

Observers who had predicted an average of one Rasta death a week in the aftermath of MoBay were proved wrong—there were two. Police shot one in Frankfield, one at Spanish Town alleging they were attacked first.⁶⁶³

The Rastafarians themselves claimed that the police had been instructed “to shoot first and ask questions afterwards.” The Holy Thursday massacre had brought eight people to the cemetery and its aftermath added at least two more Rastafarians. The three captured Rastas followed. The courts found them guilty of multiple murder and sentenced them to hang.

When the nightmare was over and the tensions had abated, many Rastafarians began to turn their attention to repatriation again. Most Jamaicans saw rehabilitation, compulsory if necessary, as the key solution, but the Rastafarians had no intention of being rehabilitated and were getting impatient. Some two years had gone by since the mission to Africa and nothing had happened. One month before the massacre, Mortimo Planno and some twenty other Rastas had invaded the room where the journalist Frank Hill was delivering a lecture. They demanded to know what was to become of repatriation and warned: “If we have to take oath like the Mau Mau you will understand that we are serious.”⁶⁶⁴ In a letter to the editor of *The Daily Gleaner* Planno later posed the rhetorical questions: “If Ethiopia is prepared to settle the Rastafarian movement, should they be sent to Ethiopia? What if the Rastafarians do not want to be integrated into Jamaican society?”⁶⁶⁵ But as time passed, it gradually became clear that the new JLP government was refusing to take any further action with regard to repatriation. Yet despite the fact that the unofficial and technical missions to Africa had not produced the expected results, the Rastafarians did not give up hope.

On 22 December 1963 Filmore Alvaranga and Douglas Mack, both delegates in the first mission, together with Samuel Clayton, left the island for what was to become a fifteen-month tour through Africa. Their

trip was a personal initiative funded by the African Repatriation Committee, a New York City-based organization which became defunct before they returned, and “unofficially” funded by the governments of several African states. The three “ambassadors,” as they styled themselves, visited Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and, inevitably, Ethiopia. In Addis Ababa, on 11 September 1964, they presented the Emperor with a petition signed by “ten thousand Rastas” eager to settle in the Promised Land. Since it had become clear that most African countries were only interested, if at all, in accepting skilled migrants, the list included not only names but also occupations. On their way home they made a futile attempt to see the Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant.

Returning to Jamaica on 6 March 1965 Alvaranga, Mack and Clayton were greeted by no more than about 200 Rastafarians. The three ambassadors, again linking their journey to that of the biblical wise men, reported their findings in the *Gleaner* and had encouraging things to report:

The Government of Kenya is in favour of settling African descendants from the West but also expressed it needed the sincere cooperation of the Government of Jamaica. The United Churches of Kenya have given our delegation a document promising free land for over 10,000 persons of African descent, if only we can supply the transportation of our members. Since the Government of Kenya is unable to undertake the costs individually.⁶⁶⁶

Of course, the visit to Ethiopia and the audience with His Imperial Majesty received most attention. “Nowhere else on earth could one find such complete freedom,” was the delighted conclusion. But above all, the prospects of repatriation were good: “The Emperor Haile Selassie I is very enthusiastic and sincere towards assisting the Rastafari Brethren to settle in his country. The Government also is ready to enter into realistic negotiations with Jamaica’s Government.”⁶⁶⁷ Now that several African countries had once again expressed their willingness to accept migrants from the West, it was, according to Alvaranga, Douglas and Mack, up to the government of Jamaica to make things possible. Finally, the three wise men were able to announce that “the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Patriarch has agreed to establish an Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Jamaica.”

Alvaranga, Mack and Clayton stressed that “we could have remained in Ethiopia as naturalized citizens if we wished ... but we came back to centralize and control the movement.”⁶⁶⁸ It was exactly because of this intention to establish themselves as leaders over the whole Rastafarian movement that the three encountered so little support. The fact that Alvaranga, Mack and Clayton belonged to the “baldhead” faction of the movement also helped to account for a disappointingly small following. The Rastafarians would never accept any self-styled leaders, whether they had visited the Emperor and perhaps held the key to repatriation, or not. Apart from that, many orthodox Rastafarians held that arrangements with the government were not going to bring repatriation any nearer anyway. They rather preferred to trust in Jah’s divine intervention. In the end, the mission had no tangible results. That did not, however, prevent Alvaranga, Douglas and Mack from establishing the Rastafari Brethren Repatriation Association, which they formally registered in May 1965.⁶⁶⁹

While the “Ambassadors of Negus” tried to get renewed attention from the government and the Rastafarians for their repatriation program, the citizens of Montego Bay and vicinity were once again alarmed by Rastafarian violence. Almost exactly two years after the Coral Gardens massacre, on 12 April 1965, some ten Rastas, armed with knives, were said to have attacked both the post office and school in Canterbury. As *The Daily Gleaner* reported the following day, several people, including a number of school children, had to run for their lives. The police had rushed to the scene and four of the ten Rastafarians were arrested.⁶⁷⁰

Two days later it turned out to have been false alarm: the attack had never taken place at all. The postmistress at Canterbury had been frightened by three Rastafarians who regularly visited the post office. They had been unarmed, but became verbally abusive. The postmistress reported her grossly exaggerated story to the police, who immediately carried out raids on Rastafarian communities in the vicinity. Neither the post office nor the school had been attacked.⁶⁷¹

Emperor Haile Selassie’s visit to Jamaica

“We have seen their strength, and make no mistake about it, in the next few years they will become stronger still.”

The Jamaica Labour Party administration had shown very little interest in the mission to Africa spon-

sored by its predecessor. Although, as the opposition party during the time of the preparations, it had remained surprisingly silent on the issue, the JLP apparently shared the view of those who considered the trip a waste of taxpayers' money or were afraid that it might have other undesirable effects. In the aftermath of the Holy Thursday massacre the JLP had demonstrated that it was prepared to deal with the Rastafarians the hard way. Whereas Norman Manley understood the subtler processes of containing social unrest, his cousin Alexander Bustamante was a man of direct action and direct results. But Busta was ageing and suffering from failing eye-sight, and younger politicians competed for the party's leadership. In 1965 Donald Sangster, the Minister of Finance, became Acting Prime Minister, but the two really influential JLP politicians were Hugh Shearer, a conservative and somewhat dull trade unionist, and Edward Seaga, the shrewd rising star of the party, unchallenged representative of the West Kingston constituency, Harvard-trained anthropologist with fieldwork experience among the Revivalists and Minister of Development and Welfare.⁶⁷² Seaga, as Rex Nettleford notes, also understood "the social anthropology" of the Rastafarian movement.⁶⁷³ Whether or not Seaga was directly involved remains unknown, but in early 1966 the JLP government announced that it had invited Emperor Haile Selassie to pay a state visit to Jamaica. It became a turning point in the history of the Rastafarian movement.

There had been suggestions that His Imperial Majesty should be invited to visit the island as early as 1954. At the end of March 1954 Noel Nethersole, Vice-President of the People's National Party, then in opposition, had written Governor Foot with the request to invite the Ethiopian Emperor. Haile Selassie was to visit the United States in May and the PNP hoped that "the only independent African ruling monarch" could come to an island in which, as Nethersole wrote, some 95% of the population was of African ancestry.⁶⁷⁴ In one of its editorials *The Daily Gleaner* had, however, reacted furiously. The editors suspected that the whole idea was intended to create unrest and was aimed at seeking the support of "criminal and lunatic elements for political advantage."

... it seems to us a most treasonable tendency for the People's National Party to seek to expand in Jamaica the doctrine held by a zany group by which they preach loyalty to Haile Selassie and practise affronts to authority in their own country.⁶⁷⁵

The People's National Party defended its proposal in a news release with the argument that:

We have no doubt that such an invitation would be widely welcome and supported. Unfortunately there is a possibility that proper consideration of this matter may be bedeviled by irrelevant and confused thinking in some quarters. ... the 'criminal' and 'lunatic' elements referred to notoriously refuse to vote.⁶⁷⁶

Michael Manley, the son of the PNP leader, defended the proposal for an invitation in his *Public Opinion* column "The Root of the Matter."

Selassie is an African and an Emperor ... an historical figure of some stature. I can therefore think of nothing more normal than that the inhabitants of a small island, ourselves of African descent, should wish to extend the hospitality of these shores to our distant and distinguished kinsman.⁶⁷⁷

Rastafarian and Afro-oriented non-Rastafarian organizations like the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the Ethiopian World Federation, the Brotherhood Solidarity of United Ethiopians and the United Afro-West Indian Brotherhood had sent telegrams to the Governor, expressing their support for the PNP's proposal.⁶⁷⁸ The whole issue had developed into a minor political battle before the Governor even had the opportunity to reply. Governor Foot relayed the proposal to the government's Executive Committee, which reached a negative decision towards the end of April. The government's reason for not inviting the Emperor turned out to be fear of possible disruptions caused by Rastafarians:

In particular, the Council has in mind that there are small numbers of people in Jamaica who might cause embarrassment to the Emperor if he visited Jamaica; and that the actions of these people might be offensive to the Emperor and harmful to the reputation of Jamaica.⁶⁷⁹

Shortly after the decision was announced, on 27 April 1954, some 5,000 people, among them "lots of bearded men," had gathered at a protest rally downtown.⁶⁸⁰ Speeches were made and a resolution was passed, but all to no avail.

Several years later, during the debates about the mission to Africa in 1960, the issue had been raised once again. A "concerned" Jamaican had asked whether it would not be possible to ask the Emperor to set "hand and seal to a document exhorting them to worship the real God."⁶⁸¹ But another commentator had been a little skeptical about the effects of this proposal and came up with a better idea:

The Rastas are already vitiated by ignorance and race hatred, and they are going to say that the document was issued by the white men to fool them. The Government should now undertake to invite Haile Selassie to Jamaica, with the view of addressing the Rastas and denouncing anyone worshipping him as Almighty God.⁶⁸²

Six years later, the government followed the advice.

Somewhat ironically, it was the Jamaica Labour Party which in 1966 took the initiative of - and subsequently the credit for - extending the invitation to Haile Selassie. The Trinidadian Prime Minister Eric Williams had invited the Emperor for a state visit and Donald Sangster requested Selassie to include Jamaica on his trip to the Caribbean. Times had changed, and with time the position of the Rastafarians in Jamaican society and the ideas about how to contain the movement. In early 1966 rumor was rife until on 14 April Donald Sangster officially announced the state visit of His Imperial Majesty to Jamaica in the House of Representatives.⁶⁸³ Only a month before, Jamaica had received Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip Mountbatten. The enthusiasm and excitement had been largely confined to the middle and upper classes, who had

primped and preened and pranced about like peacocks, acting with greater deference towards the monarchy than when the island was still held by the Crown. The police was under orders to prevent the poor from getting within squinting distance of the queen and vice versa.⁶⁸⁴

But for the black masses the Queen, though officially still the Jamaican Head of State, was little more than an alien symbol associated with colonial domination.

His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God, Jah Rastafari, was to arrive on 21 April 1966. As the moment came nearer, it stirred the Rastafarians to unprecedented excitement. As with the message about the land grant, the pronouncement of Prince Emmanuel, Claudius Henry's announcement that deadline day had come and the news about the mission to Africa, expectations of immediate repatriation reached a climax, in spite of the fact that, formally speaking, the Emperor's visit had little to do with the Rastafarians. That, however, was of no relevance whatsoever. State visit or no state visit, "Rasta day had come."

Some three weeks before "Rasta day," the editor of *Public Opinion* called on the government to show the Emperor the Rastafarian shacks. He also thought that the Rastas should be included in the official ceremonies and activities.⁶⁸⁵ The Rastafarians, of course, shared this view and the government was bombarded with requests and petitions. Ras Dizzy, one of the leading Rastafarians, wrote a letter to *The Daily Gleaner*, requesting permission to make a speech during the official welcome for the Emperor. "It would be a big insult" for Haile Selassie if no Rastafarians were there to greet him at the airport, he argued.⁶⁸⁶ Although his request was not answered, the *Gleaner* somewhat later reported that:

[t]he acting Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs Hon. Donald Sangster announced yesterday that His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia has graciously consented to hold private meetings with representatives of Afro-Jamaican groups, Ras Tafari Organizations and Churches at 12:45 p.m. at King's House on Friday. Mr. Sangster said each of the groups concerned has been asked to nominate two persons to meet the Emperor at this function.⁶⁸⁷

The Rastafarians were to meet their Messiah in person, represented this time not by three controversial representatives on a controversial mission, but by the leaders of all major groups. The JLP had apparently learned from the difficulties its predecessor had had with the nominations for the mission to Africa. Besides, it was no doubt hoped that His Imperial Majesty would clearly repudiate the claim for his divinity. The more Rastafarians who heard it, the better.

On Tuesday 19 April 1966 the Jamaican press featured a report on the Emperor's visit to Trinidad, the first stop on his Caribbean tour. At the airport there had been so many people that "part of the air terminal's roof collapsed between the weight of cheering admirers." Somehow no one was seriously injured, at least according to police statements.

The next day, *The Daily Gleaner* screamed it out all over its front page: "Emperor comes tomorrow." Several pages were devoted to the impending royal visit. The Ethiopian World Federation announced that it was to hold a concert, banquet and dance in honor of Selassie's visit, at the Jamaican Success Club on Thursday. Cartoonist Leandro contributed, a cartoon showing two Rastafarians discussing the event. The first: "So de great Selassie I is coming!" The other: "He no mus' come where 'im followers be!" While the *Gleaner's* readers smiled at the cartoon, thousands of Jamaicans, among them countless Rastafarians

from all over the island, were already on their way to the airport.

In honor of the first African monarch to visit the island, Thursday 21 April 1966 had been declared a public holiday. The Emperor was due to arrive at eleven o'clock in the morning, but made an unscheduled stop in Barbados, where he met with Prime Minister Errol Barrow and also had a chat with a guest to the island, Robert Anthony Eden, the former British Prime Minister. In Jamaica an estimated 100,000 people crowded the airport. They were singing, clapping, drumming, cheering, praying, shouting and waving Ethiopian flags and banners with texts like: "Lay not thine hands on the Lord's anointed" and "Human rights now." Some estimated that as many as 10,000 Rastafarians were among the crowd, the majority dressed in white robes with lots of red, gold and green. Fortunately, Kingston's air terminal roof proved to be solidly built.

As the newspapers reported the following day, "every plane coming in around that time was greeted with a cheer until it was discovered that it was just another commercial flight." It had rained all morning and while the dignitaries were feverishly planning alternative ceremonies inside, the Rastafarians shouted: "When God comes, the sun will come out." According to *The Daily Gleaner* several church leaders, invited to be present at the official welcome, left the airport before the Emperor arrived. Rastafarians had begun to shout: "Go, this is not your day."⁶⁸⁸ It was 1:35 in the afternoon when the royal airplane, with its red, gold and green stripes and gold lion, finally came in view. The crowd roared in excitement. Five minutes later, the plane touched down and taxied towards the terminal building. The rain stopped and the sun broke through.⁶⁸⁹ The Messiah had arrived.

After a few more minutes, the door of the aircraft opened and in the doorway appeared the short Emperor, dressed in a khaki uniform. He raised his hand. Then a cheering, roaring crowd stormed the landing place. The police was completely unable to maintain order.

The dignitaries moved out to the tarmac to be presented but they might have well remained inside the lounge. They appeared bewildered, hands by their sides while the crowd all but jumped over them to get to the plane.⁶⁹⁰

Haile Selassie quickly retreated into the airplane, which was surrounded by hundreds of people, all wanting to touch the plane which had brought His Imperial Majesty to his followers. The Emperor remained inside the aircraft. The police and other officials desperately tried to push back the crowd, but their efforts were completely in vain. One Rastafarian was overheard shouting: "Give the Babylon a break now," but that did not help much either. The authorities had been concerned that the Rastas would try to kidnap their Messiah, but what worried them most of all now, was the total neglect of the prohibition to smoke anywhere near an airplane. As Morris Cargill later expressed it: "the slightest gasoline leak would have blown them and their god to Kingdom Come."⁶⁹¹ But the Rastafarians who had stormed the landing place, were either unaware of or did not bother about the danger, and freely smoked their cigarettes and ganja spliffs. In the meantime, the elite in uptown Kingston, as one commentator later expressed it, "trembled around its television sets."⁶⁹²

Amidst this chaos, someone had the presence of mind to call on Mortimo Planno, one of the most influential Rastafarian elders and a delegate on the 1961 mission, to try and restore order. Planno climbed the aircraft steps and went inside. When he re-emerged, he commanded: "The Emperor has instructed to tell you to be calm. Step back and let the Emperor land."⁶⁹³ The crowd made room.

More than half an hour had gone by before His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I reappeared in the doorway. The roars of the crowd, the horns and the drums of the Nyabinghi drowned the airport in a deafening noise. As the story goes, the Emperor wept, according to the Rastas because he was so warmly welcomed, according to most other Jamaicans because he was scared to death. Tears or no tears, the carefully planned ceremonies and official protocol were skipped and the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah and his following (including the Emperor's favorite chihuahua Lulu, notorious for snapping and urinating at official's legs) were immediately rushed into the waiting limousines and driven to Kingston. No *Ethiopian Anthem*, no *Jamaican National Anthem*, no reception by Governor-General Sir Clifford Campbell and other worldly and religious VIP's, but only a hastily fired gun salute.⁶⁹⁴

Along the route to Kingston thousands upon thousands of people cheered. With the Emperor on his way to Kings House, the Governor-General's residence, and the crowd slowly leaving the airport, the notables sighed with relief. In the meantime, His Imperial Majesty and his entourage tried to make their way to the Jamaican capital and the delirious crowd struggled to get as close to the royal guest as possible. The

police and military tried, largely in vain, to keep the crowd at a distance. The motorcade was forced to split up, but arrived safely at Kings House.

A National Welcome was scheduled to start at five o'clock at the National Stadium. Thousands had been gathering there since early in the morning. As an annoyed *Gleaner* reporter commented:

The Ras Tafarians, dressed in the Ethiopian colours, stormed the section around the Royal Box from very early in the afternoon and filled the reserved seats, making it impossible for the dignitaries and prominent persons to be seated in the usual manner.⁶⁹⁵

When Haile Selassie arrived all hell broke loose. The welcome speech of Acting Prime Minister Donald Sangster was largely lost in the continuous "stentorian" roar of the Abeng horns.⁶⁹⁶ The Emperor received the key to the city of Kingston, but during the ceremony "anti-government slogans" along with "screams, yells, hisses and boos filled the air." When the King of Kings left the National Stadium "complete disorder" broke out.

Emperor Haile Selassie was escorted to the Royal car by the Governor-General, the Acting Prime Minister, the Chief of Staff of the Jamaican Defence Force, Brig. David Smith. He was saved from the mob only by the vigilance of a group of security officers and policemen. The crowd broke loose and surrounded the Royal car as it attempted to drive off.⁶⁹⁷

Later that evening there was an official reception for the *Negusa Nagast* at Kings House. The Government had wisely invited several representatives of the Rastafarian movement, many of them inhabitants of the worst slum areas of Kingston. It was the first time in Jamaican history that the much despised Rastafarians were allowed to mingle freely with the nation's notables, for whom this must have been a most unusual experience. But contrary to what many had no doubt expected, there was only one minor incident during the reception, when a Rastafarian - to the surprise of the *Gleaner* reporter "well-dressed" - made a "vociferous and unexpected speech."

Some brows wrinkled and many noses went up as the guest shouted greetings to the Royal guest, and asked Jamaican Rastafarians to be faithful to the Government. ... He shouted that normally the ordinary man-in-the-street would only read in the *Gleaner* that a gala reception was held at King's House. But he was glad he had lived to see the day when so many "ordinary" persons were invited to rub shoulders with the island's elite. And as the Jamaican National Anthem was being played, he joined in shouting his desire to return to Ethiopia with His Majesty.⁶⁹⁸

On the second day of his visit, Friday 22 April 1966, the Emperor addressed Parliament at ten o'clock in the morning. Later that same day he received an honorary degree from the University of the West Indies' Department of Law. During his speech the Emperor made a remark about the necessity of finding the true God, which many Jamaicans considered a clear refutation of the Rastas' claim for his divinity.⁶⁹⁹ The Rastafarians, however, had heard nothing of the sort and perhaps interpreted it as a confirmation of their beliefs and a warning for others rather than themselves.

A stone-laying ceremony at the new Haile Selassie School at Payne Avenue in West Kingston was nearly canceled on the advice of the police. There were rumors "that the Rastafarians were out to 'capture' the Emperor" and the police had informed the government that they would not be able to guarantee Haile Selassie's safety.⁷⁰⁰ Frightened by the chaotic scenes at the airport and the National Stadium the day before, the police now kept the crowds as far away as possible, much to the distress of many Jamaicans, eager to see, if not touch, this extraordinary man. As the chaotic welcome at the airport had proven, the reverence for the Ethiopian monarch was by no means limited to the Rastafarians.

For the Rastafarians, the highlight of the visit was the private audience with the Emperor at King's House at 12:15. The invited were Mervyn Green of Local 37, Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards and Edwin Mitchell of the Ethiopian African National Congress, Dennis Chin of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ras Shadrack and Ras Daniel Heartman of the Church Triumphant of Jah Rastafari, Samuel Brown of the Rastafarian Movement of Jamaica, Douglas Mack, Filmore Alvaranga and Samuel Clayton of the Rastafarian Brethren Repatriation Association, Ras Dizzy of the Ras Dizzy Group, and Gladstone Graham and Trevor Campbell of the Rastafarian Brethren United Front. There were representatives of several non-Rastafarian organizations, too: H. Brown and Miss R. Reynolds of the Ethiopian World Federation, Z. Munroe Scarlett and M.B. Douglas of the Afro-West Indian League, M. Reynolds and Vin Bennett of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and Father Ernest Leopold Gooden and Miss Esmie Moodie of the Rainbow Healing Temple.⁷⁰¹

According to *The Daily Gleaner*, the Emperor told his guests: “Jamaica is a part of Africa living in co-existence with other people. Never before had there been greater need for working in unity towards the strength and purpose of a nation.”⁷⁰² Young and politically-oriented Rastafarians later explained these words as an urge to “organize and centralize” the movement and to work towards “liberation before repatriation” or, as another slogan summarized it, “building Africa in Jamaica.” Leonard Barrett ascribes great significance to this event, although - probably unaware of the report in the *Gleaner* - he considered it a “myth,” made up by the younger generation to legitimize their position. The author nevertheless used it as a crucial explanation for the fact that sections of the Rastafarian movement gradually shifted their focus from Ethiopia to Jamaica.⁷⁰³ Although it certainly may have played a role in this process, it is, as noted in the Introduction, decidedly too one-sided an explanation and probably more a legitimization than a cause of a development that was already in progress. Also, just like his remarks about finding the true God, the words of the Lion of Judah were again indirect and somewhat oblique, and thus left room for other explanations as well. As a result, most Rastafarians merely noted that the Emperor had said nothing about repatriation being either impossible or undesirable.

Addressing Douglas Mack, a member of the missions to Africa of 1961 and 1965, Haile Selassie reportedly said: “I am glad to know, and thank you for continuing your work with your people here. You have done purposeful work.”⁷⁰⁴ The representatives of the several organizations all presented the Emperor with gifts and the Ethiopian monarch gave his guests golden medals. There were two minor incidents. Z. Munroe Scarlett and M.B. Douglas arrived too late at the audience, though just in time to receive their medals. Gladstone Graham and Trevor Campbell, however, missed the event of their lives. They arrived at 12:45, too late either to receive their medals or to see the Emperor. They said they had been told that the audience was to begin at 12:45 and not 12:15. A *Gleaner* reporter thought it was a typical example of keeping up with “Jamaica Time.”⁷⁰⁵ Prince Emmanuel, however, caused a controversy among the Rastafarians. When he was introduced to the Emperor, he bowed, but shook hands with his gloves on, as photographs in the press later confirmed. For the Rastafarians it was an unforgivable insult, but for Prince it was a meeting between two equals. Like Leonard Howell more than a decade before, he had begun to consider himself as the Black Christ.

Later that day the Emperor paid a visit to Vale Royal, the Prime Minister’s residence. Douglas Mack, Filmore Alvaranga and Samuel Clayton of the Rastafarian Brethren Repatriation Association had been invited to organize an exhibition of Rasta handicrafts there. The drummers of Count Ossie and the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari also gave a performance. Outside Vale Royal a large number of Rastafarians formed a guard of honor. In the evening there was another cocktail party at the Sheraton Hotel and again several Rastafarians were present.

On Saturday 23 April His Imperial Majesty left Kingston. He was to travel to Montego Bay by train and would make several stops along the route. In Spanish Town, the first town to be visited, the police was unable to control the excited crowd, in spite of the assistance of the army. The intended half-hour visit became a stop of no more than ten minutes. As soon as His Majesty was out of sight again, fights broke out with the security forces, who used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Several people were injured. Analyzing the only serious incident during the state visit, a *Gleaner* reporter attributed the fights to the anger of the crowd with the police “for trying to keep the Rastafarian elements away from the immediate vicinity of Haile Selassie because of the apprehension that he might be injured with a surfeit of affection.” But another reason for the disorder, according to the reporter, could have been “a rumour that ran among some Rastafarian groups that the Emperor was not Haile Selassie at all, but someone foisted on the Jamaican people by the machinations of the Government.”⁷⁰⁶ Some Rastafarians were obviously surprised to find that Haile Selassie was a very short and fragile-looking man. The Emperor’s unexpected appearance led some to doubt whether this frail person could really be the Lion of Judah, the Messiah returned. But many others found ready confirmation, for instance in scar-like marks on the palms of the Emperor’s hands, resembling the crucifixion stigmata of Christ.

While the police fired tear gas at the crowd in Spanish Town, the royal guest and his entourage made several stops in smaller Jamaican towns along the railway. When they arrived at Montego Bay, they encountered much the same excitement as earlier in Kingston. Many Rastafarians had traveled to the tourist capital to bid their Messiah farewell. MoBay was filled with flag and banner-waving Rastafarians dressed in white robes. There was drumming, singing, clapping and shouting everywhere, continuously drowned in the roars of the Abeng bull horn. In Montego Bay there were a few more receptions and ceremonies for the local dignitaries, before, early in the next morning, the Emperor and his following left for Haiti. This time there were only several hundred Rastafarians to wave farewell to the Conquering Lion of

the Tribe of Judah.

The visit of Emperor Haile Selassie and the chaotic, though more than enthusiastic welcome given to His Imperial Majesty not only by the Rastafarians, but thousands of other Jamaicans as well, sparked a lively debate on the Rastas, the Emperor, his dog and the constitution of Jamaica. Two weeks after the King of Kings had left, Wilton Hill, independent member of the Senate, submitted a motion in which he proposed to proclaim Emperor Haile Selassie Sovereign of Jamaica, instead of Queen Elizabeth II. The welcome given to the Emperor, according to Hill, clearly showed that there was far more support in Jamaica for Haile Selassie than for “our alien Queen.”⁷⁰⁷ The motion got no support and led to a number of reactions ridiculing the idea, ranging from proposals to make Hill “the Premier Ras of Jamaica” to proclaiming the Emperor’s chihuahua Lulu Queen.⁷⁰⁸

Lulu, by the way, was the subject of a little, somewhat narrow-minded, controversy of her own. Before the Emperor left the island, concerned Jamaicans had expressed their annoyance over the fact that Lulu had entered the island without the prescribed six months’ quarantine protecting the island against rabies. Before she left for Haiti, Lulu was therefore thoroughly examined by a veterinarian. Nevertheless, the Jamaica Veterinary Association thought it necessary to put the affair on the agenda for its next meeting. One of its members, a certain G.C.T. Brown, V.S.D.V.M., wrote a very angry letter to the *Gleaner* in which he described the matter as “a piece of slackness” and a “dreadful breach of our quarantine regulations.”⁷⁰⁹ This in turn led a Rastafarian to remark that in his opinion Lulu received “more medical attention than the majority of us in Jamaica,” and that “if Lulu never came to Jamaica I would never know that we have men here with so many initials to their names.”⁷¹⁰

Many middle and upper-class citizens were not only annoyed by the scenes during the welcome, but frightened as well. As one Jamaican from Montego Bay expressed it:

The outrageous behaviour of the Rastas has opened the eyes of all to the fact that they must be controlled now or be allowed to become a very powerful arm in our society. We have seen their strength, and make no mistake about it, in the next few years they will become stronger still and will become a danger to our peaceful society.⁷¹¹

Another commentator on the state visit, however, was annoyed by the almost unanimous opinion among the elite that the behavior of the Rastafarians had been “raucous, savage, deplorable and generally speaking, unbecoming,” and rhetorically asked: “what else has a Rasta in Jamaica ever been able to be proud of?” In contradiction of majority opinion, he insisted that “whatever makes the Rastafarian a social misfit is the fault of our society.”⁷¹² Another correspondent could agree that the welcome had shown “exuberance of spirit rather than insulting behaviour,” but was alarmed by the “potentials of mass disorder and mob rule.”

Many persons, including the writer of this letter, were treated as interlopers and subjected to rude remarks and menaces, many were forced to abandon their intention to join the welcome, most were stunned at the turn it took.⁷¹³

There was, of course, disagreement about the Emperor’s position on the Rastafarians’ belief that he was God. During his speech at the University of the West Indies the Emperor had made a remark about finding the “true God,” but he had not directly addressed the Rastafarians and their belief in his divinity. Yet many Jamaicans interpreted his remarks - or even the mere fact of his evident mortality - as a denial of divinity. Reverend Oswald Simms, for instance, felt that

after receiving the shock of their lives ... it should suffice to return to reason; to faith in Almighty God, and to society, from which they have deliberately separated themselves for no good reason. ... Let the Christian Church of the Redeemed of the Lord, open wide its doors and preach unto these desperate souls and to all sin-bound men, the unsearching riches of Christ. This will solve the problems of the Rastas.⁷¹⁴

The Rastafarians, however, had no doubts about Haile Selassie’s divinity whatsoever. As Samuel Brown wrote: “the *Gleaner*, which is our Press authority, covered all public speeches made by the Emperor, yet there were no statements saying he was asked or he answered no towards Divinity.”⁷¹⁵

The government, nevertheless, could be content with the state visit. With elections due early next year, the JLP had scored a useful political point, which it would not have done in 1954 when the idea to invite the Emperor had been launched by the People’s National Party. The Emperor was an important symbol for large sections of the black population in Jamaica and bringing him to the island had no doubt created goodwill and a pro-African image for a party that had an aura of Euro-centrism. As the editor of *Public*

Opinion later remarked: “The reason behind the whole show by the Government is politics.”⁷¹⁶

But it was not merely politics in the sense of gaining votes and creating a more desirable image. The mission to Africa had paved the way for employing other strategies with regard to the Rastafarian movement than sheer repression alone. There was always a chance that the Emperor, if asked, would publicly denounce the Rastafarian belief in his divinity. After all, Haile Selassie was known to be a devout Christian himself. Apart from that, the very confrontation of the Rastafarians with the Emperor might be hoped or even expected to have a sobering effect, showing the Rastafarians that Selassie was an ordinary mortal man. Moreover, including the Rastafarians in the official welcomes and receptions would raise their prestige, which on the one hand might be expected to contribute to a more positive attitude among the adherents towards Jamaican society, and, on the other hand, might help to create more understanding and acceptance for the Rastas, and thereby lessen the tensions. As Rex Nettleford later said:

I think it was a very sensible political move. Bringing him to show that he was human undoubtedly had the desired effect, because it gave the Rastafarians a kind of legitimacy and made them fight their battles within. In a way, it really helped to determine the parameters, and in that sense the government, representing the wider society, won out.⁷¹⁷

Still, the state visit was only one of several events which contributed to a changing perception of Haile Selassie, repatriation to Africa and involvement in Jamaican society. The true believers, of course, stood firm and the encounter with Jah may even have strengthened their belief. For the marginal figures, the doubters, the state visit may have resulted in a perception of the Emperor as a cultural rather than a religious symbol, though at the same time it may have convinced others that he was indeed the Christ, the man with the marks of crucifixion. The true believers also remained convinced that repatriation was close at hand. Others, however, found divine authorization for their view that the Rastafarians should involve themselves actively in the struggle for a better life in Jamaica. The true believers remained unshaken in their conviction that Babylon was evil, but quite a few had enjoyed the respect paid to them by the government and the society-at-large.

Persecution, riots and grudging acceptance in the late 1960s

“The Rastafarians and their brethren were being pushed aside and trampled on.”

The two years following Haile Selassie’s visit to Jamaica were relatively quiet, at least as far as the Rastafarian movement was concerned. It was, however, a period of growing social unrest and discontent. The slum areas of West Kingston in particular witnessed an escalation of violence and gang warfare between supporters of the two main political parties, for which quite a few people blamed the Rastafarians. The most notorious battle ground was Back-O-Wall in the Foreshore area, one of the worst squatter areas of West Kingston. Back-O-Wall had been in existence since about the mid-1930s and had traditionally been one of the strongholds of the Rastafarian movement, once described as “the Rasta Vatican.” In June 1966 the police began to clean out the trouble spots. The result was a large-scale battle between the security forces and the various gangs. Shots were fired all over the place, tear gas was used, and houses and shops were bombed, as a result of which several people were killed.

On 1 July 1966 the government gave the squatters of the Foreshore area notice to leave. The slums were to be cleared to make room for a model housing scheme, Tivoli Gardens, and the development of an industrial site. Tivoli Gardens was the brainchild of the rising star of the Jamaica Labour Party, Minister of Development and Welfare Edward Seaga, the representative for the West Kingston constituency. The “Minister of Devilment and Warfare,” as his PNP opponent Dudley Thompson called him, gave the squatters fourteen days to move. Some left for other slums in Riverton City, Tower Hill or Spanish Town, but most had no place to go.

On 12 July hundreds of policemen and several bulldozers moved into the area. In a highly efficient and merciless operation they bulldozed and burned down over 1,500 shacks on some 50 acres of land, leaving hundreds of squatters homeless. With the few possessions they could rescue from the blazing fires, many of the sufferers retreated to the nearby May Pen cemetery. Others found temporary shelter in a church.⁷¹⁸ The destruction of Back-O-Wall affected many Rastafarians, including Sam Brown and his group, and Prince Emmanuel’s Ethiopian National Congress. Like the other squatters, they were forced to move to other parts of the city. The JLP had once again demonstrated that it was willing to follow the hard line.

After the clearance of “the Rasta Vatican” the violence only escalated further. There were gunfights between PNP and JLP supporters almost daily, businesses were looted, a cinema bombed and again numerous people were killed. On 2 October 1966 the government declared a state of emergency for West Kingston and part of the parish of St. Andrew. The Minister of Home Affairs prohibited Seaga and Thompson from entering their constituency, and hundreds of persons were arrested and detained. The state of emergency was lifted a month later, but the violence continued until after the elections of 21 February 1967.⁷¹⁹ The Rastafarians stayed away from “politricks” as far as possible and the politicians did little to involve them, although there was a report that a JLP candidate during a speech in West Kingston received a lot of applause when he said: “If you want to go to Africa, vote for me.”⁷²⁰

The JLP was re-elected for a second term. Its economic strategy remained basically the same as it had been since 1944: attracting foreign investors for export-oriented industrialization. But the rate of economic progress had slowed down during the last half of the 1960s. Unemployment had continued to increase to over 20% and discontent with the uneven distribution of wealth was becoming more and more widespread. The pressure on the landless peasantry and the ghetto dwellers was building up. At the same time, new and lavish upper middle-class housing schemes clearly demonstrated that there was considerable prosperity for a happy few. Independence had paved the way for the emergence of a new elite, many of whom were light-skinned. It reaffirmed the notion that, just like during the colonial days, color and class were closely linked and that the black people on the island were to remain at the bottom of the social ladder. The JLP government also had an aura of corruption, while its harsh measures to maintain law and order did not contribute to its popularity either. The 80-year-old leader of the JLP, Alexander Bustamante, resigned from politics. Acting Prime Minister Donald Sangster, however, suddenly died in April 1967 and was succeeded by Hugh Shearer, who - as the party proudly emphasized - became the first black Prime Minister of Jamaica.⁷²¹

The second half of the 1960s had not only witnessed increased violence, but also the rise of the Rudies or Rude Boys, frustrated ghetto youths, many of them recent arrivals from the rural areas, without opportunities for schooling or work, with no outlook beyond suffering in the slums. But they also had little or no respect for any form of authority. Under the influence of local heroes like gun-toting ghetto-badman Rhygin’ and American action-movies, they elevated crime and violence to a life-style.⁷²² The Rudies demonstrated their toughness with ratchet knives, robberies, street-fights and sometimes murder. They had little to lose and much to gain.

By the late 1960s social tensions in Kingston were thus building up rapidly. Inspired by the black struggle for civil rights and the revival of Black Power in the United States, young black intellectuals at the University of the West Indies (UWI) began to translate problems of poverty, suffering and inequality in racial terms.⁷²³ The JLP government reacted with a ban on Black Power literature, such as the works of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael.⁷²⁴

One of the central figures in the Jamaican Black Power movement was the young Guyanese historian Walter Rodney. He had studied at the UWI in Kingston and graduated in 1963, after which he had spent some time in England, where he received his Ph.D., and Tanzania, where he taught African history at the University of Dar es Salaam. In January 1968, at the age of 26, he returned to Jamaica to take up an assignment as lecturer in the Department of History. Once back in Jamaica, Rodney did not restrict his teachings on African history to the Mona campus, but took to the streets as well, speaking to colorful groups of Rastafarians, unemployed youths and students. He viewed the Rastafarians as “the leading force of [the] expression of black consciousness.”⁷²⁵ During his “groundings” Rodney emphasized the political and revolutionary message of Black Power, but in a far more elaborate manner than Marcus Garvey or the Rastafarian leaders before him. Rodney, as Anthony Payne summarized, “set it more firmly than ever before within an economic framework which recognized imperialism as a key element conditioning the lives and prospects of the Jamaican people.”⁷²⁶ His lectures made sections of the Rastafarian movement more aware of the necessity of political involvement in Jamaica. According to Horace Campbell:

[Rodney] promoted the positive aspects of the movement, while painstakingly clarifying the misinformation on Ethiopian history and culture. ... [S]ome Rastas had understood his message to the point that they began to question the emphasis on repatriation and Haile Selassie, and the more progressive were calling for a people’s government in Jamaica and Ethiopia.⁷²⁷

Some eight months after he had taken up his post at the UWI, the JLP government was already starting to become more than a little alarmed about Rodney’s street lectures for the black masses. In August 1968

the university's Vice-Chancellor, Sir Philip Sherlock, was summoned to the office of Roy McNeill, the Minister of Home Affairs. The Minister expressed his government's concern, but nothing happened. On 14 October, however, the Vice-Chancellor was again contacted, this time by Prime Minister Hugh Shearer, who demanded that the UWI fire Rodney, who was off the island to attend a conference in Montreal. Sherlock told Shearer that there were no reasons for such a step and that it was not within his power to do so either. He promised to call a meeting of the UWI's staff to discuss the problem and to return two days later. But when Walter Rodney returned to Jamaica the following day, he was not allowed to leave the airplane and was deported back to Montreal on the same flight.⁷²⁸ In a radio broadcast Shearer accused Rodney of "subversive activities." To justify his decision and to take advantage of anti-Rastafarian sentiments, he added that Rodney had worked together with "groups of people who claimed to be part of the Rastafarian movement and also with Claudius Henry who was convicted in 1960 of treason felony."⁷²⁹ Henry had been released from prison in 1967, but whether or not he had actually been in touch with Rodney is unknown.

Upon hearing the news of Rodney's deportation, the Guild of Undergraduates of the UWI called a meeting at which it was decided to protest with a demonstration at the Prime Minister's office the following day. Wednesday morning came, but not the buses which were supposed to take the hundreds of students downtown. It was therefore decided to march to the Prime Minister's office. They marched along the same route as had been taken 47 years before by Alexander Bedward and his flock. And just like the Bedwardites, the students from the Mona campus did not get far. A strong police force met and stopped them on Mona Road, using batons and tear gas. The march was broken up, but many students, joined by lots of other sympathizers, later demonstrated on downtown Duke Street. Things then escalated rapidly. The protesters marched to the Prime Minister's office, but as they were passing the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union's (BITU) headquarters, they were attacked by trade union members affiliated with the Jamaica Labour Party. BITU and JLP supporters threw stones from the building and the police dispersed the crowd.

Once the marchers had reached the Prime Minister's office, the police once again broke up the demonstration, which by then was no longer dominated by students, but had attracted thousands of youths, Rastas and other downtown and ghetto-dwellers. While most of the students retreated to the Mona campus, others proceeded through downtown Kingston and began to attack, loot and burn down businesses, most of them owned by foreign companies. Some 50 buses of the Jamaica Omnibus Service also went up in flames. By the end of the day three people had been killed, twelve seriously injured, a large number of looters arrested and property estimated at some £ 1 million damaged or burned down. The following day saw some scattered incidents, but the strong presence of the military and police prevented further chaos. The Mona campus was surrounded by soldiers for almost a week.

The Shearer administration was quick to call the spontaneous rioting a carefully planned attempt of foreign communist agitators to spark a revolution, thereby grossly exaggerating both the influence of left-wing students from other Caribbean countries and the organized character of the riots. Since many Rastafarians sympathized with Rodney and some were actively involved in the demonstration, the "Rodney riots" once more demonstrated to the general public that the Rastafarians were dangerous revolutionaries.

In the wake of the Rodney riots, radical young intellectuals together with other black activists and a number of politically-oriented Rastafarians founded the Abeng group. Starting in February 1969 they issued a weekly newspaper under the same name, which brought news and opinions relating to the black struggle and reached a circulation of some 15,000. Internal conflicts and ideological differences, however, resulted in the collapse of the Abeng group within two years. Its weekly appeared for only a few months. In October 1969 the *Abeng* printery burned out under suspicious circumstances. Yet the impact of the Abeng group and Black Power ideas on Jamaican society was considerable, if only because it helped to create racial awareness among the black intelligentsia and middle classes, and created a bridge between politically-oriented sections of the Rastafarian movement and other progressive black activists.

During the late 1960s, the Rastafarians were still subject to regular police harassment, though only some of these cases were made public. *Abeng*, for instance, reported in March 1969 that police officers from Morant Bay, St. Thomas had burned the huts and belongings of a group of Rasta fishermen, allegedly because they were squatting on government land. When one of the Rastafarians later went to the police station to talk to the Inspector, he was severely beaten with guns and sticks.⁷³⁰ Claudius Henry and his following were also subjected to several police raids, as we shall see in the next chapter. Most of the

Rastafarians suffered in silence, but others took to the streets. In October 1969 an estimated 500 Rastas staged a demonstration in St. Ann's Bay, where "various speakers voiced dissatisfaction with present conditions in Jamaica and claimed that the Rastafarians and their brethren were being 'pushed aside and trampled on.'"⁷³¹

Also in 1969 the General Manager of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) banned the weekly radio programs *The Lion of Judah Time* and *Speak Love* which two Rastafarian groups, the Disciples of the Great King and Sons of Negus Churchical Hosts, had produced since 1968. The reasons given for the ban were that:

specifically the JBC is not prepared to accept for broadcast any program (i) which states or implies that His Majesty Haile Selassie is God (ii) which we believe could adversely affect racial harmony (iii) which, in our opinion, could be regarded as seditious or disruptive of law and order.⁷³²

But there were signs of growing tolerance and recognition as well. According to Anita Waters, many of the Rastafarians who had kept their hair short to avoid persecution, began to grow "locks" during 1968 and 1969.⁷³³ Compared to the reactions to Rastafari during the 1950s and first half of the 1960s acceptance, although often grudging, had increased by the late 1960s, giving more and more Rastafarians the courage to visibly identify with the movement. The university's *Report*, the missions to Africa and other publicity had contributed to a better understanding of the movement and its doctrines, while the visit of Haile Selassie had certainly contributed to their prestige. The late 1960s also witnessed a growing influence of Rastafari on the Rude Boys and other ghetto youths, which was reflected in popular Jamaican music. As shall be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, mento and ska music gradually gave way to new styles, known as rock steady and reggae, whose lyrics revealed the increasing impact of Rastafari. But the Rastafarians not only found a receptive ear in the world of music. In October 1968 an exhibition of Rastafarian art attracted "an admiring crowd."⁷³⁴

In September and October 1969 both the Prime Minister, Hugh Shearer, nicknamed "Pharaoh Share-out" by the Rastafarians, and Opposition Leader, Michael Manley, who had just succeeded his father Norman as leader of the People's National Party, paid visits to Ethiopia and His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I.⁷³⁵ One of the things Shearer discussed with the Lion of Judah were the problems surrounding the imperial land grant of 1955.

Following the Ethiopian World Federation's announcement that there was land available for black people from the West who wanted to settle in Ethiopia, only a few people had been able to make their way to Shashamane. To increase the number of settlers, the EWF had launched a campaign to raise some £ 5,000 during 1967 and 1968, but the fund had been making "disappointingly slow progress," in spite of a £ 20 donation from former Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante.⁷³⁶ Yet between 1965 and 1969 several members (both Rastafarian and non-Rastafarian) and non-members of the EWF had settled in Shashamane, including Willy Hillman, a Baptist minister from Georgia, Noel Dyer, who had been born in St. Thomas and *walked* all the way to Ethiopia from Britain, Solomon Wolfe, President of Local 43, and Inez and Clifton Baugh and their children from Jamaica.⁷³⁷ However, the Pipers, the first Shashamane settlers, refused to share the land with those arriving later.⁷³⁸

According to Carole Yawney, "the small settlement in Shashamane appeared to represent the Back-to-Africa movement in microcosm, for the same factions are found within it." There were "allegations that the original administrators mismanaged its affairs," problems between the pioneers from different countries of origin and problems with the local population.⁷³⁹ The Shashamane land grant had also been a source of continuous conflict between Rastafarian and non-Rastafarian members and Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation in Jamaica. These conflicts, as we have seen, dated back to the mid-1950s, when several Locals had barred dreadlocks from becoming members. After the 1961 mission to Africa the mainly dreadlocked Local 7, led by Raphael Downer, Local 25, located in Spanish Town, and Local 37, led by Mortimo Planno, had broken with the EWF headquarters in New York City, "but still acknowledged the validity of the E.W.F. as an instrument of Repatriation."⁷⁴⁰

During their meeting Shearer and Haile Selassie agreed on a resettlement of some of the pioneers and when Shearer returned to Jamaica he stated that although there was "no limitation on the acreage to be made available, ... Jamaicans would not be allowed to flock there."⁷⁴¹ The young and charismatic Michael Manley, accompanied by another rising star in the PNP, P.J. Patterson, visited the Ethiopian monarch only a few days after Shearer. It was, as Manley junior said upon returning, "a tremendous experience."

His interpretation of the possibilities for migration to Ethiopia was more optimistic than that of the Prime Minister. As the newspaper reported:

Mr. Manley said Emperor Haile Selassie had said that he looked to a future in which it would be possible for Jamaicans to come as farmers, provided there was adequate government control and supervision. "This was what he said and this was what I quoted him as saying, having secured his permission to quote him ..."⁷⁴².

As the 1960s drew to a close, both political leaders had scored useful points with their visits to Ethiopia and its Emperor, although as Yawney writes, "many brethren interpreted the ... visits as attempts to influence the Rastafarians and sympathizers favourably in the coming elections."⁷⁴³

But the popularity of Rastafari among the young was growing. Certainly since the revival of Black Power during the late 1960s, many of the non-religious ideas expounded by the Rastafarians had become more acceptable and were gradually taken up in wider circles. As Rex Nettleford writes: "What would have been regarded as peculiarly Rastafarian in 1959-60 was to be assimilated ten years later into the mainstream of thought on black power and majority control."⁷⁴⁴ The assertion of a black, African cultural identity was no longer a uniquely Rastafarian issue.

Chapter 4.

A traditional hostility: Rastafari and Jamaican society, 1970-1979

The year 1970 began just like any other year. The wider Jamaican society celebrated New Year on 1 January and the Rastafarians celebrated Ethiopian Christmas from 7 to 11 January. Some 300 Rastafarians gathered in the parish of Hanover and “a detachment of police from Lucea and other stations in the parish joined the Kingsvale police in patrolling the area to see that law and order was maintained.”⁷⁴⁵ No disorder was reported.

A few days later, for no apparent reason, H.S. Burns complained in *The Daily Gleaner* about “the cancerous worms” of the Rastafarian movement. Those with a good memory for names will recall that the same gentleman had also written a letter to the *Gleaner* after a “Rasta” had murdered Sidney Garrell in 1951. Burns had claimed to “know these bearded men,” since he had spoken to some of them during a few days of census-taking in the slum areas of West Kingston. In the almost two decades between his letters to the *Gleaner* his opinion about the Rastafarians had not changed for the better. In 1951 he had still regarded the average Rasta as “either ganja smoker, idler or criminal,” although there were, he concluded, some “true Christians” among “the beards.” Now he found that

[t]he Rastafarian, the criminal, the communist, the followers of the Black Power movement have a like objective - the overthrow of the present system of Government, the present rulers and their officers, therefore the overthrow of all law and order and decency. In this they are all one - a menace to democracy, to society, to the Jamaican way of life. They must be stamped out, exterminated or God help Jamaica.⁷⁴⁶

To justify his opinion of the Rastafarians, Burns hinted at a murderous tendency within the Rastafarian movement: “I have met men and women who swear they were Ras Tafarians, but they had to run, or as one said, ‘Dem was gwine heng me.’”

In a reaction to Burns’ letter, Ras José, a Rastafarian from West Kingston, cynically replied:

God help the Rastafarians if all men were thinking like you. The propoganda about Rastafarians is [as] fantastic as the truth. All we need is to go Home (repatriation), not to overthrow any government. For even in this we still would not get content.⁷⁴⁷

Many Rastafarians indeed still wanted to leave Babylon as soon as possible and some were quite persistent in their efforts to make it to the Promised Land. In early March, for instance, the authorities had to impose “strict security measures” at the Kingston wharf. A group of Rastafarians had made several attempts to board the Ghanaian freighter *Kulpawn River* bound for Port Limón, Costa Rica.⁷⁴⁸

Other Rastafarians continued to pressure the government for action. A delegation of Rastafarians, including Ras Samuel Brown, met with Neville Gallimore, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who assured them that the government was busy preparing a diplomatic mission to Africa.⁷⁴⁹ Following Prime Minister Hugh Shearer’s visit to Ethiopia the year before, the Jamaican High Commissioner in London had met with the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss the resettlement of the Rastafarian pioneers in Shashamane, where there were still problems with the Pipers.⁷⁵⁰

Back in Jamaica, the Institute of Jamaica’s Art Gallery held its annual National Exhibition where a large number of paintings by Rastafarians was one of the most significant features. It led *The Daily Gleaner* to devote several pages to “the exciting art of the Rastafarians.”⁷⁵¹ An enthusiastic art critic wrote about the “sudden” appearance of Rastafarian art: “some of it is flamboyant and real, some showing traces of the copybook, but all of it creating a positive Jamaican style.”⁷⁵² Quite a few Rastafarians had devoted their energies to the arts and by the late 1960s several of these self-taught artists had begun to attract the attention of art collectors. The works of Ras Daniel Heartman, Ras Dizzy and many others were highly valued and the Rastafarians were increasingly regarded as one of the major artistic forces on the island. Growing appreciation for the Rastafarian movement as a creative cultural movement - not only in painting and sculpture as we shall see further on - was a major element in its growing acceptance by and accommodation with the wider Jamaican society during the 1970s.

The Daily Gleaner, however, also continued to print articles ridiculing the Rastafarians. A Rasta by the

name of Contus Anderson, on trial in Montego Bay for possession of ganja, was asked for the name of his lawyer and was reported to have replied: "His Imperial Majesty." Resident Magistrate Boyd Carey asked the Rastafarian "if Selassie was going to come and appear for him and before Anderson could reply the judge said he did not think the Emperor was a lawyer but he fixed Anderson's [trial] for Feb. 23 and told him to bring Selassie and his witnesses."⁷⁵³ The courts in Jamaica still had little or no compassion for the Rastafarians or others with somewhat deviant ideas. In another case a few weeks later, a barrister was twice refused entry into the courtroom because he wore an African gown.⁷⁵⁴ The *Gleaner* devoted considerable space to such entertaining items.

In the meantime, the police force continued to monitor the activities of the Rastafarians. Prince Emmanuel and his following were evicted from the premises they occupied at Spanish Town Road and were later arrested for trespassing in upper-class Cherry Gardens. Ten Rastafarians celebrating their devotion for Haile Selassie on a Portland beach, were arrested for possession of ganja and chilium pipes.⁷⁵⁵ A year later, policemen were to burn the huts of a group of Rasta-squatters in the Wareika Hills, during which action one Rastafarian lost his life.⁷⁵⁶

By 1970 little was left of the older Rastafarian groups. Robert Hinds was dead and Leonard Howell lived in seclusion in what remained of Pinnacle. Other early preachers, like Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley were, however, still around. Hibbert was loosely affiliated with the Ethiopian World Federation and presided over his Ethiopian Coptic Faith (Church). He returned to the spotlight when in 1970 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church founded a branch in Jamaica, as we shall see further on. During the mid-1950s Archibald Dunkley had dismantled his King of Kings Mission to become President of Local 77 of the EWF, but he appears to have had only a small group of adherents. Nothing at all was heard of other early leaders, like Vernal Davis and Ferdinand Ricketts.

Of the other more or less formal Rastafarian groups which had gained some prominence during the 1950s - the United Ethiopian Body led by Claudius Stewart, the United Rases Organ led by George Williams or the Rastafari Brethren United Front of Gladstone Graham and Trevor Campbell, to name but a few - little or nothing was heard after the 1960s. The Church Triumphant of Jah Rastafari, led by Ras Shadrack and Ras Daniel Heartman, the Ras Dizzy Group, the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari, headed by Count Ossie, and the numerous Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation continued to exist, but kept a relatively low profile. Most of these groups were subject to a process of constant fission and fusion. They changed names, merged with other groups and split up yet again.

The organizations under charismatic leadership which had emerged in the mid-1950s, like Claudius Henry's African Reform Church (later the New Creation Peacemakers' Association) or Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards' Ethiopian National Congress (which later became the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress Church of Salvation, commonly known as the Bobo Dreads), were more stable, but at the same time more marginal and isolated. Henry and his Peacemakers had retreated to Clarendon. Prince Emmanuel and his Bobo Dreads had been constantly on the run since the clearance of the Foreshore area in 1966 and their eviction from Spanish Town Road four years later. In 1972 Prince Emmanuel was to leave Kingston to start a commune in the vicinity of Bull Bay, St. Andrew.⁷⁵⁷

The attempts of West Kingston's Rastafarians to unite during the preparations for the mission to Africa, had only resulted in further division. Samuel Brown remained a respected elder, but had lost much support as a result of his participation in politics. Although Mortimo Planno had formally joined the EWF, he was a prime example of an independent elder. Filmore Alvaranga and Douglas Mack, who had represented the United Rases of East Kingston on the mission to Africa, had lost much of their credibility after they styled themselves "the three wise men" and leaders of the movement, following their own journey to Africa with Samuel Clayton. They had formed the Rastafarian Brethren Repatriation Association, which maintained close ties with the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari of Count Ossie.

Among the new groups and organizations that had been formed shortly before 1970, was the Rastafari Movement Association (RMA), which later changed its name into the Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly (RITA). The RMA was founded in 1969 by a group of young and politically-oriented Rastafarians, including Ras Historian (Eric Clement), Gill Tucker and Ras DaSilva, in an effort to organize and centralize the Rastafarian movement. No doubt influenced by Black Power ideas, they took the position that the movement should strive towards "liberation before repatriation," as Haile Selassie had supposedly urged the Rastafarians to do during his state visit to the island in 1966. The RMA, with its office on Wildman, later Laws and finally Church Street in downtown Kingston, became active in community proj-

ects and food and employment programmes for youths. It also operated a small workshop for Rastafarian artists. From 1970 on it regularly published *Rasta Voice Magazine*, initially known as *The Rases Voice*.⁷⁵⁸ Unlike some other Rastafarian organizations, the RMA was willing to cooperate with non-Rastafarian groups in order to achieve greater political influence.

Another organization which had emerged around the same time was the Twelve Tribes of Israel. It was founded in 1968, but until the early 1970s was known as Local 15 of the Ethiopian World Federation, and was described by Joseph Owens as “perhaps the most strictly organized group of Rastas now in operation” and “the most insistent upon pursuing repatriation.”⁷⁵⁹ Local 15 focused on Bible-reading and organized large Sunday night meetings at various places in downtown Kingston. The group was led by Vernon Carrington, commonly known as Brother Gad, who assumed the role of true prophet. Its membership included a large number of middle-class Rastafarians and intellectuals. According to Anita Waters some of them had been active in the Abeng group, which had disintegrated in 1970.⁷⁶⁰ During the early 1970s Local 15 claimed to have obtained a new charter for settlement in Shashamane, which was probably what caused the split with the Ethiopian World Federation in 1972. Under the name “Twelve Tribes of Israel” they were to become one of the largest and most influential formal organizations within the movement.⁷⁶¹

The majority of the Rastafarians, however, were not at all or only loosely affiliated with any of the numerous organizations, some of which effectively had only two or three active members. Yet several more formalized groups had developed, reflecting the diversity of ideas and beliefs within the movement.

During the early 1970s several leaders of the movement were to found the Jah Rastafari Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government, also known under a score of similar names. The core of the Theocracy Government was formed by lower-class Rastas from the ghettos of West and East Kingston and its organizational structure was based on the “House” of Nyabinghi of the radical dreadlocks, who had once formed groups like Youth Black Faith. Initially, there was a High Council of fifteen members. Later the Judah Coptics or orthodox Rastafarians, as they will be referred to here, were officially led by 72 elders, although in practice their number was much smaller. Membership was open to all (dreadlocked) Rastafarians, regardless of whether they belonged to other groups or took part in House activities. As an umbrella organization, the Theocracy Government thus claimed to be the movement’s only legitimate representative, a divine nation. As one of its leaders later expressed it:

Theocratic Government is a divine government that shall rule Creation in Love, Holiness, and Unity with all the ingredients of Affection, Compassion, and Humility. ... When we conquer Babylon, when we conquer the deceiver Pope under brutal feet of death, then it shall be one ruling government-theocracy. ... The rainbow is the emblem, the dominion, and the power and the glory for all the Theocratic Government. ... It’s a government, a Divine Theocratic Government, and that’s the reason why all who belongs to this Theocratic Government should project qualities. Not only talk it, but utilize it among others.⁷⁶²

In a sense, the Judah Coptic Church and Theocracy Government became the largest and most important section of the Rastafarian movement. The “members” of the church and government only came together for their Nyabinghis or grounations, on occasions such as the annual celebration of Haile Selassie’s coronation, birthday or visit to Jamaica. In practice it thus remained a scattered and fluid organization, made up of numerous individuals and small informal groups, some in Kingston, others in what Jamaicans describe as the country. This made it almost impossible to determine who represented the Judah Coptic Church and Theocracy Government at any given moment in time. Furthermore, in spite of the apparent unity, there were continuous internal struggles and conflicts. As Tracy Nicholas writes:

there are conflicts of interest which arise primarily between leaders from Kingston and those from some of the island’s rural areas. ... It is when the leaders come together that conflicts must be settled, through hours of discussion and debate, even displays of emotion, shouting, and screaming.⁷⁶³

As we shall see, the Judah Coptics and their Theocracy Government were to play a crucial role during the 1970s and 1980s.⁷⁶⁴ But in May 1970 another church, an established Christian church, the church of His Imperial Majesty, came to Jamaica.

The Jamaican branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

“It was very difficult, because while they were glad to see me come from Ethiopia, they did not like the fact that I preached Christ.”

One of the dearest wishes of the Rastafarians had long been to learn more about the teachings of the church of Ethiopia, the church of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. As early as 1954 the Brotherhood Solidarity of United Ethiopians and several Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation had asked the leadership of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) in Addis Ababa, to establish a branch in Jamaica. The Ethiopian church had already established a branch in Trinidad in 1953, later to be followed by branches in Guyana and, in 1959, in New York City.⁷⁶⁵ The Rastafarians had constantly written letters to the church repeating their request, and asking for and providing information. One of the main activists was Cecil G. Gordon, Second International Vice-President of the Ethiopian World Federation in the West Indies, who had brought good news upon returning from the 20th Annual Convention of his organization in New York City in 1959. The Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Theophilous, was to come to Jamaica in December that same year to establish the long awaited branch.⁷⁶⁶ But for reasons which remain obscure, this did not come about.⁷⁶⁷

As mentioned before, the authors of *Report on the Ras Tafari movement*, basing their advice on the aspirations of the Rastafarians, had in 1960 recommended that the Jamaican government officially invite the EOC to establish a branch on the island.⁷⁶⁸ The Norman Manley administration had adopted this recommendation, but nothing happened. During the 1961 mission to Africa Cecil Gordon, one of the delegates, had again relayed the request to Abuna Basilius, another high-ranking church official.

Every now and then, priests of the church had visited Jamaica. In 1962 Ato Alem Seged, secretary of the EOC in the West Indies, had made a brief stop on the island while on his way to New York City. He met with several Rastafarians and “gave them hundreds of copies of the Amharic alphabet,” which the Rastafarians had accepted gratefully: in preparation for their return to Ethiopia, many were eager to learn the official language of the Empire.⁷⁶⁹ Although they lacked a formal link, several groups already worshipped along the lines of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church or had at least incorporated elements of the EOC’s liturgy and ritual into their services. This was the case with a small group calling itself the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, led by Dennis Chin and Brother Buckley, some Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation and Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert’s Ethiopian Coptic Faith. One of their regular celebrations centered around Ethiopian Christmas on 7 January.

But not only the Rastafarians were anxious to have a branch of the church established in Jamaica. Some Jamaican politicians perceived a useful role for the EOC in converting Rastas, just as members of the Jamaican elite had previously expected the Moral Rearmament movement to be useful in undermining Rastafari. Edwin Allen, Minister of Education in the Jamaica Labour Party administration, later recalled:

I was ... greatly distressed to find that some of our Jamaicans who are admirers of His Imperial Majesty allowed their zeal to lead them astray and to cause them to regard him as God. So when His Imperial Majesty visited Jamaica and I had the honour of speaking to him, I asked him what he thought of being worshipped as a God. He told me that he was not a God and indeed, he was a devout Christian. I gathered from what he said that any attempt to worship him as a God was an embarrassment to him. I therefore took the opportunity to discuss this matter with the Ethiopian Ambassador who visited Jamaica soon after the visit of His Imperial Majesty. I suggested that it would be best for all concerned if a branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church could be established in Jamaica so that those who admired His Imperial Majesty so greatly could become members of that church which is one of the oldest churches in the world.⁷⁷⁰

The importance of Allen’s initiative is difficult to assess. As we have seen, both Prime Minister Hugh Shearer and Opposition Leader Michael Manley had visited Ethiopia and the Emperor in 1969 and it may very well be that one or both of them brought the matter to the attention of His Imperial Majesty. In any case, shortly afterwards, Laike Mariam Mandefro, *Archimandrite* (bishop) of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the United States, was summoned to an audience with Emperor Haile Selassie and the Patriarch of the church, Abuna Theophilous, where he was told that he was to be sent to Jamaica to establish a branch of the EOC.

Laike Mariam Mandefro was born in Addis Ababa in 1933, the son of a high-ranking civil servant. He was ordained deacon at fourteen and priest at seventeen, and after serving at a monastery in Tigre was called to the Ethiopian capital to receive further training at a special seminary. There Mandefro became one of

Emperor Haile Selassie's personal priests. Later, already ordained *Archimandrite*, Mandefro was sent to the United States for further education. He studied at the Russian Orthodox Theological School, New York University and at Princeton's Theological Seminary, and graduated with Masters Degrees in Divinity, Psychology and Philosophy, and Systematic Theology. Finally, he became the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the United States and it was in this capacity that Mandefro was summoned back to Addis Ababa, where he received his new orders without much enthusiasm. In an interview with *The Daily Gleaner* Mandefro later recalled:

I didn't want to go, but the Emperor said: "I want to help these people. My heart is broken because of the situation of these people. Help them to find the True God. Teach them." It was the Emperor's order, and I could not refuse.⁷⁷¹

When the *Archimandrite*, accompanied by two deacons, Gebre Hiwot and Collin R. Tomlin, arrived at Kingston's airport on 14 May 1970, some 300 Rastafarians and other admirers of Ethiopia, armed, as usual, with banners and singing hymns, were there to welcome them. Of course, they all wanted to pass through Customs to greet Mandefro, but only Cecil Gordon of the Ethiopian World Federation and now chairman of the Ethiopian Church Mission Committee, and Nathaniel Hibbert, active as "spiritual organizer" in the same committee, were allowed through.

Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert, as described earlier, was one of the early Rastafarian preachers, who had established his Ethiopian Coptic Faith (Church) in the early 1930s. He had preached his own mystical version of Rastafari and the Coptic faith ever since. Later he also founded a Local (27) of the Ethiopian World Federation and became actively involved in the attempts to found a branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Jamaica. Hibbert, however, not only regarded himself as the "spiritual organizer," but also claimed to be the principal teacher and prophet of the Coptic faith in Jamaica, "the incarnated body," probably of Josiah. In his view, Mandefro was merely an assistant. As he later declared: "His Majesty Haile Selassie I sent me a Priest namely Abba Mandefro to baptize the people under my leadership."⁷⁷² How Hibbert's relationship with Mandefro and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church developed is not completely clear, but he appears to have gone his own way rather than becoming an active member in the church. As one of the founding fathers of Rastafari, Hibbert remained a respected elder, but after 1970 his influence on the movement appears to have been limited. Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert died on 18 September 1986, at the age of 93.⁷⁷³

Shortly after his arrival in Kingston, Abba Mandefro was interviewed by a reporter from the *Gleaner* to whom he explained that "the people were very much concerned about the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and they knew that [it] was the church which belonged to the black race. Everyone wanted to have his own identity."⁷⁷⁴ The most important event during his eight days in Jamaica was the baptism of no fewer than 600 persons, most of them Rastafarians, during one service held at the Kingston Parish Church on Saturday 23 May. Some 150 others, who had also applied for baptism, could not be served, but the *Archimandrite* and his two deacons did manage to marry eighteen couples. The remaining 150 candidates for baptism were served later that evening at the Ebenezer Hall in West Kingston. The following day the EOC celebrated its first High Mass in Jamaica, again at the Kingston Parish Church, with Roman Catholic Archbishop Samuel Carter as special guest.

Besides leading the religious services, Mandefro officially established the Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Church Mission in Jamaica. Some 25 officers were elected and a fund-raising committee established. Mandefro called on several church leaders, including the Roman Catholic, Moravian and Anglican (Arch) bishops. Having come to the island as a guest of the government of Jamaica, Mandefro also met with Neville Gallimore, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and PNP leader Michael Manley. He furthermore paid a courtesy call on the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Campbell, who agreed to be the patron for the fund-raising committee.⁷⁷⁵ When Mandefro and his assistants left the island, he described his visit as "wonderful and successful," since he had been able to "unite groups of various philosophical beliefs."⁷⁷⁶

For most Rastafarians the new church was simply the church of Ethiopia and Haile Selassie, and as such an institution uniquely relevant to Rastafari. Although many Rastas flocked to the EOC shortly after its establishment, it was not long before large numbers dropped out again. They soon discovered that the theology and ritual of the church were in more than one respect closer to the despised Roman Catholic and Anglican churches than to the teachings of Rastafari. Much of the ritual of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, such as baptism, the host or the kissing of the cross, was patently alien to the Rastafarians, while

the hierarchical structure of the church was contrary to basic Rastafarian beliefs about democracy and equality. Worst of all, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church did not regard Haile Selassie, officially the head of the church and himself a devout member, to be divine. A lot of Rastafarians wanted to be baptized in the name of Haile Selassie and not in the name of Yesus Christos, as was customary in the EOC. According to *The Star* this even led to “disorder” during a registration meeting, when a group of Rastafarians demanded to be baptized in the name of their Messiah.⁷⁷⁷ As Mandefro later recalled:

In the beginning, it was very difficult, because while [the Rastafarians] were glad to see me come from Ethiopia, they did not like the fact that I preached Christ. But I teach them that the Emperor is the Defender of our Faith, and the greatest Christian leader of our time. The Church cannot baptise in any other name than Christ, and this has been accepted by our Church members, many of whom still wear dreadlocks. But those who want to be baptised in the Emperor’s name, must not be ridiculed or condemned, there must be someone who will be able to contact them and gradually bring them to the truth.

Many expected our Church to be different, and for many the name of Jesus Christ was a name associated with slavery, so what was different about our Church. Also, we were prepared to worship with other churches, including the Catholic, Methodist and Anglican churches which loaned us premises before we had our own building. Many Rastafari did not approve of this ecumenism, but I have had to teach them that Christ’s Church is one Church, with no divisions.

We have lost many members who were glad to be baptised in an African/ Ethiopian church, but who cannot accept Christ. ... I have to be very careful not to hurt the feelings of Rastafari. When I am asked is the Emperor God? I say the Emperor is a devoted Christian, and I use the Ethiopian “Yesus Christos” rather than the British pronunciation, which helps to make a difference. ...

My life has been threatened many times, but because of the vow I took, I decided that whatever happened, I was going to stand and face everything. ... These people love Africa and Ethiopia. They need someone who will sacrifice themselves [sic] with them. I am not doing a great thing. I feel I am making a small sacrifice to help them understand.⁷⁷⁸

Those Rastas who did not desert the church became, in effect, Christians, although quite a few managed to combine their belief in the divinity of Selassie with the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, arguing that Selassie and Christ were one and the same. The majority of the Rastafarians, however, were ambivalent in their feelings towards the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. They did not agree with its teachings, its ritual or its hierarchical structure, but it was still the church of Ethiopia, the church of the Emperor.⁷⁷⁹ And thus in 1972 alone about one thousand members were baptized into the EOC.⁷⁸⁰

The welcome given to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church by Jamaican church leaders and politicians, on the other hand, was unequivocally warm. The established churches made their premises available to the EOC, their leaders attended its first services as honorary guests and took seats in the church’s fund-raising committee. In a speech to the congregation of the EOC a year later, Governor-General Sir Clifford Campbell remarked that the “Rastafarians in Jamaica were seeking an identity” and that “the establishment of a branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church here would go a long way towards assisting them in that direction.”⁷⁸¹ The first and only church to have come to Jamaica at the request of the people, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as one of the church leaders said, “came in on a top level.”⁷⁸²

But there were critical voices, too. Reverend J.E.C. Farrell of the Mount Zion University Church was quite bitter about the Governor-General’s patronage of the EOC’s fund-raising campaign. In an advertisement in the leading Jamaican newspaper he wrote:

We are already supporting enough falsehood and hypocrisy: we can compromise no further. It’s only the truth can [sic] set men free. Sir Clifford Campbell said that “members of the Ethiopian Church should go out and teach so that people could get to know about God.” Doesn’t Sir Campbell know that Rastafarians are already busy teaching that Haile Selassie is God?

Farrell, “ready to die for truth and right,” added that the Rastafarians “must be told bluntly that Haile Selassie is no God.”⁷⁸³

His advertisement provoked a reaction from the chairman of the Jamaica Council of Churches, Bishop Hastings, and the leaders of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, Bishop Swaby and Archbishop Carter, who insisted that the members of the EOC were Christians and that “although many of our Rastafarian brothers have become members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Jamaica, membership in this denomination is by no means limited to or is to be identified with any particular group, racial or otherwise.”⁷⁸⁴ Laike Mariam Mandefro, back in New York City, also reacted to Reverend Farrell’s advertisement.

These people, we must not forget, are citizens of Jamaica and thus are entitled to all the rights and privileges to which Jamaicans are entitled. ... For many years Rastafarians just existed; today they are seeking, with their own incentive, because of the Orthodox Church, to establish themselves as citizens of Jamaica, the world, black men and children of GOD.⁷⁸⁵

In spite of the defense of the Rastafarians by Mandefro and the leadership of the established churches, many Rastas were disappointed in the church. Nevertheless, its membership was to grow and the church itself to become a respectable institution in Jamaican society.

With or without the Ethiopian Church, repatriation continued to be the ultimate goal for many, if not most Rastafarians. In November 1970 a Rastafarian from the northern part of the island, Ross Manassa L. Tapper, announced that he had founded a new organization, the Jamaica Ethiopia Blood-Brotherhood. He requested Prime Minister Hugh Shearer to make one thousand acres of forest reserve land available for all those Jamaicans of African ancestry who wanted to secure training in skills necessary for their return to Africa. Tapper and his Blood-Brotherhood proposed training in tobacco and peanut growing, but little more was heard of either Shearer's response or the Jamaica Ethiopian Blood-Brotherhood.⁷⁸⁶

Half a year later, Prince Emmanuel and several of his followers called on Neville Gallimore, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and asked the government for assistance in repatriation to Ethiopia. Gallimore told them that the government "would not hinder emigration, provided that the brethren had been accepted by the Ethiopian government," but also pointed out that Jamaica was "unable to render any financial assistance." The Rastafarians left the Ministry with little more than a copy of *The Ethiopian Gazette*, outlining the requirements for migration to Ethiopia.⁷⁸⁷ Prince Emmanuel was somewhat angered by the reports about his meeting with Gallimore, especially by the use of the term "emigration," which had caused him to refuse a place on the mission to Africa ten years before.

Our claim is that out of slavery we are entitled to repatriation not only for the brethren of Rasses alone but universal. Our statement was that the Government should seek out from the United Nations and African organizations international rights of repatriation. ... I do not defend emigration.⁷⁸⁸

The Jamaica Labour Party government was not about to finance repatriation or migration to Africa and Neville Gallimore made that quite clear. If there was to be any support for Rastafarian activities at all, it would be for those contributing to the movement's further integration in society. So a group of Rastafarian artists, organizing workshops for youths, received a J\$ 300 donation from a private company, which enabled them to continue their activities.⁷⁸⁹

In the meantime, the persecution of Rastafarians by the police force continued almost without interruption. Many Rastas were easily recognized by their dreadlocks, known for their devotion to the weed and often hated for what were held to be un-Christian and anti-social ideas. Countless innocent Rastafarians were still arbitrarily molested, arrested or detained. Trimming their locks remained a favorite game at police stations. Hardly any of these numerous incidents made the press and few victims thought it worthwhile pressing charges against the police. *Rasta Voice* recorded the stories of some of the Rastafarians who had been subjected to arbitrary harassment by the police:

I man Jah Gill was standing at the corner of Laws Street and Lad Lane when I see a babylon [police] car came up and stop, I look when I hear babylon say, you did a smoke ganja, so I man say but from you see Rasta you must say that. Huewitt tump I and take out his big gun and said, go into the car so I man go in through I man know I dont do nothing. Them carry I man to Central and use Hostility and brutality on I man, they trim I man locks that I carry for three years [unedited quote].⁷⁹⁰

Well on Friday 7th January [1972] the Rasta movement was at Norin Lane Old Harbour Bay celebrating in our own divine way, when on Monday morning 3 o'clock the 9th January four units of Police and Soldiers entered the premises and hit some of our brothers and sisters with batons and other things. ... The truth is, there is a Church of God building some 20 chains from the spot of the celebration, on Sunday this Church it is understood was to have a concert but the African people did not attend this babylon concert instead they visit the Ethiopian celebration. The Parson was vex he then call the Police told them that Rasta was burning down his church and I and I have three bags of wisdom weed. The backward lice did not come and find out if it was so, before they start beating up I and I and asking for ganja, some five persons was hurt [unedited quote].⁷⁹¹

The government of "Pharaoh Share-out" did little or nothing to end the persecution of Rastafarians. But while numerous Rastas fell victim to "the Babylon," important developments were taking place on the Jamaican musical scene, developments that were rapidly to increase the Rastafarians' influence on

Jamaican youth.

The advent of reggae music

“I do not think that it is reasonable for the Rastafarian artiste to be translating religious songs.”

Music and especially drumming had played an important part in Rastafarian ritual from very early on. Several early prophets had used adaptations of hymns sung in the Revival and Kumina groups. But many Rastas considered the Revival and Kumina cultists, who were heavily influenced by Christianity, with distrust.⁷⁹² In their search for an African identity, the Rastafarians had inevitably been attracted to the burru drummers.⁷⁹³

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the burru drum had served as the “work metronome for the slaves.”⁷⁹⁴ After the abolition of slavery the burru men moved to the cities where, like so many other slum dwellers, they had a hard time trying to make ends meet. Only during various festivities of the Christmas season did the burru drummers have the opportunity to use their skills and in doing so earn some money. They had developed the art of social commentary in their songs, addressing either current events or specific persons. It also became customary to welcome released prisoners back into the community with songs and dances. In the words of Garth White: “In the ghettos burru drummers were the exemplars of the ‘other tradition’ - the urban, spiritual descendants of Myal.”⁷⁹⁵

Both the Rastas and the burru drummers were regarded as social outcasts, both had their homes in the slums of the cities. As Verena Reckford writes:

The Burru people had no religion of their own so to speak. Rastas had no music.... The exchange of music for doctrine in the later 40's resulted in a merger of the two groups and the almost total extinction of the Burru people as a social group.⁷⁹⁶

The emergence of Rastafarian music and drumming is inseparably connected with the name of Count Ossie, born Oswald Williams in March 1926.⁷⁹⁷ In the late 1940s, when young Ossie still lived in West Kingston, he became a student of burru drummer Brother Job. Count Ossie developed into a master drummer and a specialist on the small *peta* drum. He acquired his own drums and transformed burru music into Rasta “ridims.” Together with Filmore Alvaranga, the Count organized street meetings, at which they preached the message of Jah Rastafari and accompanied the reasoning with drumming. As time passed, Count Ossie became one of the most prominent Rastafarian elders and drumming became an integral part of the Rastafarian meetings or Nyabinghi's.

After hurricane Charlie had demolished his home in 1951, the Count had moved to the Wareika Hills of East Kingston, where he established his famous camp at Adastra Road. During the late 1950s and early 1960s the music of Count Ossie and his group, the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari (MRR), began to attract national attention and in 1964 the group won a national award for its achievements.⁷⁹⁸ Within a few years, the highly acclaimed Count and his twenty-odd member MRR were touring the United States and England, and performing for foreign guests at Vale Royal and Kings House, the residences of the Prime Minister and Governor-General respectively. In 1974 the Count and his group established a community center at Glasspole Avenue. The ground-breaking ceremony was performed by Stokely Carmichael, the former President of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Commission and Field Marshall of the Black Panthers.⁷⁹⁹ The center became a meeting ground for Rasta musicians, but also served as a training center, with a library and spelling and art classes.

Count Ossie, father of thirteen children, died in a traffic accident on 18 October 1976. The funeral service was conducted by Abba Estaphanos of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Count was not a baptized member of the EOC, but after some initial reluctance the church agreed to make an exception. Among the guests at the funeral were JLP leader Edward Seaga, Kingston's PNP Mayor Ralph Brown and scores of other politicians and dignitaries. *The Daily Gleaner* devoted its editorial to the death of “one of the most acceptable and accessible Rastafarian leaders.”⁸⁰⁰

At the time when Count Ossie was starting to beat the drums, Jamaican music lovers still clung to calypso and mento. But around 1950 black-American Rhythm & Blues, in the style of Fats Domino, Chuck Berry or Louis Jordan, surpassed calypso and mento in popularity. Transistor radios had become more com-

mon and under good weather conditions radio stations from Miami or New Orleans came through loud and clear in Jamaica. The popularity of R&B also led to the emergence of the so-called sound systems. The government-owned Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) boycotted Rhythm and Blues and few Jamaicans were able to spend money on their favorite records. So enterprising businessmen took the music to the street. The first sound systems were simple installations, little more than a record player and a few giant speakers, but they soon developed into elaborate mobile discotheques. In their competition for the favor of the audiences, sound system operators like Prince Buster, Duke Reid or Clement “Sir Coxsone” Dodd staged complete sound clashes and soon not only played the latest records, but started talking and mixing the tunes together, thereby laying the foundation for what became known as dub or deejay music.^{801.}

It was not until the second half of the 1950s that successful sound system operators and Jamaican entrepreneurs began to produce and record local music. Before he went into politics, the young Harvard-trained anthropologist Edward Seaga had established his West Indies Recording Company and Chris Blackwell, a white Jamaican from an upper-class family, founded Island Records. Mento and R&B, in the meantime, had merged into a new Jamaican form of “shuffle-rhythm” music, known as ska. The members of the Skatalites, including Don Drummond on slide trombone and Ernest Ranglin on guitar, dominated the musical scene during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Ska or bluebeat, as it was known in England, also underwent the influence of Count Ossie. Prince Buster, for instance, recorded a song called *O Carolina*, in which the Count and his drummers backed the singing of the Folkes Brothers. The song became an instant hit and a ska classic.^{802.}

In spite of the technical skills of many of the ska musicians, the Jamaican middle classes and elite took little notice of this “backward” musical form. Their opinion became somewhat more positive when in 1964 Island Records released Millie Small’s *My Boy Lollipop* and sold six million copies worldwide. Official promotion of Jamaican music followed. Edward Seaga, by then Minister of Development and Welfare in the JLP government, sent Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, Prince Buster, Millie Small and rising star Jimmy Cliff to the New York World Fair.^{803.}

In the mid-1960s another development took place in Jamaican music. The ska beat slowed down, the rhythm was “cut in half” and the bass and drum began to dominate the tune. The new style became known as rock steady. Social commentary, though not necessarily absent in previous musical styles, now came to dominate the lyrics. Rock steady in a way reflected the rise of the Rudies, the “tough street anarchists born to raise hell in defiance of hard-eyed magistrates and the whipping-post,” as Stephen Davis once described them.^{804.} But just like most Rude Boys, rock steady had a short life. In the late 1960s the influence of the Rastafarians on the ghetto youths, and thereby on much of Jamaican popular music, steadily increased. Rock steady gave way to what became known as reggae, with an even slower beat and an even more dominant bass and drum line. The lyrics increasingly reflected the Rastafarian influence and by the early 1970s the presence of Rasta in popular music in Jamaica was firmly established.^{805.}

Reggae became popular among the lower classes, but - hardly surprising - not among the middle and upper classes. *Gleaner* columnist Morris Cargill, for instance, defined reggae as “some simple-minded phrase repeated over and over again to the accompaniment of an equally simple-minded chant.”^{806.} Other Jamaicans were offended by the lyrics of the reggae songs.

I do not think that it is reasonable for the Rastafarian artiste to be translating religious songs such as “Jesus Never Fails,” now known as “Rasta Never Fails” ... I think that the government should put a ban on some of these songs. They are on sale, which we could not stop; but hearing them on the radio is the worst part.^{807.}

The call to ban this kind of song was not in vain. The Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation banned song after song, which was usually the best guarantee for good sales.

But the Rastafarians had much more powerful songs than translations of Christian hymns. Only weeks after *The Daily Gleaner* had published this complaint, Bob Marley and the Wailers released *Trench Town Rock*:

One good things about music,
when it hits you feel no pain.
So hit me with music, hit me with music,
brutalise me with music, now.

The song hit the Jamaican record charts and remained number one for five successive months. It was the decisive breakthrough for the man who was to become the personification of Rastafari.

Nesta Robert Marley was born in the parish of St. Ann on 6 February 1945, the son of the elderly, white Navy-captain Norval Marley and his young, black wife Cedella. Theirs was a typical Jamaican marriage: the day after the ceremony Norval left. He sent money every now and then, but hardly ever showed his face. When Norval died and the money supporting the family stopped coming in, Cedella decided to try her luck in the capital. Young Bob, as his mother called him, initially stayed behind, but was sent to Kingston two years later. Mother and son lived in the slums of West Kingston, where the young “sufferer” soon found some “brethren,” including Neville “Bunny” Livingstone, with whom he roamed the streets, played football and listened to the ever-present music.

Bob and Bunny preferred to listen to the mento and the music of American stars like Ray Charles, Curtis Mayfield, Fats Domino or Sam Cooke. They imitated their singing and spent a lot of time hanging around the yard of Joe Higgs, one of the popular ghetto musicians, who at some point in time decided to teach them singing and harmony. Through Higgs, Bob and Bunny met another ghetto youth, Winston “Peter” MacIntosh, who possessed something very special: a guitar. Together they formed one of the many singing groups desperately trying to attract the attention of local producers.

Early in 1962 Marley met Jimmy Cliff, who had just scored his first local hit. Cliff in turn introduced Bob Marley to producer Leslie Kong, who recorded three songs with the trio. The records attracted attention, but were sold poorly and earned them little more than J\$ 20. In the meantime, mother Cedella had given birth to a child by Livingstone senior, then married a certain Edward Booker and left Kingston. Bob moved in with Bunny’s family, but was thrown out of the house after a row with one of Livingstone’s girlfriends. At the age of seventeen he found himself without a family and without a home, living on the streets, where his tough and sometimes reckless behavior earned him the nickname Tuff Gong.

The first local success came in 1963, when “Sir Coxson” Dodd recorded *Simmer Down* with the Wailing Wailers, as the trio now called themselves. It became a number one hit on the Jamaican charts. In *Simmer Down* the Wailing Wailers stood up for the Rude Boys, but not without calling on them to ease their aggression.

Simmer down, O control your temper
Simmer down, or the battle will be hotter ...
Simmer down, and you won’t get no supper
Simmer down, or you’re bound to suffer.⁸⁰⁸

Both the beat and the lyrics were completely different from what Jamaica had heard until then. Appreciation was, of course, restricted to the lower classes and the ghetto youths in particular. The Jamaican middle class preferred harmless ska-songs like Millie Small’s *My Boy Lollipop*, anti-Rudy songs like The Slicker’s *Johnny Too Bad* or Prince Buster’s *Judge Dread*, if not American music or, better still, Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. So although the Wailing Wailers performed mainly in dark downtown theaters, the success of *Simmer Down* gave them regular access to the recording studios. Nevertheless, the group remained completely dependent on the producers, making only a few dollars for themselves. Sir Coxson paid J\$ 20 for every recording, plus a small weekly allowance.

In February 1966 Bob Marley, in a way, followed in his father’s footsteps. The day after he married Rita Anderson, he left for the United States. Marley, Livingstone and Tosh had demanded payment in keeping with their success from Sir Coxson, but had received no more than a few dollars extra. Marley had thereupon decided to try to make some money in the United States, hoping to save enough to start his own recording studio. While Marley worked on odd jobs in the United States, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I visited Jamaica, leaving a deep impression on the other - no longer wailing - Wailers. Their Rude Boy image gradually shifted to an identification with Rastafari. When Marley returned, he somehow got to know Mortimo Planno, who took care of the Wailers’ business for a time, and Jamaica’s Rasta football star Alan “Skill” Cole, who soon became Marley’s closest friend. More importantly, however, Planno and Cole taught him about Rastafari.

During this period, Bob and Rita Marley left Kingston to live in St. Ann, where he not only composed songs like *Stir it up*, but also began an intensive study of the Bible. The Wailers recorded several songs with producer Leslie Kong, but sales were minimal. Once again, Marley decided to leave for the United States and, again, it did not work out. Back in Jamaica, the Wailers gave it another try with yet another

producer, Lee “Scratch” Perry, a sound wizard with new ideas. Still earning far too little to make a decent living, Marley went to Sweden to assist Johnny Nash with the recordings for the soundtrack of a movie, which was never released. In the meantime, collaboration with Perry and his musicians continued, but it was not until the summer of 1971 that the Wailers achieved their definitive breakthrough with *Trench Town Rock*. “Scratch” immediately released some of their earlier recordings.⁸⁰⁹

The 1972 elections and the Henry pamphlet

“The PNP believe in Michael’s rod; the JLP in Almighty God.”

While the lower classes danced to the rhythms of reggae and the nation’s elite expressed its annoyance with the lyrics, Jamaica was preparing for the general elections of February 1972. After the defeat of the People’s National Party in April 1962, the Jamaica Labour Party had taken the island through the first ten years of independence. The JLP government had pursued a policy of economic growth through export-oriented industrial development, following the example of Puerto Rico. It was successful in so far as the Gross Domestic Product had witnessed continuous growth, though not as extensive as the average 6.5% growth of the 1950s and it slowed down towards the end of the 1960s. Sectors like manufacturing, finance and public administration had shown a remarkable growth, but agriculture had rapidly declined in importance. Unemployment rates, on the other hand, had increased from about 10% to over 23% during the Jamaica Labour Party’s two terms in office, while the cost of living had steadily risen as well. The ghettos of Kingston expanded continuously due to the daily arrival of hundreds of migrants. By the end of the 1960s there was widespread discontent with the unequal distribution of the benefits of economic progress, the increased tax burden and the harsh reactions to civil protest. On top of that the JLP government was widely believed to be corrupt. In short, the JLP had brought little or no progress for the Jamaican masses and ten years after independence many of the hopes they had raised had been shattered.

While the JLP urged Jamaica to vote for consolidation and solid progress under the realistic leadership of Hugh Shearer, the PNP, led by the eloquent populist Michael Manley, promised “Power to the people” and “Better must come.” The party also displayed a dynamic, progressive and pro-black image. Rastafari was rapidly gaining adherents, both in the ghettos and among youths from the middle classes, and the politicians shrewdly and successfully capitalized on this development. As a campaign manager told Anita Waters:

A lot of middle class kids became Rastas. It is also true that by that time, their image had improved. Many were into art, doing creative things. They weren’t necessarily a bad element. Their language was gaining currency among the middle classes and the school children. We had the feeling that Rasta talk was understood across the country.⁸¹⁰

Whereas Norman Manley over a decade earlier had decided to try to undermine the Rastafarian’s basic beliefs, the PNP under the leadership of his son Michael had apparently decided to try to co-opt Rastafari, though this time the motive seemed to be electoral gain, rather than an attempt to contain the growth and radicalization of the movement.

The surging popularity of reggae and the gradually increased acceptance of Rastafari as a creative cultural force and an authentic expression of black, African identity made Rastafari in a way into a people’s movement. Apart from the usual verbal abuse and escalating gang violence, the election campaign of 1972 was thus characterized by the use of reggae and Rasta symbolism, especially by the PNP. During the election campaign several PNP candidates, including Michael Manley, frequently used words like “Hail,” “Love” and even “I man,” made popular by the Rastafarians. The JLP could not lag behind in the quest for the favor of those voters who had begun to identify with Rasta and reggae. Even Hugh Shearer, with his “restrained, suavely-suited business image,” was overheard talking about “I man.”⁸¹¹ At a meeting in downtown Kingston, the PNP Mayor of the city, Eli Matalon told the crowd that although the Prime Minister styled himself I man, “it was his Government that had persecuted the Rastafarians by shaving their beards and trimming their hair,” whereas it had been Matalon himself

who had given the Ethiopian Orthodox Church the land on which to site their Church, when both the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning made themselves unavailable to listen to the representation of the Church.⁸¹²

At least one PNP candidate started to wear a knitted tam, which many dreadlocked Rastafarians used to cover their hair, and several others grew their beards. According to Klaus de Albuquerque, some Rastas even believed Manley's close associate, the young and bearded P.J. Patterson, to be a Rastafarian.⁸¹³ During the campaign the PNP also organized weekly "bandwagon" concerts with popular reggae artists like Bob Marley and the Wailers, Ken Boothe, Max Romeo and Delroy Wilson.⁸¹⁴

But the most important and controversial symbol of the 1972 elections became the "rod of correction." Michael Manley - or Joshua as he was called by his supporters - claimed that the Emperor had given him a staff during his visit to Ethiopia in 1969. Everywhere he went, Manley waved His Imperial Majesty's rod and promised that with the help of it he would wipe out all evil. Joshua not only claimed supernatural powers for his rod, but also styled himself a God-sent redeemer and leader, approved and assisted by Haile Selassie.⁸¹⁵ Many Rastas felt that the politicians were out to use Rasta for their own electoral gain. Ras Wise, in a letter to *Rasta Voice*, warned against the Rastafarians being drawn into politics.

Vision clearly people that the two leaders are trying their best to get Rasta man to support them in their election [campaigns]. If you should look good you will see pictures on walls with men in the middle of our father. But the big question is, can these men help the African in Jamaica and the Caribbean? In these times when Black Power is the cry, who are they trying to fool?⁸¹⁶

Though the Rastafarians preferred not to get involved in "politricks," no doubt many passively supported Michael Manley and the People's National Party. Manley stood for change and tolerance, and several of his associates were progressive intellectuals and declared black nationalists. His claim to possess a rod of Emperor Haile Selassie also lent him legitimacy and an aura of mystic power. Shearer and the Jamaica Labour Party, on the other hand, stood for harsh repression and corruption. Although they could take credit for having invited Haile Selassie to Jamaica, they were at the same time responsible for the destruction of Back-O-Wall, the witch-hunt on Rastafarians after the Coral Gardens massacre and the banning of Walter Rodney.

One of the Rastafarians attracted to Michael Manley was Claudius Henry, the Repairer of the Breach, who had been released from prison in or shortly before 1967.⁸¹⁷ Back-to-Africa was no longer part of his teachings and so he had set out "to build Africa in Jamaica." The name African Reform Church was dropped in favor of New Creation Peacemakers' Association. The Rosalie Avenue headquarters had been abandoned and transferred to Green Bottom in the parish of Clarendon, the southern part of which had traditionally been a Henry stronghold. Here, within a very short time, the Repairer of the Breach and his followers had successfully established a bakery and a block-making factory, and also built a few two-room houses and a church with seating for 300 people. Green Bottom was, however, not the only place with Henry followers. There were branches in Kemps Hill and several other communities in Clarendon; in Brae's River, St. Elizabeth; in Port Morant, St. Thomas and in Kingston at Charles Street and Waltham Park Road. In spite of his long years in prison, his following had remained faithful. Also, not long after his release, Claudius Henry and Edna Fisher were married.

But not everything went so smoothly. Early on the morning of 23 January 1968 the Peacemakers' Association's branches had been raided by the security forces. After weeks of careful planning, over 200 heavily armed policemen and soldiers in full battle and riot gear, and carrying machine guns and bayonets, were ordered to invade Kemps Hill. They rounded up all the men, women and children, and turned everything upside down. Four people were arrested: two on charges of possession of prohibited literature, one for possession of ganja and another for possession of two cartridges. "Heaps upon heaps" of literature were seized.⁸¹⁸

A second raid occurred on 5 May 1968 in Brae's River, where according to a press release by the Jamaica Council for Human Rights "over £ 100 worth of property was destroyed. Even food which was then being prepared was thrown on the ground, trampled and deliberately contaminated with tear gas by the police."⁸¹⁹ Henry and a group of faithful, on their way to Brae's River, were held up at a road block and detained for six hours, without being charged. During the raid on the Brae's River congregation no one was arrested or charged, but the police took photographs and fingerprints, even from the children. Within two months, on 3 June, a joint police and military force of some 500 men once again raided Kemps Hill, without any apparent reason. Once again everything was searched, some articles were taken away and the members of the Peacemakers' Association were lined up to have their photographs and fingerprints taken.⁸²⁰

The demonstration of force was excessive. The core of Henry's following probably did not exceed one

hundred persons. Whether the raids had anything to do with Shearer's accusation in October 1968 that Henry was associated with Walter Rodney's "subversive activities" is unknown. It seems more likely though that the authorities were simply afraid of a possible repetition of the incidents of 1960.

But whatever the reasons behind the raids on the Peacemakers, some time during 1970 Claudius Henry decided to support the People's National Party. Members of the Peacemakers' Association played their drums at the 32nd General Conference of the PNP in February 1971, and between November that same year and January 1972 Henry distributed hundreds of pamphlets with pictures of himself flanked by Emperor Haile Selassie and Michael "Joshua" Manley. The pamphlet described the trio as "the Trinity of the God-Head."⁸²¹ In a tone befitting the true prophet, Henry stated:

There is no other man in Jamaica worthy as a Political Leader to receive this Honourable Staff of Justice and Power, to lead the people of Jamaica into a Righteous Government of Peace with Security, As Prime Minister, But Joshua. Therefore, as A Prophet of God, "The Repairer of the Breach," I declare Joshua, an Honest, Upright and Sincere Leader, Approved by God, to lead Jamaica and Jamaicans into a New Government of Righteousness and Peace. I am therefore calling upon all Sincere people, whether of the Labour Party Government or of the People's National Party to give Joshua a fair chance to prove himself a God-sent Leader ...⁸²²

The alliance between the PNP and Claudius Henry's group provoked strong criticism from the Jamaica Labour Party. One O.S. Brown, speaking at a JLP election meeting in the West Rural St. Andrew constituency, thought that Michael Manley had "joined forces with some strange elements" and was "in bad company, because he wanted to turn the country into a Rastafarian state."⁸²³

In February 1972, only a few days before the elections, Minister of Education Edwin Allen came across one of Henry's pamphlets. He took it to the police to verify its authenticity and contacted the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church, Samuel Carter, for a reaction to what Allen considered "a blasphemy." Carter's reaction is unknown, but the JLP used the pamphlet in a full-page advertisement in *The Daily Gleaner*.⁸²⁴ The accompanying text read:

Jamaicans were taught that The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. But some supporters of the P.N.P. think otherwise. To them the Trinity of the God-Head is Moses (Rev. Cladius [sic] Henry); Joshua (Michael Manley) and the "Lord of Lord" [sic] (Haile Selassie). A pamphlet widely distributed all over Jamaica states: "Now the time for a change has come. This change will be brought about by Moses, Joshua and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, "The Trinity of the God-Head." This will be the greatest Religious Event to take place on earth since the beginning of the creation of God." Is the pamphlet saying that the event is greater than the Birth of Christ? Greater than the Resurrection of Christ? Greater than the Ascension of Christ? Astonished? But it's true; that is what it is saying. The Church and the People will want to know if this is the promised change that is coming with the P.N.P.. The P.N.P. Believe in Michael's Rod, the J.L.P. in Almighty God. Vote J.L.P.⁸²⁵

Reaction was swift. Immediately after publication, the PNP leadership wrote to the church leaders that it knew nothing about and had nothing to do with the pamphlets. In a radio broadcast later that same day the PNP once again repudiated the "Henry Pamphlet."⁸²⁶

The following day *The Daily Gleaner* published a letter from Reverend Richmond Nelson, writing on behalf of the Jamaica Council for Churches (JCC). He heavily criticized the JLP for dragging God into politics:

We consider that the use of the "Henry Pamphlet" to attack the Leader of the P.N.P. and his Party represents a departure from our standards by being an example of personal abuse and a deplorable dragging of the name of God into the election fight for Party advantage.⁸²⁷

The church leaders called upon the JLP to stop using the pamphlet and the name of God in their advertisements, adding - in an effort to be non-partisan - that in their opinion the leaders of both parties were faithful Christians. The PNP, however, immediately counter-attacked with an advertisement about the Jamaica Labour Party's "lie." At the same time the JLP published a rather unsavory advertisement, even by Jamaican political standards, alluding to the PNP's greeting slogan "Hail the Man." Under the caption "Hail the Man or Hail God?" it read: "Manley's supporters say 'Hail,' Hitler's supporters said 'Heil.' Is there a difference?"⁸²⁸

In the following days the JLP made weak attempts to correct its blunder. One advertisement insisted that the PNP had indeed been involved in the "Henry Pamphlet." Referring to the first pamphlet, printed in November 1971, the JLP declared that Manley "had all the time to refute any association with the pamphlets when they were first printed and distributed."⁸²⁹ Another advertisement focused on the fact that

Reverend Richmond Nelson had not written on behalf of the Jamaican Council of Churches.⁸³⁰ Nelson's letter did indeed turn out to have been wrongly submitted on behalf of the Council, but the leaders of the Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and United Churches, along with the Disciples of Christ and the Jewish Community, twice repeated their condemnation of JLP tactics in full-page advertisements.⁸³¹ A final attempt to regain lost ground was an advertisement showing Manley with two different rods. One was the so-called "rod of correction" and the other, with a white top, was termed the "rod of discovery," according to the JLP the only one seen with Manley recently. Below the two photographs was one of JLP Minister Edward Seaga holding something strongly resembling the original "rod of correction." It was said to have been brought to Seaga after unknown persons had stolen it from Manley's home. The PNP, in this absurd media clash, gave its reaction six pages further on, showing Manley with his rod. "It has never been out of my possession for one day - Nor will it ever be. ... Seaga's stick is a childish trick."⁸³²

The trick did not work. The JLP's attempt to capitalize on an alleged alliance between the PNP and ex-convict Claudius Henry, and thus on slumbering fears about the Rastafarians, had acted like a boomerang. The People's National Party gained 56% of the votes and 37 seats in Parliament, against 43% and 16 seats for the Jamaica Labour Party. Edwin Allen later attributed the defeat of his party to the "Henry pamphlet" affair. In a long, resentful letter to the *Gleaner*, Allen wrote:

I contend that a major (and perhaps the major) factor in the PNP victory was the partisan role played in the election campaign by those church leaders who published full-page advertisements in the *Gleaner*. These statements charged the JLP with "character assassination" of the PNP leader and completely exonerated the PNP in the matter of the Henry Blasphemy. ... The PNP avidly accepted this gracious gift from the church leaders and proceeded to indulge in the most cruel, malicious and reckless "character assassination" ever witnessed in Jamaican politics.⁸³³

In addition to Michael Manley and the PNP, the *Gleaner* Company and Claudius Henry also did well out of the affair. The *Gleaner* Company gained income from numerous full-page advertisements, Henry gained status. As Barry Chevannes remarked, "Henry's stature grew in the eyes of his followers, because he had backed the right horse."⁸³⁴ Whether Henry gained any status outside his small group of followers is unknown, though unlikely. According to a poll by Carl Stone, "the overwhelming majority of the respondents did not find the issue surrounding Henry's support of the PNP to be of any relevance or significance," which, if true, would prove Edwin Allen wrong.⁸³⁵

As Anita Waters writes, it is "highly unlikely" that significant numbers of Rastafarians voted for the PNP.⁸³⁶ Nevertheless, the PNP's positive attitude towards the Rastafarians during the election campaign and the promise of "Better must come" and "Power to the people" had raised hopes about the chances of improvement in their situation and of getting government assistance for repatriation. The change of government thus led several Rastafarian delegations to make new attempts to get financial support for the return to the land of their fathers.

So in June 1972 Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards, claiming to represent the 144,000 chosen mentioned in the Bible, called on the new Minister of Home Affairs, Noel Silvera.⁸³⁷ This time he also demanded the release of all Rastafarians in prison. Unlike JLP Minister Neville Gallimore a year before, Silvera did not immediately make it clear that the government was not going to finance any repatriation schemes. Instead, he promised Prince that he would bring the matter to the attention of the Prime Minister and the Ethiopian government.⁸³⁸ The young and politically-minded Rastas in the Rastafari Movement Association (RMA), however, had completely different ideas. In one of the issues of *Rasta Voice* they called on

all Bros. to stop worrying the government about sending us to Africa and unite ourselves together. The Govt. says that the people will not get any help, unless we organize ourselves and press for what we want, now it is time to go begin that and, do what our Father said in 1966, Quot. that we should organize and centralize, any where Africans are we must set up world peace.⁸³⁹

The change of government not only resulted in vague promises, but also in an invitation for Mortimo Planno to accompany the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Dudley Thompson on a tour to several African countries in June 1972.⁸⁴⁰ One of the purposes of the tour was to "strengthen cultural ties" between Africa and Jamaica. According to *The Daily Gleaner*, Planno sparked a little controversy when he called on all Zambians "to give up Christianity and discover their own God [Emperor Haile Selassie of course]". The General Secretary of the Zambian Christian Council thought that Planno was "talking through his halo" and rebuked the Rastafarian with the remark that "Zambians had their own God-given brain power to separate between human failure and the reality of God."⁸⁴¹ All this, Planno later insisted, was an

example of “the scientific method of journalism wherein sensational news pays big dividends.” He had only been asked whether the Rastafarians worshipped Haile Selassie as God and a local newspaper had printed his affirmative answer. “Never in the paper’s history did they sell so many copies,” said Mortimo Planno.⁸⁴² In spite of the controversy and negative publicity, the inclusion of a Rastafarian on a government mission to Africa was another sign of the growing acceptance and recognition of Rastafari.

Yet, it was not long before it became clear that the PNP, in spite of its apparently positive attitude towards Rastafari, was neither willing nor able to give meaningful assistance for repatriation. Dudley Thompson had several meetings with Rastafarian delegations and during one of these, the Minister stated that although “government was sympathetic towards repatriation,” it could not offer the Rastas sponsorship for a return to Ethiopia. Thompson had several reasons for not providing assistance. For one thing, the government could “not assist in sending unskilled people to a country that was well known for its hard working people.” Besides, many of the perceptions about Africa were, according to the Minister, totally wrong:

I am not interested in an emotional individual who goes on a platform shouting “black power” and using a lot of cosmetic culture to identify themselves - that is not what true Africa is about. ... We do not understand Africa - there is so much to be learnt from the place - we only hear of Africa through the white press. One has not got to go to Africa to be free, the important thing is to know that you are free.⁸⁴³

Thompson’s spokesman, Eric Frater, added two other, more practical reasons why the PNP administration was unwilling to give financial support for a return to Africa. First of all, the government could not afford the costs of such a scheme, but in addition it “also had responsibilities to other sections of the community, who may not be sympathetic to repatriation.”⁸⁴⁴ The PNP appreciated the Rastafarians’ constant struggle for black pride and awareness of the African cultural heritage in Jamaica, but was not prepared to accept the anti-nationalist quest for repatriation. It therefore set out to induce the Rastafarians to cooperate with the government in the creation of a new, socialist and Afro-oriented society. Many Rastafarians, however, were not looking for cooperation or sympathy in Jamaica, but for action towards repatriation.

Nevertheless, the PNP’s intentions to do something about the discrimination against Rastafarians seemed to be sincere. In early 1972 a dreadlocked Rastafarian had successfully applied for a position with the Post and Telegraph Department. However, a senior employee refused to actually employ the Rasta, because of his dreadlocks. The matter was brought to the attention of the Prime Minister, who ordered the head of the department to employ the Rastafarian.⁸⁴⁵

But the new government - like the previous government - did little to halt the continual harassment of the Rastas by the security forces. There were incidents almost every day, but as usual only a few of these were made public. In its magazine *Rasta Voice* the RMA called on its members to send in accounts of their experiences with the police. Some of these stories were printed.

NEWS: A group of Rastafarian were attacked by a group of Soldiers Police after antagonising these Brothers they put them at gun point and order each one to cut off there hair, this is some of the power that the P.M. have promise to the people of Jamaica [unedited quote].⁸⁴⁶

The lack of concrete results with regard to repatriation and police harassment led some Rastafarians to gradually withdraw whatever support they had given to Manley and the PNP. When Dudley Thompson attended a Rastafarian meeting organized in honor of the 43rd anniversary of Haile Selassie’s coronation, to deliver a speech on behalf of Michael Manley, he again spoke about “the misconceptions about Africa.” The crowd became angry and shouted that that was “not what we want to hear.” The police were called in to remove some Rastafarians, and Thompson left without finishing his speech.⁸⁴⁷

Dissatisfaction with the People’s National Party administration was, however, not limited to the lack of government support for repatriation and the constant police brutality alone. There had been rumors during the election campaign that the PNP would legalize the use of ganja, but nothing substantial had happened, beyond a reduction of the maximum sentence for ganja possession. The PNP had also stressed the importance of Jamaica becoming self-sufficient in food production and continually urged farmers to increase production by cultivating idle land. Members of the Jah Rastafari Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church had a meeting with Michael Manley on 17 January 1973 at their Welcome Avenue headquarters in Cockburne Gardens, West Kingston, during which the national food shortage was discussed. As a result of that meeting they started a small vegetable garden on a piece of fallow land in New Haven. But in

March 1974 the owner of the plot called in the police and demanded that the Rastas vacate the land. The Rastafarians argued that this was impossible since the vegetables had not yet been harvested and would spoil if left unattended. The police came back twice to order them to leave. In April they tore down the fence and drove in animals, completely ruining the harvest. The Rastas complained about injustice and blamed Manley for not protecting them.⁸⁴⁸

It is interesting to note that, according to Barry Chevannes, the Prime Minister during his meeting with the Judah Coptics had offered them some 7,000 acres of farm land. Manley had “expressed the hope that they [the Rastas] might be able to assist in getting the youth back into agriculture and so to find a way of curbing the tendency among them to crime and violence.”⁸⁴⁹ The elders of the Judah Coptic Church went on a tour of the land with one of Manley’s aides, but later refused the offer because of the criticism from other Rastafarians, who considered the acceptance of land in Jamaica contrary to the primary goal of the movement: repatriation to Africa.

In short, although the PNP government thus perceived a useful role for the Rastafarians in achieving some of its own political goals, this new-found recognition posed serious ideological problems for the Rastafarians. Should they accept the new possibilities being offered to them and thereby improve their position in Babylon or should they reject such Babylonian seductions and continue to strive towards repatriation to the Promised Land? The government’s co-optative efforts created a dilemma for the Rastafarians of isolation versus involvement, of repatriation versus integration. As time passed, the dilemma was to paralyze the movement’s revolutionary potential and to facilitate its partial accommodation with the wider Jamaican society.

The fall and death of Emperor Haile Selassie

“God has the power to lay down his physical structure and to take it up again.”

While the Rastafarians were watching the PNP government closely to see whether it was going to fulfil its promise of “Power to the people,” something happened which they most certainly had never expected. In September 1974 Emperor Haile Selassie I was deposed by a revolutionary military committee. There had already been an attempt to overthrow the Emperor in December 1960, when His Imperial Majesty had been in Brazil and a group of high-ranking soldiers and nobles staged the unsuccessful “Bodyguard Coup.” Many of the better-educated Ethiopians, notably those at university and in the army, had long opposed the feudal regime and had covertly been pressing for fundamental social and political changes in the Empire. As few people dared to speak out openly against the Lion of Judah, they instead blamed the aristocracy, the clergy, the bureaucrats and the ministers for the corruption, poverty and other evils in the country. Emperor Haile Selassie’s power, based on the support of the conservative aristocracy and orthodox clergy, had never been undisputed, but the threat of a coup had traditionally come from among the aristocrats and warlords, or even from within the royal family itself, rather than from progressive forces.

During the early 1970s, when famine after famine struck the Empire, the dissatisfaction with the feudal regime became widespread. An estimated 200,000 people died of starvation in 1973 alone. For the elite there was nothing really new about famines: they had tortured the country for as long as anyone could remember. But times had changed. A British film crew came to Ethiopia and shot a documentary which showed thousands of people starving to death while the royalty was served splendid banquets and the Emperor fed large chunks of meat to his lions. More film crews and reporters flew in, followed by foreign doctors, nurses, missionaries and shiploads of food and medicine. The famines in Ethiopia and the wealth of the royal family and its entourage made international headlines. Students used the opportunity to spark off demonstrations against the monarchy and in late February Marxist officers in the armed forces followed their example.⁸⁵⁰ The Second Division took control of the northern town of Asmara and other divisions soon took over in Addis Ababa.

At first the revolt was not directly aimed at the Emperor. The army arrested members of the government, bureaucrats and other dignitaries, including members of the royal family, but the soldiers carefully left the Emperor untouched and even claimed to be acting on his behalf. His Imperial Majesty never denied this, but was certainly no longer in a position to countermand the developments. Haile Selassie remained silent, neither approving nor disapproving of the “Quiet Revolution.”⁸⁵¹

In April 1974 the 82-year-old Emperor promised a new constitution and announced that he had appointed his 20-year-old grandson Zara Yacob, son of Crown Prince Asfa Wossen, heir to the throne.⁸⁵² The gesture was in vain. By August the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah was alone in his enormous palace, with the exception of one personal assistant and his dogs. The *Dergue*, as the provisional military government became known, had arrested virtually every member and supporter of the monarchy. Those who had not been immediately arrested, fled or went underground. Crown Prince Asfa Wossen was one of the few members of the royal family who escaped imprisonment, because he had been in Europe for medical treatment during the upheavals and wisely chose to stay there.

It was only after the summer that the Emperor became a direct target of the revolutionaries. The *Dergue* began to accuse H.I.M. of personal responsibility for the famines and the death of thousands of peasants. The Emperor was also said to have enriched his family with millions of dollars from the Ethiopian treasury. Early on the morning of 12 September 1974, three officers came to the palace. They told the Emperor that he had been dethroned. Haile Selassie listened, thanked them and said that if the revolution was for the well-being of the people, he also supported the changes and would not resist his dethronement. The officers did not arrest the Emperor, but asked him to accompany them to the old Menelik palace outside Addis Ababa. The ex-Emperor was driven away in the back seat of a Volkswagen Beetle.⁸⁵³

The Rastafarians, according to Leonard Barrett, remained “undisturbed” by the political developments in Ethiopia: “To them the king stood above politics and whatever was written in the Western press was nothing but dangerous propaganda.”⁸⁵⁴ During the revolution Barry Chevannes interviewed several Rastafarians. Initially, almost all Rastas

held that the changes and general upheavals were inspired by the Emperor himself. Selassie was putting his own house in order, the implication being that he could not seek to put the rest of the world in order if his own house were corrupt.⁸⁵⁵

And even when the position of Haile Selassie became quite desperate, the Rastas stood firm. “There is no need to panic; the Emperor has everything under control,” was the statement of one of the Rastafarian spokesmen in August 1974. “How else could there be a revolution without any blood flowing? Not a single person has died. And the Emperor has not been touched once.”⁸⁵⁶ Many Jamaicans, however, ridiculed the Rastafarians and their belief in a Messiah who was not even able to rule over his own Empire. And many opponents of Rastafari no doubt hoped that the events would lead to the demise of the movement. Only when the Emperor’s dethronement was a fact, did the views change. The Rastafarians now invoked biblical explanations. Haile Selassie’s downfall was the fulfillment of prophecy, and could be compared with the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. This view, according to Chevannes, rapidly became the universal explanation.⁸⁵⁷

While the Rastafarians remained firm in their belief in the divinity and omnipotence of their deposed Emperor, the *Dergue* had over 60 members of the nobility executed.⁸⁵⁸ Haile Selassie was said to have escaped the executions of “Bloody Saturday.” For several months nothing was heard of the dethroned Emperor, until on 7 February 1975 Agence France Presse released the news that Haile Selassie, still in captivity in the old Menelik palace, was in good health. According to the French press agency, he still believed himself to be the Emperor of Ethiopia. The Lion of Judah was reported to have repeated his position that if the revolution was for the benefit of the people, he fully supported the developments.⁸⁵⁹

But six months later, on 28 August 1975, the *Dergue*, through *The Ethiopian Herald*, briefly announced that the 83-year-old former Emperor had died the previous day. His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God, was said to have died from a circulatory disorder.⁸⁶⁰

In Jamaica, the news of the Emperor’s death featured prominently on the front page of the *Gleaner*: “Haile Selassie dies at 83.” Prime Minister Manley issued a statement in which he expressed his regrets at the passing away of the Emperor and diplomatically added: “We realize that the Jamaican Rastafarian community for whom His Imperial Majesty was a unique symbol will be especially distressed to learn of the passing of this great man for whose life and work all Jamaicans always had profound admiration and respect.” Edward Seaga, who had just succeeded Hugh Shearer as the leader of the Jamaica Labour Party, recalled the state visit of the Emperor in 1966 and noted that “thousands revered him as a spiritual leader with semi-divine powers.” The political leaders clearly did not acknowledge the fact that the Emperor was (still) God to the Rastafarians.⁸⁶¹

But Michael Manley was wrong when he stated that the Rastafarians would be “especially distressed.” On the same page as the announcement of the Emperor’s death there was an article under the title “Rastas say he is not dead.”⁸⁶² Contrary to what most Jamaicans expected - that this would be the beginning of the end for the Rastafarian movement - the Rastas stood firm. It was really very simple: God cannot die. Some Rastafarians dismissed the report as a deliberate attempt by Babylon to discredit the Emperor and his followers, a lie of the “shitstem’s press.” Others, like Ras Michael, explained:

God can’t die. God ... has the power to lay down his physical structure and to take it up again - or to take another form. The spirit ... cannot die. Neither principalities nor powers can separate I and I God ... in a little while you would see me and in a little while you shall not. The Rasta never moves.⁸⁶³

Although there was some confusion at first, it was hardly of importance. “Spiritually Jah liveth,” was the reaction of most Rastafarians. Both Leonard Barrett and Joseph Owens received similar reactions from their informants.⁸⁶⁴ Bob Marley, within a few days after the news, recorded *Jah lives!*

Selassie lives! Jah-Jah lives, children!
Jah lives! Jah-Jah lives!
Fools sayin’ in their hearts,
Rasta your God is dead
But I ’n I know ever more
Dreaded shall be dreaded and dread.⁸⁶⁵

The single became an instant hit.

However, in the long run the passing away of the Emperor inevitably had an affect, particularly on the attitude of the younger generation. For them and for the politically-oriented adherents Haile Selassie became a spiritual symbol, a great African king, rather than a God in the flesh, and as such Selassie’s death served to further secularize part of the movement.

But the religious core of the movement managed to reinterpret the meaning of the Messiah’s disappearance and over the years these Rastafarians were to find more and more evidence to support their belief that Haile Selassie had not died. Members of the Twelve Tribes, for example, claimed that when a delegation of executives traveled to Addis Ababa in 1976, they opened the tombs of Haile Selassie and of Empress Menen, who had died in 1962. The body of the Empress was there, but the Emperor’s tomb was empty.⁸⁶⁶

Another important piece of evidence was later provided by Crown Prince Asfa Wossen. Almost immediately after his father’s death, Asfa Wossen demanded an independent investigation, not because he doubted that Selassie had passed away, but rather to determine the cause of death. The Crown Prince apparently suspected murder - not without reason as it later turned out. His appeal, however, was in vain and so the Rastas argued that the *Dergue* could not allow an investigation, because there was nothing to investigate.

The *Dergue*’s accusation that the royal family had transferred huge amounts of money from the Ethiopian treasury to Swiss bank accounts, was quite readily accepted by the international press. The famines and the publicity about the feudal conditions in Ethiopia, had undermined the Emperor’s status as a respected statesman. But to the Rastafarians the publications about the alleged corruption were merely an example of the way in which the Babylonian press tried to discredit His Imperial Majesty. In April 1977 they found confirmation in a letter by Crown Prince Asfa Wossen to *The London Times*. Under the caption “The great conspiracy (see Psalm 2)” Wossen wrote:

Ever since my late father, Emperor Haile Sellassie, was deposed by the present Marxist-Leninist (their own description) military regime (who have, within two years, murdered three heads of state, two of them appointed by themselves) the world press, radio and television have made much of a sport of the alleged billions of dollars, francs, or pounds which my father was supposed to have deposited in Switzerland to the great detriment of the Ethiopian people. Even serious organs of the press have indulged in this reckless pursuit, and the figures quoted (always without the slightest proof or evidence - yet never qualified by doubt or hesitation) have ranged between four and six thousand million dollars. One French paper even quoted Swiss bankers as asking the late Emperor to withhold further deposits of gold, as their vaults were brimming over with his precious metal. I am told that a month or two ago a major German television network broadcasted a similar programme. More recently, an Italian paper, amidst a welter of other factual inaccuracies, has referred to an accord between myself and the present Ethiopian regime to divide the billions allegedly deposited by my late father in Switzerland. I need hardly add that all this is utterly untrue.

Although I knew all these allegations to be mendacious and slanderous of the memory of a great man, I have so far kept silent, as I wished first to make the most detailed investigations.

These researches and inquiries minute, accurate, widespread, and probing, have now been completed - thanks to the kind help of the British, Swiss, and other banking authorities. No avenue of approach, direct or indirect, has been neglected or omitted, and I am now in a position to state, categorically and authoritatively that not a single penny, cent or franc has been located anywhere.

I trust that this statement, supported by ample facts and conclusive evidence, will silence the slanderers and allow my tormented family to live in peace.⁸⁶⁷

Copies of this letter have circulated ever since among the Rastafarians, who consider it to be a definite blow to the press campaign to slur the reputation of the Emperor. In spite of the references to the “late” Emperor, the letter was for the Rastafarians yet another piece of the evidence that Haile Selassie was not dead. The somewhat ingenious explanation given to the present writer was that if Selassie was dead, he would have left an estate. Since “not a singly penny, cent or franc has been located anywhere,” there was no estate and thus the Emperor was still alive. On the stencilled copy of this letter, obtained from a member of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the above-quoted passage was underlined and “Jah Lives!” was written in the margin.

Ten years later, further evidence was provided by a grandson of the Emperor, Prince Dawit Makonnen, who visited Jamaica and several Rastafarian groups in March 1987.⁸⁶⁸ From his base in the United States, Makonnen had organized part of the royalist resistance against the Mengistu regime. In an interview on JBC Radio One he was asked whether Haile Selassie was dead or alive. Dawit Makonnen replied:

Well, as far as I know, there is no proof to that he's dead. Now, the best proof to me is if they have a body that they have killed or whatever, they should show it to the people ... there is no better proof than a dead body.⁸⁶⁹

Thus, apart from the firm belief that their God simply cannot die, the Rastafarians' main argument against the Emperor's apparent passing away was and remains the complete absence of evidence for his death. In fact, they turned the argument around: the lack of evidence about the Emperor's death was proof that his Imperial Majesty was still alive.

In February 1992, after the fall of the *Dergue*, it was revealed that the Emperor had not, as reported, died from a circulatory disorder. According to a witness, Haile Selassie was murdered at the direction and under the supervision of Haile Mariam Mengistu on 23 November 1974, a month after his dethronement. His body was recovered from a grave three meters deep under Mengistu's office.⁸⁷⁰ Its discovery shattered one of the Rastafarians' major arguments.

Though it is still too early to assess the effects of this new twist, it may nevertheless be expected that the discovery of the body will have no more affect on the Rastas' beliefs than did the news of his death in 1975. In 1992 - also the centenary of the Emperor's birthday - Ras Ivi Tafari of the Nyabinghi Order commented on the “recent wave of rumour coming out of Ethiopia perpetrated by lying culprits:”

The propaganda machinery of the 70s has reactivated its rumour mongering in the year of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I, as its aim in the 1970s has proven futile in uprooting the Divine Livy of Rastafari. Their objective at this time must also fail as Rastafari sons and daughters universally hold fast to the Ivinity of H.I.M. the 225th Rebirth of Solomon & Sheba who CANNOT DIE but liveth for Iver & Iver.⁸⁷¹

Rastafari and the Manley administration

“I and I as a sojourner here would like to partake in the development of a just Society ... until such time as I and I repatriate to Ethiopia.”

By the mid-1970s, when Emperor Haile Selassie “disappeared,” the position of the Rastafarians in Jamaican society had changed drastically. Not only was there a government which tried very hard to display a progressive, pro-black, pro-Rasta image, but reggae music had also hit the international record charts, a success closely connected with the rise to stardom of the man who became the personification of Rastafari: Bob Marley.

After performing on the PNP's musical “bandwagon” during the elections of 1972, Marley had left for England for the recording of Johnny Nash's success-album *I can see clearly now*. In London Marley made a decision that was to change the Wailers' career once and for all: he walked into the office of Island

Records' boss Chris Blackwell, who had transferred his headquarters to England. Island Records, after initially producing Jamaican music, had contracted white rock-stars and bands like Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Cat Stevens, Steve Winwood, King Crimson and Jethro Tull. Blackwell offered the Wailers a contract and, for the first time, decent payment. The Wailers became the first Third World group to receive the same recording facilities and promotion as the major European and American rock bands.

From that moment on, the Wailers' success had steadily increased. Their first album, *Catch a fire*, was released early in 1973 and was soon followed by *Burnin'*. The Wailers toured the United States as the opening act for Bruce Springsteen, but by the end of the year the band was beginning to break apart. Bunny Livingstone hated touring and everything that was part of it, especially "ridin' the iron bird." Peter Tosh preferred a solo-career to being only one of the Wailers. Bob Marley, who had been the real leader of the band anyway, took over and formed a new band under the same name.⁸⁷²

While several Wailer songs had been banned from radio airplay in Jamaica, Eric Clapton recorded Bob Marley's *I shot the sheriff* and made it a number one hit in the United States, giving another boost to Marley's fame. By then the reggae star had moved uptown to 56 Hope Road, a mansion that belonged to Blackwell and was used as a recording studio. It was here that he became more and more involved in the Twelve Tribes of Israel and began to invite the group to organize their services there. At only a short distance from the residences of the Prime Minister and the Governor-General, Island House was soon to become Marley's headquarters and, much to the distress of its neighbors, became a gathering place for numerous ghetto youths and Rastas.⁸⁷³

When Bob Marley and his new Wailers toured the United States and England in early 1975, a year after the release of their third album, *Natty Dread*, they were the top of the bill and attracted thousands of fans. Shows were sold out within days. Marley was now in a position to turn down an invitation to tour as the opening act for the Rolling Stones. When Blackwell released the album *Bob Marley and the Wailers Live!* later that same year, their fame spread even further. Bob Marley had become one of the biggest rock stars in history, the first internationally acclaimed musician from the Third World and a multi-millionaire. Marley not only placed Jamaica on the world map, but also spread the message of Rastafari throughout the world: in his songs, in his interviews, in his appearance. Previously Jamaica had been just a small island producing sugar and rum. Now it had suddenly become one of the hottest musical centers of the world, the island of reggae and Rasta. In the trail of his success numerous other Rastafarian reggae artists found their way to lucrative contracts, international tours, number one hits and instant fame.

But, as noted before, the Rastafarians were not only active in music. Quite a few adherents of the movement had established a name as painters or sculptors whose work was in demand among the upper classes.⁸⁷⁴ The Rastafari Movement Association actively promoted Rasta art with workshops and exhibitions. At the Festival Arts Competition at Devon House in 1975, Rastafarian artists won several prizes. Mrs. Coore, the wife of the Minister of Finance and mother of two sons who had turned Rasta, opened the exhibition of the RMA and in her speech said that "she detected respect and a sincerity of purpose among Rastafarians."⁸⁷⁵ Yet among the middle and upper classes in Jamaica there was a certain ambivalence in the reactions to the success of reggae and of the many Rastafarian artists. On the one hand, since it flattered nationalist feelings many were proud of the attention that reggae brought the island. On the other hand, it was hard to accept that it was a dreadlocked, ganja-smoking Rastafarian, singing about oppression in Babylon and redemption in Zion, who had become Jamaica's most famous citizen - a citizen who claimed a moral right to Ethiopian nationality.

Due to the success of reggae, Rastafari also suddenly found itself in the national as well as international spotlight. Rasta was rapidly becoming *the* grass-roots movement in Jamaica. Thousands of young people from both the lower and middle classes took up at least the outward symbols of the faith. Rastafarian symbolism was everywhere: on the streets, in the speeches of politicians, in the newspapers, on radio and on television. Many Jamaicans were far from pleased with this development, but were forced to accept the growing popularity of Rastafari. As Reverend C.S. Reid wrote, shortly before his appointment as President of the Jamaica Council of Churches:

Some strange things happen in Jamaica. Rastafarianism is "popular," it is the "in thing." Those who wish to show that they are "with it," feel bound to bend the knee at the shrine of "I & I," lest they be not considered authentic Jamaicans. So now, "if it's Rasta, it's right."⁸⁷⁶

What emerged as the result of the popularity of Rastafari was a Rasta-reggae subculture. It included a

wide range of styles. There were the youths who just wanted to be fashionable: dreadlocks, the red, gold and green paraphernalia, and the distinctive Rastafarian argot were simply in vogue and were adopted as symbols by all sorts of pseudo-Rastas. Others did likewise, but not merely in an effort to be “with it.” Their adoption of Rasta symbolism was a form of often militant social protest, “a counter-culture, the culture of Dread,” as George Beckford and Michael Witter termed it.⁸⁷⁷ In a sense, they were the successors of the Rudies. These “Natty dreads,” a reference to the knotty appearance of someone who had just started to grow locks, usually had little comprehension of the religious elements in Rastafari, but they were a fruitful recruiting ground for the movement and quite a few Natty dreads later became Rastaman.⁸⁷⁸ Then there were those who could be best described as “secular Rastafarians,” for whom Rastafari was primarily a new identity, a personal statement of a new way of life or “livivity,” a way of stressing their black, African identity as opposed to the dominant Euro-centrism of the middle and upper classes on the island. They rejected the Rastafarians’ religious beliefs, but in varying degrees subscribed to the movement’s cultural and social ideas, and adopted many of its norms and values.⁸⁷⁹

The co-optation of Rasta symbolism and ideas served to further inflate the significance of the Rastafarian movement for the wider Jamaican society. In the early years, when a Rasta was identified by his beard, the movement had had to cope with the society’s inability or unwillingness to distinguish between “criminal elements hiding behind a beard” and Rastafarians. The emergence of a Rasta-reggae subculture during the 1970s posed a similar problem for the Rastafarians, since the behavior of pseudo-Rastas and Natty dreads was not always in line with Rastafarian virtues, and the movement as a whole was blamed for their behavior.

The 1970s were a turbulent period, not only for the “in-thing” Rastafarian movement, but also for Jamaican society as a whole. Until 1974 the PNP government had largely followed the economic strategy of its predecessor. But in September 1974, the same month in which Haile Selassie was deposed by Marxist soldiers, Manley declared that his government would follow the course of “democratic socialism.” For a large part this was mere rhetoric, popularly translated in speeches with slogans like: “Socialism is love” and “This comes to you from Michael with love.” As Anthony Payne concluded: “... socialism in Jamaica was made the servant of that typically Jamaican personalistic style of politics which Manley so effectively embodied.”⁸⁸⁰

Nevertheless, Manley and his cabinet did start up several important social reform programs. Under The Land-lease Project small farmers were to be provided with farming land. The Impact Programme was intended to create jobs for the urban poor. Food subsidies and community-health aid programs were initiated, with the aim of relieving the poor. A National Housing Trust was established to provide more affordable housing. Laws were passed to guarantee minimum wages and redundancy payment, and for women equal pay and maternity leave. Workers’ participation was to be stimulated. Training programs were instituted, in particular for the young. Illiteracy was attacked through the JAMAL Programme and educational reforms were made to enable children from the lower classes to gain free access to education. All this, of course, required considerable investment out of limited public funds.⁸⁸¹

Economic progress under the PNP government soon stagnated, however, partly as a result of the global economic crisis following the sharp increase in oil prices during the first half of the 1970s. Within a year the cost of oil imports had increased from J\$ 65 million to 177 million.⁸⁸² The trade deficit rapidly expanded and, faced with the necessity of meeting escalating costs, including that of its own social programs, the government imposed a production levy of 7.5% on the value of aluminum selling prices for the American-owned bauxite companies. These reacted with threats to remove their plants from the island and with an immediate reduction in production. As a result, the expected gains in income from the levy were disappointingly small. The key solution became self-reliance. The government began to encourage the mobilization of idle resources, both human and natural, and tried to save on foreign exchange expenditures by import substitution.

The PNP also made another important error of judgement, which contributed to a further deterioration of Jamaica’s relations with the United States. Manley developed a close friendship with Fidel Castro. He accompanied the Cuban leader in his private jet to Algiers to attend the summit of the Non-Aligned Nations in 1973, accepted technical aid from Cuba, which sent doctors and engineers to Jamaica, and visited Cuba in 1975.⁸⁸³ The Nixon and Ford administrations in the United States perceived these developments as a direct threat to political stability and US economic interests in the region, and sharply reduced their financial aid to Jamaica.

The PNP government not only had to cope with the external pressures of a global economic crisis and an at best uncooperative United States administration. The Jamaican middle and upper classes were also quickly losing confidence in Comrade Michael. Many suspected that Manley was out to turn Jamaica into a second Cuba. The Jamaica Labour Party opposition and the conservative Gleaner Company began an intense and well-organized campaign against the People's National Party. The JLP and the "The Daily Misleader" branded the PNP as "communists," partly because the small Marxist-oriented Workers' Liberation League (WLL), headed by the political scientist and University of the West Indies lecturer Trevor Munroe, openly supported the PNP. The PNP leadership, in turn, accused both the United States and the Jamaican opposition of waging a war of destabilization against party and government. The polarization resulted in a rapid intensification of political gang warfare in Kingston.

In spite of the political and economic problems, some Rastafarians remained convinced of the sincerity of Manley's efforts to reform Jamaican society and of the benefits of such reforms for the poor, including many Rastas. The Rasta Movement Association thought that

[t]here is nothing to be afraid of from embracing the socialistic principles and ways of living, as it has always been our way of culture long before the Europeans began to establish it. As brother Stokely [Carmichael] said recently on the radio that; Scientific socialism is the only and the final end of capitalism and the beginning of a new era for I and I.⁸⁸⁴

In another editorial the Rasta Movement Association once again called on all Rastas to involve themselves in Jamaican society:

our country is in a state of chaos, and if we don't organise ourselves; then the capitalists and their colonial stooges will still have I and I under captivity. ... Rasta must come to the realisation that the role today must be one of active and vigilant participation within the development of Jamaica.⁸⁸⁵

Archibald Dunkley, one of the founding fathers of the Rastafarian movement and President of EWF Local 77, also continued to support Manley and the PNP. As late as 1977 he insisted that "outside of Marcus Garvey, the only individual who has helped the people is our present Prime Minister, Mr. Michael Manley."⁸⁸⁶ Bongo Silly (Sylvester Ivy), a leading Rastafarian artist from Ocho Rios, told Tracy Nicholas that

[t]his is the first government that deals with Rasta at all. People in the past have just known that Rastafari was just like a wild animal. ... Rasta comply with Manley and assist him against crime and violence. Many bredren would be better off without this way of life, of crime and violence. Thousands of people lose their lives in Kingston. The people don't give thanks to Manley, but he keeps them from being slain by Shearer.⁸⁸⁷

Many Rastafarians no doubt felt that they were better off under the PNP. However, despite the PNP administration's progressive attitude and Manley's personal - though feeble - attempts to put a stop to the harassment, the persecution of Rastafarians by the security forces had scarcely declined.

In a way, the PNP only made things worse. In an effort to curb the escalation of crime and violence, which the island and especially the slum areas of Kingston had experienced since the mid-1960s, the government had instituted the infamous Gun Court in March 1974.⁸⁸⁸ As Anthony Payne writes, it was "a new court, literally resembling a concentration camp, where all persons using firearms for criminal purposes were tried within seven days, without option of bail, and if found guilty sentenced to indefinite detention without right of appeal."⁸⁸⁹ Also in 1974 the government issued *The Suppression of Crime (Special Provisions) Act*, which gave the police the right to arrest or detain any suspected person, search any building and to enforce curfews and cordons, all without a warrant. It was somewhat ironic that this Act was introduced by Minister of Security Dudley Thompson. During the election campaign of 1967 he had unsuccessfully run against Edward Seaga for the West Kingston constituency and the two candidates were widely held responsible for introducing the gun into politics. Though initially invoked for only 30 days, *The Suppression of Crime Act* has remained in effect ever since.⁸⁹⁰

The "special provisions" made it even easier for the security forces to harass Rastafarians. *Rasta Voice* continued to draw attention to such incidents.

On the night of 19th April 1973, Smith visited another brethren Dudley Shaw who owns and operates a shop at Middleton in St. Thomas. A car drove up and stopped in front of the shop. Two men came out of the car, looked into the shop, then approached Smith and demanded that he turned out his pockets. He was dragged to the car receiving at the same time several blows with the gun's butt. Battered, bruised and bleeding he spent two days in jail. He was eventually given his own bail, he attended Court on Wednesday, 25th April to face charges of possession of ganja, and resisting arrest. ... There was not any exhibit or evidence to be produced by the police.⁸⁹¹

Only on rare occasions did the Jamaican press consider incidents of police brutality against Rastafarians newsworthy. In early 1973 the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation reported a case in which policemen had forced several Rastafarians to trim each other at gunpoint, which led *Gleaner* columnist Morris Candidly Yours to devote his column “Candidly Yours” to the affair:

I'm no admirer of the filthy-looking hairstyle affected by the “locksmen”; but if some people want to go around looking like that it seems to me up to them, and we are supposed, after all, to be living in a free country. I find too, that when the police, or other bully-boys start forcing people, for no good reason, to do things like cutting one another's hair, it is extremely distasteful, not to say alarming. ... there ought to be at least a departmental enquiry.⁸⁹²

Enquiries into police misbehavior, however, were not very common in Jamaica and when there was an enquiry at all, it was usually carried out by the force itself and without any consequences for the offenders.

Not only nameless Rastafarians fell victim to the police. Celebrities like Peter Tosh also suffered from unlawful police treatment. In the summer of 1975 the reggae star was beaten up and seriously injured by policemen in his own home. A few months later, on 24 September 1975, a Rastafarian from Kingston was on trial following a charge of murder. He had been arrested on 3 October 1973 and thus spent almost two years in jail before being brought to court. In his defense he stated that he was accustomed to being persecuted “because of his cultural and religious beliefs” and that “being accused wrongly of murder was part of the pattern of persecution that Rastafarians had to bear.” He had, however, not only been wrongly accused, but severely tortured as well.

[He] said that when he was taken to Rockfort Police Station he was strung up to a window by his handcuffed wrists so that his feet did not touch the floor, his side was beaten with a wooden stick and two heavy stones were tied to his testicles and he was left in that position for several hours.⁸⁹³

The Medical Officer of the General Penitentiary testified that when he had examined the accused three weeks after his arrest, “he found several healed abrasions on his body ... consistent with [the Rasta] having been hit with a sharp instrument.” The Rastafarian was unanimously acquitted of the charges laid against him, but the judge took no measures against the policemen. Instead he vaguely remarked:

It is strange that when the accused was examined by a doctor he said nothing to him of the torture he described in court. It does appear from the healed abrasions found on his body, however, that someone did inflict him quite serious injuries while he was in prison.⁸⁹⁴

Manley and the PNP did little more than call on the police to halt the persecution of Rastafarians. On 11 January 1976 the Prime Minister, in a speech to PNP supporters in the East Rural St. Andrew constituency, assured his audience that he was against the security forces forcibly cutting the locks of Rastas. Manley was quoted as saying that there were good and bad Rastas, just as there were good and bad Christians. “The fact that a man has locks does not make him a wrong-doer,” he said. The Prime Minister also said that his government had made efforts to stop the practice. There was “resounding applause,” but neither Manley's appeal nor the government's efforts succeeded in improving the situation.⁸⁹⁵

As the elections of 1976 approached, a reign of terror and violence descended upon Jamaica. Supported by the *Gleaner* Company, the JLP's campaign against the “communists” of the PNP was extended into the ghettos of Kingston, where rival gangs no longer settled their differences with switchblade knives and machetes, but with Magnum .365s. Some of those involved in the political violence and gang wars were youths who had grown their locks, which once again confirmed the old prejudice that Rastafari and crime were closely connected.⁸⁹⁶ The Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church issued a statement in which they denounced all gun-toting dreadlocks:

I and I ancient church ... disassociates itself from all acts of violence and political indoctrination being carried out by impostors wearing dreadlocks and hypocritically claiming to be followers of Jahrastafari. The public is hereby notified that all persons, who wear locks, carry guns and indulge in Anti-christ political activity; are not recognised by the Juda-Coptic Church as brethren of Jahrastafari!⁸⁹⁷

But statements like these did little to improve the situation. The security forces, responsible for roughly half of the total number of violent deaths, reacted with brute force and quite a few Rastafarians became law enforcement victims. In January 1976 the Rastafari Movement Association (RMA) once again made an impassioned appeal to the authorities to halt the random persecution of Rastafarians.

The Rastafari Movement Association views with profound sadness and disgust the alarming situation that has

been taking place by members of the security forces, while carrying out their duties in the troubled spots of Kingston. They are taking innocent Rastafarians off the streets and off the public transport, beating, torturing and trimming against their will. ... The RMA condemns these actions against the individual basic civil and human rights. We are appealing to the security forces and the nation not to fall victim to panic, fear and hysteria.⁸⁹⁸

On 19 June 1976 the government, for the second time since independence, declared a state of emergency. At first it seemed to be effective in curbing the violence, but within a few weeks it became clear that the gunmen had little or no respect for martial law.

In November 1976, shortly before the general elections and with the political warfare at its height, Bob Marley and the Wailers offered to stage a peace concert, "Smile Jamaica," in Kingston. The influential American music magazine *Rolling Stone* had chosen the Wailers as "Band of the Year," and television crews and magazine reporters were swarming all over Hope Road. The album *Rastaman Vibration* had been released and the American and European tours were almost completely sold out. Only weeks before the plans for the concert were made public, Marley had once again made the front pages of the Jamaican newspapers, this time because of his affair with Cindy Breakspere, a white Jamaican beauty queen who had won the Miss World title earlier that same year. The Jamaican elite was shocked by this romance between "the Beauty and the Beast," but Marley was at the height of his popularity, the hero of many a Jamaican voter, and his influence on Jamaican youth was enormous. The PNP immediately took advantage of Marley's offer to stage a peace concert and tried to present the show as a pro-PNP manifestation. The "Smile Jamaica" concert was scheduled for 5 December 1976. As soon as the date was fixed, Manley announced that polling day would be 16 December, less than two weeks after the concert.

But on the morning of 3 December a small group of gunmen raided 56 Hope Road. Bullets were fired at random, hitting Marley in his left arm, his wife in the head, and badly wounding two members of the Wailers' crew, Don Taylor and Lewis Simpson.

In spite of the assassination attempt and the injuries he sustained, some 80,000 Jamaicans saw Marley perform at National Heroes Park two days later. In the title song he made a forceful plea for peace and unity in terror-ridden Jamaica:

We're gonna help our people,
help them right,
O Lord, help us tonight.
Cast away that evil spell,
throw some water in the well
and smile (in Jamaica).
Come on and smile (in Jamaica).
Get things together now (in Jamaica),
get it together right now (in Jamaica).⁸⁹⁹

The next day the King of Reggae left the island which shortly afterwards chose him as its "Man of the Year."⁹⁰⁰

Michael Manley and the People's National Party won the elections, but their success at the polls was anything but matched by their economic performance. Jamaica's economy was backsliding and democratic socialism did not seem to be providing any solutions. Most critics attributed the crisis to mismanagement by the PNP and its "communists allies," but some blamed it on the growing popularity of Rastafari:

Too much Rastafarian songs are being played on the radio and television ... It is high time we discouraged these confusing "Rasta" songs. They are influencing even Christians. ... The Christian religion is being pushed back into the background and this is one of the many reasons the country's economy is so bad. God is not pleased.⁹⁰¹

Others, on the contrary, suggested that the government would be well-advised to consult the Rastafarians:

It is time Government meet Rastas and give Rastas a chance to put forward national proposals and publicly state their ideas on how the economic problems should be approached ... Rasta could play a vital role in solving the problem of getting people to do farming. Land should be given to Rastas, and Jamaicans, particularly our youths, would follow Rastas into the hills and valleys to do farming.⁹⁰²

As we have already seen before, this was an idea Michael Manley had launched when he met with members of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church's Theocracy Government in January 1973. It had not

worked out and if the Prime Minister had ever hoped to make practical arrangements with the Rastafarians as part of his socialist master plan, he had apparently given up hope by 1976: no further efforts were made to mobilize the Rastafarians as a group. But Manley still considered Rastafari an important factor in the development of the democratic socialist state. In a speech in honor of the opening of the new community center of the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari, he spoke about Rastafari as “a spiritual force and a bona fide religion,” which could play a crucial part in “the cultural awakening and self-realisation which is taking place in the country.”⁹⁰³

But the Rastafarians were not so easily impressed by Manley’s flirting. At a meeting with a committee of the Caribbean Press Council in July 1977 a group of Rastafarians discussed “unfair reports about Rasta in the press.” One of their major complaints was that during and after the 1972 election campaign the press had wrongly suggested that the Rastafarian movement supported the People’s National Party, whereas in fact the PNP had been guilty of “misuse of their symbols, without permission or even consultation.”⁹⁰⁴

Meanwhile, the persecution by the police continued. In November 1976 a Rastafarian assembly in Guys Hill, St. Mary was raided by the police. The Rastas were beaten up, property was destroyed and several of those present were arrested. A year later, on 4 November 1977, the Haile Selassie Theocratic Government was holding a Divine Assembly, this time at the Willowfield Community Center in St. Thomas, when a police patrol came and rounded up the Rastafarians. According to *Rasta Voice*:

Brethrens were beaten, gun butted in the face and head, lamps and kitchen utensils destroyed, food kicked from off fires, clothes and personal belongings destroyed and the passport of one of the Brethrens was defaced.⁹⁰⁵

The Rastafarians were taken to the Port Morant police office, “continuously beaten and gun butted on the way,” where some were detained and charged. But violence against the Rastafarians did not come only from the police. In August 1977 six men, dressed in Fire Department uniforms, attacked five Rastafarians in West Kingston. Three were stabbed to death and two were critically injured.⁹⁰⁶

Still there were some, like Ras Shadrack of the Church Triumphant of Jah Rastafari, who had not yet given up hope. Ras Shadrack wrote that he would like to have an audience with the heads of government and the leaders of the churches in Jamaica “to discuss a wide range of subjects,” like

how I and I can help to improve the economy and help to restore Peace and Love to the Nation. I and I as a sojourner here would like to partake in the development of a just Society in this country until such time as I and I repatriate to Ethiopia.⁹⁰⁷

Jah Lloyd of the Theocracy Government also still believed that the Manley administration might yet improve the position of the Rastafarians in Jamaica. Before the 1976 election campaign, the PNP had again given the impression that it might legalize the use of ganja and had later appointed a committee, chaired by Kenneth McNeill, to investigate the legal implications. The committee proposed to allow possession of one or two ounces for personal use, but Jah Lloyd, who attended a hearing on behalf of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Theocracy Government, told the committee that he would require at least “one pound of ganja a day for dietary purposes.”⁹⁰⁸ Government did not follow the advice of the McNeill committee or that of Jah Lloyd. Ganja remained an illegal drug, which was yet another disappointment for those Rastafarians who had believed that Manley and the PNP would make some fundamental changes in Jamaica.

In late June 1977 Michael Manley, while on a visit to England, appeared in the BBC Television program *Everyman*, which paid special attention to the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica. Manley publicly admitted that there was indeed discrimination against Rastafarians in Jamaica.

Manley said his government was attempting to educate its police force to eliminate hostility against the Rastas. “There is a traditional hostility between the Rastafarian Movement and more traditionalist elements in Jamaican society,” Manley said. He added that it was often true that employers would not give Rastas jobs because of their dramatic hairstyle but he predicted these prejudices would be quashed with time.⁹⁰⁹

The Prime Minister had barely spoken the words when Michael Batts, a Rastafarian pilot who had been employed by Air Jamaica since May 1974, was fired. In disregard of the company’s rules, he had grown a beard and wore his hair long and uncombed. A spokesman for Air Jamaica insisted that it had nothing to do with Batts’ religious beliefs and referred to *The Pilots’ Manual*, which stated that “haircuts must generally give a neat appearance.” Asked for comment, Batts said that his dismissal was a case of contempt “for the respected religion of the people” and “out of step with the declared policy of the government.”

The pilot made it clear that he did not intend to accept his suspension and wrote letters to the Jamaica Council for Human Rights, the Rastafari Movement Association and his trade union. Furthermore, he requested the Jamaica Airline Pilots Association (JALPA) to assist him.⁹¹⁰

JALPA discussed Batts' request at a general meeting, but its members unanimously decided not to support their fired colleague. The pilots did not give a reason for their decision. Batts was disappointed, but not "entirely surprised." He assured the press: "I will continue to stand up for my rights. I am a free person entitled to freedom of choice in what I want to do with my natural self."⁹¹¹ In the meantime, he consulted three of Jamaica's best-known attorneys to determine whether it would make sense to take the matter to court. Apparently the conclusion was negative: no action was taken.

Michael Batts' dismissal provoked numerous reactions in the press. One commentator related the case to the general problem of the increasing lack of discipline in Jamaican society and concluded:

Air Jamaica might very well think that some of its passengers will cancel flights if they cannot feel confidence in a pilot who sports the "Dread" look (And this has nothing to do with the totally respectable ideology of Rastafarianism). The point is that when you're 4,000 feet high in the air your pilot must not only be competent, he must appear competent. To you.⁹¹²

Others, too, felt that Batts' appearance might cost Air Jamaica clients. "Aren't we in need of valuable foreign exchange at the moment," was the rhetorical question posed by another commentator, who added that once Batts was allowed to wear his beard and hair as long as he wanted to, similar claims would soon be made in the police and defence forces, and even in schools.⁹¹³ A *Gleaner* columnist suggested that Batts might not only follow Rastafari in his hairstyle, but in its deification of ganja as well, and observed: "No airline - and most certainly not Air Jamaica - would survive a month once it became known to travel agents that the Captain might be a Rasta. Where such matters are concerned, the world is very square."⁹¹⁴ Wilmot "Muttu" Perkins, not only a well-known attorney and *Gleaner* columnist, but a friend of the Batts family as well, provided a "technical" reason for the rule prohibiting the wearing of beards and thus for Batts' dismissal. Oxygen masks, needed in a case of emergency, would "not seal against beards." This might cause highly inflammable oxygen to leak into the cockpit and therefore Perkins considered it "nonsense to speak of this as religious persecution and discrimination."⁹¹⁵

But there were other opinions as well. A teacher commented:

If I am one of [Air Jamaica's] passengers it is immaterial to me whether the pilots are cleanshaven and cut their hair short. The assurance I require is that Air Jamaica employs the pilots with the best safety records.⁹¹⁶

Reverend Ernle Gordon, a spirited writer of polemic letters on any and every issue - and once described as "a noted fruitcake" because of his often controversial opinions - expressed his view that "it is utter nonsense to place moral values on material things like clothes and hair. This is merely class prejudice. Pilot Batts would never have been dismissed if he were piloting a Russian plane."⁹¹⁷ A Rastafarian, finally, noted that everyone was against Batts and urged the pilot not to give in to the pressure "because Rastafari will soon appear." In reaction to the comments on the "hazard" posed by a bearded Rasta pilot, he concluded that "Brother Batts would be the safest man to fly with because he would be praying and involving the presence of God with him all the time."⁹¹⁸ Both Michael Batts and Air Jamaica stood firm.

The dismissal of pilot Batts was only one of the numerous cases in which dreadlocked Rastafarians either lost or failed to obtain a job. Since the majority of them were unskilled laborers rather than highly-trained professionals, little or nothing was heard of such incidents. But with the growing adherence to Rastafari among the middle classes, more cases of discrimination began to make the press. For instance, three Rastafarians working for the Kingston Fire Brigade were also suspended, because their beards and long hair prevented their helmets and respirators from fitting properly. They were given a week to comply with the rules, but refused to do so.⁹¹⁹

Much the same happened in school with dreadlocked Rastafarian children whose continual exclusion became one of the most controversial issues in the relationship between the Rastafarian movement and the wider Jamaican society during the 1970s. What for most Jamaicans was mainly "a question of hair," was for the Rastafarians a matter of basic human and civil rights. In a way, the issue was a small-scale reflection of the whole complex and often ambivalent relationship between the Rastafarian movement and the society as a whole.

Rastafarian children and school

“I and I violate them school rules. But them violate a greater rule I and I religion.”

In their *Report on the Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica* Smith, Augier and Nettleford had already noted that during the late 1950s Rastafarian school children were regularly subjected to discrimination and harsh treatment by teachers.

[S]ome teachers cut the hair of Ras Tafari children, so the parents react by keeping the children away from school. Some of these parents are asking for special schools for their children. There is a much simpler remedy: the Minister of Education should prohibit teachers from cutting the hair of children without their parent’s permission.⁹²⁰

The researchers had advised the government to take measures, but as with so many other recommendations little or nothing had happened. The majority of the schools simply refused to accept students with locks and many Rastafarian parents therefore either kept their children at home or sent them to school well-trimmed. There were a few attempts to establish Rastafarian schools. The Rastafarians, maintaining that they had been stripped of their African identity during slavery and colonial rule, attached great importance to proper education, although they considered the curricula taught at Jamaican schools to be indoctrinating. So when a small group of Rastafarians started the Harambee School in East Kingston in 1971, *Rasta Voice* reported:

At the moment the enrolment is 75. The children get free food and books. ... We are hoping to set up more school [sic] of this type so that our children can be educated properly in the African way and not fall into the danger of being brain-washed into whiteness at the expense of an education.⁹²¹

Three years later Sister Norma Hamilton established the Royal Ethiopian Basic School in the yard of a member of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The school was meant for children between the ages of two and five, and was to apply the Montessori teaching methods. It is unknown what exactly became of these schools, but it seems likely that both were short-lived, since nothing more was heard of them. The movement lacked both the resources and organization to make it work, and thus remained dependent on a regular Babylonian education.

Before the mid-1970s lower-class children had very limited access to education, especially at the secondary level. Education was just too expensive. One of the lasting achievements of the People’s National Party government, however, was *The Education Thrust of the Seventies*, announced in June 1973.⁹²² Based on the idea that “education is key” for the development of a Third World country, the program aimed to financially enable more lower-class children to obtain proper (secondary) education. *The Education Thrust* made it possible for students of all socio-economic classes to qualify for secondary education by undergoing, at age ten or eleven, a highly competitive selection process, known as the Common Entrance Examination (CEE). This also opened High School doors to lower-class Rastafarian children, although, as soon turned out, quite a few of them were to have those doors slammed in their faces.

The first widely publicized case in which a Rastafarian child was barred from school occurred in September 1975, when the *Jamaica Daily News* reported the “school daze” of three-year-old dreadlocked Jahboukie Myton, photograph and all on its front page.⁹²³ Jahboukie’s mother had first approached Grossmond Preparatory School, but there she was told that they could not accept her son because of his hair. She then went to try her luck at Suthermere Preparatory, where Jahboukie was accepted and his relieved mother paid the fees. However, within a few hours she had the fees returned to her home, along with a letter from the headmistress, in which she was informed that after a discussion with members of staff the headmistress had changed her mind. Jahboukie could not be accepted. As the headmistress wrote: “the fact that he has to wear a hat continuously during school hours will certainly undermine the discipline of the school and I know that under the circumstances Jahboukie will not be comfortable here.” His mother then contacted the *Jamaica Daily News*.⁹²⁴

The following day the newspaper was able to report that Jahboukie’s school daze was over. Upon reading the first article, Beverly Manley, the Prime Minister’s wife, had contacted Jahboukie’s mother and guaranteed her son’s acceptance at Jamaica House Basic School of which she was the chairperson.⁹²⁵ Apparently not only Mrs. Manley, but also Opposition Leader Edward Seaga had become interested in young Jahboukie’s fate. Seaga wrote to Manley, “offering to arrange transportation by car for Jahboukie to and from school daily, subject to the approval of his parents.” It was the year before the elections and

Rastafari was at the height of its popularity.⁹²⁶

The article about Jahboukie not only provoked the sympathetic albeit perhaps merely politically-motivated responses of Beverly Manley and Edward Seaga, but also a critical letter to the editor of the *Daily News*. Although the author stated that she could not “conceive of any forward-thinking establishment in these modern times discriminating against a three-year-old or anyone else simply because he is Rastafarian,” she added:

On the other hand, every school must have the right to maintain its established norms. Let’s say the rules are bent to make Jahboukie the only student sporting locks or wearing a cap in class. Isn’t this discriminating against all other students who don’t wear a cap or locks? Then you have to bend for others as well: the Arab pupil who wears a robe, the naturalist who wants to attend classes in the nude, or the hydrophobe who never takes a bath and stinks.⁹²⁷

She insisted that all these people would then have the same rights as the Rastafarians and wondered what would happen if Jahboukie started to bring his “religion weed” to school. But even more important, what about Jahboukie’s freedom of choice?

In any case, how much religious conviction can a boy of three have anyway? ... The thing to do is to give the child a proper haircut and send him to school. His education ought to be more important than any dogma. It would be a great pity if handsome, innocent Jahboukie were to become just another sacrifice on the altar of anti-establishmentarianism. The greater pity is that it is his parents who must decide his faith and not he himself.⁹²⁸

Nevertheless, Jahboukie went to school, with his locks and without any “naturalists” or “hydrophobes” following in his wake.

On 18 January 1978 there was another case which not only received ample attention in the press, but also triggered a small chain reaction. Three dreadlocked students from Kingston Technical High School (KTHS), Michael Wright (18), Ronald Dawson (16) and Carlton Rose (16), were sent home “to procure proper grooming.” The Principal of KTHS, F.G. Roper, said he had twice warned the students to do something about their hairstyle and pointed out that the rules of the school stated that

[s]tudents must be neatly attired at all times. Hair must be well-groomed. No tams will be allowed with school uniform, either in school or on the road. Any violation of this rule will necessitate in his/her being sent home.⁹²⁹

The principal emphasized that he had nothing against Rastafari, but the students, of course, defended their constitutional right of religious freedom. As one of them told a *Gleaner* reporter: “I and I violate them school rules. But them violate a greater rule I and I religion.”⁹³⁰ The schoolboys insisted that there were more dreads at Kingston Technical and that most of their schoolmates “checked” for them. They also claimed to have been subject to discrimination by teachers and to had been warned “not to talk to certain female students.” The Rasta Movement Association wrote a letter to Minister of Education Eric Bell, asking him:

Will youths be denied a chance to be educated, and consequently to contribute to the wholesome development of the society because they have chosen to live their lives within the contents of an African inspired cultural religious value system.⁹³¹

The RMA also had a meeting with Principal Roper, but all to no avail.

Two days later another dreadlocked student, Errol Reynolds, who attended Trench Town Comprehensive High School, was also sent home to “comb properly.” Reynolds claimed that he was “unmolested” until the story about the three KTHS students had appeared on the *Gleaner*’s front page. Later he asserted: “I have missed roughly two weeks of school now and exams are coming up shortly. I want to do the exams but I would have to hold I and I faith still.”⁹³² The principal of the Trench Town school “expressed sympathy with the youth’s position” and seemed to be either acting on directions from the School Board or hiding behind them, when he stated:

Everything is left up to him. All he has to do is to comply with the rules. The rules state very clearly that the hair of every student must be combed neatly. Unless the School Board changes that rule I have to see to it that every student obeys it. We cannot waive the rule to please one individual ... or everyone will be expecting this treatment.⁹³³

A few weeks later *The Daily Gleaner* announced that the Ministry of Education was “not against Rastas in school.” Unnamed sources at the Ministry were quoted as saying that “a set of guidelines outlining the

Ministry's position on the physical appearance of students" had been drawn up, which were supported by the Jamaica Teacher's Association and also had the cabinet's approval. The guidelines advised that dreadlocks could be worn in school when tied back or covered with a tam. According to the *Gleaner* the Ministerial guidelines further directed that:

problems related to the attire of students will have to be settled at the local level with School Boards having the final authority at that level. In the event of a failure to resolve the dispute it is to be referred to the Ministry of Education.⁹³⁴

The dismissal of the Rastafarian students from Kingston and the report about the Ministry's guidelines apparently led some twenty students from Montego Bay's respectable Cornwall College to protest against the discrimination against Rastafarians in schools. Things got a little out of hand when the students began to "verbally and physically abuse" a number of foreign teachers, and walked "freely in and out the staff room to get chalk which was used to inscribe numerous slogans on the walls in support of Rastafarian culture and student power."⁹³⁵ The school was closed over the weekend, the students suspended and ordered to face a disciplinary committee. On Monday 20 February the dismissed students took to the streets of MoBay to protest against this decision.⁹³⁶

Although the guidelines did little more than sanction the existing situation, the Ministry of Education, through its Permanent Secretary, was quick to disavow the *Gleaner* report.⁹³⁷ It could not be regarded as "authoritative" and had been made by a source unknown to the Minister. The Permanent Secretary, however, reassured the public that a "code of conduct" was being prepared and would be made public as soon as possible. The spokesman was probably referring to a committee chaired by Reverend Ashley Smith, which was to advise on the problem of undisciplined behavior in schools.⁹³⁸ According to the newspaper, "the committee has met with Rastafarians in the course of its investigations but no final position has been adopted on the question of Rastafarians in schools."⁹³⁹

In spite of the Ministry of Education's contradiction of the *Gleaner's* report that Rastas could now go to schools wearing locks, a concerned Jamaican expressed his disgust in a letter to the *Jamaica Daily News*:

No wonder we have such indiscipline in society today. Established school rules must be broken and be discarded because they affect Rastaman's religion! The Rastaman should not attend any institution which affects his religion, should he? What will be the future of our country if this is allowed to happen? Very soon these Rasta youths are going to say "my religion permits me to smoke ganja, and a man must practice his religion everywhere," then the next big thing is the smoking of ganja in school. What a calamity!⁹⁴⁰

The Rastafarians of the Theocracy Government reacted with an open letter to the Minister of Education, Eric Bell. They had reached the conclusion that "the majority of people in the Jamaican society are not prepared to accept Rastas in their schools." Even the Haile Selassie I Secondary School, donated to Jamaica by the Emperor during his state visit in April 1966 and ever since regarded by the Rastafarians as a school meant for Rasta children, had only non-Rastas enrolled. Apart from that, the Smith Committee had only once met with the Rastafarians, "with no success as most of the people on this committee are the same ones who are refusing Rasta youths in their schools." The members of the Theocracy Government were still waiting for a second meeting with the committee, as they had been promised. Since they did not expect any improvements, they had decided to teach their children themselves. The only problem was that they had no school building. "All we ask for is the school for we have the teachers who are ready to start teaching, if only we could be given what is rightfully ours."⁹⁴¹

In August 1978 Jahboukie Myton's "school daze" started all over again. He had completed his three years at Jamaica Basic School and now his mother had to find a Preparatory school.⁹⁴² She tried well-known Prep schools like Vaz, Oxford and Ardenne along with several others, but was turned down each time.⁹⁴³

Two years later Lennox and Courtney Haughton experienced the same problem. The brothers Haughton, a former *brigadista* trained in Cuba and a former employee of the Jamaica Development Bank, had gained a place at the new, Cuban-built G.C. Foster College for Physical Education, but were told that they could not be registered because of their hairstyle. The Haughtons wrote letters to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education, the Jamaica Council for Human Rights and various other persons and institutions, and threatened to take legal action.⁹⁴⁴ Principal Jimmy Carnegie defended his position by pointing out that the regulations of the school board required, among other things, proper grooming. Within a few days, however, the school board changed both its mind and its rules, and decided to admit the brothers.

Carnegie resigned, not, as he later said, because he had anything against dreadlocks, but because he felt the board had let him down.⁹⁴⁵

The conflicts over school admissions were another sign of the Rastafarians' growing assertion of claims for recognition and acceptance in Jamaica, for equal rights and justice in Babylon. For the growing numbers of Rastafarians who had abandoned the idea of physical repatriation and the growing numbers of "secular Rastas," recognition and equal rights in Jamaica were the prime goals of their struggle. Among those who maintained that repatriation remained the movement's ultimate goal, opinions differed. The orthodox expected persecution and discrimination as their inevitable fate, the cross of the chosen, who were destined to suffer in Babylonian captivity. Many of the younger generation, however, held that striving for repatriation and for improvement of their situation in Jamaica were by no means mutually exclusive. But the elders still exerted considerable influence and they were determined to pursue a return to the land of their fathers, no matter how long it took. And in the meantime they had no intention of compromising with Babylon.

The Judah Coptics' repatriation offensive

"Run Babylon, run ... Lightning, fire and brimstone for all pork eaters."

In their quest for repatriation the various orthodox religious groups all employed their own strategies. Prince Emmanuel and his Bobo Dreads continued to bombard the government, the Queen and the United Nations with petitions. In one of these, addressed to the General Secretary of the UN, Prince wrote:

We would be grateful if you could gather all heads of the United Nations and heads of states to come together with her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth and the Prime Minister of Jamaica, to free us the people under own vine and fig tree. Our nationality, black Africans, black Jerusalem, Ethiopia, to bring forth our fundamental freedom, international repatriation under Universal Declaration of Human Rights Charter; on the Black man's Bill of Right internationally. These right must be handed down to us the people, the have-nots. Freedom for all, freedom of movement, freedom of travelling, free waterways [unedited quote].⁹⁴⁶

Prince's petitions were - hardly surprisingly - in vain.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel in the meantime, had decided not to wait on support from any government or supra-national organization. Directed by the prophet Gad, they had taken action themselves. During the early 1970s a handful of members had already made their way to the Shashamane land grant and on 8 December 1976 six more followed. Seven other members had accompanied them on their journey into the Promised Land, but they returned to inform their brethren back home about the situation in Ethiopia.⁹⁴⁷ Unlike many other Rastafarian groups, the Twelve Tribes of Israel had sufficient financial resources to organize the repatriation of at least some of its members to Ethiopia. The Tribes collected money from its members, many of them from a middle-class background, and had the support of quite a number of wealthy reggae stars, including Bob Marley, Judy Mowatt, Freddie McGregor and Dennis Brown.⁹⁴⁸ Its quiet, but determined efforts to realize the millennial dream right now, without depending on others, attracted many young Rastafarians who were tired of the insistence of the elders that they should wait and practice patience.

The members of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government were not prepared to take refusals to support repatriation as quietly as Prince Emmanuel or to finance their return to Africa themselves as the Twelve Tribes were doing. So in August 1979 the Judah Coptics, led by Jah Lloyd and Ras Makonnen, launched an offensive to exact financial assistance for repatriation, this time not from the Jamaican, but from the British government.

All previous efforts of the Theocracy Government to get assistance from the PNP government had failed. During early 1976 representatives of the Judah Coptic Church had conducted "a series of meetings to discuss grouses that they have" with Prime Minister Michael Manley. The last meeting with Manley was attended by thirteen delegates, ten "official observers" and several other Rastafarians who were all allowed into the conference room of Jamaica House. After several prayers and hymns, the Rastafarians had discussed with the Prime Minister and his aides issues ranging from "Ras Tafari divine qualities" to "economic development." They had complained about the "continuing acts of intimidation and discrimination ... despite assurances from the government" and demanded that Michael Manley take measures

to end the police brutality.⁹⁴⁹ Besides an end to the persecution by the police force, the Rastafarians also wanted official recognition as a religious group and as Ethiopian nationals, including a recognition of their right to smoke ganja, to wear locks and to be repatriated to Africa.

However, later that same year, on 5 July 1976, ten representatives of the Theocracy Government, headed by Jah Lloyd, visited Governor-General Florizel Glasspole to complain that the meetings with the Prime Minister had not led to any “tangible results.” The persecution by the police still continued and there were no signs of official recognition. The meeting with the “GG,” however, did not produce any results either, because as *The Daily Gleaner* reported:

The Governor-General told the delegation that he had no power to resolve their complaints but suggested that they secure the services of an attorney who would present their complaints to the proper government ministry. He said that much of the criticism levelled against [the] Rastafarian[s] was due to the fact that a number of youths were taking up “the fashion of the locks and people were confusing them with the Rastas who were [a] peaceful group.”⁹⁵⁰

Less than two weeks after their meeting with Glasspole, the Rastafarians tried their luck at the offices of the *Gleaner*. They demanded action from the Prime Minister in order to stop the “war of provocation and intimidation.” Their patience, they said, “was now strained to the limits” and although they had “no intention of taking any retaliatory action ... it would not be surprising if Rastas got violent” should the harassment and abuses continue.⁹⁵¹

Two years later, in August 1978, the Judah Coptics celebrated a Nyabinghi at Kingston’s National Heroes Park. They had been given permission to use the park for eighteen days, but when the permit expired, they refused to leave until Michael Manley and his cabinet agreed to meet with them “to discuss, identify and initiate” repatriation. Minister Dudley Thompson, they claimed, had promised such a meeting. After several warnings, a heavily armed police force removed the Rastafarians from National Heroes Park. Jah Lloyd and two others were arrested for setting fire to an oak tree, which had been planted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.⁹⁵²

The Rastafarians of the Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government, Divine Order of Nyabinghi, were nothing if not persistent. In April 1979 they sent a telegram to Manley in which they once again demanded that he immediately meet “his moral obligation to reason with I and I.” They reminded the Prime Minister that in response to a hint he had dropped during the opening of the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari community center’s new wing on 1 June 1977, the MRR had organized a census “of all the brethren who wish to re-settle in Africa.” In early 1978 the Mystic Revelation had submitted the census report and the forms filled out by the Rastafarians to the government, but had never received a response.⁹⁵³ The Judah Coptics’ telegram apparently went unanswered as well, so the Theocracy Government decided to turn to Britain.

Early on the morning of 8 August 1979 about twenty Rastafarians, armed with drums and banners, assembled at the British High Commission’s premises on Trafalgar Road and demanded to see the High Commissioner, John Drinkall, to discuss repatriation in relation to possible changes in the Jamaican constitution.⁹⁵⁴ Their spokesman Jah Lloyd told a reporter of the *Jamaica Daily News* that

they had decided to seek assistance from Britain since the Jamaican government had failed to respond. Early last month, the Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government called on Prime Minister Manley “to immediately face [the government’s] moral, statutory and historical obligation to repatriate the brethren before the rest of the West Perish.”⁹⁵⁵

As noted before, in Rastafarian ideology Britain still had a responsibility for repatriation. They claimed that when slavery was abolished in 1834-1838, the British Crown had paid a £ 20 million compensation to enable black people to return to Africa. The money, however, had been seized by the planters, who afterwards falsified history by claiming that the payment was meant to compensate the planters’ for the loss of slaves. In line with this reading, Rastafarians had frequently addressed both the British Crown and government in order to get what they considered to be rightfully theirs: £ 20 million for their return to Africa. On one of those occasions, the British Minister for Overseas Development, Judith Hart, on a visit to Jamaica, had suggested that the Rastafarians should bring their case before the United Nations. Jah Lloyd, however, thought that if repatriation was a matter for the UN, it was a matter for the member countries of the UN as well. Lloyd and his group had later been invited to a discussion with the Press Attaché of the British High Commission, but since they regarded repatriation as an issue to be discussed with only the highest officials, they had gone to Trafalgar Road to see Commissioner Drinkall.

After two hours of singing and drumming in front of the High Commission, Jah Lloyd and Ras Makonnen were invited to meet the Deputy High Commissioner, who told them that Drinkall would see them next week, on 15 August.⁹⁵⁶

On the appointed day, the twenty Rastafarians again went to Trafalgar Road, where Jah Lloyd and Ras Makonnen spoke for about an hour and a half with Drinkall, while the rest waited outside. The High Commissioner told them that since Jamaica was an independent country, neither he nor the British government had any authority with regard to repatriation of Jamaican citizens. If the Rastafarians wanted to send another message to Queen Elizabeth II, as they had indicated, they should approach the Governor-General, Her Majesty's representative in Jamaica. The outcome of the meeting did far from satisfy Jah Lloyd and Ras Makonnen's group. As soon as they were outside, they cut the British flag from the pole, refused to leave the compound and kept up a chant of "run Babylon, run." Jah Lloyd reportedly kept shouting "Lightning, fire and brimstone for all pork eaters."

In keeping with a good Jamaican tradition, the commotion in front of the High Commission soon drew a huge crowd of curious on-lookers; motorists blocked all traffic on Trafalgar Road for half an hour. In the meantime, the police were ordered to "remove them with any force necessary." Police eventually led the Rastas away from the High Commission without further incidents. *The Jamaica Daily News* later reported that Jah Lloyd had told one of the policemen that "if by September 5, we do not get an answer from Queen Elizabeth or Thatcher, put you gun at all white boy head." The High Commissioner thought the whole affair was "most disgraceful" and the Jamaican press shared his view.⁹⁵⁷

Jamaica, however, had more important things on its mind than a Union Jack cut from its pole by a small group of loudmouthed Rastas. The economic situation had become really critical and political polarization had brought the country to the brink of civil war. Michael Manley's experiment with democratic socialism had proved to be a disaster. Already by 1977 the economic problems had reached such proportions that the government had been forced to negotiate a loan with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). After failing the first performance test, a new loan was negotiated with the familiar IMF conditions attached, including extensive cut-backs in public expenditure, sharp devaluations, heavy lay-offs and painful wage limits. In December 1979 Jamaica once again failed the test and the IMF demanded more of the same. The PNP refused, broke with the IMF and announced that the Jamaican voters should decide about their own and the party's future in general elections to be held in late 1980.⁹⁵⁸

Since the 1976 elections, political violence had been steadily increasing. In the ghettos rival gang members killed each other at random. And when they were not murdering one another, the security forces were always there to pull the trigger.⁹⁵⁹ But in January 1978 two of the most powerful "dons," JLP-warlord Claudie Massop and PNP-crook Buckley Marshall, worked out a Peace Truce to stop the senseless killings. With the help of the leadership of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, they persuaded Bob Marley to stage a second peace concert. The Rastafarian superstar was still living abroad following the failed assassination attempt a few days before the 1976 "Smile Jamaica" concert. He feared that JLP gangs were still out to kill him, but nevertheless agreed to perform in Kingston.

Although the truce was broken long before Marley arrived in Jamaica, the preparations for the "One Love" peace concert, under the guidance of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, went ahead. The Prime Minister provided heavy security and on 22 April 1978 the National Stadium was crowded as never before. The leading stars of the reggae scene were present to perform for "One Love," among them Big Youth, Jacob Miller, Dennis Brown, Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, Culture and Inner Circle. Peter Tosh "seized the opportunity to lecture Michael Manley and Edward Seaga for their failure to support the legalization of ganja" and demonstrated his contempt for Babylon by lighting up a ganja cigarette on stage.⁹⁶⁰ "Light up your spliff, light up your chalice, we're gonna smoke it in Buckingham Palace," he sang.

When Bob Marley finally went on stage, he invited Eddie and Joshua to join him. Singing *One Love*, he

grabbed the two leaders' right hands and held them over his head for all to see. It was an electric, historic moment for Jamaica. Then, while the little singer in the middle finished his song, Manley and Seaga seemed to freeze as they shook hands, looking uncomfortable and remote. Later, when Bob saw a video of the scene, he commented, "Guiltiness rest on their conscience."⁹⁶¹

As the elections drew nearer, the violence escalated to an unprecedented intensity. It was "war inna Babylon" and to many youths, from both the lower and the middle classes, Rastafari seemed to be the only sane alternative.

Chapter 5.

The obnoxious minority: the international diffusion of Rastafari

The international breakthrough of reggae music during the 1970s and the subsequent rise to stardom of several Rastafarian reggae musicians, spread both the movement and the message of Jah people all over the world. By 1975 Rastafari was no longer a typical Jamaican phenomenon, but was rapidly becoming a familiar sight in most Caribbean countries, Canada, the United States, Brazil, several Middle American, African and European countries, New Zealand and Australia. Although this study is primarily concerned with the relations between the Rastafarian movement and Jamaican society, the rapid international diffusion of Rastafari cannot be neglected, if only because events elsewhere began to affect the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica and, in several cases, sparked controversies on the island.

However, research on Rastafari outside Jamaica, perhaps with the exception of England, is still extremely limited. There are only a few publications on Rastafari “abroad” and most of these provide very little detailed information. Consequently, the picture that emerges from the following discussion is, unfortunately, far from complete.⁹⁶²

Rastafari in England

“The wrongs, which their imitators commit in their name, ... will destroy them.”

During the 1950s and early 1960s thousands of Jamaicans, still British subjects with British passports, crossed the Atlantic hoping to find work in the expanding British industry. In all some 175,000 Jamaicans migrated to the very heart of the British Empire between 1953 and 1962. Shortly before independence, in 1961, migration to England reached a peak of 39,200 registered migrants. Nancy Foner found that 92% of these Jamaican migrants in England had been born in rural areas, and that 70% had lived in rural parts of the island prior to emigration. In England, however, they had to settle in urban areas. Most were poor and hardly educated, but willing “to make sacrifices in order to achieve their original ambitions.”⁹⁶³

Among these migrants there were probably also a handful of Rastafarians. As early as 1955, according to Sheila Patterson, there was a failed attempt to organize a “Rastafarian-oriented” United Afro-West Indian Brotherhood in London. Three years later, in 1958, “a group of bearded and rather conspicuously dressed young men were noted in the Brixton market area.”⁹⁶⁴ It was confirmed by several informants that these young men were Rastafarians, but that was about all anyone knew about them.

Some ten years later, in 1968, a group of Jamaican migrants founded the Universal Black Improvement Organization (UBIO), an organization designed along the lines of Marcus Garvey’s once mighty Universal Negro Improvement Association. Although the UBIO was not an exclusively Rastafarian group, it included in its membership persons of Rastafarian faith, among them Ascento Amanuel Foxe and Norman Adams, who also formed a political wing within the UBIO, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), again after the example of Garvey’s People’s Political Party.⁹⁶⁵ As Ernest Cashmore writes: “at this stage the UBIO and its political branch had no clear programme; it was not strictly Rastafarian in doctrine, philosophy or ambition; nor was it a straightforward political interest group.”⁹⁶⁶ Amanuel Foxe, who had left Jamaica during the mid-1950s, in his own words “to establish the Rastafarian movement in England,” soon became one of the most prominent Rastafarian leaders in this cold and foggy part of Babylon.

In May 1972 Foxe and Adams went “on a fact-finding mission” to Jamaica. They met with the *Archimandrite* of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Laike Mariam Mandefro, who baptized them into the EOC. The two fact-finders expressed a wish to learn more about the Ethiopian Orthodox faith and were given instruction in liturgy and Bible reading. Mandefro advised them to familiarize themselves with the teachings of the church. As the Rastafarians later recalled:

He also said, with due regards to the efforts of the sistren’s [sic] and brethren’s in London on his return to America he would instruct the International President of the Ethiopian World Federation Inc., Mr. George E. Bryan, to issue London an official Royal Charter of the Ethiopian World Federation Inc.⁹⁶⁷

As a result of Mandefro's instruction, the Emperor Yohannes Local 33 of the Ethiopian World Federation was established in London on 25 August 1972. Amanuel Foxe became its President. Later, two more branches of Local 33 were founded, one in Birmingham, led by Claudius Haughton, and the other in Leicester.⁹⁶⁸

In the meantime, another Rastafarian organization had also become active in England, a group whose teachings centered not so much on the "philosophy and opinions" of Marcus Garvey or the theology of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as on Bible reading, "a chapter a day." Some time during 1972, one of the founders of the EWF, named Pepe, "branched off to form his own separate Rastafarian group, the Twelve Tribes of Israel."⁹⁶⁹ Whether or not the founding of a branch of the Twelve Tribes was an initiative of the Jamaican headquarters is unknown, but unlikely. Most of the Twelve Tribes' international branches were personal initiatives of local Rastafarians, which were formally recognized only after the prophet Gad had visited and counselled the group. Whatever the case, with branches in Brixton and Old Trafford, Birmingham, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, according to Horace Campbell, initially had a strong influence on the Rastafarian movement in England.

However, the hegemony of this group over less organised Rasta formations could not hold sway for long, for many Rastas objected to the introduction of whites into the "organ." Even if Rasta was religious, in the eyes of many Rastas it had to be black and anti-imperialist.⁹⁷⁰

In May 1973 a delegation of the EWF's Emperor Yohannes Local 33 was invited to attend the conference of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in New York City, where they met with several leaders of the EOC, including Abuna Theophilous and Abba Athanasius Abeba, bishop of the Americas. Laike Mariam Mandefro and International President of the EWF George Bryan also received the delegation from England. Three more members, Roy Prince, Keith Berry and Wazero Foxe, were baptized and the delegation was present at the High Mass celebrated on 20 May 1973. After the conference, the delegation from Local 33 accompanied Mandefro and Abuna Theophilous on their visit to Jamaica.⁹⁷¹

Within a year, the contacts between the Rastafarians of the British EWF Local and the leadership of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church resulted in Mandefro visiting to London, in order to formally establish a branch of the church in England. Mandefro arrived on 24 May 1974. He led several services to explain the teachings of the EOC and, at the request of his audience, spoke about the Shashamane land grant. In August that same year, the high-ranking bishop Abuna Samuel also paid a short visit to the newly established branch at Lancaster Road. The *Abuna* led a service and had a meeting with the members of Local 33 at their Portobello Road headquarters, but his visit was shorter than intended. Due to the political unrest in Ethiopia, the *Abuna* returned home after only three days. By the end of the following month, Emperor Haile Selassie had been deposed by a Marxist *junta*. Foxe later claimed to have led a demonstration of 20,000 people through London to protest the overthrow of Haile Selassie.⁹⁷²

As in Jamaica, the relationship between the British Rastafarians and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was ambivalent. Two years after the Quiet Revolution in Ethiopia and the subsequent death of Emperor Haile Selassie, "the Abba" of the EOC in London, according to Cashmore, tried to correct two important elements in the beliefs of those Rastafarians who had become members of the church.

First, that if they were to be righteous EOC members, they should cut off their dreadlocks. His second directive was more serious: that members should erase from their minds the "erroneous belief" in the divinity of Haile Selassie (given the political situation in Ethiopia, this request was understandable).⁹⁷³

The first directive was "dutifully carried out by many Church members," but the appeal to give up the most central belief in the Rastafarian movement was, needless to say, "disturbing and totally unacceptable." The reaction of the "overwhelming majority" was to stay in the church, but also to remain faithful to their belief in the divinity of His Imperial Majesty, which seems to contradict Campbell's statement that the members of Local 33, in accordance with the teachings of the EOC, were

political in orientation and did not promote the divinity of the Emperor of Ethiopia, saying "Selassie is the supreme defender of the faith of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. He is not divine, indeed Selassie denied his divinity - but he is worshipped as the spiritual leader of the movement."⁹⁷⁴

Whatever the exact position of the members of Local 33 and the EOC on the divinity of the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, it is clear that by the mid-1970s a small number of Rastafarians had firmly established themselves in England, although their social importance, as Cashmore terms it, was limited. To the extent that they were organized, the Rastafarians were associated with two recognizable groups, the

Twelve Tribes of Israel and the Ethiopian World Federation; the latter was in turn closely connected with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In January 1978 another group, calling itself the Rastafari Universal Zion (RUZ), was established in London. RUZ was soon to become one of the most visible Rastafarian organizations in England, not least because of the magnetic personality of its leader, Jah Bones. Based in Tottenham, Rastafari Universal Zion operated an advisory service for Rastafarians, a Saturday school and a government-sponsored training project for youths. The RUZ headquarters served both as an art and crafts shop and as a community center.⁹⁷⁵

In February 1975, the same year in which His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I “disappeared,” Chris Blackwell’s Island Records released Bob Marley and the Wailers’ third album, *Natty Dread*, followed by performances in London and Birmingham in July. During one of these shows, at the London Lyceum, recordings were made for *Bob Marley and the Wailers Live!*, which was released in November. This not only heralded a definite rise to stardom for Marley and the Wailers, and in their wake scores of other Rastafarian reggae artists, but also signalled the emergence of a Rasta-reggae subculture. Numerous young black immigrants in England began to identify with, if not with the religious beliefs, then with the social and cultural ideas of the Rastafarians. The majority, however, adopted only the outward symbols, notably the dreadlocks and the red, gold and green insignia, as elements in a new fashion.⁹⁷⁶

The emergence of so many young pseudo-Rastas understandably caused problems for the Rastafarians, one of whom expressed her opinion about the look-alikes in a poem:

Hey you false RASTA out dere!
Bout seh you ah locks up yu hair,
You don’t know what locks is all about.
You tink is new fashion jus com’ out?
You don’t even deal in the praising of Jah!⁹⁷⁷

But just like the Rastafarians in Jamaica, the Rastas in England were unable to disassociate themselves from those who adopted the outward symbols. For the general public and the authorities, including the police, all those with dreadlocks were Rastafarians and they were soon identified as the worst of what a section of the British press had labelled “the black muggers.”

During the late 1970s and early 1980s England witnessed increased tensions between black youths and the police, culminating in a series of riots in 1981. In most of England’s major cities, economically depressed areas with large concentrations of black migrants had emerged, in which the young in particular suffered from racial discrimination, unemployment, inadequate housing and education and a general lack of opportunities. On top of that many black youths - second generation migrants - were faced with an identity crisis. Criminal behavior was said to be rampant among them, the yellow press printed exaggerated reports about “black muggers,” preying on defenseless, white, elderly ladies, and the police reacted with heavy patrolling.⁹⁷⁸ When dreadlocks became a trend among black youths, sections of the press singled out the Rastafarians as hard core criminals, who were said to terrorize the streets and neighborhoods of many major cities in England. As a result, quite a few genuine as well as pseudo-Rastas ended up in jail.

Campbell relates that, like their brethren in Jamaica, Rastas in British prisons were forcibly shaven and had their locks trimmed, despite their loud protests. The authorities did not consider Rastafari to be a religion and when the Jamaican High Commission in London was consulted, it informed the Home Office that dreadlocks and beards were not regarded as religious symbols in Jamaica either. The Home Office thus advised the prison authorities that Rastafari was not to be recognized as a valid religion under either *The Prison Act* or *The Prison Rules*. It was of little use to claim membership of the officially recognized Ethiopian Orthodox Church either, since the church, when applied to, stated that “long hair is not a requirement.” According to Campbell “some of the Rastafarians who objected to having their symbol of black pride forcibly shorn were placed in mental institutions.”⁹⁷⁹

Following the first clashes between young black West Indians and the police in Handsworth, Birmingham and other areas in the West Midlands during the second half of the 1970s, the police decided to look into the background of the tensions and of the disturbed relations between the police and the black community. The research was carried out by John Brown, who had held positions at the University of the West Indies and the Cranfield Institute of Technology. In December 1977 he published his findings in *Shades of Grey: a report on police - West Indian relations in Handsworth*.⁹⁸⁰ In essence Brown concluded that the vast majority of the crimes committed in Handsworth could be attributed to

a particular group - some 200 youths of West Indian origin or descent who have taken on the appearance of followers of the Rastafarian faith by plaiting their hair in locks and wearing green, gold and red woollen hats.⁹⁸¹

According to Brown, “apart from the specific crimes for which they are responsible, [almost all these dreadlocks] constantly threaten the peace of individual citizens, black, brown and white, whilst making the police task both difficult and dangerous since every police contact with them involves the risk of confrontation or violence.” He added, however, that a distinction should be made between this “criminalised Dreadlock sub-culture” and “the true Rastafarians.” But this shade of grey was completely lost in the media coverage.

Prior to the publication of *Shades of Grey*, the British tabloids had already jumped on the Rastas with headlines such as “Lost Tribes on the warpath” and “Terror gangs shock”.⁹⁸² After the report was published, a whole series of articles under similarly paranoid headlines appeared in every major newspaper, effectively confirming the criminal image of the whole Rastafarian movement. It appeared as if all criminals in England could now be identified by a dark skin-color, dreadlocks and a “knitted tea cosy hat” of red, gold and green. The press coverage of *Shades of Grey* had a devastating impact on the image of the Rastafarians in England.

Other effects of the report were that an additional twenty policemen were stationed in Handsworth, that two policemen were sent to Jamaica to do some research into Rastafari and that street lighting in the area was improved. Furthermore, the police started a project to promote “community policing” with the help of black people from the neighborhoods, including some Rastafarians. According to Horace Campbell,

some misguided Rastas sought to persuade other brethren to cooperate with the police, who promised assistance in repatriating them to Africa. The police, along with other race relations “experts”, organised meetings between the Rastas and Home Office ... [and] invited Eldridge Cleaver to Birmingham in 1978, to promote another version of alienation called “Born Again” Christianity.⁹⁸³

The riots that received most attention, if only because they were instantly broadcast on television, were undoubtedly the Brixton disorders of 10, 11 and 12 April 1981. The rioting was an immediate reaction to an incident in which the police was (falsely) accused of having stabbed a black youngster. What had begun as a minor incident involving a handful of black youths throwing stones at policemen, soon developed into a spontaneous riot. Hundreds of youths, many but not all of them black and quite a few of them sporting locks, clashed with the police (injuring over 250 law enforcers), smashed windows, burned cars and buildings, and looted stores in this depressed area of South London. The decision to continue a major stop-and-search operation codenamed *Swamp '81*, which had started in the week before the riot, only added fuel to the eruption of violence. Some 950 persons had been stopped and over a hundred arrested under the disputed “sus law,” more than half of them black and two-thirds under 21 years of age.⁹⁸⁴ But the deeper causes of the riots were, of course, the dissatisfaction, anger and frustration resulting from persistent social and economic discrimination against young blacks.

Immediately following the disorders, Lord Scarman was requested to lead a public inquiry into the background of the riots. Scarman had hardly finished preparations for the inquiry, when in July 1981 riots broke out in some thirty British cities, the major ones occurring in the Southall area of London, in Toxteth, Liverpool, and Moss Side, Manchester. The inquiry, however, was largely confined to what became known the Brixton Uprising. In his report, Scarman sharply criticized harsh policing methods and lack of imagination within the police force, and made several recommendations to improve police-community relations. He also concluded that, contrary to public opinion,

there was no suggestion in argument, nor any indication in evidence, that the Rastafarians, as a group or by their doctrines, were responsible for the outbreak of disorder or the ensuing riots. The Rastafarians, their faith and their aspirations, deserve more understanding and more sympathy than they get from the British people. The true Rastafarian is deeply religious, essentially humble and sad.⁹⁸⁵

Scarman, however, also had a warning for the Rastafarians:

It is [the Rastafarian’s] great difficulty that young hooligans have aped the outward signs of his faith without accepting its discipline or adopting his religious approach to life. ... The risk - to the Rastafarians themselves as well as to the rest of society - is that they will be overwhelmed by the wild and the lawless. In that event the good they represent will perish: the wrongs, which their imitators commit in their name, will be for what they are remembered, and will destroy them.⁹⁸⁶

Within a few months Scarman's inquiry was followed by a report on the Rastafarian movement by the London-based Catholic Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ), an advisory body to the Roman Catholic bishops. The CCRJ's advice that Rastafari should be recognized as a valid religion, provoked sharp reactions in the British press (a more detailed discussion of the report of the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice will be presented in the following chapter).⁹⁸⁷

In spite of such recommendations and Scarman's conclusion that Rastafarians had played no particular role in the disorders of 1981, the police maintained a keen interest in the Rastafarian movement. In December 1982 *The Guardian* featured an article on Detective Chief Inspector Wilf Knight, engaged in "extensive" research into Rastafari. Knight was part of the community relations police team sent into Brixton after the disorders. According to *The Guardian*, the Chief Inspector felt that cannabis smoking by Rastas should be legalized, because otherwise "the Rastafarians could become a threat to society." Scotland Yard, however, was quick to emphasize that this was Knight's personal opinion and in no way official policy.⁹⁸⁸

To improve the relations between the Rastafarians and the British public and to provide information about the movement and its faith, members of the Ethiopian World Federation and the Rastafarian Women's Organization established the Rastafarian Advisory Centre on 8 December 1982. Through the Project Enterprise scheme, cheap office accommodation had been made available at Askew Crescent, Shepherd's Bush, in Western London. The Rastafarian Advisory Centre's aim was to set up educational programs and workshops, and to provide legal assistance to Rastas.⁹⁸⁹

In an effort to improve relations within the strongly divided movement itself, the Rastafarians in England organized a conference in the Brixton area in 1983. Here several British-based Rastafarian organizations, groups and individuals, excluding, of course, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, agreed to work under the EWF's umbrella. They were all provided with copies of the Federation's constitution, pending negotiations for official charters. Even before these were completed, however, several groups had begun to use the name of the EWF without permission. Members of Emperor Yohannes Local 33, headed by Amanuel Foxe, requested an audience with the Ethiopian Crown Prince Asfa Wossen, who had lived in London since the 1974 revolution. The Crown Prince received the members of Local 33 and discussed the EWF's situation with them.⁹⁹⁰

On 1 July 1983, as a result of this meeting, Asfa Wossen issued a letter "for the benefit of the Rastafarian Community world-wide," in which he wrote:

It is nevertheless regrettable that presently the Ethiopian World Federation Inc., and the Rastafarian movement as a whole have deflected from their constitutional objectives by various unfavourable conditions and personality cults, as a divisive result of which they have not effectively rallied under the Imperial banner with a structured body counselling for a leadership of unity to achieve the same sacred goals, set out by my father Emperor Haile Selassie I. In the same spirit I call upon all the followers of the movement today to embrace and consolidate their international activities in unison and also assist the liberation struggle and the restoration of the Constitutional Monarchy of the Solomonic Dynasty in Ethiopia. Even though we are very pleased to note that the grass roots of the movement as a whole are exerting their individual energies and influence to reach out and support our unfortunate exiled brethren and those caught up in wars, strife and famine victims in Ethiopia today, the results of their valuable efforts have been ineffective, uncoordinated and haphazard. We shall therefore be pleased to exchange official documents and bestow the relevant credentials necessary for the revitalisation of the sacred aims and objectives, as originally laid out by my beloved father Emperor Haile Selassie I, so as to renew our highest considerations to the sacred goals of the movement world wide, under the renewed banner of the Imperial World Federation Inc.⁹⁹¹

Forty-six years after Dr. Malaku Bayen had founded the Ethiopian World Federation, Crown Prince Asfa Wossen thus put an end, at least formally, to its existence and established a new, officially recognized organization, the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. (IEWF). He issued two Royal Charters, one for the Asfa Wossen Local 1 in England and another for the Zara Yaqob Local 2 in Jamaica.

The aims and objectives of the new Imperial Ethiopian World Federation were described as follows:

- A. To develop the social and administrative mechanism to organise and centralise the Rastafarian Movement, according to the operational guidelines which the Federation and the movement see fit.
- B. To achieve official recognition for the Federation[s] Rastafarian[s] leading towards democratic representation.
- C. To provide cultural and political education for the members of the Federation and the Rastafarian Movement and others who conscientiously wish to become informed about the Movement.

- D. To keep in close touch with Independent African States in regard to the question of Repatriation.
- E. To establish co-operative economies in order to raise the standard of living of Rastafari and members in general.
- F. To introduce community development projects which will provide employment and professional skills for Federation and Rastafarians in urban and rural communities.
- G. To insure the observance of Universal Human Rights in accordance with the International Human Rights Charter and specifically, the principles of the Freedom Charter.
- H. To promote love and goodwill among Ethiopians at home and abroad and thereby maintain the integrity and sovereignty of Ethiopia. To disseminate the ancient Ethiopian culture among its members, to correct abuses, relieve oppression and carve for ourselves and our posterity, a destiny compatible with our idea of perfect manhood, and God's purpose in creating us, that we may not only save ourselves from annihilation, but carve for ourselves a place in the sun; In this endeavour we are determined to seek peace and pursue it, for it is the will of God for man.
- I. To promote and pursue happiness; For it is the goal of human life and endeavour.
- J. To usher in the teaching and practice of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.
- K. To promote and stimulate interest among its members in world affairs and to cultivate a spirit of international goodwill.
- L. To promote friendly interest among its members to develop a fraternal spirit among them and to incubate in its members the desire to render voluntary aid and assistance to one another at all times.
- M. To encourage its members to develop interest and pride in democratic institutions and to promote democratic principles and ideals.⁹⁹²

The founding of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation reconfirmed the close links that had developed between the royal family and part of the Rastafarian movement. In contrast to the old Ethiopian World Federation's constitution, the IEWF's constitution clearly reflected a strong Rastafarian influence, for instance in its resolve "to keep in close touch with Independent African States in regards to the question of Repatriation." The constitution did, however, carefully avoid referring to the Rastafarians' belief that Haile Selassie was God. What the constitution did not mention specifically, notwithstanding Asfa Wossen's letter, was the aim of toppling the Marxist regime and restoring the monarchy in Ethiopia, whereas it was on precisely this objective that the IEWF was to focus in the years to come.

Amanuel Foxe became the International President of the IEWF. In 1984 he once again led a rally against the regime of Haile Mariam Mengistu and later claimed that some 15,000 people had taken part. Not long after this, Foxe decided to return to Jamaica. "The Emperor told me to use the Federation to strengthen the movement here," he told *Gleaner* columnist Ian Boyne a few years later.⁹⁹³

In Jamaica, as we shall see further on, the International President of the IEWF could, in his vivid letters to the editor of *The Daily Gleaner*, be a merciless critic of his brethren outside the IEWF. Like many other Rastafarian groups, the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation considered itself to be the only legitimate representative of the Rastafarian movement, claiming that it alone had received official recognition from the Ethiopian royal family. The IEWF therefore relentlessly tried to convince the Rastafarian movement of the necessity of unification under the umbrella of the Federation. As one of their members wrote:

The first step in the struggle for survival is unification. Not unifying as different groups, but assimilating at one central point, under one central authority. ... These different groups of Rastafarians should now assimilate under one heading, the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Inc., the organization answerable to the Ethiopian Crown Council, in exile in London, England, and therefore work together for the upliftment and development of Rastas living in Jamaica.⁹⁹⁴

The second issue tirelessly addressed by the members of the IEWF was that of the liberation of Ethiopia from the Marxist regime and the restoration of the Ethiopian monarchy. Before that had been realized, there could be no repatriation.

In the former years of Rastafarianism the ancient Rastaman completely dedicated himself toward the spiritual aspect of Rastafarianism. Thanks to his perseverance the religious concepts of the Rastaman have been accepted and respected by many worldwide. ... Rastas must now balance church and state affairs ... The first priority of the Rastaman was repatriation. Today we of the I.E.W.F. Inc., have put aside that objective. We the Royalist Rastas refuse to go to, or support a communist Ethiopia. We could never think of going to Ethiopia until the eradication of the Russian-backed Marxist regime, headed by "Mengistu", which is a must.⁹⁹⁵

Foxe also severely criticized the Rastas for focusing on the situation in South Africa, while making no active efforts whatsoever to liberate Ethiopia from the communist ordeal. He declared once that he regarded communism as an even greater evil than Apartheid, adding: "Without a free Ethiopia you cannot have a free South Africa." To achieve his goal, he admitted that he was prepared to seek assistance from

the United States. "I man will hug up America fi get out Mengistu."⁹⁹⁶

After 1985 little was heard of the Rastafarians in England.

Rastafari in the Caribbean

"The rationale is every inch as odious as the Rastas themselves."

One of the earliest spin-offs of the Rastafarian movement to come to public attention in the Caribbean were the Dreads of Dominica. During the 1970s this tiny island was one of the poorest countries within the Commonwealth Caribbean. It experienced several major economic, social and political crises of which the emergence of the Dreads in the early 1970s was but one example.⁹⁹⁷

According to Bert Thomas, "approximately 200 young people from the middle and lower class elements," mainly unemployed, had adopted the "symbols of resistance which had become so well known in Jamaica - the locks; tam; lion; ites; green and gold; and the use of the herb for spiritual and social communication and inspiration."⁹⁹⁸ The ideas of this group, however, were far from homogeneous. There were those who had adopted the religious beliefs of the Rastafarians, but others, specifically the Dreads, did not embrace the belief in the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I nor the concept of repatriation to Africa, in spite of the fact that they had adopted much of the symbolism of Rastafari. George Simpson states that some even maintained "that Selassie personified corruption."⁹⁹⁹ The aim of the Dreads was either to escape or to overthrow the capitalist Babylonian system on their island and to work towards the establishment of something like an autonomous agricultural state. Regarding themselves as spokesmen for all oppressed and poor people, the Dreads strongly opposed foreign enterprises and viewed the Dominican ruling elite as nothing but puppets of big business. They advocated the redistribution of land, more than half of which was owned by only a handful of persons. The Dreads believed in complete self-reliance, a natural life-style and cooperation in agricultural communes and many of them had thus settled in the hilly interior, where they farmed illegally on government land. Some were said to have left their jobs, but the majority appear to have been unemployed youths.

Chandar Supersad, in his thesis on the Dominican Dreads, points to the Black Power movement in the United States as the main external influence and does not even mention the Rastafarians.¹⁰⁰⁰ Although American Black Power no doubt had a strong influence in Dominica, the stress on agriculture, self-reliance and a natural "livity," however, suggests the Dreads had adopted more than just a few symbols of Rastafari. As far as their attitude towards Haile Selassie and Ethiopia is concerned, a persuasive explanation has been provided by Horace Campbell, who notes that "by the time the Dreads appeared as a social force, the Ethiopian monarch had been deposed into history by the Ethiopian people."¹⁰⁰¹

Dominican society, however, made no distinction between Dreads and Rastas. To the elite all those with locks were Dreads and they were, hardly surprisingly, far from popular. But among the youths and in the progressive, leftist circles of the Movement for a New Dominica (MND), the Dreads were assured of considerable support.¹⁰⁰² According to Supersad, Dread was nothing more than a "fad" until 1974.¹⁰⁰³ The Dominican elite, however, considered the Dreads to be subversive elements and held them responsible for a series of incidents, including several attacks on the few tourists who visited the island. As Lennox Honeychurch writes:

The epithet of "honkey" was in constant use, they were jostled, sometimes spat on, cameras were occasionally smashed, cases of stone throwing were reported and things were generally uncomfortable for whites passing or coming into contact with "the four corner boys."¹⁰⁰⁴

Within a few years of the appearance of the first Dreads on the island, there was widespread fear of the dreadlocked "terrorists." The case which brought the crisis to a climax was the murder of an American tourist, Albert John Jirasek, during Carnival 1974. Two Dreads, Desmond "Ras Kabinda" Trotter and Roy Mason, were arrested and charged with the killing. Their trial began on 20 August that same year. A visitor from Antigua, the main witness for the prosecution, alleged that she had overheard Trotter boasting about the murder. Later, back in Antigua, she told a lawyer that her story had been invented under police pressure. When the trial resumed, however, she stuck to her original, ambiguous account. Mason was released, but Trotter, defended by Maurice Bishop and Bryan Alleyne, was found guilty and sentenced to death. It was only because of strong international protests that the verdict was later commuted to life

imprisonment.^{1005.}

Shortly after Carnival, Deputy Prime Minister Patrick John announced “more effective measures ... to stamp out the menace that threatens our progress and development.”^{1006.} John’s uncompromising attitude towards the Dreads gave the police and civilians the opportunity to take justice into their own hands. Numerous Dreads were beaten up or had their huts destroyed. A few months after succeeding Edward Le Blanc as Prime Minister, John introduced an astonishing piece of legislation which virtually licensed a witch-hunt on dreadlocks.

On 19 November 1974 the House of Assembly passed almost unanimously *The Prohibited and Unlawful Societies and Association Act 1974*, clearly designed with the Dreads in mind, since it was the only “society” named in the schedule to the Act, which was therefore soon commonly known as the Dread Act. Nevertheless, the formulations of the Dread Act outlawed almost any member of any group on the island, especially those “wearing any uniform, badge or mode of dress or other distinguishing mark or feature or manner of wearing their hair.” All such persons, section 2 ruled, were guilty of an offense and subject to arrest without warrant. Wearing dreadlocks could mean a nine-month term behind bars. But that was insignificant compared with section 9 of the Act, which read:

No proceedings either criminal or civil shall be brought or maintained against any person (police included) who kills or injures any member of an association or society designated unlawful, who shall be found any time of day or night inside a dwelling house.^{1007.}

Simpson notes that “those who sympathize with the Dreads assert that they have become a scapegoat for anti-socialist groups in Dominica.”^{1008.} Thomas, analyzing the justifications for the Dread Act, writes:

... the Act was [considered] necessary to stop senseless and unexplained killings. Secondly, the harassment of tourists, who happened to be white, had to be stopped. Later the Premier would add the charge of an impending Communist plot to overthrow his government ...^{1009.}

The Dominican elite and the press, especially the Roman Catholic *New Chronicle*, welcomed the Dread Act, but critics furiously denounced it as a “license to kill.” It was indeed interpreted as such by the police force and those citizens committed to putting an end to the existence of the Dreads. As Thomas noted in 1976:

as soon as the law was enacted ... one witnessed a reign of terror unleashed against the Dreads The armed Dreads took to the hills while the police, whose contempt for the group is no secret, began to chase. To date, there have been about 20 killings in confrontations between police and Dreads.^{1010.}

Immediately after the Dread Act was passed and the security forces had begun to track down all suspicious persons, “many adherents and sympathizers changed and quickly conformed with the authorities.” Many religious Rastafarians, afraid of being mistaken for “terrorists,” quickly disassociated themselves from the Dreads. But a hard core of dedicated followers, especially a small group in the Belles area, refused to conform or surrender and remained in hiding in the interior.

On 25 July 1975, perhaps as a result of international indignation and pressure, the government issued an amnesty for all Dreads in the inland who surrendered their arms; they were also invited to discuss their problems with government officials. According to a government spokesman, there were some contacts through an intermediary, but this did not result in a meeting. The Dreads in the hills had little or no confidence in the government and refused to lay down their arms. The amnesty, originally issued for 38 days, was extended until 30 September and a committee of eight “wise men” was established, chaired by the Methodist Reverend Didier. The Committee to Investigate the Problem of Dreadism in Dominica, as it was officially known, was to “ascertain the origins of and causes of dreadism, establish contact and dialogue with the dreads, recommend solutions to the economic, social, educational, occupational and other problems confronting them and to investigate and report on means of reintegrating them into society.”^{1011.}

The Didier Committee failed to secure a dialogue, but nevertheless concluded that there were three types of Dreads: members of a peaceful counter-culture group, political activists and criminal elements. It also found that the number of Dreads in the hills was much smaller than commonly believed. In fact, there were only a few groups of several dozen persons in all. The majority of the dreadlocks were peaceful Rastafarians, while only some of those identified as Dreads were committed to violence. The Didier committee advised that the Dread Act be replaced by an Act which would not designate a person as a terrorist

merely on the basis of his outward appearance, but the government of Patrick John “considered the report weak and too conciliatory,” and declined to lift the Dread Act.¹⁰¹² The elite considered the refusal of the Dreads to respond to the government’s offer of an amnesty as proof that they were indeed ordinary criminals and terrorists.

Yet the fact that a distinction had been made between Rastafarians and Dreads was an important step forward, even if the nuances escaped the attention of many Dominicans. Rastafarian groups assured the government that their faith was peaceful and disassociated themselves from the Dreads. In December 1976, for instance, Patrick John and other government officials had a meeting with a group of “baldhead” Rastafarians, who sought and were promised aid for their agricultural program. The Prime Minister took the opportunity to warn the Rastas not to continue the cultivation of marihuana. The Rastas, in turn, complained to Patrick John “that they were being wrongly blamed for the bastardly acts committed by other groups and individuals,” but nevertheless asked John to maintain a dialogue with the Dreads.¹⁰¹³

With the amnesty having expired, the confrontations continued. There were several cases of murder, for which the police blamed the Dreads. In December 1976, during the same month in which the Rastafarians had their meeting with John, a group of the Dreads, led by a certain Galloway a.k.a. Tomba, kidnapped two girls from Portsmouth. The government immediately posted a reward for information leading to the arrest of this “extremely dangerous” convict, who was not long afterwards shot and killed during a raid on his camp.¹⁰¹⁴

On 3 November 1978 Dominica became independent with the near dictatorial “Colonel” Patrick John as Dominica Labour Party Prime Minister. The independence celebrations were scarcely over, when a political row erupted over illegal transactions and dubious legislation aimed at curtailing democracy. Following strikes, mass protest and rioting in May and June 1979 John’s government was toppled and replaced by an interim Committee for National Salvation. During that same period Desmond Trotter managed to escape from jail. On 20 July ex-Prime Minister Patrick John declared in Parliament that Trotter had been falsely accused. It had been known all along that the real murderer of Albert John Jirasek was a youngster whose father held a high position in government.¹⁰¹⁵ After hiding out for about a month, Ras Kabinda turned himself in. No sooner had he been locked away again than the prison was demolished by Hurricane David on 29 August 1979 - an event to which the Dreads and Rastafarians attached great symbolic significance.¹⁰¹⁶

After general elections in July 1980, the conservative Dominica Freedom Party assumed power in the crisis-ridden island under the leadership of the Iron Lady of the Caribbean, Mary Eugenia Charles. But it was not until another violent confrontation had taken place that the controversial *Prohibited and Unlawful Societies and Associations Act* was lifted.

On 12 February 1981 there was a shoot-out between members of the police force and a small group of Dreads near Giraudel. Two dreadlocks were killed and another was seriously injured. The others involved escaped, burned down the nearby farm of Edward Honeychurch, father of the government’s Press Secretary, and took him into the hills as their hostage.¹⁰¹⁷ In the following days the Dreads, led by a certain Pokosion, demanded the release of three followers held in prison (two of them on Death Row for the murder of a teacher), an impartial investigation into the shoot-out with the police, and an immediate end to police excesses and to the Dread Act. The government refused to negotiate and proclaimed a state of emergency. Within days of the kidnapping, however, the government lifted the Dread Act and replaced it with *The Prevention of Terrorism Temporary Provisions Act*, which, it was argued, would help to differentiate between terrorists, Dreads and Rastafarians.¹⁰¹⁸ It did not, however, resolve the crisis. The government of Dominica firmly believed that the kidnappers had links with and support from abroad. In March several illegal immigrants from Guadeloupe and Îles des Saintes were arrested because, so the government claimed, they had come to Dominica “to meet the brothers in the hills.”¹⁰¹⁹

In May 1981 the Dreads set up road-blocks. They stopped passing motorists and handed out messages for the police and the government, in which they demanded to be left alone. The police immediately carried out a raid in the area, and shot and killed three Dreads. Several others, including Pokosion, were reportedly injured, but escaped.¹⁰²⁰ In June one of the kidnappers (Eric Joseph) was caught. He confessed that Honeychurch had been killed and his body burned one day after he was abducted.¹⁰²¹ In May 1983 Eric Joseph was sentenced to death (at the time of writing he was still on Death Row).¹⁰²²

Over the course of the following years, the relations between Dominican society and the Dreads and

Rastafarians remained tense. The distinction between Dreads and Rastafarians also faded, with the Inity of Rastafarian Idren, led by Desmond “Ras Kabinda” Trotter, emerging as the major group of Dreads/Rastafarians on the island. In July 1985 over 200 Rastafarians held a grounation, which resulted in the formation of a twelve-member National Assembly. In a statement, the Rastafarians condemned “the continued harassment and denial of Rasta religious rights as enshrined in the United Nation’s declaration of human rights.” They also protested the “continued refusal of entry into Dominica of Rasta personnel from overseas” and “the denial of formal education rights to Rasta children.”¹⁰²³ But in spite of such calls and the abolition of the Dread Act, the Rastas continued to suffer from persecution. By 1987 the unremitting “hunting of Rastafarians in the hills” led Trotter to leave Dominica and settle in England.

Nowhere in the Caribbean were the reactions to Rastafari and its spin-offs as extreme as in Dominica. But throughout the region the emergence of Rastafarians and their look-alikes led to confrontations and repressive legislation. In many cases the reactions of government officials and the press were quite similar to the Jamaican reactions towards Rastafari in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when qualifications such as “thieves,” “drug users,” “lunatics” and “criminals” were among the mildest used.

In Barbados the Rastas first came to public attention in October 1977, after their representatives had a meeting with the Minister of Labour and Community Services, Lionel Craig. As an unknown author wrote in the *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*:

The objective of the Rastafari delegation in calling on the Minister was to present a request to the Government for land so that they could pursue independent agricultural activities. Mr. Craig gave them a receptive audience and promised that he would endeavour to meet their demand. This meeting triggered off in the press an extensive discussion on this hitherto unpublicized “social phenomenon.”¹⁰²⁴

Analyzing the reactions in the press to the apparently recent emergence of the movement, the *Bulletin* noted that the reactions were mixed: some “sought balance and objectivity,” others were “highly emotional.”¹⁰²⁵ An example of the first category was an editorial published in *The Advocate News*, which “considered the Rastafarian commitment to peace, lack of greed and malice and their belief in the oneness of man as commendable.” Nevertheless, the editor had serious objections to the use of marijuana.¹⁰²⁶ The reactions in the “highly emotional” category were predictable. According to *The Nation*, the Rastafarians of Barbados were “thieves, dope-users and idlers.”¹⁰²⁷ The same newspaper, ten days later, wrote that “the Rastafarians, by standards of modern hygiene, are now exploring all the possibilities of dinginess, dirtiness and squalor.” *The Advocate News* considered them to be “a frowzy, lunatic fringe” and added:

In an age when Barbadians are looking for dignity and progress, they opt for unkempt, filthy raggedness and a reversion to primitiveness. When others attempt to bridge the divisions between societal groups they erect further barriers both through their objectionable personal habits and their mindless giberishness.¹⁰²⁸

The *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* concluded that all in all the Rastafarians were not regarded “as a group bent on doing anything constructive.” The attitude towards the movement, the journal stated, was two-fold: “one of grudging tolerance, the other of hostility and antipathy.”

The meeting between the Rastas and the Minister of Labour was unproductive and no further meetings were held.¹⁰²⁹ Yet at the end of 1979 the government ordered its Youth and Community Development Division to look “into ways to reintegrate Rastas in the community.” There was serious concern about “the spate of crimes involving members of the long-haired sect and also at the number of young people that are becoming followers.”¹⁰³⁰ But it seems that the investigations had no concrete results and that the policy of repression maintained in place. In October 1980 Senator Randolph Field, Chairman of the Board of Tourism “told the Senate Chamber that the estimated 2,000 ‘Rastas’ should either be jailed or beaten, and blamed the Movement for praedial larceny in the country.”¹⁰³¹ At the same time, the Commissioner of Police revealed that he was receiving complaints about crimes committed by Rastafarians on a daily basis. He held the Rastas responsible for two out of every three crimes committed in Barbados and “felt the time had come for the police to respond to the calls.”¹⁰³²

In 1983 the periodical of the Trinidadian Rastafari Brethren Organization (RTBO), *Rastafari Speaks*, noted that in recent years many Rastas in Barbados had cut their locks and dropped the faith, which it attributed to “pressure from Big Business,” persecution by the police and “inherent weakness in the brotherhood” itself.

Under pressure, some weakened out and clipped themselves - then re-entered the mainstream of the system as "baldheads." ... The total absence of a delegate from Barbados at the 2nd International Assembly of Rastafari speaks for itself¹⁰³³

The fact that many Rastafarians in Barbados had apparently chosen to relinquish visible identity with the faith, did not keep *The Advocate News* from expressing its concern about the "upsurge of Rastafarian activity in the Caribbean." The editors added the caution:

When a majority of the community feel threatened by an obnoxious minority, its reaction can be extreme and violent and so far the Rasta communities throughout the Caribbean have shown no evidence that their lawlessness and disruptive behaviour will abate.¹⁰³⁴

In the late 1980s Maxine McClean and Hyacinth Griffith noted that "the Rastafarian community in Barbados is primarily a religious group," divided into two major organizations: the Nyabinghi's and the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Attitudes towards the Rastas in Barbados had apparently remain unchanged, as they were said to be still "frequently associated ... with criminal activity and general lawlessness."¹⁰³⁵

Without specifying the period or providing other details, Horace Campbell maintains that Rastafari in Guyana "was prominent in the urban working class areas, and some Rastas petitioned the State for land to settle in the interior."¹⁰³⁶ Whatever the basis for and value of such a statement, Rasta in Guyana appear to have first come to public attention in 1978. On 30 October that same year *The Citizen* featured an article on the government's reaction towards "the smelly Rastas" in Guyana. Part of it was reprinted with comments in *The Daily Gleaner*:

The Government press today sharply denounced a recent trend here in which some youngsters have taken to wearing "dreadlocks," adopting a bastard Jamaican accent and smoking dope to mimic the Rastafarian cult. "The smelly Rastas who now plague Guyana have no connection with African culture and the life style of Africans in their own country," the *Citizen* newspaper declared. "Since there is neither link nor nexus between them and African culture and life style pattern of behaviour, the Rastas reveal themselves to be impostors," the paper added. *Citizen* in its editorial said that the Guyana constitution gave the people the right to organise themselves, but not into "cults and factions intended to erode the foundation of morality." The "group" which is said was now in evidence in Guyana represented "a cult the members of which pay little or no heed to personal hygiene as we know it." "In this primitive state the rastas are nauseating," the paper stated. *Citizen* claimed that the cult members were growing marijuana in the hills around the bauxite township of Linden some 65 miles south of Georgetown. This dope was sold at night clubs, beer gardens and hotels, and the limits of the sadist activities is reached when they hawk their dope in schools. The paper claimed further that the cult members worked in combination with thieves and thugs and rationalised their "lawlessness" by saying they were practising African culture. "The rationale is every inch as odious as the Rastas themselves."¹⁰³⁷

Within a month, Guyana's government had a much bigger "cult problem" on its hands when Jim Jones and 924 followers of his People's Temple committed suicide, after they had murdered several people, including the United States Member of Congress Leo Ryan.

The government of Guyana banned reggae music and appears to have actively persecuted anyone suspected of being a Rasta, and thus, in its opinion, a thief or drug pusher. In the face of these repressive actions, most Rastafarians in Guyana retreated inland to live and work as independent farmers.¹⁰³⁸ Little was heard of them. A few Rastas, however, made the press in 1979. During that summer "irate" citizens from Georgetown complained that Rastafarians were "swimming nude and relaxing in the sun all day, stealing vegetables from gardeners, and trying to entice school children to join them." Later that same year, the police were reported to have forcibly removed a small group of "Rastas" from the zoo on several occasions. They were trying to get into the lion cage, claiming to "have power to control the jungle monarch."¹⁰³⁹ A year later, the press reported that for the second time in seven months a Rastafarian had been wounded by a lion in the zoo. He kept shouting "Jah, Jah!" as he climbed into the cage and vowed to return even after he had been seriously injured and taken to the hospital.¹⁰⁴⁰ Of course, such sensationalist press coverage of the actions of a few, possibly mentally unstable persons described as Rastas, served to ridicule the whole movement and no doubt confirmed the idea of many that Rasta was some sort of mental disease resulting from marijuana addiction.

Keeping a low profile did not help those Rastas in Guyana who had settled in the interior to live off the land. In early 1981 it was reported that the Minister of Home Affairs had promised an investigation into a case of police brutality against a group of about 50 Rastafarian farmers, who had occupied some 600 acres in the Madhia area in the western part of the country for about three years. Policemen had raided their village, set several homes on fire, destroyed their tools and had beaten up at least five Rastafarians.

Twenty Rastas were taken away and locked up, “being treated very harshly,” without any charges being laid against them. They also had their locks forcibly trimmed by the police. After two weeks, three were released. They went to Georgetown and contacted both the press and the Minister of Home Affairs, who promised investigations, but also stated that some Rastafarians “had engaged in acts of lawlessness and would not be allowed to flout the law.”¹⁰⁴¹

In 1983, Guyana’s President, Linden Forbes S. Burnham, flatly denied that there were any tensions between the Rastafarians and his government or that the government had sanctioned police persecution of Rastas:

I don’t think the Rastafari movement has a bad profile in Guyana, certainly not as bad as in some of the other islands. We have Rastafarians in good positions in the country. Some of them are actually working with the Government, and many of them are involved in agriculture - which as you know is a point of major emphasis with us now. So I don’t think the position of Rastafari is any way perilous in Guyana.¹⁰⁴²

Three years later there was indeed at least one Rastafarian in Guyana in a “good position.” In early 1986 Enerva Trotman, a dreadlocked Rastafarian of ten years’ standing, was elected Member of Parliament for the ruling People’s National Congress, thereby becoming the first Rastafarian Parliamentarian in the Caribbean. Trotman noted that his colleagues had “reservation[s] about him in politics at that level,” but was determined to show that he could do a good job.¹⁰⁴³

Quite a different situation developed in Grenada, where according to Campbell “more than 400 Rastas were involved in the People’s Liberation Army which overthrew the Eric Gairy dictatorship.”¹⁰⁴⁴ In March 1973, during the Gairy regime, progressive opposition groups had formed the New JEWEL Movement (Joint Endeavour Welfare Education and Liberation). The demonstrations against Gairy eventually resulted in his downfall, when on 13 March 1979 Maurice Bishop and his People’s Liberation Army staged a successful coup. Bishop and the New JEWEL Movement transformed Grenada into a socialist state, developed close links with Cuba and attempted, with some success, to reorganize the social and economic structures on the island. Unemployment rates decreased and the standard of living improved. The United States government, ever-faithful to the modern interpretation of its Monroe Doctrine, followed these developments closely.

The Rastafarians of Grenada, according to Campbell, had suffered from persecution by the Mongoose Squads, which “took special pride in cutting the locks of the brethren.”

The change in the direction of the Grenadian society offered new possibilities for the Rastafari Movement. Rastas were integrated into the armed forces, rising to responsible positions; and with the new trust and cooperation offered by the political leadership, the Rastas took their proper place in the community without fear of harassment. Young brethren from St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Dominica flocked to see this new society where Dreadlocks did not have to shave their locks.¹⁰⁴⁵

There were, however, dissenting voices among the Rastafarians in Grenada as well. Bishop had promised general elections and when it became clear that he was not going to keep his promise, the opposition began to press for action. The opposition newspaper *Torchlight* ran a front-page article in which two members of the local branch of the Twelve Tribes of Israel attacked Bishop’s Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) and its treatment of Rastas on the island. The two were quoted as saying that the Grenadian Rastas were likely to start a demonstration to protest against “the debarment of Rasta children [from school] and the arrests and charges for ganja smoking.” They also accused the government of “pointing guns” at the Rastas.¹⁰⁴⁶ *Torchlight* added that during one of their Nyabinghis the Rastas had decided that the PRG was “anti-Rasta” and that the Rastafarians were “not supporters of Cuba and Russia.”¹⁰⁴⁷ According to Campbell, “it was a strange twist of history that those who hounded the Rastas under Gairy as dirty and unwashed now championed the cause of two young brethren, and manipulated these young brethren into stirring up trouble leading to a demonstration.”

A few days after the *Torchlight* article, some 300 Rastafarian members of the PRG, “some of them with bayonets in hand,” staged a protest march in support of the Bishop administration and against the Twelve Tribes of Israel.¹⁰⁴⁸ The Twelve Tribes members and eighteen others were arrested, and *Torchlight* was banned. In justifying its reaction, the PRG claimed that it had uncovered a CIA plot to overthrow the government and alleged that the editors of *Torchlight* and several Rastafarians were involved.¹⁰⁴⁹

During September and October 1983 internal differences and rivalries surrounding the leadership of the New JEWEL Movement surfaced. As a result Maurice Bishop was ousted and General Hudson Austin and Minister of Finance Bernard Coard took over. Bishop was arrested, but a party of his supporters stormed the building in which he was detained, set him free and occupied the army's headquarters, Fort Rupert. The army intervened and killed some 40 people. Shortly afterwards, Bishop and several prominent members of his party were executed. On 25 October 1983 a military force from the United States and several Caribbean countries invaded Grenada, with the aim, according to President Ronald Reagan, of protecting the lives of some thousand American citizens and preventing further chaos.¹⁰⁵⁰

In December 1979, a few months after the successful coup by Maurice Bishop and the New JEWEL Movement in Grenada, a group of some 50 youths - led by Rastafarians according to Campbell - tried to take over Union Island, a tiny, impoverished island in the Grenadines, administered by St. Vincent. The secession attempt occurred shortly after Prime Minister Milton Cato's Labour Party had won the elections, gaining eleven of the thirteen seats in Parliament. In the Grenadines, and especially on Union Island and Bequia, there was widespread dissatisfaction with Cato's government and with St. Vincent's administration of the Grenadines. The majority of the population had voted for the opposition New Democratic Party.

On 7 December 1979 a group of young Union Islanders, led by Lennox "Bumber" Charles and Camilo Adams, fired a few shots and seized the police station, the revenue office and the airstrip. Prime Minister Cato declared a state of emergency and immediately requested military assistance from the United States, England and Barbados. Only Barbados responded favorably and dispatched 50 soldiers to assist the St. Vincent police force. Before they arrived, however, the local police had already put down the rebellion. Over 30 rebels were arrested and detained.¹⁰⁵¹

In Antigua Rastafarians had appeared in the streets around 1972-1973 and were initially associated with Black Power groups. According to one source, Rastafari started among youths from the middle classes, but soon attracted "children of dispossessed and underprivileged families."¹⁰⁵² As in most other Caribbean countries, the Rastas soon clashed with the authorities and several of them were said to have been killed by the police. Marihuana use appears to have been the major reason for the tensions, but the Rastas were also blamed for "acts of terrorism."

The Rastafarians are viewed with contempt by Antiguan society in general and are branded as deviants. Some Rastas do not work and terrify members of the community, particularly in the agricultural area where they ravaged small farmers' crops. ... It is felt that they withdrew to the hills in order to practice a form of anarchism.¹⁰⁵³

In 1978, in an effort to contain the spread of the movement and its ideas, the Antiguan government even refused to give Father Joseph Owens, the author of *Dread*, permission to give a lecture on Rastafari in Jamaica. Ironically, Owens had just delivered a lecture in Dominica, where the Dread Act had still not been lifted.¹⁰⁵⁴ A year later, a Jamaican Rastafarian musician was also refused entry to Antigua by immigration officers. The Minister of Home Affairs nevertheless denied that Antigua had a policy of barring Rastas.¹⁰⁵⁵

It appears that during the late 1970s a number of Rastas on the island supported the opposition party, the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM). However, the ACLM disassociated itself from the Rastafarians, "to avoid the wrong label," as its leader, Tim Hector, expressed it. In 1980, relations between the Rastafarians and the Antigua Labour Party government seemed to improve somewhat, when a committee was appointed "to examine ways and means of developing the talents [in art and craft] of Rastafarians" and to seek possibilities for the Rastas "to fully participate in the economic and social life of the state." While promising acceptance of the religious beliefs, the government also issued a firm warning against the criminal impostors and "parasites" hiding behind a Rasta mask.¹⁰⁵⁶

But the committee had scarcely been installed, when on 17 November 1980 a 22-year-old Rastafarian by the name of Bernard Brown was arrested by the police for possession of marihuana. The policemen beat him up and slammed one of his feet in the door of their car. Brown died in custody a few days later. A witness testified that the police had beaten and kicked Brown, and had pulled him around by his locks. A pathologist testified that his death "was due to concussion of the brain resulting from severe blows he received on the head." Police officers claimed that Bernard Brown died after falling and injuring his head.¹⁰⁵⁷

Contrary to Antigua, the British Crown colony of the Cayman Islands, which until 1962 was a dependency of Jamaica, made no secret of its policy of arbitrarily denying entry to Rastafarians or Rasta look-alikes. This policy first came to attention in January 1983, when two dreadlocked, non-Rastafarian entertainers from Jamaica were not allowed to enter the country.¹⁰⁵⁸ Shortly after this incident, the government of the Cayman Islands released a statement saying that while

the Cayman Islands will always extend a hearty welcome to tourists and visitors from Jamaica, with whom we retain a close connection, it is important to reaffirm the Government's intention to keep out undesirable elements from whichever they emanate. In recent years it has been the consistent policy of the Government of the Cayman Islands to prohibit the entry to these islands by those people whose appearance and dress habits resemble those of hippies and the Rastafarian cult. This policy is subscribed to by the present Government and is well known to, and supported in large measures by, the Cayman community.¹⁰⁵⁹

There was hardly any protest in the Caymans. Only the editors of *Caymanian Compass* thought that the ban on Rastafari was “distasteful and smack[ed] of racial, religious and civil discrimination.”¹⁰⁶⁰ In Jamaica, however, the ban did cause a little controversy. Writing in *The Daily Gleaner*, Morris Cargill tried to explain that a ban on Rasta was a sound way of protecting the Cayman tourist industry. The *Gleaner's* Rasta columnist, Arthur Kitchin, probably expressing the opinion of most Rastafarians, viewed it as just another case of discrimination against Rastafarians.¹⁰⁶¹ The dreadlocked Rastafarian musician Michael “Ibo” Cooper of the internationally acclaimed Third World Band, called on all reggae musicians to boycott the Cayman Islands. He himself had not so long before been subjected to a humiliating body search upon arrival in the Caymans. His call for a boycott, however, provoked an angry reaction from a “baldhead” reggae musician named Louis Marriot, revealing the tensions between the dreadlocks and baldheads, both in the Rastafarian movement and the musical scene. Marriot refused to support Cooper because

in the world of reggae/Jamaican music, baldheads have suffered discrimination over the years and, rather than rising to the defense of the baldheads, the privileged dreadlocked musicians have delighted in the discomfiture of the baldheads. ... Recording companies have offered contracts to baldhead musicians on the condition that they grow locks and pose as Rastafarians, which the companies view as making them more marketable.¹⁰⁶²

The government of the Caymans did not withdraw its ban on dreadlocks, although it seems to have been selective in its application of the law, by deporting black people with dreadlocks, but allowing entry to whites with a similar hairstyle.

The Cayman Islands' ban on Rastafari was not unique. In 1980 the British Virgin Islands accepted *The Prohibited Persons Act*, enabling the Governor to bar unwanted persons. In the early 1980s the Rastafarian psychologist Leahcim Semaj was informed that the Governor would not allow him to enter the country, in spite of an invitation from the local Mental Health Department to assist it in its activities.¹⁰⁶³ In the late 1980s several other cases were reported of dreadlocked travelers being barred from the British Virgin Islands.¹⁰⁶⁴

In Trinidad, there were considerable numbers of Rastafarians, but little is known about them.¹⁰⁶⁵ According to Ansley Hamid:

Reggae music was chiefly instrumental in this propagation of Rastafari ideas. It should be noted, however, that the first Rastafari in Trinidad were not necessarily influenced by Jamaicans. The first Rastafari in San Fernando, a leading ganja-man in the process of becoming a blockleader, had grown his locks in 1973, two or three years before the majority of San Fernandian Rastafarians would do so: he claims that he borrowed the idea from a picture of Ndebele tribesmen in a book on Africa.¹⁰⁶⁶

Although Hamid traced the emergence of the movement in San Fernando back to the early 1970s, there is reason to believe that there may have been small numbers of Rastafarians or at least Ethiopianist-oriented believers in Trinidad during the 1960s, if not earlier.¹⁰⁶⁷ As we have seen, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had already established a branch in Trinidad in 1953, while the welcome given to Emperor Haile Selassie during his state visit to Trinidad and Tobago in April 1966 led to chaotic scenes at the airport, where “part of air terminal's roof collapsed between the weight of cheering admirers.”

In 1979 Hamid estimated the number of Rastafarians in Trinidad's second city, San Fernando, to be at least 1,500. In the Laventille area of Port of Spain there was around the same time a very active group of Rastafarians organized into the Rastafari Brethren Organization (RTBO), which published the magazine *Rastafari Speaks*. Muntu Lalibala was one of its most prominent leaders.

The attitudes towards Rastafari in Trinidad were similar to those elsewhere in the Caribbean. In the early 1980s the *Trinidad Guardian*, for instance, noted that “the Rastas ... may well qualify as the most unloved group of persons in our midst.” The editors of the newspaper also thought that

the lawlessness associated with the Rasta cult has reached such critical proportions [that] the time has come for the authorities to regard the members of this long-haired breed as constituting a particular menace to the society.^{1068.}

Rastafarians in San Fernando were frequently subject to arrest and harassment by the police. Some 150 Rastas were jailed during Carnival in San Fernando in 1979 alone. The RTBO headquarters at Trotman Street, Spanish Town, were also regularly subject to police raids and Lalibala was arrested on several occasions.^{1069.}

The Twelve Tribes of Israel, the most internationally oriented group within the movement, had an officially recognized and apparently thriving branch in Trinidad, as well as in Grenada, St. Vincent, Barbados and the Cayman Islands.

In St. Lucia, or Iyanola as the Rastas prefer to call it, several Rastafarian organizations emerged, among them the Iyanola Rastafari Improvement Association, which claimed to be “the only legitimate body to represent the interest of Rastafari on a national level in Iyanola.” There was also the Rastafari Revolutionary Movement, with headquarters in Vieux Fort, and a rurally based group called Roots of Tribulation.

In St. Kitts several hundred Rastafarians organized a protest rally in front of Prime Minister Kennedy Simmonds’ office in March 1980. They demanded a meeting with Simmonds and the reduction (or repeal) of penalties for possession and use of marihuana.^{1070.}

In the French-speaking Caribbean only Martinique and Guadeloupe are known to have Rastafarian communities. For the small Rastafarian community in the French-speaking *département* of Martinique, life has not been much easier than in the English-speaking territories. In the early 1980s they claimed that Rastas on the island were barred from public transport and were arbitrarily harassed and provoked by the police. On 26 June 1983 one of their members, Thiery Locks, was shot and killed by a white man, allegedly for stealing mangos. According to the Rastas, who subsequently organized themselves into the Movement of 26 June, the land from which the mangos were taken did not even belong to the murderer. “The killer was presented before a Tribunal the next day without handcuffs, although when a brother is arrested for a little herbs, he is chained up.”^{1071.}

The Rastas of Martinique were quite aware of the language barrier between the French and British-speaking islands. In a letter to *Rastafari Speaks* they urged:

Although Babylon wishes to render the frontiers between the French- and the British-speaking islands of the Caribbean insurmountable, we the brothers of Martinique work to break all barriers so the RASTAFARI unity can become a reality according to the will of JAH RASTAFARI SELASSIE 1ST - a unity already realised through the living spirit, but which we will make concrete by means of exchanges: symposiums, debates, artistic and “artisanal” exchanges - OUR CULTURE. We appeal to all RASTAS in the Caribbean to break these barriers in order to realise those exchanges.^{1072.}

No information at all, not even hear-say, could be collected about Rastafari in the Spanish-speaking countries and only very little about Rasta in the Dutch-speaking regions. Velma Pollard noted that in Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, “the red green and gold symbol was visible in unexpected places for all those who know their significance,” although a Surinamese informant assured her that Rastafari did not exist in his country.^{1073.}

In spite of the paucity of data on Rastafari in the Caribbean, it may be concluded that Rastafari spread throughout the entire English-speaking Caribbean, but hardly at all through the French (except for Martinique and Guadeloupe) or Spanish-speaking territories.^{1074.} The diffusion of Rastafari throughout the English-speaking Caribbean occurred during the early and mid-1970s. Whereas Jamaican migration led to the emergence of Rastafari in England, it was first and foremost reggae which spread the message and the movement of Jah people through the Anglophone Caribbean. Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Jimmy Cliff and others found a receptive audience among young black people in the Caribbean, most of whom faced social and economic conditions similar to those in Jamaica. An additional factor was, of course, contact

with travelers to and from Jamaica, and, probably equally important, the encounters of people from different Caribbean countries in England or the United States. Many, say, Trinidadians no doubt learned about Rastafari from Jamaicans in London, New York City or Miami rather than in Kingston.¹⁰⁷⁵

That reggae was the main vehicle for the diffusion of Rastafari may also explain the fact that Rasta found very little acceptance in the main French- (Haiti) and Spanish-speaking Caribbean nations (Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico). The language barrier was no doubt the most important factor, although cultural orientation and the extent of contact between the various islands may be an additional explanation. For instance, small islands like Martinique and Guadeloupe are probably in closer contact with neighboring English-speaking islands in the Eastern Caribbean than Jamaica is with Cuba or Haiti.¹⁰⁷⁶

There is a remarkable difference, however, between Rastafari in Jamaica and Rastafari in the other Caribbean nations. Outside Jamaica the socio-political and revolutionary elements in Rastafari appear to have been far more important than the religious doctrine. By the time the first Rastafarians emerged in the other Caribbean territories, Emperor Haile Selassie had already been deposed. Lacking the history of messianic-millenarian expectations, sophisticated biblical interpretation and religious instruction of the elders of the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica, many black youths on the other Caribbean islands must have found it difficult to focus their ideology on a monarch of the past and on a return to a famine-ridden country under military rule. The majority of the Rastas in the Caribbean thus absorbed the social, political and cultural ideas, along with the outward symbols of Rastafari, rather than its religious ideas. Instead of focusing on a return to Africa, these Rastas primarily concentrated on bringing about change in their own societies. In 1974-1975 the Dreads of Dominica set a clear example for all others. The Rastas who participated in Maurice Bishop's People's Liberation Army in Grenada and the Rastas who allegedly led the insurrection on Union Island five years later, set another example.

Although strictly religious groups are to be found in all the Anglophone Caribbean countries, Trinidad, according to Campbell, remains "one of the few areas outside Jamaica where young blacks still revere Haile Selassie." The author attributed this to the fact that "young activists from Jamaica ... collaborated in staging a Jubilee celebration" on the island.¹⁰⁷⁷ It may be correct that Trinidad is one of the few areas where the religious Rastafarians have dominated the local movement, but it is difficult to accept the Jubilee celebration in 1980 as a convincing explanation.¹⁰⁷⁸ If the Trinidadian Rastas are indeed less politicized than elsewhere, it seems more likely that the reason for their still being "steeped in religion," as Campbell puts it, should be sought in the relatively early emergence of the Rastafarian movement in Trinidad, and perhaps also in the impact of Haile Selassie's state visit to the island in 1966. Moreover, the Twelve Tribes of Israel appear to be one of the more influential organizations within the Trinidadian movement and there is a fairly close contact between Jamaica and Trinidad. Nevertheless, it seems clear that although several religious Rasta groups emerged in the Caribbean, the politically-oriented groups have dominated the scene.

Rastafari in the United States and Canada

"Potentially one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the United States."

Ever since the late nineteenth century, the United States has been one of the most popular destinations for Jamaicans looking for a better future. Thousands upon thousands have moved north, legally as well as illegally, to settle permanently or temporarily in the country of unlimited possibilities. Already between 1881 and 1911, approximately 16,000 Jamaicans had migrated to the northern cities of the United States. In the booming industries there was more demand for labor than in the fledgling sugar economy in Jamaica. In the ten years after 1911, another 30,000 Jamaicans followed.¹⁰⁷⁹ Migration to the United States slowed down after 1930, due to the economic depression, *The Immigration Act* of 1932, which limited the numbers of people allowed to settle in the States, and the effects of World War II. Only during the 1950s and early 1960s did the number of migrants leaving for England surpass the numbers of those who settled in the United States. When migration possibilities to England were sharply reduced after Jamaica became independent in 1962, thousands began to look again at the American Dream. Between 1950 and 1983 more than 288,000 Jamaicans migrated legally to the United States. The number of illegal migrants is, of course, unknown, but estimated to be somewhere in the region of 250,000.¹⁰⁸⁰ With the migrants, Rastafari, too, came to the United States.

Ernest Cashmore, referring to personal communication with Leonard Barrett, states that Rastafarians were noted in Hartford, Connecticut as early as 1962. Until then Rastafari had only come to public attention in the United States in the wake of Ronald Henry “rebellion” in 1960. Grossly exaggerated accounts of the “coup” had been published in leading newspapers and magazines.¹⁰⁸¹ As noted before, the publicity was such that the Jamaica Tourist Board thought it necessary to assure potential travelers to Jamaica that the “presence in the island of American visitors ... means nothing to the Rastas.”

It was, however, not until the early 1970s that the press began to report on Rastafari in the United States itself, and when it did the Rastas were characterized as criminals wearing dreadlocks. In August 1971 *The New York Times* reported that “Rastafarians” in the City, linked to Rastas in Jamaica, were responsible for “a wave of terror and crime in Brooklyn.” In a reaction to this negative publicity, Jamaica’s Consul General, Gerald Groves, declared in an interview with CBS Television that “Rasta is non-violent and strictly religious” and that the New York Rastafarians were fakes.¹⁰⁸² But his defence of the reputation of both Jamaica and the Rastafarians was in vain. Leonard Barrett, writing in the mid-1970s, when home-grown Rasta was just about to make headlines, stated:

According to police estimates, as many as fifteen thousand Rastafarians are in New York City, primarily in Brooklyn and the Bronx; this number is rather debatable. They also estimated that fights between the two Rastafarian groups from these boroughs have taken the lives of from twelve to twenty cultists and other Jamaicans since 1974.¹⁰⁸³

Wondering just who these New York City Rastafarians were, the author tried to gather information about the Rastas in New York City, but found few people “bold enough to talk” and reached only “inconclusive conclusions.”

Many of these youths know very little about the doctrines of Rastafarianism but, having been rejected in American society, without jobs and roots, have adapted the hairstyle of the cultists and are generally under the leadership of someone who might have been marginally Rastafarian before coming to the States. All the trappings of the movement are simulated by them; they conduct Nyabingi in homes, follow the hygienic laws of the cult, and smoke the herb when it is available. It also appeared that leading ganja exporters in Jamaica have been supplying the cultists with the weed - through middlemen - finding it a lucrative market. It is therefore quite possible that the control of the market may have been the cause for the gang warfare.¹⁰⁸⁴

However, the author’s confidence that “New York City Rastas will probably soon settle down to more creative tasks” and that what was happening during the mid-1970s was “part of the growing processes,” seems to have been a little premature. The Rastafarians continued to receive negative publicity.

On 16 May 1976 Jack Anderson, an influential columnist, published an article in which he listed the Rastafarians as one of the “terrorist group[s] which threatens the American Bi-centennial Celebrations and Canada’s Olympic Games.” Anderson claimed to have received his information from reliable intelligence sources. His article attracted considerable attention. In Jamaica it was perceived as yet another move in the United States’ “destabilization” campaign against the experiment with democratic socialism being conducted by Michael Manley’s People’s National Party government. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dudley Thompson, declared that it was “the height of ridiculousness” and added that Rastafarians in Jamaica were “not even able to pronounce the names of Japanese, Puerto Rican, Cuban and other terrorist groups listed in the article.”¹⁰⁸⁵ Later, in a speech before the Annual Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Chili, Thompson insisted that “the Rastafari are like hippies. They preach the Bible, they walk around smoking marijuana and I don’t think any of them even know where Japan is.” According to Thompson, there were more CIA-agents in Jamaica than Rastafarians in New York. Besides, Rastafarians would not even want to live in New York, “because they don’t eat food which comes out of refrigerators.”¹⁰⁸⁶

Six years later, it was once again Jack Anderson who brought the Rastafarians in the United States to national attention. Basing his allegations on confidential information from a New York City Police Department (NYCPD) report on Rasta crime, he wrote in *The Washington Post* of 30 June 1983:

A little-known Marxist-oriented, black supremacy group is emerging as potentially one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the United States, and eventually may rival even the Puerto Rican and Cuban extremist gangs.

After noting that there were now at least 30,000 Rastafarians in the United States and briefly mentioning that most were honest, hard-working people, the author warned that the Rasta gangs did not confine

themselves to gang warfare or drug smuggling. “Terrorism experts believe that racist, Marxist-tinged criminal elements of the cult, already armed to the teeth, will begin striking at American political targets in the next few years.” In another article in *The Washington Post* he informed readers that the Rastafarians “are often easily identifiable by their braided ‘dreadlocks’ hair style,” and proceeded to quote directly a warning to the law enforcers included in the police report:

If you see one of them begin to screw his face up, making weird, grimacing expressions, HE IS ABOUT TO AT-TACK YOU! They play soccer nearly all day and their heads and feet are especially deadly. If you have to question them on the street, you can be sure there are guns and-or backup nearby. Under no circumstances let any of them out of your sight.

The *Caribbean Review* published an excerpt from the confidential intelligence report on Rastafari as used by Anderson. It had originally been compiled by the New York City Police Department between 1977 and 1983.¹⁰⁸⁷ The report was classified as “raw intelligence ... prepared with the expressed purpose of revealing the cultural concepts of this particular group.” In the report, the authors emphasized that “all Rastas are not criminals” and that “most of the estimated 10,000 Ras Tafarians currently living in New York are honest, hardworking, law-abiding individuals who remember and still fear the criminal elements of their cult.” However, an unknown number of Rastafarians and Rude Boys in New York City had a “propensity for violence.”

All investigations into Ras Tafari activity in this city have uncovered their propensity to criminal activity. They mainly prey on fellow Jamaicans or other Ras Tafarians, through assault, homicide, or extortion. They also engage in smuggling of illegal aliens and marijuana into this country. ... The Ras Tafari Cult is reported to adopt a stoic attitude toward violence, probably due to heavy ingestion of marijuana ... Most of the Ras Tafarians are armed and will kill to avoid detection or apprehension. They believe in reincarnation and do not fear death.¹⁰⁸⁸

Although earlier intelligence-gathering by the same Police Department had revealed that “members of the Ras Tafari cult were being sent to Havana, Cuba, for extensive training in guerilla warfare,” the authors of the report stated:

We have no evidence that Ras Tafarians, as a group, are being manipulated by non-Ras Tafarians with violent beliefs such as activists or terrorist groups. The Ras Tafari doctrine ... has no links with Marxism, through analysis or prognosis. However, many Marxists recognize that the violent aspects of the Ras Tafari movement provide a potential for manipulation.¹⁰⁸⁹

The criminal elements in the Rastafarian movement could not be linked to Marxism or organized terrorism, but there was “a sufficient amount of unsubstantiated information” to link some politically oriented Rastafarian groups with the People’s National Party and the Michael Manley administration. These groups were

engaged in the filtering of monies to persons who have direct ties to members of the People’s National Party. In addition to the above, this writer was informed by reliable confidential sources in Jamaica, W.I., that a number of homicides that appear to be drug related, were in fact directed by persons who were once in positions of power during the administration of former Prime Minister Michael Manley.¹⁰⁹⁰

Finally, the NYCPD report identified a number of organizations with which several “groups, clicks, cadres and/or cells” within the criminal fraternity were aligned. Among these were not only such groups as Black Organized Crime, Organized Crime Family, the Revolutionary Ras Tafari Guerilla Movement, the Reatown Boys (a.k.a. the Untouchables) and the Hot Peppers (a.k.a. the Jungelites), but also more familiar names like the Twelve Tribes, the Ras Tafari Movement Association, the Niyabingi Tribe, the House of Israel and the Ethiopian Zion Coptics.¹⁰⁹¹

The NYCPD report on Rasta crime and the press coverage it received completely determined public opinion about the Rastas in the United States. Numerous press reports about “Rastafarian” gangs later served to confirm opinions about “the criminal nature” of the movement. Rastafarians from Baltimore complained that they were “routinely ... the innocent victims of police brutality.”¹⁰⁹² In early 1984 *The Miami Herald* reported that a Rastafarian gang was responsible for 24 murders in Dade County over a period of three years. The Rastas were said to be involved in smuggling drugs, guns and illegal aliens, and to be in a constant state of war with the Colombian drug barons in Florida. Even other Rastafarians feared them, the *Herald* added.¹⁰⁹³ In February 1986 a police force of over 500 men carried out raids on some 70 locations in Washington to round up what was said to be a “secretive heavily armed network of Rastafarian drug dealers.” Several persons were arrested, and a small amount of drugs and weapons seized.¹⁰⁹⁴ Five years later a police spokesman in Washington declared on television that Jamaicans were

becoming the most dangerous criminals in the United States and were responsible for over 700 murders in one year.¹⁰⁹⁵

Even Hollywood made its contribution to the negative image of Rastafari in the United States, when in 1990 it released the action movie *Marked for death*, featuring Stephen Seagal and depicting the heroic fight of a retired Drug Enforcement Agency officer against a violent and unscrupulous Jamaican drug posse and its leader Screwface. The movie was promoted with the lines: “Born in Jamaica, raised in the USA: the posses ... more dangerous than the mafia. No questions are asked before they kill. Don’t guess. Don’t test. They’re wicked and deadly.”¹⁰⁹⁶

Although the word Rastafarian was not mentioned in the movie, all the bad guys were dreadlocked black Jamaicans. The movie clearly confirmed the existing prejudices and stereotypes. In November 1990 *Marked for death* sparked a protest by a small group of Rastafarians in Miami, who were “extremely disturbed by the implications of this distressing piece of anti-Jamaican, anti-dreadlocks and anti-Rastafari propaganda.”¹⁰⁹⁷ Hardly surprisingly, their protest was in vain. In fact, it appeared to have received more publicity in Jamaica than in the United States. The Jamaican press, as usual, was more worried about the impact on tourism than about the image of the Rastafarians. When *Marked for death* was released in Jamaica there was no organized protest from Jamaican Rastafarians.¹⁰⁹⁸

In that same month, however, Rastafarians in the United States could also celebrate a victory, because the Supreme Court upheld an earlier ruling of a lower court that prison authorities were violating the First and Fourteenth Amendment when they forced inmates to have a haircut, either for reasons of hygiene or for the taking of identification photographs. Eleven years earlier a group of New York-based Rastafarians had taken legal action against the practice, but in the first instance without success.¹⁰⁹⁹ It was not until November 1986 that the New York Court of Appeal reached the unanimous decision that dreadlocks should be respected as a religious symbol and thus qualified for protection under the First Amendment which guaranteed freedom of religion.¹¹⁰⁰

What was designated as Rasta in the United States had little or nothing to do with Rastafari in Jamaica. The stereotypical Rastafarian in the States was a young black Jamaican with dreadlocks, involved in drug trafficking and dealing, and crime and violence of the most vicious sort. Although reliable data are lacking, it seems unlikely that these youths adopted more than the outward symbols of locks and perhaps colors. For the police, the press and the general public they were, however, identical with the few religious Rastafarians. By claiming to be religious adherents whenever they ran into trouble with the law, criminal pseudo-Rastas no doubt also contributed to the virtual absence of a clear distinction between true and false Rastas.¹¹⁰¹

Hardly anything is known about the numbers and activities of “true” Rastafarians in the United States, apart from unspecified claims that there are Rastafarian communities in almost every major city in the United States with a sizeable Jamaican population, and in particular New York, Los Angeles and Miami. Horace Campbell, however, maintains that the Rastas “on the eastern seaboard” of the United States, who believed in the divinity of Haile Selassie, “were so few in numbers that they did not take any clear organizational form.”¹¹⁰² Although Campbell does not explain how he reached this conclusion, it seems indeed unlikely that there are significant numbers of Rastafarians in the United States, although it should be noted that the Twelve Tribes of Israel have two branches in the United States: one in Brooklyn, New York City and one in California, probably in Los Angeles. Just how large these branches are is unknown.¹¹⁰³

The dubious reputation of Rastafari in the United States must have contributed to the apparent lack of response to the beliefs and practices of the movement on the part of black Americans. Rastafari seems to have drawn its following in the States almost exclusively from among first and second generation Jamaicans. The relatively closed character of the Caribbean immigrant communities in the United States may also have played a role. Another factor, as Linden Lewis suggests, may have been the attitude of some black Americans towards Rastafari as “a quaint, Third World, semi-religious practice.”¹¹⁰⁴ The questionable reputation of the so-called Rastafarians in the United States - “some of the most menacing hoodlums who prowl our inner cities,” as *The Washington Post* once wrote - is no doubt also the major reason why so amazingly little research has been carried out on the Rastafarian movement in North America.

If little is known about the Rastafarians in the United States, hardly anything is known about Rasta in Canada, which between 1950 and 1983 accepted some 69,000 legal (and an unknown number of illegal)

migrants from Jamaica.¹¹⁰⁵ Many of the Jamaican migrants to Canada were skilled laborers or highly trained professionals, many of them with a university degree, together with their family members.¹¹⁰⁶ Toronto and Montreal became the centers of Caribbean and Jamaican activity.

Cashmore records that he “noticed the movement in 1975-6 [in Toronto] and was informed by the Police Inspector of Intelligence, that the Rastas’ “relationship with the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force is usually of a criminal nature.”¹¹⁰⁷ In 1975, according to Campbell, the Canadian “police and immigration authorities launched an attack on the Rastas.” As in the United States, Rastafari in Canada was almost exclusively linked to crime, drugs and gang warfare. Apparently the Canadian police relied heavily on information from United States police reports and monitored the dreadlocks carefully.¹¹⁰⁸ Some of the violent incidents ascribed to Rastafarians also made the Jamaican press. In January 1980, for instance, the Toronto police arrested three Jamaican “Rastas,” described as “vicious animals,” for involvement in armed robberies with a haul of over \$ 150,000. During that same month, police officials reported that a gang war between two rival Rastafarian factions had so far resulted in two deaths. It appears to be only one of many such cases.¹¹⁰⁹

Yet in spite of the negative image engendered by the criminal behavior of look-alikes, the Rastafarian community in Toronto was quite active and, according to Campbell, religious. Organizationally, the branch of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church seemed to be the most influential groups. In 1982 it was, as we shall discuss further on in this chapter, the Canadian Rastas who organized the first international Rastafarian conference.

Rastafari in Africa, Europe and New Zealand

“I want to know what ‘Rastafarian’ is, I am seriously thinking of becoming a follower.”

Rastafari first came to Africa, or “*Afreeka*” as Rastafarians sometimes refer to that continent, when the first Rasta settlers of the Shashamane land grant arrived in the early or mid-1960s. As noted before, some 500 acres of land “for the people of the West who aided Ethiopia during her period of distress” had been made available by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1955 as a gesture towards the people of African descent in the New World for their support for Ethiopia during the Italian occupation (1935-1941). The land grant was administered by the Ethiopian World Federation’s headquarters in New York City.

As we have seen, the first settlers in Shashamane were neither Rastafarians nor Jamaicans. With help from the EWF’s New York headquarters James and Helen Piper, originally from Montserrat, moved to Addis Ababa in 1955, where they taught English for some time. Later they settled in Shashamane itself to cultivate some of the 500 acres of land. The Pipers remained the sole occupants of the land grant until the mid-1960s, when one by one a few more migrants, from Jamaica and the United States, began to arrive. Derek Bishton related the story of one of them, Noel Dyer, a Jamaican Rastafarian who had migrated to England and from there had continued his journey to the Promised Land on foot. It took him a year to reach Shashamane.¹¹¹⁰ A group of EWF members, eleven males and one female, arrived in Ethiopia in 1969. The money for the journey of the Pioneer Corps had been raised by the EWF’s Ethiopian Settlement Fund.¹¹¹¹ By 1970 there were some fifteen families in Shashamane.

Initially, there were serious problems between the Pipers and the newcomers because the Pipers refused to share the land. But when Prime Minister Hugh Shearer and Opposition Leader Michael Manley visited Shashamane in 1969, the problems were discussed with the Emperor, who agreed to resettle the Jamaican pioneers. After the problems had been solved, all the settlers ended up farming plots of some 25 acres. They found out that life in the Promised Land was not all milk and honey. As Bishton writes, the settlers were “not driving tractors, but riding dreams.” The revenues from farming were small and, apart from the internal disputes and feuds, relations with the indigenous population were not always friendly. But the pioneers were dedicated and persistent, and tried to make the best of it.¹¹¹² On the advice of the Jamaican ambassador in Addis Ababa, they pooled their resources and from 1972 farmed the land in cooperation.

Their fortunes turned full circle, however, when the Emperor was dethroned and a Marxist-military *junta* took power. The *Dergue*, as the regime became known, nationalized all land in the former Empire, including the plots of the EWF pioneers. After some confusion, they were allowed to continue as long

as they did not use machinery or hire labor. In early 1975, however, they found that their land had been confiscated. As Carmen Clarke, one of the settlers who returned to Jamaica after the coup, described the moment: "They didn't even notify me. I only see one morning when some men appeared with spears and cows and started to work."¹¹¹³ It was then that she, the Pipers and most of the other settlers of the EWF Pioneer Corps, with the exception of a handful of very persistent pioneers, decided to leave Ethiopia.¹¹¹⁴

The withdrawal of most of the EWF pioneers was not, however, the end of the settlement in Shashamane. Not long after they had left, the first of several members of the Twelve Tribes of Israel began to arrive.¹¹¹⁵ Somehow the leadership of the Twelve Tribes had managed to develop a working relationship with the new Ethiopian authorities and had received permission to settle its adherents at Shashamane.¹¹¹⁶ By the early 1980s, some 30 to 40 members of the Twelve Tribes' branches in and outside Jamaica, including children, had settled there. Members usually left Jamaica individually, although in 1976 a group of thirteen traveled together.¹¹¹⁷ The *Dergue* assigned them some 150 acres of land on condition that they did not hire labor or use tractors or other machinery.

The Twelve Tribes settlers made a living by subsistence farming and producing crafts, and their settlement received financial support from the organization or from individual members, including several reggae stars. Nevertheless, life in the Promised Land was hard. There continued to be tensions among the settlers as well as with the local population. The community's only cow was stolen and the Rastafarians had to protect their possessions with barbed wire. Although they kept a low profile and carefully avoided provoking the authorities by expounding their belief in the divinity of Haile Selassie, their cultivation of marihuana repeatedly caused problems. Some ten members of the Twelve Tribes were arrested for drug offenses. Yet the Ethiopian regime acquiesced in their presence and in spite of the many hardships the pioneers seemed determined to never give up their niche in the fathers' land.¹¹¹⁸ In 1991 *The Voice* reported that there were some 200 Rastafarians in Shashamane, among them recent arrivals from the EWF.¹¹¹⁹

Although the information is still scanty, Rastafari is said to have spread rapidly throughout several African countries in recent years. Reggae has become very popular in many African countries, especially since Jamaican reggae stars performed in several parts of the continent. Bob Marley's performance at the celebrations for Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 was without doubt the most important show, but certainly not the only one.¹¹²⁰ As one "brethren" from Sierra Leone wrote to the Rasta Movement Association in June 1982:

I assure you that more than two hundred (200) brothers were automatically willing to join the movement, many of us got the message from songs, by Marley, Tosh and a few others since there has been no direct communication as it is now. Lots of brothers have already consented to do the preaching of the message provided they are backed by literature sent by you.¹¹²¹

But the message of Rastafari was not only spread through performances and albums by Jamaican reggae stars. During the 1980s, a number of African musicians adopted the Rastafarian religion and combined local musical traditions with reggae. Some of them became internationally acclaimed stars, performing all over the world and were often in close contact with Jamaican Rastas and reggae musicians.¹¹²² Alpha Blondy from Ivory Coast, Lucky Dube from South Africa and Felix Bell from Ghana are only the best-known.¹¹²³ But not all African musicians were equally happy with the influence of Jamaican reggae. One of Zimbabwe's most popular musicians, dreadlocked Thomas Mapfumo, "the Lion of Zimbabwe," for instance, considered reggae and dreadlocks to be nothing more than an imitation of age-old African rhythms and hairstyle, and strongly objected to giving the Jamaicans the credit for inventing them.¹¹²⁴

Regardless of credit, Rastafari was gradually establishing itself in Africa. Mwatabu Okantah, a "Yankee dread" traveling through West Africa in or shortly before 1990, even found that "Rastafari is sweeping Africa by storm." In Senegal, he observed, the movement "is making significant inroads."¹¹²⁵ Although Okantah did not mention it, there is even a Rastafarian "village," all of its occupants Africans and dreadlocked, somewhere in the eastern part of this former French colony. It is said that all members dress in white robes, that tobacco smoking is strictly forbidden and that the chief of the village, with locks almost reaching the ground, has vowed never to touch a woman. The fact that the major languages spoken in Senegal are Woloff, Dyula and French, and that some 80% of the population is Muslim, makes the presence of a group of seemingly religious Rastafarians, since at least the early 1980s, if not the mid-1970s, all the more bizarre.¹¹²⁶

Ghana appears to be another African country where Rastafari has rooted firmly. Okantah describes his visit to a settlement of the Twelve Tribes of Israel in a depressed area of Accra:

The settlement is a headquarter/gathering place/information centre for the movement. ... The compound we entered consisted of three small dwellings and a fenced-in, open courtyard. The area was well-kept. Pictures of Haile Selassie and Marcus Garvey were everywhere present.¹¹²⁷

Okantah does not tell his readers where the members of this group originated from, but the priest leading the service he attended spoke English, changing to Ga only when addressing the children.

Since quite a few individual Rastafarians from Jamaica and elsewhere have traveled to Africa in recent years, it may very well be that such groups were established by Jamaican Rastafarians. For many of these, repatriation to Ethiopia after the deposal of Haile Selassie had become anything but attractive. Besides, many Rastas now viewed Ethiopia merely as the spiritual center. "I and I gonna habituate all of Africa." Ghana had always had a strong appeal for the Rastafarians. Nkrumah was known to have been strongly influenced by "the philosophy and opinions" of Marcus Garvey and the country had long been a symbol of progressive thinking in Africa.

These pioneers established a bridgehead on the continent in anticipation of the arrival of others. As a certain Brother Jah Ites from Ghana wrote to *Rasta Voice*:

I and I brethren and sistren from Rainbow Valley in Labadi, Accra work towards the total liberation and unification of I and I beloved continent Africa. I and I organize cultural programmes, Israel Isseblys, as well as certain institutions giving Rastafari Vibes unto the people (ital centre, craft shop). The Sons of Zion and other farming co-operations are trying to build a solid foundation so that the brethren who come from Babylon may find food, a place of shelter and open arms to welcome them in I and I motherland Africa.¹¹²⁸

As noted before, the available information on Rastafari in Africa is extremely meager. It is to be hoped that with the apparently rapid spread of the movement on the continent, this gap will soon be filled.

Research on Rastafari in Latin America, the European continent, Australia and New Zealand is if anything more limited than that on Rastafari in Africa. In most cases the information is restricted to statements that there are Rastas in a particular country, which usually means that persons wearing dreadlocks and/or red, gold and green insignia have been noticed. Rastas or dreadlocks are said to be found in almost every country with a significant population of Afro-American and Caribbean descent. In several cities in the north-eastern part of Brazil there are said to be considerable numbers of young blacks who, inspired by reggae, have taken on the outward symbols of Rastafari. To what extent they have also adopted the religious beliefs, or how large these groups are, is unknown. Much the same goes for Belize, which for our purposes should perhaps be considered as part of the Caribbean.

Rastafari has also made inroads among the Maori population of New Zealand.¹¹²⁹ But in this case there is at least one publication, a two-page feature article on the growing impact of Rasta and reggae by the journalist Gordon Campbell in the *New Zealand Listener*. Unfortunately, it does not provide us with much more information than the fact that since the early 1980s

a growing number of Maoris and Islanders are adapting Rasta to fit local needs. Symbols like the distinctive plaited hairstyles ... and the red, gold and green Rasta colours are increasingly evident - especially among street kids, who have tuned into the movement through Marley's music.¹¹³⁰

The emergence of Rasta in the Pacific seems to be closely linked to Bob Marley's performances in Japan, Australia and New Zealand in 1978. According to the author, the majority of the youths in New Zealand merely followed the reggae fad, while several of them adopted elements of "Rastology" as a new political message, a successor to Black Power ideologies from the United States. For others Rasta was said to be primarily a message of peace, love and brotherhood, a call for the unity of all black and oppressed people worldwide. They perceived clear parallels between the situation of the black people in the New World and the Maoris, for both, having been stripped of their cultural identity were now struggling to regain it. Rastafari provided an answer. As one informant expressed it:

Jamaica being in the Caribbean relates to New Zealand because this is a Pacific country and the same sun, the same aura is here. ... When you have people without a culture, who have been robbed of their culture, the next best thing is to pick up on the topmost culture that's around ... right now, we have to delve into our history and find out where it connects.¹¹³¹

In the early 1980s those who accepted the religious teachings were few in numbers. One informant estimated them to be "a solid 100" in the Ponsoby/ Grey Lynn area of Auckland.¹¹³² Yet by the mid-1980s

the prophet Gad of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, always internationally oriented, apparently felt that the Rastafarians in New Zealand were sufficient in number and dedication to found a formally recognized branch of the organization. He visited the region in 1986.¹¹³³

Rasta has also found its way into mainland Europe: as a religious movement (mainly among Caribbean migrants) and as a fashionable sub-culture (mainly among European reggae-lovers). Again, the information is scanty and the number of publications extremely limited. Dreadlocks are fairly popular in France, Portugal, the Netherlands and Germany, but those who sport them seem to be reggae-fans rather than religious Rastafarians. Reggae is especially popular in Germany. Some Jamaican reggae musicians have settled there, while quite a number of German youngsters travel to Jamaica in the summer to attend the Reggae Sunsplash Festival in Montego Bay and to experience Rasta, reggae and ganja on the island in the sun. However, as far as could be ascertained, no research has been done into Rasta in any of these countries, with the exception of the Netherlands.¹¹³⁴

In the Netherlands Rastafari has appealed particularly to black Surinamese migrants, although there are also small numbers of Hindu and Dutch adherents. The number of Rastas in the Netherlands, however, is relatively small. Most appear to live in the major cities, like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, but small groups of Rastas can also be found in other cities with a relatively large Surinamese population. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the little work that has been done on Rastafari in the Netherlands provides very little detailed information. The most important study was carried out by Peter Buiks, in the context of a project on the life-styles of Surinamese youths in Rotterdam.¹¹³⁵

One of Buiks' most interesting findings is that all his informants had become Rastafarians after they had settled in the Netherlands, apparently because it was there that they really encountered racism. They came into contact with Rastafari mainly through listening to reggae music and also through meeting Rastafarian reggae musicians from England. A small group had adopted the strict religious elements of Rastafari, but the majority regarded Rasta as above all a life-style. Another interesting conclusion Buiks draws is that the majority of these Surinamese Rastas wanted to return to Suriname, where they intended to settle in the interior to start self-sufficient agricultural communes. According to Buiks, these Rastas combined the ideas of Rastafari with Maroonage. Only a small number of the religiously-oriented Rastas in Rotterdam talked about repatriation to Ethiopia or other African countries.¹¹³⁶

The Dutch capital of Amsterdam is said to have been an important center of Rastafarian activity around 1980, although the boom was relatively short-lived. After 1982 the number of Rastafarians decreased rapidly, apparently as a result of a lack of meeting places, organization and leadership. Without going into detail, Hans Vermeulen maintains that three different groups emerged, the most important of them called the "Twaalf Stammen van Israel" (Twelve Tribes of Israel). This group taught Rastafarian doctrine in a major Surinamese community center in Amsterdam, but was never formally recognized as a branch of the Twelve Tribes by the Jamaican headquarters. According to Vermeulen, the Rastafarian movement in the Netherlands distinguished itself from the movement in England mainly by the fact that the organizational structure was even less developed; furthermore, the Rastas in Amsterdam were less politicized. Another difference which, as we have seen, was also noted by Buiks, was that the majority of the Surinamese Rastafarians in the Netherlands were more interested in a return to the interior of Suriname, than to Ethiopia.¹¹³⁷

The number of Rastafarians in the Netherlands has been, and still is, so insignificant and their presence so low-profile, that it has never led to social tension, other than within families. The press has devoted scarcely any attention to Rastas, except for an occasional article focusing on the exotic aspects of Rastafarian belief and life style.¹¹³⁸ Contrary to the situation in England and the United States there seem to have been hardly any problems between the Rastafarians and the police in the Netherlands, which is probably also due to the fact that the Dutch legislation on soft drugs (and thus on marijuana) has been rather liberal. Nor do there seem to have been any youth gangs with the hairstyle or any of the other trappings associated with Rasta.¹¹³⁹

From the limited information available, it appears that much of the internationalization of the Rastafarian movement has actually had more to do with the spread of widely appealing reggae and Rasta symbols, than with Rastafarian ideology and theology as such. As one reggae fan from New Zealand wrote to the Rasta Movement Association in Kingston in 1982: "I want to know what 'Rastafarian' is, I am seriously thinking of becoming a follower." Apparently, reggae had made such an impression on this New Zealander that he was already considering becoming a follower before he knew what it was he was following.

Besides wanting to become a follower, his concern was largely with the outward symbols. The better part of his enquiries were directed towards the problem of coiffure.

I have dreads, but they don't stay in, so I have not done them properly, if you could also tell me step by step the process of dread making that would also be appreciated."¹⁴⁰

Letters from reggae fans, intrigued by Rastafari and requesting information or simply expressing their love for the music and support for a movement they hardly understand, reach Rastafarian organizations from all corners of the earth. Michael "Brother Miguel" Lorne maintains that he even receives mail from such unlikely places as Moscow.¹⁴¹ In most cases, the letters are sent by fascinated teenagers, who have probably started growing their hair (if their parents allow it), obtained a copy of Timothy Whites' biography of Bob Marley, along with some red, gold and green paraphernalia, and who never leave the house nowadays without a reggae cassette in their walkman. One such letter is quoted here in full.

Hello! I am a boy of 17, living in cold Sweden. I do not know why I am writing this letter but I know that I love reggae. It started some years ago, when I was in England and bought my first reggae record. Now I have got several, a lot of Jamaica records are not distributed in Sweden. They say it is hard to understand Rastafari, and it is often difficult to understand the patois. Since I started listening to Rasta Music, I think I have changed to the better, and if everybody listened to reggae, I think the world would have been better. I am not a Rasta, I call him God and you call him Jah, but it's the same thing, isn't it? I read the Bible everyday, trying to understand Rasta a little more."¹⁴²

But not every reggae fan reaches such a level of understanding of Rastafari. The present writer met several youths in the Netherlands, walking around in knitted black sweaters with red, gold and green stripes, and displaying their fascination with Bob Marley and other reggae stars in countless buttons. They all considered Rasta to be some sort of music-related fashion and when asked whether they knew that Rastafari is also a religion, they merely shrugged their shoulders in disbelief. None of them knew where the colors came from, but they thought they were probably "the reggae colors." None of them could understand much of the lyrics. But who the hell cared? The music was great anyway.

The international Rastafarian assemblies

"With the scent of 'sensi' perfuming our resolutions, total harmony prevailed."

Until the early 1980s, contacts and communications between the Rastafarians around the world were largely a matter of individual initiatives or were made within the framework of the few internationally oriented organizations. The Twelve Tribes of Israel, the (Imperial) Ethiopian World Federation and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church maintained contacts with affiliated groups elsewhere. One of the few groups to communicate with non-affiliated Rastafarian groups internationally - mainly within the Caribbean - was the Trinidad-based Rastafari Brethren Organization (RTBO), which issued the magazine *Rastafari Speaks*.

In 1982, however, there was a first attempt to bring the international Rastafarian community closer together. From 23 to 25 July, Rastafarians from Toronto, Canada, hosted the First International Rasta Conference at the Oakwood Collegiate. The aim of the conference was "to facilitate an exchange between the Rastafarian community; to clear up some of the misconceptions held by many people about Rastafarian culture; and to find ways of dealing with the concerns which will help to relate more effectively with [the] Rastafarian community and the community-at-large." The theme of the conference, attended by some 40 delegates from Canada, the United States, Jamaica (represented by Ras Samuel Brown and Danny Dred), Trinidad, St. Lucia, Nevis and St. Kitts, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Antigua and Montserrat, was the "Unification of Rasta."¹⁴³

Apparently the Canadian authorities were none too happy with the conference:

Only a week prior to the Conference, organizers hastily called an emergency press conference in which they stated that an interdepartmental memo was being circulated by the MTPC [Toronto police] advising Immigration authorities to refuse entry to any Rasta wishing to attend the Conference."¹⁴⁴

The Rastas' warning at their press conference that "the Police should know that they cannot stop the unification of Rastas," seemed to have some effect. Opening the conference, its organizer Charmaine Montague was able to announce that all delegates had arrived in Toronto without problems.

The conference started in Caledon on Friday 23 July, with a Nyabinghi session for Rastas only, to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie I. For the next two days of the conference anybody who was interested could listen to a number of speakers, including Ras Samuel Brown, giving their views in workshops on topics such as “Rastafari and theology,” “Rastafari and the family,” “Rastafari and education” and “Rastafari and the community.” One of the reporters who attended the workshops wrote:

it was concluded that Rastas encountered more racism than other Blacks because of their non-conformity. Suggestions highlighted the need for the Rastafarian community to start their own publishing houses in order to counter the derogatory misrepresentations which are made about them by the mainstream press.¹¹⁴⁵

Much later, an official report on the conference was drawn up, together with a list of recommendations.¹¹⁴⁶ The workshop on Rastafarian theology had focused on the different interpretations of the nature of the divinity of His Imperial Majesty. It was recommended that there be further discussions on the teachings of Rastafari “so that I and I will have the same common principles, but still be able to retain I and I individually.” The workshop on the relations between the Rastafarians and the wider community had apparently attracted most attention. The recommendations called for more understanding, decriminalization of marihuana use and possession, and more exposure to Rastafari for the youth. With regard to the workshop on Rastafari and the family, most attention was given to education and the question whether Rastafarian children should attend indoctrinating Babylonian schools or be educated within the family. Surprisingly, the recommendation of the workshop on education called for Rastafarians to become politically involved, especially in the Caribbean, and for the development of a strong economic base within the Rastafarian community worldwide.¹¹⁴⁷

The First International Rasta Conference ended with a cultural show, with reggae, drumming, poetry and dance. According to the official report on the conference, it “was a success in the sense that we were able to achieve most of our objectives.” The conference had “provided a forum whereby Rastafarians ... could meet and reason about problems facing all of us” and had given “non-Rastafarians an opportunity to learn about our culture and lifestyle.”¹¹⁴⁸ The editors of the *Jamaica Daily News* noted some shortcomings, however. There was limited interest from the press and the black community in Toronto, and the organizers had failed to involve the local Rastafarians. Nevertheless, the latter were almost lyrical about the success of the conference.

The International Rastafarian Conference was a colossal initiative. To have attempted it was remarkable. To have carried it through was truly inspiring. A follow-up is needed. And documentation from this meeting should be made available to all interested parties. The Rastas who were present would have called it reasoning. We called it an attempt to communicate. It was at times a difficult dialogue. But certainly not a monologue.¹¹⁴⁹

It was decided to organize a second conference for the following year in Kingston.

The Second Annual Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly, as it was called, began on Monday 18 July 1983 at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and was to last until the following Monday, 25 July. The theme of the Assembly was announced as: “The hungry be fed, the naked clothed, the sick nourished, the aged protected, the infant cared for.” The Rastafari Preparatory Commission and the Rastafari Movement Association had organized the assembly, with Ras Samuel Brown as international coordinator and Ras DaSilva as chairman. In cooperation with the Creative Arts Centre of the UWI, the Preparatory Commission had also organized an exhibition of Rastafarian arts and crafts, and, in cooperation with the National Library of the Institute of Jamaica, a photographic profile of Rasta.

The Sunday before the great Assembly, several delegates paid a visit to Prince Emmanuel’s Bull Bay commune. At the start of the conference over 300 delegates, mainly from Jamaica, but also from Canada, the United States, England, Trinidad, Guyana, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Thomas, St. Kitts, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Antigua gathered on the UWI-campus, where the rest of the day was spent in registering and introducing the delegates. *Rastafari Speaks* described the scene as: “Red, Gold and Green was in evidence everywhere. Some delegates wore robes. Some carried painted walking-sticks. The Nyah-binghi Order (of Jamaica) came with flags and drums.”¹¹⁵⁰ Accompanied by the drums of the Nyabinghi and with the necessary spiritual inspiration from the wisdom weed, Tuesday and Wednesday were filled with reasoning about numerous issues, above all repatriation and education. It was a “heated debate” and “again and again the reasoning over-ran the stipulated time-frame as point and counterpoint, history and experience within and outside of the movement were strongly put forward.”¹¹⁵¹

To break away from the heated debates, the delegates spent the next four days touring the island, visit-

ing several Rasta groups and celebrating the birthday (23 July) of His Imperial Majesty with a special Nyabingi session. Before the delegates returned to the UWI-campus, visits were paid to Ras Daniel in Trelawny, Bongo U in Montego Bay and Ras Steve McDonald, also in the northern part of Jamaica.

By the end of the tour, the delegates were expected to submit their reports on the Assembly, so that final communiques and resolutions could be drawn up for release on Monday 25 July. Drawing up resolutions acceptable to all, however, proved to be a rather problematic exercise, and resulted in “stormy sessions.” In the evening Rita Marley and the Ethiopian reggae band Dallol, and the Wailers (with Ziggy Marley) performed, but as yet there were no final communiques. The conference was extended for one more day and, deprived of access to university facilities, the remaining representatives continued their reasoning out in the open.

Here, with the scent of “sensi” perfuming our resolutions, total harmony prevailed. Discussions were brought to a firm conclusion and final drafts prepared for all delegates, many of whom had delayed their departure to comply with the extended timetable.¹¹⁵²

The resolutions were later published in *Rastafari Speaks* and are worth quoting:

Spiritual/Cultural: That Rastafari International Divine Order of the Nyabingi should be the responsible source to provide spiritual guidance regarding Rastafari Religious Foundation and Livitical [sic] Authority.

Economics: That the Economic development of Rastafari should be centred around basic agriculture, technical skill resource, cultural creative arts & crafts, and, that a Rastafari International Trading Corporation be one primary vehicle to facilitate this economy.

Health & Education: That Education and Health pursued in a balanced motive, are consistent with His Majesty's teachings, with Divine Laws, and with Natural functions, and that therefore, technical, religious and practical education should be encouraged to promote effective Cultural livity and I-vine spiritual groundation.

Administration: That the Administration of the Rastafari Community should be handled at two distinct levels: a Rastafari International Secretariat; and, a Rastafari International Theocracy Government (functional).

Media/Communication: That an independent Rastafari International Media Communication Centre be developed to monitor Rastafari International Affairs, Information, and Community News Release.

Youth & Dawtas: That Youth and Dawtas be given greater freedom and assistance to develop responsible economic, educational, and family-life programs appropriate to their organization and function (roles), critical to service their social, health and nutritional needs.

Repatriation: That a special Repatriation Committee be instituted immediately within the Rastafari International Secretariat to develop the Repatriation Exercise and to implement formal agreements relative to African States and the OAU; (that Tanzania be local for Working Embassy).

Human Rights/Collective Security: That each Regional Secretariat be responsible to develop an organ to liaise with regional Governments and Service Institutions in each respective territory to lobby for and secure the Collective Civil Rights of Rastafari individuals and groups.

Fund-Raising: That fund-raising for Repatriation and related administrative services of the International Secretariat be centred around Cultural shows, retail of books, lectures, films & videos, Rastafari Festival Arts & Crafts and the sale of Collected Teachings of the Rastafari Elders.¹¹⁵³

The resolutions, as could be expected of such a divided and unorganized movement, read more like a summary and repetition of wishes and intentions, than a workable program for action. None of the proposed institutions - Trading Corporation, International Secretariat, Media Communications Centre, Repatriation Committee or Working Embassy in Tanzania - have been established. Apparently no agreement was reached as to the question of whether Rastas should participate in the Babylonian system of education or should strive towards establishing their own system of education. Similarly, there seemed to be no agreement about repatriation, except for the fact that fund-raising would be allowed. Most resolutions were little more than good intentions. Nevertheless, the whole atmosphere of the Assembly was geared to centralization and organization.¹¹⁵⁴

A third international Rastafarian conference was to be organized in Trinidad in 1984. Apparently it was not as successful as the first two conferences. As far as could be ascertained, little or nothing was reported about the convention, either in the Babylonian press or in Rastafarian magazines or pamphlets.¹¹⁵⁵ However, after 1984 small groups of Rastafarians from Jamaica traveled regularly to various countries in the Caribbean, the United States, Canada and England. At the same time, growing numbers of Rastafarians from abroad came to visit Jamaica. Several smaller international conventions appear to have been organized, again in Toronto in 1984, in England in 1986 and in the United States in 1988.

John Homiak reports that during the late 1980s a large group of elders from the Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government became directly involved in the dissemination of Rastafari abroad.¹¹⁵⁶ The initiative was prompted by a raid of some 500 policemen on the Jamaican community in Washington D.C. on 6

February 1986. Jamaican gangs were suspected of large-scale criminal activities and drug dealing, and the Rastafarians, long branded by the press as the worst among the *posses*, were once again the prime target of police action. Though few arrests were made, a group of Washington Jamaicans, led by two Rastafarians, set out to try to correct the public image of the Rastafarian movement in the United States. They proposed, among other things, to invite some of the leading elders of the movement from Jamaica to visit Washington to educate the public. The Jamaican High Commission “unofficially” supported the idea and the Rastafarians contacted John Homiak, an anthropologist affiliated to the Smithsonian Institution, who had been involved since the early 1980s in extensive research among the Jamaican Rastafarians. Homiak made contact with the elders in Kingston, who, after a lot of reasoning and conflicts, eventually agreed on a delegation of fifteen. Some later withdrew, while some elders who had not been selected also succeeded in obtaining a visa for the United States. So in mid-1988 a group of about twenty traveled to the North, to “Rastasize the world,” as their (controversial) spokesman Sam Brown expressed it. During their three months’ tour of the United States, the elders met with the Rastafarian communities in Washington and New York, visited the Smithsonian and Howard University in Washington and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and were received by the Jamaican High Commissioner. They received an “enormous amount of attention, indeed adulation, ... within the black urban communities they visited.”¹¹⁵⁷

In 1989 most of those who had been on the 1988 tour visited the United States again, this time having been invited to attend the Festival of American Folklife of the Smithsonian Institution. Several of the elders chose to stay in the United States. As Homiak writes: “it became apparent that they had approached these trips not only as spiritual missions, but as opportunities to forge new social ties and to explore their options abroad.”¹¹⁵⁸ As a result of the presence of a number of Nyabinghi elders in the United States, orthodox Rastafarians will no doubt extend their impact on younger Rastas in the States, though at the same time the Jamaican movement has been deprived of some of its leading spokesmen.¹¹⁵⁹ The elders’ visits to the United States also caused conflicts within the Theocracy Government in Jamaica, some of its members claiming that the elders were selling out Rasta for personal benefit.

During a National Assembly in Kingston in early December 1990, the Rastafarians announced that they were preparing an International Assembly for 1991 “to make further plans for the Centenary of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I in July 1992.” The National Assembly was attended by some 200 Rastafarians, most of them from Jamaica, but a few from other Caribbean islands.¹¹⁶⁰

The international conferences of the Rastafarians were important steps in improving the contacts between and organization of the various groups around the world. But, like the attempts of the Jamaican movement to unite all Rastafarians under one banner, there were no tangible results. Only a small part of the movement was involved and, even then, the conferences stranded on insurmountable differences. As such, they once more demonstrated the inability of the Rastafarians to organize themselves effectively and to overcome their internal differences.

Nevertheless, increasingly strong informal contacts developed during the 1980s among Rastafarians worldwide. If it had been reggae which spread the message of Rastafari throughout the world during the 1970s, during the 1980s it was the frequent traveling and migration of both Jamaican and foreign Rastafarians which intensified communications enormously. Although it is still a little too early to assess the precise impact of these closer international ties, it seems more than likely that it will greatly expand the control of the Jamaican elders over the movement abroad in the near future. They will no doubt educate foreign adherents in orthodox religious teachings and Rastafarian livity, and may as such have a positive influence on the image of Rastafari abroad.

In the meantime, however, there had been important developments in Jamaica.

Chapter 6.

Breaking the tide of radicalism: Rastafari and Jamaican society, 1980-1990

Jamaica made an unfortunate start to the 1980s. The economy was rapidly heading for bankruptcy, society was deeply divided between supporters of the Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party, and violence was rampant. Michael Manley's experiment with democratic socialism had been a complete failure, in spite of undoubtedly good intentions and many important social reforms.

From an economic perspective, democratic socialism had been a calamity. The real value of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had declined from some J\$ 2,200 million in 1972 to approximately J\$ 1,830 in 1980.¹¹⁶¹ The external debt, which had been US\$ 154 million or almost 16% of the GDP in 1970, ten years later stood at over US\$ 1,800 million or 88% of the GDP. The exchange rate of the Jamaican dollar had been US\$ 0.91 in 1974, now it stood at US\$ 1.78. Official (and thus flattered) unemployment rates had increased from 23% to almost 27% between 1972 and 1980 (and for women under 24 years of age from 35% to a record 60%). The cost of living had increased by a staggering 320% in the six years following Manley's announcement that Jamaica was to take a democratic socialist direction. On top of that, there was a chronic shortage of basic consumer goods, not only because the country lacked hard currency, but also because the government had prohibited the import of every conceivable luxury, ranging from toilet paper to motorcars.¹¹⁶²

From a political perspective the People's National Party was no more and no less responsible for the failure of democratic socialism than was the Jamaica Labour Party. Gunshots were reverberating day and night, and there were fatal incidents almost daily. JLP and PNP *posses* and the security forces killed one other at random, not because of any political ideals, but because in Jamaica's clientelist political system the fate of the ordinary man depended to a considerable extent on the question of whether his own party or the opposition was in power.¹¹⁶³ The politicians promised money, jobs, houses and other privileges, and distributed the guns and rifles with which to secure victory at the ballot box. In May a number of outlaws apparently thought that they could make a contribution to their party's struggle for power by bombing a home for elderly women. As many as 167 women lost their lives in the flames. It was the most disgusting example of the senseless terror that had Jamaica in its grip. At stake in the ongoing war between the *posses* - it was rumored - were not only jobs and houses, but control over the lucrative hard drugs trade as well. Allegations of drug trade involvement were made by and against both political parties. In addition, the PNP - not without reason - accused Seaga and his following of waging a war of destabilization with the assistance of the CIA, and of trying to create a second Chili. The JLP in turn blamed Manley and his party for having ruined the island's economy by trying to create a second Cuba. Babylon was burning and in this madhouse of bloodshed, Rastafari, with its stress on peace and love, seemed to be one of the few sane alternatives, especially for the young.

Some Jamaicans were so sick and tired of political tribalism and violence, that they would even have preferred Rastafarians in power. "They are the ones who can bring betterment to Jamaica. I feel if the Rastas are in power, the killing and gang war will stop," one of them wrote to the *Jamaica Daily News*.¹¹⁶⁴ But the fear of violence, the economically desperate situation and, according to some, the chance that Jamaica would be turned into a communist Rastafarian state were precisely the reasons why, long before the elections were due, a considerable portion of the upper and middle classes had already voted with its feet. Many of those who were affluent enough to leave, had decided to await more stable times in Miami, New York City, Toronto or London. The exodus was such that a bumper sticker with the text "will the last Jamaican turn off the lights" had become a popular sales item.¹¹⁶⁵

The 1980 general elections and the Golden Jubilee

"Rastafarianism is one form of radicalism which should be eliminated."

As we saw in chapter 4, many Rastafarians had lost faith in Manley and the People's National Party during the mid-1970s. Manley had not been able to put an end to police harassment or to discrimination against Rasta children in school. Nor had he legalized ganja, let alone done anything with regard

to repatriation. By 1980 most of those Rastafarians who had not already lost confidence in Michael “Joshua” Manley years before, had finally turned their backs on the PNP and its leader. Joshua had been a pretender, a false prophet, who had made a lot of promises, but had never delivered. Manley’s ally Fidel Castro, often regarded by the Rastas as the representative of the indigenous Amerindian population in the Caribbean, had also forfeited whatever sympathy the Rastafarians may have had for him. While on a visit to Mengistu’s Ethiopia, the Cuban leader had spoken negatively about Haile Selassie and had made the unforgivable mistake of sitting down on the Emperor’s throne.¹¹⁶⁶

One of the Rastafarian leaders who had lost faith in Michael Manley and the PNP was Claudius Henry, who had blessed Joshua as a God-sent leader in the early 1970s. Shortly after the controversies sparked by his pamphlet in 1972, Henry’s church had been burned down. The Peacemakers’ Association had since kept a low profile, devoting their attention to religious and economic matters. But the death of Edna Fisher some time during the late 1970s and later on Henry’s third marriage, had caused serious problems. During the 1950s the former fish vendor had led the small Ethiopian World Federation group which had formed the basis of Henry’s African Reform Church. She had been the driving force behind the Peacemakers’ bakery and block-making factory, and without her presence these had rapidly fallen apart. Religious differences also seemed to have developed, eventually resulting in a split in the organization and even in an attempt to assassinate Henry. Unfortunately, details on these developments are not available.¹¹⁶⁷

With his Peacemakers’ Association falling apart, Claudius Henry shifted his allegiance to the Marxist Workers’ Party of Jamaica (WPJ), formerly the Workers’ Liberation League. It is not clear what exactly motivated this shift. As far as could be ascertained, Henry made no public statements on his decision. In any case, the Repairer of the Breach, by then 77 years of age, was disappointed in Manley and his People’s National Party. According to Trevor Munroe, leader of the WPJ, Henry and some members of the Peacemakers’ Association came to a party congress some time during 1980. Asked about the relationship between the WPJ and the Peacemakers, Munroe later explained:

The Peacemakers’ Association has a very strong admiration for the Party. They believe it reflects many of their own goals for, as they put it, building God’s Kingdom on earth - that is how they conceptualize it. We, on our part, admire them greatly for their persistence in seeking to represent black people over the years.¹¹⁶⁸

To which he added that “they see the WPJ, as it were, as a continuation of the transformative tradition which they hope to encourage in Jamaican politics.” The Workers’ Party, however, remained a marginal party, which (up to the time of writing) has never succeeded in gaining sufficient votes for representation in Parliament. Little was heard of Henry during or after the elections.

Amidst raging violence, Jah Lloyd of the Theocracy Government called for the dismissal of both Manley and Seaga, of both the PNP and the JLP. He demanded the “adoption of the Ethiopian Theocratic Constitutional Monarchy and its constitution, as the legitimate instrument of Governmental authority over the children of emancipated slaves, and the people of Jah Rastafari.” In addition, Jah Lloyd thought that Manley was “under the divine mandatory obligation to deliver the rod he bore for I and I the Illect of Jahrastafari from I and I father His Theocratic Majesty Haille Selassi the almighty.” The dreadlocks of the Theocracy Government had not forgotten the “rod of correction,” which Manley had carried around during the 1972 election campaign, and apparently Jah Lloyd believed that Selassie had ordered the Prime Minister to hand over the rod to the Theocracy Government of the Rastafarians.¹¹⁶⁹

For orthodox Rastafarians repatriation continued to be the one and only goal although, according to some Jamaicans, there was a clear discrepancy between words and deeds in the movement.

Our Rastafarians, from as long as I can remember, chant “Back to Africa; Back to the land of our ancestors; repatriation is a must.” etc. The people want an organisation or Government to stand the cost of such an excursion because they are poor. I agreed. That was until I found out differently. Now we have a few brothers and sisters who can now afford to step out of Babylon ... But have people like Marley, Tosh, Killer-Miller [Jacob Miller], Big Youth and scores more who have the cash to pay their way left yet for the desired land. They are firmly planted in Jamaica¹¹⁷⁰

But in orthodox “Rastology” repatriation was still something other than migration at one’s own expense: repatriation was a divine master plan that would sooner or later be brought about by Jah. Others, however, maintained that it was a government to government or United Nations affair, and among these some thought that participation in politics would be the only way to achieve repatriation. Then again, there

were those who felt that the time was ripe for the movement to involve itself fully in Jamaican society and to abandon the idea of a return to Africa. Rastafari was a deeply divided movement and despite continual calls for unity and organization, the differences were increasing rather than decreasing.

The younger and often better educated Rastafarians in particular were getting impatient with the movement's a-political stand and the elders' slogans about a divine theocracy. They advocated a more realistic approach to achieve their goals. As one member of the Twelve Tribes of Israel expressed it:

In 1966, the Emperor of Ethiopia visited the West Indies including Jamaica. Seeing what happened at the airport, we called upon Mortimo Planner [sic] to work toward becoming the first Rasta Prime Minister. Until now we don't know what happened to him. What I had learnt is that the elders of Rasta refuse to take steps towards the Rasta movement because they can go around collecting money from capitalists. They have not studied the future of the Rasta movements. Some are illiterate and only follow the others saying that they want to go home to Ethiopia, Africa without studying the requirements. I went to a number of Nyabinge [sic] celebrations all around and what I observe is that brethren are fighting over governmental matters such as: should we repatriate before liberation.¹¹⁷¹

The Rasta Movement Association (RMA) called on all Rastafarians to prepare themselves for and to take part in the upcoming elections.¹¹⁷² Already in 1979 Tzega Zab, on behalf of the RMA, had elaborated on participation by the Rastafarian movement in the next general elections, arguing that "the society at large would like for the Rastas in an organised fashion to take part in the administrative aspect of the country." According to Zab, the time had come for the movement to follow the advice given by His Imperial Majesty in 1966, when the Emperor had supposedly urged the Rastafarians to "organize and centralize." Zab attributed the non-involvement of the majority of the Rastas to members looking for "personal benefit" as well as to ignorance of the "right to contest for the power of the state."¹¹⁷³ The central issue in the RMA's policy, however, remained "repatriation for all." Yet calls like these were largely in vain, although Stephen McDonald, a Rastafarian from the northern part of Jamaica, was said to have registered as an independent candidate for the elections. Details, unfortunately, are unavailable.¹¹⁷⁴ The majority of the Rastafarians, however, were not prepared to take part in "politricks" on any large scale and were neither able nor willing to "organize and centralize" the movement.

In contrast to the elections of 1972 and 1976, the use of Rastafarian symbolism played only a minor part in the 1980 campaigns of both the PNP and the JLP, although Dudley Thompson continued to wear a tam.¹¹⁷⁵ The JLP, styling itself the Jesus Loving People, nevertheless borrowed one of its slogans from a popular song by Bob Marley and the Wailers, and urged the voters to "stand up for your rights."¹¹⁷⁶ Conservatives in Jamaica accused leftists of maintaining close links with radical Rastafarians, a heritage from the days of the Henry fiasco and a convenient argument to discredit the PNP. JLP chairman Ronald Irving, for instance, felt that

the PNP took no notice of the credit balance when they took office. They thought they could create a populous movement by simply giving Rastas money freely and talking about capitalism, how bad it is for the people.¹¹⁷⁷

There was even talk of a revolutionary group called RAPS, in which the R supposedly stood for Rastafari.¹¹⁷⁸ But most of the Rastafarians were not into "politricks," if only because for them the X that voters were expected to mark on the election form was an evil sign.

On 30 October 1980 Jamaica decided about its political future in the bloodiest elections in its history. The terror unleashed by the PNP and JLP gangs had brought Jamaica to the brink of a civil war, in which an estimated 750 Jamaicans lost their lives. As Michael Manley later wrote:

Up to 1976, the Magnum .365 was the deadliest weapon in common use in the political battle. It certainly was deadly enough! The 1980 campaign was to be dominated by the M-16 rifle, smuggled into the country in large but unspecified numbers at that time. Their rapid-fire chatter became like a theme song of the campaign.¹¹⁷⁹

For the first time in Jamaican history there had been a fatality among the candidates. PNP Junior Minister of Security Roy McGann was shot and killed in Gordon Town on 13 October 1980. On D-day itself there was widespread intimidation, polling stations were attacked or burned down, ballot boxes stolen and voter registration lists forged. In one constituency 227 registered voters managed to bring out 956 votes for the JLP.¹¹⁸⁰ But when all the correct and incorrect votes had been counted, 58% of the Jamaican voters turned out to have had more confidence in Eddie's promise "deliverance is near" than in Joshua's democratic socialism. As soon as the outcome of the elections was made public, one Peter Chin Yee expressed his hopes for the future of Jamaica.

Rastafarianism is one form of radicalism which should be eliminated from the Jamaican society. The doctrines of this cult are race, hatred and blasphemous heresy. Rastafarianism is subversive because it encourages indiscipline and undermines constituted authority. Africa does not sanction Rastafarianism. Rastafarianism encourages slackness, sloppiness, untidiness and unkempt grooming. Jamaica now has a strict Government that will administer a strong clause of discipline to rid the society of Rastafarianism once and for all.¹¹⁸¹

Such opinions recalled the 1950s and 1960s, when calls for the extermination of the movement were still widely supported. In a sense, the 1980s were to see a return to what many conservatives regarded as “those good old days.”

While the election war was still heading for its climax, the Rastafarians had been preparing for the festivities of their Golden Jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of Haile Selassie’s coronation and thus of their own movement, on 2 November 1980.¹¹⁸² The first event had already taken place in September in Linstead, where the local branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had staged a reggae night, featuring some of the best-known musicians among the members of the church, like Cedric “Im” Brooks, Rita Marley, her children performing as the Melody Makers, and the Light of Saba.¹¹⁸³ The Twelve Tribes of Israel, renowned for its perfect organization of reggae shows, held a successful anniversary ball in the National Stadium in Kingston.

The celebrations organized by the Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church, however, were less successful. The House had announced a reggae show and an art and crafts fair at Devon House, Kingston’s best preserved Great House and a major tourist attraction. But when the musicians arrived, there was neither equipment nor a stage. They blamed Ras Makonnen, organizer of the event, but he argued that the artists should have provided the necessary equipment themselves. Makonnen also thought that “Rastafari musicians and singers are not respecting the divine foundation of the roots of the Movement, instead they are making a bag of money in the name of Rastafari.” The crafts fair was a disappointment as well and with the exception of the Nyabingi session the whole event flopped.

On 2 November 1980 the *Jamaica Daily News* featured a special supplement on the Golden Jubilee, compiled in collaboration with the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church. Apart from an abstract from the *National Geographic’s* June 1931 article on the coronation of Haile Selassie, an article about the Sabbath and a message from the Judah Coptic Church, the supplement carried several advertisements congratulating the Rastafarian movement on its Jubilee from, amongst others, such respectable companies as Mutual Life Insurance, the Jamaica Public Service Company and the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation.¹¹⁸⁴ In honor of the Golden Jubilee, the *Jamaica Daily News* had even replaced its usual “Sunshine girl” in bikini for a photograph of a Rastafarian “Queen,” dressed in the traditional headscarf and gown.¹¹⁸⁵

For the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church the Golden Jubilee was “not merely an event,” because as Leviticus 25:10 said:

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family.

The Rastafarians therefore saw the Jubilee as “a time of redemption for the people [of] Israel.” Forty-nine years or seven Sabbaths had passed since the coronation of Haile Selassie and now the time for the fulfillment of prophecy had come. Ras Makonnen proclaimed a new repatriation offensive, starting on 2 November 1980. “In pursuit of liberty for the descendants of the emancipated slaves, and in advancing redemption for Judah and Israel,” the elders of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church had already sent yet another telegram to Queen Elizabeth (on board her yacht in the harbor of Naples) in which they expressed their concern about a possible change from monarchy to republic in Jamaica.

Talks of Jamaica becoming a republic, like Trinidad and Tobago, for instance, had surfaced once again. With the dissolution of Parliament in anticipation of the general elections, the elders of the Judah Coptic Church now held the Queen “fully responsible for all affairs on the island” and urged her to take that responsibility before Jamaica became a republic. The Rastas feared for their “security and protection of special interests,” and demanded that Her Majesty “delay no further the granting of a Bill of Repatriation for I and I and those descendants of the emancipated African slaves so desirous.” What the Rastafarians feared in particular was that once Jamaica became a republic, they would no longer be able to pursue

their claim to the £ 20 million compensation of 1834, intended - so they insisted - for the repatriation of the former slaves. Ever since they had cut the Union Jack from its pole in August 1979, their attempts to meet with the British High Commissioner John Drinkall again, had been in vain. Governor-General Florizel Glasspole did not have time to see them either, but discussions with assistants of both representatives of the Crown resulted in the promise that the Rastafarians would be given a hearing before any constitutional reforms were carried through.^{1186.}

The Rastafarians also had a meeting with Isa Modibbo, the Nigerian ambassador in Jamaica. During the late 1960s and early 1970s Jamaica had established rather firm ties with Nigeria, the only African country with an embassy in Jamaica. Nigerian diplomats on the island had taken a positive attitude towards the Rastafarians and had more or less acknowledged their (moral) right to settle in Africa. The Rastas had contacted the ambassador in order to secure “political asylum” should developments in Jamaica make such a step necessary.

As part of their repatriation program, the Judah Coptics also announced that they were going to attend the next meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa, scheduled for early 1981. Some three years earlier, in June 1977, they had already announced the appointment of an “ambassador” to the OAU, claiming that Rastafarians were members of the Organization by “divine right of Ethiopian nationality and international covenants of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”^{1187.} Now their presence at the meeting was necessary “for the purpose of placing the matter of the return of the continent’s stolen sons and daughters before the only legally constituted continental Governmental authority.” Confident that their mission would succeed, the elders asserted that “these negotiations will not be preliminary but implementary in nature, since all else is prepared.”^{1188.} The Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church intended to travel to Addis Ababa with no fewer than 50 delegates.

In the months that followed, representatives of the church, headed by their spokesman Ras Makonnen, launched an offensive against the newly elected Jamaica Labour Party government. Some two weeks after the elections, on 16 December 1980, a group of thirteen delegates went to the Prime Minister’s office and made a formal request for a meeting with Prime Minister Edward Seaga and the Minister of State for Information and Culture, Ed Bartlett. They wanted to discuss several issues:

repatriation; the intention to send a delegation to the next Foreign Ministers meeting of the OAU; the Golden Jubilee of the coronation of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I; Constitutional Rastafari in general; inclusion of the Royal Ethiopian Juda-Coptic Church on the official list of non-profit religious institutions eligible to receive tax-deductible gifts; and legalization of ganja for purposes of religious observances.^{1189.}

The Prime Minister’s aide promised to bring the request to Seaga’s attention and Ed Bartlett promised the Rastafarians an early audience.

Three weeks later, on 8 January 1981, Ras Makonnen, Abuna Blackheart, Jah Stone and Jah Lloyd had a meeting with Percival Broderick, the new Minister of Agriculture. They told Broderick that they had identified lands suitable for agricultural development in four parishes and asked for “technical advice and farm machinery.” In spite of their preparations for the return to Africa, the Judah Coptics apparently anticipated spending a few more years in Jamaica. The Minister was “interested” and promised to look into the possibilities for government support. Furthermore, they again pleaded for the legalization of ganja and were assured that the issue would soon be discussed in Parliament. Finally, they asked the Minister for financial support to attend the OAU meeting.^{1190.}

Within a week the representatives of the Judah Coptics and Theocracy Government had their discussion with Bartlett and Olive Lewin, Director of Culture. Bartlett “expressed his pleasure” about meeting the Rastas and promised to examine the possibilities for government support for their demands.^{1191.} Nevertheless, the Minister later told the members of the House that the government did not have the financial means to sponsor the trip of 50 delegates to Addis Ababa.^{1192.}

The Judah Coptics, however, were not prepared to accept this. On 26 January Makonnen, Blackheart and Stone also met with Neville Gallimore, Minister of State in the Department of Foreign Affairs, to discuss their attendance at the meeting of the Organization of African Unity and financial assistance for their mission, but again to no avail.^{1193.} The desired meeting with Edward Seaga did not materialize.

When it became clear that the JLP administration had no intention of subsidizing their trip to the OAU meeting, the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church decided to send two of its representatives, Ras

Makonnen and Jah Prince, to Addis Ababa at its own expense, although it seems that one of them had been given a ticket by an unknown benefactor. The two delegates were to leave on 31 January 1981, but their departure was postponed when they got word that the government had offered 52 Americans, who had been held hostage in Teheran for over a year, a free vacation in Jamaica.¹¹⁹⁴ At an improvised press conference in the VIP lounge of the airport, Ras Makonnen declared that the government's proposal "constitute[d] a sudden significant change in the financial ability of the government or a recent change in government policy." He demanded equal rights and justice. If the government was able to offer 52 Americans a free vacation, then the Rastafarians insisted on "the immediate confirmation of financial support for the 50 delegates to the OAU conference."¹¹⁹⁵

The demands of the Judah Coptics provoked a harsh reaction from one of the *Gleaner's* columnists, Vincent Tulloch, who thought that

the Rastafarians should have been told point blank that the government would not sponsor them even if it had the cash. They are not worthy of state support and must be told so in no uncertain manner. If as they claimed they are members of a theocracy government, then I fail to see how they could expect taxpayers whom they see as "babylon", to use hard earned cash to send 50 fanatics to a conference in Ethiopia.¹¹⁹⁶

The author was prepared to make one exception, however. "The only way the state should support them is if it is a certainty that they will be given permission to enter the country. In that case give one-way tickets to as many who want them, if we can afford it."¹¹⁹⁷ It was again a proposal similar to those several commentators had made during the late 1950s.

Another Jamaican was also quite annoyed by this "Rasta foolishness" and thought he knew a solution.

Sir, I as a christian think I know of an easy way to get rid of this Rasta foolishness. I think all the news media in the countries concerned should publish the facts concerning Selassie's death and tell us what is going on in Ethiopia now ... and explain the formation of the O.A.U. etc. ... The world needs a clarification.¹¹⁹⁸

Even Arthur Kitchin, the *Gleaner's* Rastafarian columnist, disapproved of the repatriation program of the Judah Coptics and wrote that "Makonnen's actions ... could provoke local and international incidents which may have detrimental repercussions on the entire Rastafari Movement, apart from creating further misery as it is said that some of his followers have sold their belongings."¹¹⁹⁹

But the Judah Coptics were determined to go ahead with their repatriation offensive, in spite of the fact that another meeting with Minister of State for Information and Culture Ed Bartlett had not resulted in securing the demanded support. So in late February, Ras Makonnen and Jah Prince finally went on their way to Addis Ababa. They traveled via London, where they intended to apply for visas for Ethiopia. London, however, turned out to be the final station of their trip. The British authorities deported the two Rastafarians on the first flight back to Jamaica, probably because they had not secured permission for entry to Ethiopia in advance. Ras Makonnen later declared that they had been searched and that some of their documents had been taken from them by the immigration officers at Heathrow.¹²⁰⁰ Though this was the end of their trip, it was not yet the end of the publicity.

Within a month of his deportation from England, the elders of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church sentenced Ras Makonnen "to 21 years indefinite suspension." As Basil Walters reported for the *Jamaica Daily News*:

At a Press conference at Welcome Avenue "Sanctuary" yesterday morning [21 April 1981], Abuna Blackheart, the church leader declared that Ras Makonnen had been found guilty by the church of sacrilege and of usurping the authority of the Abuna. The Abuna said Makonnen had passed confidential documents and "espionaged letters" to other elder Dreads who are defectors from the church. He was sentenced by the Haile Selassie Frontier Disciplinary Committee. The elder to whom Makonnen disclosed "confidential documents" is Jah Stone, who is now wanted by the Disciplinary Committee.¹²⁰¹

For this offence, Makonnen was to have his "dreadlocks cut by religious decree." As was customary, the youngest member of the church would execute the verdict.

After a few days Jah Stone was tracked down and placed "under safe-keeping by the church." He was charged with "impersonation, refraining from speaking the truth and trying to confiscate documents which concern the peoples right in going back to Africa." Jah Stone would be brought before the elders "for the hearing of the judgment." Asked whether Stone would also have his locks cut, Abuna Black-

heart answered that such a decision was up to the elders. In his defence, the accused later declared: “All I know ’bout, is that I have a rod for Blackheart and I will be taking it to him on the celebration of the new moon at the Sanctuary on Sunday.” He claimed that Jah Makonnen was a strategist who had “tried to corrupt I.” The possibility of having his locks cut seemed remote to Jah Stone: “No man can do that,” he insisted.^{1202.}

What had actually happened and what kind of documents were involved was not disclosed, but Blackheart stated that the whole affair had nothing to do with the failed attempt to visit the OAU meeting. Instead, he spoke about a “Holy War” and stated “that because of the disunity among Rastas, it appears as if there is no clear definition of Rasta.”

The Abuna said there are 7,000 members on roll in his church and already some brethren don’t wait on the Elders to trim them. They trim themselves and run out of the church leaving their family behind. He said that it is written in the Scripture that there are 7,000 brethren out of a total of 144,000 who will not bow to Babylon, but communicate their culture as pre-christians and not as christians.^{1203.}

Little was heard of either Ras Makonnen or Jah Stone after their “dreadlocks judgment,” but the incident demonstrated quite clearly that there were serious problems and conflicts within the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church. That a number of Rastafarians decided to trim and to break away from the Judah Coptic Church, was yet another sign that there was growing disagreement among the Rastas over the direction the movement should take.

The death and funeral of Bob Marley

“Bob is not dead, he’s only resting.”

On 11 May 1981, only a few days after Ras Makonnen had his locks trimmed, Jamaica was rudely surprised by the announcement that Bob Marley, the 36-year-old King of Reggae, the personification of Rastafari and the island’s most famous son, had died in a Miami hospital. By the time he died, Bob Marley had become a prophet for many Rastafarians and a living legend for the rest of Jamaica.

After his performance at the “One Love” peace concert in April 1978, Marley had briefly visited Shashamane and toured all around the world. The *Kaya* tour of 1978 had even brought him to Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In 1980 Island Records had released the album *Survival*, which contained the song *Zimbabwe*, a homage to the freedom fighters of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

Every man’s got a right to decide his own destiny,
and in this judgement there is no partiality.
So arm in arms, with arms, we’ll fight this little struggle,
‘cause that’s the only way we can overcome our little trouble.
Brother you’re right, you’re right, you’re right, you’re right, you’re so right.
We’re gonna fight, we’ll have to fight, we’re gonna fight, fight for our rights.
Natty dread it inna Zimbabwe, set it up inna Zimbabwe, mash it up inna Zimbabwe.
Africans a liberate Zimbabwe.
No more internal power struggle
we come together to overcome the little trouble.^{1204.}

As Stephen Davis writes, *Zimbabwe* “struck like a bomb” on the African continent.^{1205.} As a result, Robert Mugabe extended an official invitation to the band to be guests and performers at the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean independence ceremonies on 18 April 1980.^{1206.} Marley and his Wailers crew were the only artists invited to play at Salisbury.

On their way to Zimbabwe, there was an incident which demonstrated Marley’s contempt for the British Crown. The Wailers had to stop over in Nairobi, where at the same time another guest of the Zimbabwean government also happened to be waiting for a connecting flight: Prince Charles, who was about to “collect his mother’s flag.” An aide of the royal family approached Marley with the request to come and meet the Prince of Wales. Marley brusquely declined the invitation: “Tell him if he want to meet me he should come to me.”^{1207.}

The performance of Bob Marley and the Wailers a few days later was a colossal success, despite the fact that the police force had to use batons and tear gas to control the ecstatic crowd, and later that same

year, Island Records had released the tenth Wailers album, *Uprising*. An extended world tour had been scheduled, which had the advantage of keeping Marley off the island during the months leading up to the elections: he had been warned that gangsters were again out to assassinate him, because of his alleged support for Michael Manley and the People's National Party.

But in the summer of 1980 Marley had become seriously ill. A few years earlier, he had already had one of his toes amputated. Now doctors in the United States had detected a brain tumor and in September the remaining part of the American *Uprising* tour had to be canceled. On 4 November 1980 Marley, a member of the Twelve Tribes of Israel since the mid-1970s, was baptized into the Ethiopian Orthodox Church by Laike Mariam Mandefro, now known as Abuna Yesehaq. Marley, who had been known as Joseph in the Twelve Tribes, took the name Berhane Selassie. Quite a few Jamaican citizens regarded Marley's baptism as a return to Christianity and a rejection of Rastafari. Many Rastafarians, especially members of the Twelve Tribes, regarded his baptism as a betrayal of Rastafari. After all, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and not in the name of Haile Selassie. Some suspected that he had been pressured by his mother and wife Rita, who had long since been prominent members of the EOC, but there were also rumors that Marley had asked for baptism because he knew he might soon die. Referring to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the *Abuna* later denied this and declared:

He had a desire to be baptised long ago, but there were people close to him who controlled him and who were aligned to a different aspect of Rastafari. ... Many people think he was baptised because he knew he was dying, but that is not so ... he did it when there was no more pressure on him¹²⁰⁸

When the news about Marley's illness reached Jamaica, rumors about lung cancer, resulting from excessive use of ganja, surfaced almost immediately. Many Rastafarians, however, convinced of their own immortality and of that of their reggae prophet, maintained that the talk about Marley's illness was nothing but an attempt to "kill Bob psychologically."¹²⁰⁹ Others, notably in the orthodox groups of the movement, had long since reached the conclusion that Marley was a false prophet, because he dealt with Babylon, had used the Rasta image for his own personal gain and had not donated a biblical tenth of his considerable earnings to the movement. Commentators in the newspapers, arguing that "the public made him a star, the public made him a millionaire," and "therefore has a right to know," had already begun to speculate about what would happen to the Rastafarian movement, in case Marley should die. Some had already buried the King of Reggae long before he had passed away, while others hurried to honor him before it was too late.

In April 1981 the Gleaner Company presented Marley with the Gleaner Honour Award for "his contribution to popular music." In the singer's absence, the award was handed to his wife Rita, who told the press that her husband might be back home soon and that he was "dealing with the problem very positively."¹²¹⁰ One week later Prime Minister Edward Seaga announced that the government was to award the superstar the Order of Merit, one of the highest distinctions in Jamaica.¹²¹¹ In the House of Representatives Seaga had, "for the purpose of the records," carefully emphasized that the decision to honor Bob Marley had been made a year earlier by the PNP administration. Because no contact could be made with Marley at that time, the presentation had been postponed.¹²¹² In his speech Seaga said:

Jamaica's cultural heritage has been enriched because of Bob Marley. It is with a sense of deep appreciation and gratitude that the Government and people of Jamaica present him with this award, in honour of his effort in the nurturing, presentation and development of Jamaican music nationally and internationally.¹²¹³

Commenting on the Order of Merit, the editors of *The Daily Gleaner* thought that his Rastafarian beliefs were little more than a convenient style:

[B]y adopting something of the mysticism of the local cult of Rastafarianism, this talented artist added a new dimension to folk singing; so that his songs took on a special aura of philosophy and social protest. In this way, he has become rather similar to another great artist, the American Bob Dylan.¹²¹⁴

Three weeks later the Honorable Robert Nesta Marley, O.M. was dead.¹²¹⁵

The *Jamaica Daily News* broke the news with the caption "The King is dead, long live the King" and carried a full-size picture of Marley in a red, gold and green frame on its front page. *The Daily Gleaner* was not on the streets due to a strike. Edward Seaga immediately announced the government's decision to give Marley an official state funeral, for which the budget debates in the House of Representatives were postponed.

Marley's body was flown back to Jamaica on 19 May 1981. The following day some 24,000 Jamaicans gathered in front of the National Arena to give Bob Marley a last salute. The coffin was covered with a Jamaican flag and guarded by policemen and members of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Outside the Arena, it was pure chaos. People were fighting to get inside and the police used tear gas and batons to control the crowd. Some complained that while they had been waiting for hours to get a glimpse of the King of Reggae, "preference was being given to members of the Rastafarian movement." In the meantime, vendors and pickpockets were doing good business.^{1216.}

Early on the morning of 21 May Bob Marley's body was driven to Maxfield Avenue for a funeral service in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. From there, the coffin was escorted back to the National Arena, where a huge crowd created "a carnival atmosphere." Outside the Arena, there were thousands of people trying to get inside, among them once again numerous vendors selling drinks and snacks as well as buttons, tapes, t-shirts and posters of Marley. "So plentiful were the vendors that the announcer at the Arena had to request that selling be avoided inside the Arena 'because it is a funeral service that is in progress'."^{1217.} Inside the National Arena, hundreds of Rastafarians, reggae fans, reporters and dignitaries were seated for the official ceremony.

After a "musical presentation" by the Wailers, the funeral service began at eleven o'clock. Abuna Yesehaq and several priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church led the service, much to the chagrin of the members of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The Abuna said that, as a Rastafarian, Marley had brought dignity to the movement and about the Rastafarians he remarked:

They are a people who are continuously struggling towards their identity and should be encouraged in the development of their talent and skills for the benefit of the country. I say this with the hope that they will be fully aware about their home, not only in Africa, but also in Jamaica.^{1218.}

Governor-General Sir Florizel Glasspole read the first lesson, but was constantly interrupted by shouts of "Jah Rastafari!" Michael Manley and Edward Seaga also read lessons. The Prime Minister announced that a statue was to be erected in memory of Bob Marley. Clearly aware of the beliefs of the majority in his audience, he closed with the remark: "May his soul find contentment in the achievements of his life and rejoice in the embrace of Jah Rastafari." Football star Allan "Skill" Cole, one of Marley's closest friends and a prominent member of the Twelve Tribes, exacerbated the tensions between the Twelve Tribes and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church when he read another passage from the Bible than the one selected for him by the priests of the EOC. His "Greetings in the name of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I and greetings in the name of the Twelve Tribes of Israel" were answered by the crowd with a roaring "JAH RASTAFARI!". Abuna Yesehaq finally assured all those present: "Bob is not dead, he's only resting." According to Barbara Gloudon, writing in the *Gleaner*, the funeral "was an unparalleled example of the show biz organisation for which Jamaican officialdom has always been noted."^{1219.}

After the funeral service at the National Arena, an endless chain of cars headed for Marley's birthplace, Nine Miles in the parish of St. Ann, watched by the thousands of Jamaicans who lined the road. In the evening, Bob Marley was finally laid to rest in a small mausoleum.^{1220.}

According to Timothy White, the passing of Bob Marley resulted in a conflict between the Marley clan and the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The dissension centered around a ring that had once belonged to Emperor Haile Selassie and had later been given to the reggae star by Crown Prince Asfa Wossen. Immediately after Marley's death, the leader of the Twelve Tribes, the prophet Gad, had launched a campaign to get hold of the ring, which was still on Marley's finger when he lay in state in the National Arena. In spite of the assistance of "many prominent Jamaicans who revealed their membership in the Twelve Tribes solely for the purpose of helping to obtain the ring," Gad's mission was unsuccessful, which put the prophet, as White added, "in a righteous rage beyond describing."^{1221.} The whereabouts of the ring, prominently displayed on the cover of the posthumously released album *Legend*, have remained a mystery. While some maintain that it was buried with its owner, others insist that it is in the possession of Marley's son Ziggy.

Marley's death and funeral not only triggered conflicts between the Twelve Tribes of Israel on the one hand and the Marley family and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on the other hand, but also sparked a lively debate as to whether Marley was a Rastafarian or a Christian, and whether it was possible to worship Christ and Selassie at the same time, as the late singer had evidently done. Most Jamaicans soon agreed that it was totally impossible and concluded that Marley had been either a fake Rasta or a fake Christian. In a reaction to the many opinions about this "controversy," a Rastafarian wrote that "the

solution is really very simple:"

I and I accept Christ as our personal saviour, like other so-called Christians but in His Kingly Character, that of HIM Haile Selassie I. So I and I don't need to write any big theological books or get into any lengthy arguments about can Rastas accept the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and still be true to Rastafari, because with Jah all things are possible.¹²²²

Another controversy centered around Seaga's announcement that the government would erect a statue of Bob Marley. This attracted criticism from both Rastafarians and non-Rastafarians. A citizen from Mandeville wrote a lengthy letter about the medical and social dangers of ganja use, and asked whether it was wise to erect a statue in memory of "a self-acclaimed ganja smoker?" "Will this not give wholesale license, especially to the impressionable young, to practice this health-destroying, mind-distorting, self-abasing habit," he queried.¹²²³

The Rastafarians, on the other hand, had completely different reasons for objecting to a statue. On biblical grounds they were against any graven images and so many of them would have preferred another sign of tribute, for instance a music school in Trench Town. But the Rastas were not consulted and not long after the funeral the assignment was given to the sculptor Christopher Gonzales, a Jamaican living in Atlanta, Georgia.

When, on 11 May 1983, exactly two years after Marley's death, the statue was due to be unveiled, a large crowd of curious fans gathered in the vicinity of the National Stadium. But as soon as the cover was removed, the crowd exploded in anger, began throwing stones and bottles, and loudly demanded that the statue be taken away. The statue turned out to be a bronze of the singer's torso emerging from a tree root, holding a microphone, which was also emerging from a tree root, and pointing its right hand to the sky. It was apparently meant to symbolize Marley's "roots music," but it did not - in almost everyone's opinion - bear any resemblance to the King of Reggae. The anger of the crowd was such that military reinforcements had to be called in. Prime Minister Edward Seaga ordered the ceremony to be canceled and had the statue taken away to the military headquarters at Up Park Camp.¹²²⁴

The growing middle-class involvement in Rastafari

"You don't argue with a Rastafarian. You have to love him."

The events surrounding the death of Bob Marley had not only demonstrated that the Rastafarian movement had, to a certain degree, gained social recognition and acceptance; the prominent role of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Twelve Tribes of Israel during the funeral had also illustrated the enormous popularity of Rastafari among large sections of the young from the middle and upper classes. Since the late 1960s, the numbers of young "uptown" Jamaicans, who identified with Rasta, had slowly but steadily increased. Rex Nettleford had already noted this tendency in his essay on Rasta in the 1960s when he wrote:

the inherent injustice of a social system which threatened to keep the black Jamaican forever at the base of society ... was to strengthen the adherence of educated middle class youths, who despite the benefits of education, adequate shelter and opportunities for advancement in the wider society, have embraced Rastafarian creed and habit in their own quest for identity and reconstruction.¹²²⁵

The rise of the middle classes in Rastafari had a significant impact on both the character and the perception of the movement. Traditionally it had been a movement of the "sufferers," the landless peasantry, the unemployed ghetto-dwellers, the "Lumpenproletariat." Rastafari, as the authors of the 1960 *Report* had noted, was "rooted in unemployment," to which they added: "If the supply of jobs in Kingston were to catch up with the demand for jobs, a hard core of the religious belief would remain, but the movement would cease to have mass significance."¹²²⁶ Ten years later, the unemployment rates had risen sharply and the Rastafarian movement was also beginning to acquire "mass significance" among the educated and the employed.

The "quest for identity," as Nettleford phrases it, was of course not restricted to the unemployed or the lower classes, and certainly played a role in the growing adherence to Rastafari among the middle class and intellectuals. The process of decolonization, independence (not only in Jamaica, but worldwide and especially on the African continent), the rise of the Civil Rights movement and black nationalism in the

United States, the influence of Black Power advocates in Jamaica, and last but not least the impact of the Rastafarians themselves, had all contributed to a growing awareness among the black middle classes that there was a need to assert and acknowledge the black, African identity and heritage of the vast majority of the island's population. Whereas over 90% of the Jamaican population was of (partial) African ancestry, the dominant cultural focus and the norms and values among the middle and upper classes were still European. With the demise of a visible Black Power movement during the early 1970s, the Rastafarians were the only ones who radically rejected everything western and consequently stressed their black African identity.

But apart from that, Rastafari stressed aspects that seemed to be completely absent or at least insufficiently represented in those segments of society which, in one way or another, maintained the status quo: the political parties, the trade unions, the established and evangelical churches or even the various Afro-Christian religions. Rastafari stood for fundamental change, not only in the sphere of cultural identity, but also - though far less explicitly - in the distribution of wealth and power relations. Rastafari, with all its symbolism and vagueness, seemed to provide an answer to all questions, a solution for all problems, a comprehensive world view, forcefully, eloquently and persuasively expressed by men who appeared to have an unshakable faith and deep understanding of the secrets of life.

Moreover, Rastafari embodied virtues that demanded respect. Not only did they emphasize dignity and pride in a society that tried desperately to live up to and copy the traits of its former oppressors, but they also emphasized complete independence and self-reliance in a society that, according to some, suffered from a severe dependency syndrome.¹²²⁷ The Rastafarians emphasized peace and love, in a society that was increasingly being torn apart by violence; a sober natural life, in a society that craved for more material wealth and for luxuries it could not afford; sharing the little that one had with one's brothers and sisters, in a society where it was often a "rat race" for survival.

Also, during the 1960s, as the result of the *Report* and other constructive publicity, a better understanding of Rastafari had developed. The mission to Africa and the state visit of Haile Selassie had contributed to a little more, though still grudging, tolerance and acceptance. At the same time, sections of the movement had demonstrated that they were capable of adopting a more realistic and cooperative approach to issues like political participation or community development. Without completely abandoning the goal of and faith in repatriation, there were signs of a growing willingness among the Rastafarians to involve themselves in Jamaican society. The Rastafarians' contributions to the arts and music, furthermore, had helped to lend the movement respectability as a creative cultural force. Black Power and certainly the co-optation of Rastafarian symbols during the election campaign of 1972 had also changed the perception of Rastafari. The erstwhile "lunatic fringe" had increasingly become an expression of Afro-oriented Jamaicaness. In many different ways, all this gave the movement significance, not only for the lower classes, but also for the middle classes.

From the mid-1970s onwards the growth of middle classes and intelligentsia participation in Rastafari had accelerated, partly as a result of the growing popularity of reggae, but also because of the social climate created by the PNP government, which, in its pursuit of economic and political change, had also stimulated the social and cultural expression of a black Jamaican identity. Though it is difficult to determine just when the supposed surge in Rastafari's popularity occurred, several commentators have pointed to the late 1970s, notably 1977-1978. These were the years when Bob Marley and scores of other Rastafarian reggae artists were at the height of their popularity, with the PNP still firmly in the saddle and its social programmes beginning to show results, even though the political polarization between the PNP and JLP was heading for its climax.

As noted before, one of the results of PNP policies was that children from a lower-class background gained easier access to secondary and higher education in particular. Children from the middle and upper classes now had to share the classroom with children from the ghettos and thereby came into contact with a completely different way of life, of which Rastafari was often an integral part. The increased access to education also meant that Rastafarian children, in so far as schools accepted them, could penetrate the labor market at higher levels than before. In short, the second half of the 1970s saw the rapid growth of a Rastafarian middle class and intelligentsia from two directions. Rastafarians from the lower classes found ways of moving upwards on the social ladder. And at the same time, growing numbers of young Jamaicans from the middle and upper classes came into contact and began to identify with Rastafari.

The middle- and upper-class Rastafarians were thus a mixed group. Many of the Rastafarian reggae mil-

lionaires had their roots in the ghettos of Kingston, and most never forgot their origins. There were some, however, who were born and raised in the luxurious residential areas of Upper St. Andrew, like PNP Minister of Foreign Affairs David Coore's two sons, who had become Rastafarians some time during the 1970s. One migrated to Ethiopia, while the other, Stephen "Cat" Coore, became a well-known musician as a member of the "uptown" reggae formation, Third World Band.¹²²⁸

Though well-known and influential, the Rastafarian reggae musicians represented only one element in the Rastafarian middle and upper class. The vast majority of middle-class Rastas were nameless doctors, teachers, bank employees, students, nurses, engineers, secretaries or public servants. Although most felt themselves closely related to their lower-class brethren, and despised being perceived as middle-class, they faced a different reality from that of their brothers and sisters in the ghettos. They had to combine their Rastafarian beliefs and identity with the luxuries of a middle-class life and their respectability among family, friends and colleagues. In particular those with a nine-to-five job in wage-employment often found it impossible to reveal their adherence to Rastafari. The majority of employers bluntly refused to hire those who visibly asserted the Rastafarian faith, most notably by wearing dreadlocks.¹²²⁹ Some were willing to hire dreadlocked Rastafarians for jobs which did not include contacts with customers or clients. So one might find a dreadlocked Rastafarian working in a bank, but never as teller. Many Rastas were told that they qualified for a job, but would only be accepted if they first paid a visit to the barber shop. Others, as we have seen in the case of pilot Batts, were fired once they began to grow their hair. Those who refused to bend for Babylon, had to accept that they thereby severely limited their chances on the labor market.¹²³⁰ Many middle-class Rastas opted for an undisclosed adherence to Rastafari.

A considerable number of middle-class Rastas flocked to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, an organization which had developed out of Local 15 of the Ethiopian World Federation towards the end of the 1960s. The Twelve Tribes, under the leadership of Vernon Carrington, better known as the prophet Gad, had developed a very strict organizational structure. Gad, a former sky-juice vendor from West Kingston, was considered to be a modern-day prophet, a messenger of Jah, a man with a special revelation. Gad was the absolute authority on every conceivable issue. "Blest be he that enlargeth Gad," was one of the catch phrases of the organization. Below the prophet there was a board of executives, consisting of twelve males and thirteen females. They represented the male and female members of each of the twelve tribes of Israel plus one (female) representative for Israel's daughter Dinah. According to the Twelve Tribes, the month in which one was born determined the tribe to which one belonged. Someone born in October, for instance, belonged to the tribe of Gad (hence the name of the prophet) and someone born in August belonged to the tribe of Issachar.¹²³¹ Associated with the various tribes was a complex system of beliefs - a surrogate astrology - about personality traits.

Membership of the Twelve Tribes entailed formal registration and (voluntary) financial contributions, principles quite contrary to the open and highly democratic form of membership within the Theocracy Government. In addition, the Twelve Tribes of Israel organized monthly dances or parties and held regular, well-planned and extremely popular reggae concerts. Their involvement in reggae music and the membership of a considerable number reggae stars, including Bob Marley, Dennis Brown, I Jahman Levi and Freddie McGregor, led to the organization being dubbed "the Reggae House of Rastafari." Located on Hope Road, in uptown Kingston, the Twelve Tribes membership included many university students and alumni, which was reason enough for the orthodox Rastafarians to declare that the Tribes were "snobbish and class-biased."¹²³² On top of that, the Twelve Tribes also had a small number of whites in their membership, which orthodox Rastafarians, in spite of their profession of racial equality and the brotherhood of man, viewed with suspicion.¹²³³

The Twelve Tribes of Israel was a relatively tight-knit group. They had their own football and cricket teams, courses and other activities, and both tried to create and present a "one-big-family" image. As one of the best organized groups within the movement, the Twelve Tribes had also founded several branches outside Jamaica, including offshoots in the United States, Canada, England, several Caribbean islands and New Zealand. Furthermore, the Twelve Tribes of Israel had its own repatriation program. Since the mid-1970s it had settled several members in Shashamane. In 1976, as we have seen, they had sent a delegation of thirteen members, about half of whom were to settle in Ethiopia permanently. Several more had followed since then.

As a middle-class Rasta organization, the Twelve Tribes of Israel maintained a more liberal, more Christian ideology. Unlike many Rastafarians from the lower classes, they accepted Jesus as the Messiah. For them Jesus was not an earlier manifestation of Haile Selassie, rather Haile Selassie was the second

manifestation of Jesus Christ. "Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whom has this day revealed himself in the personality of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I," was another of their catch-phrases. Just like the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Twelve Tribes of Israel were in a sense a bridge between Rastafari and Christianity. The organization did not prescribe the wearing of dreadlocks, the use of ganja, a vegetarian diet or self-employment, to name only a few examples. But whereas the Twelve Tribes dictated few rules of appearance and behavior, its members were obliged to read the Bible, "a chapter a day," and to appear regularly at the monthly Sunday night meetings, the dances and the reggae concerts.

Because of its registration of members, its membership fees, its middle-class image, its semi-Christian and liberal attitudes, and the unconditional support of its membership for their self-styled prophet, the Twelve Tribes were often denounced by other Rastafarians. As Ancient Patriarch Bongo Devon expressed it:

JAH choose a certain amount, a hundred and forty four thousand ... A JAH choose one. Not because yu is a member of Twelve Tribe and yu sign a paper make yu one o' dem. Nutten no go so! A JAH elect a one yu'hear man.¹²³⁴

On the other hand, there was also admiration for their well-organized repatriation program, meetings, dances and concerts.¹²³⁵

Of course, not all middle-class Rastafarians were affiliated with the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Quite a few appear to have become members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, although the EOC did not acquire a middle-class image comparable to that of the Twelve Tribes. Many middle-class Rastas were not associated with any of the groups and organizations at all. During the 1980s several Rasta "intellectuals" emerged as prominent and independent spokesmen of the movement. Attorney Michael Anthony Lorne was a typical example of one of those Rastafarians who had benefitted from the improved opportunities for lower-class children to obtain a proper education. Born in 1953 and raised in Kingston's ghettos, he went through secondary education and later studied Law at the University of the West Indies, "to see if I could correct some of the injustices I saw when I was growing up."¹²³⁶ He graduated in 1979 and was admitted to the bar in several Caribbean islands, including Jamaica and Trinidad. In the early 1980s he opened an office on Tower Street in downtown Kingston and became active in defending Rastafarians who had run into trouble with the law. Lorne, popularly known as Brother Miguel, rapidly gained prominence in the movement and became one of its chief intellectuals and spokesmen.¹²³⁷

Lorne's brother-in-arms Leahcim Semaj (Michael James), became another influential middle-class representative and self-styled spokesman of the Rastafarian movement. Semaj, a psychologist who received his doctorate from Rutgers University and had worked as an Assistant Professor at Cornell University, took up a post as a research fellow at the University of the West Indies in Kingston in 1982. He quit the UWI some time during the late 1980s and thereafter worked as a consultant and a talkshow host on the nightly program *Night Doctor*, on RJR radio.¹²³⁸

For several years, during the late 1970s and 1980s, the Rastafarian movement also had its own controversial columnist on "The Daily Misleader" in the person of Arthur Kitchin, who usually published opinions on issues in one way or another related to the movement. The *Gleaner*, in Kitchin's own words, "took the initiative of giving a dreadlocked Rastafari prominence, a move regarded as revolutionary in certain quarters, notwithstanding any negative motives which might be attached to the act."¹²³⁹ Though he did not hesitate to criticize the political establishment, his position was usually quite moderate. Moreover, he repeatedly castigated radical Rastafarians. He was highly critical, for instance, of Jah Lloyd's offensive against the British High Commission and planned trip to the OAU conference. Such condemnations earned him the wrath of the orthodox groups, who denounced the dreadlocked columnist as merely a puppet of the elite. It may be that the editors decided to reserve space for a moderate Rastafarian columnist in the hope that his articles might restrain radical elements in the movement. But even if this was their plan, it is doubtful whether Kitchin carried enough weight to influence the movement in this way.

In any case, as educated men these Rasta intellectuals had the language, knowledge and prestige, necessary to be able to express "Rastology" in a way that the Jamaican elite could relate to. The media sought them and they sought the media. Whenever there was something which affected the movement, they appeared on talk shows and "call-in" programmes or wrote letters to the editors of the newspapers. But although many Rastafarians had respect for and were proud of their "brains," not all of them approved of the emergence of an intellectual vanguard within the movement. Amanuel Foxe, for instance, denounced

Lorne and Semaj as “usurpers.” The rise of the middle class and the intelligentsia in the movement thus added another contradiction and ground for conflict and opposition within Rastafari. The rise of the middle class in Rastafari also affected the position of women in the movement. Traditionally, there had been few women in the Rastafarian movement, which, as Barrett expressed it, was “male-dominated.” The female Rastafarians, “Queens” or “Dawtas” (daughters), made up a mere ten to fifteen percent of the movement.¹²⁴⁰ But the male dominance was not restricted to numbers. Women were believed to be secondary to men and could only come to Jah through male mediation. Many Rastas justified their attitude towards women by references to the Old Testament, starting with the story of Adam and Eve. According to Sheila Kitzinger:

Women are peripheral to the Rasta movement, although at one time there was a camp consisting solely of women. They are generally marginal ... Rasta men do not consider them integral to the movement. Leadership, status, prophecy, and healing rest with the men. The men claim, indeed, that women are “not Rasta in heart,” and insist that the man is the head of the church. ... Ras women ... are probably quick to leave their consorts when they see opportunities for greater security for themselves and their children elsewhere.¹²⁴¹

Among the orthodox Rastafarians there were strict codes of behavior for females. Women were generally expected to be obedient, modest and inconspicuous. They could not take part in reasoning or smoking the chalice. In public a Rastafarian Queen was always expected to have her head covered and during her periods she was believed to be unclean, as a result of which she could not prepare meals, sleep with her “Kingman” or attend any gatherings or meetings. Furthermore, female Rastafarians were expected to observe strict dress codes. Long skirts, headscarfs and buttoned-up blouses, preferably with long sleeves, were the accepted style deemed necessary to secure and maintain dignity.¹²⁴²

Although Maureen Rowe still concluded in 1980 that “there can be no denying the fact that Rastafari is a patriarchal movement,” Rastafarian Queens had increasingly begun to assert themselves and to challenge their prescribed role and the codes of behavior laid down for women.¹²⁴³ Financially independent female reggae stars and middle-class women in particular were no longer prepared to take their “subordinate” position at face value, while those in wage employment usually found it impossible to conform to the strict dress codes. Among the orthodox groups, this development was not appreciated. According to Rowe, some women who attended meetings without their headwrap, “were subjected to hostilities.” During a Nyabingi session in 1980, “the issue of daughters and their abilities and place in Rastafari was raised The Brethren reiterated their love for the daughters and also that the man is the head.”¹²⁴⁴ Nevertheless, with or without the consent of their Kingman, some female Rastafarians organized themselves. In 1980 a group called the King Alpha and Queen Omega Theocracy Daughters emerged within the Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government. Their objective was “to restore the Omega balance within the Rastafari Movement [sic].” While it advocated the typical orthodox virtues like ensuring that “the Rastafari woman dresses within the fulfillment of her Royal dignity and not to the dictates of fashion ... making a plaything and sex object of woman,” the Theocracy Daughters also strove to “eliminate barriers placed in her path to prevent her from fulfilling herself as a hola woman.”¹²⁴⁵

Another women’s group established around the same time was Dawtas United Working Towards Africa (DAWTAS). Its four-page *Constitution* carefully avoided specific mention of any aim of changing the role and position of female Rastafarians within the movement. Instead, it mentioned such objectives as “to critically explore issues and questions relevant to the experiences and conditions of the African family and communities” or “to nurture our physical and spiritual selves in order to ensure our individual and collective well-being.”¹²⁴⁶

The situation in the middle-class dominated Twelve Tribes of Israel was quite different. That organization took a relatively liberal attitude towards women, who were considered to be equal in all respects. Female members could participate in all functions at all times and there were thirteen female members in the executive board, twelve representatives for the tribes along with an additional female representing Dinah. The Twelve Tribes did not pay too much attention to dress codes. Although wearing pants was still out of the question, skirts could be at knee-length rather than full length. Head covers were only prescribed during religious meetings, but that rule applied to male members as well. As a result of these liberal attitudes, the organization attracted a relatively large number of female Rastafarians.¹²⁴⁷

The association of so many “uptown” youths with the ideas and beliefs of the Rastafarian movement, and the emergence of Rasta doctors and lawyers, scientists and students also altered the movement’s image. It was quite a shock for the Jamaican establishment to discover that the Rastafarian was no longer the stereotypical impoverished, ragged and uneducated ghetto sufferer, shouting praises for Jah and predict-

ing “fire and brimstone” for Babylon, but could also be an affluent, well-dressed and educated uptown citizen, eloquently expressing Rastafarian ideology and denouncing social injustices. The Rastafarian was no longer a strange, anonymous man or woman in the street, but could also be one’s own son or daughter. Many middle-class worlds fell apart. As one upset parent wrote:

Many Rastas pretend not to understand the revulsion they inspire; but which parent who has cherished ambition for their children’s development is not heart-broken to observe their children wearing dirty looking dreadlocks; suddenly become withdrawn and non-communicative, staring at one with glazed eyes, and muttering the “I and I” gibberish declaring that ganja is their sacrament.¹²⁴⁸

For uptown parents their children’s identification with Rastafari was about the worst thing that could happen to a decent Christian family, and definitely entailed a loss of prestige and status. The problem was usually perceived as one of indiscipline and ganja-addiction. That Rastafari could be more than a fashionable ganja-smoking cult dedicated to laziness and lawlessness, usually did not enter the minds of these parents, who organized seminars to discuss their misfortune.

A woman noted that her son had been an “achiever” when he left Jamaica at age 19 to attend a predominantly white university in the United States. “He went there with a lot of zest and zeal, but I must admit that we did misinterpret achievement for maturity.” ... Having switched courses several times, the young man finally dropped out of college and became a Rastafarian. “We sent him money and he would use it to buy drug and support others. Another mother said that her son, who was also a drug pusher, was now afraid to leave the house. This she said was the result of “deep involvement with ganja and Rastafarianism.”¹²⁴⁹

The growing popularity of Rastafari among the middle class young led *Gleaner* columnist John McSeivright to list eight reasons why he, as a black Jamaican, opposed Rastafari - reasons no doubt shared by a considerable part of the Jamaican elite. His objections ranged from the worship of Haile Selassie as God, “even though he said he was not,” to the fact that “Rastafari actively discriminate against women.” Of course, the perceived encouragement for the use of illegal drugs was also among the objections, as well as the Rastafarian hairstyle and speech, which in McSeivright’s view, “render[ed] all Black people to ridicule.”¹²⁵⁰ Journalist Mark Ricketts, however, considered that “irrespective of its imbecility or stupidity, Rastafarianism has been in the last decade and a half, a major form of political and cultural assertion in the country.”¹²⁵¹

It was only when Rastafari began to attract growing numbers of youths from the middle and upper classes that the established churches began to worry about the movement and began to address “the problem” actively. Reverend Earl Thames, for instance, considered Rastafari to be “one of the most serious challenges to the Christian faith in Jamaica today” and wrote a lengthy article about how parents should cope with children who had suddenly started to grow locks, smoke ganja and who declared themselves to be Rastas. Maintaining that “there is no doubt that the greatest attraction of Rastafarianism to both young and old is ganja,” Reverend Thames tried to counter the basic beliefs of Rastafari, and assured his readers that “many young people turn to Rastafarianism not because of any religious conviction but because of some problems in home life.” And since, according to the Reverend, “young people are very sensitive to hypocrisy ... the best defence against Rastafarianism and other erroneous teachings is a sound Christian commitment.”¹²⁵²

Another commentator, however, thought that “the greatest challenge that may yet face the Church revolves around the acceptance of Rastafarian worship as one having its own intrinsic and legitimate worth,” and urged the established churches to seek a dialogue with the Rastafarian movement.¹²⁵³

David Keane, President of the Evangelical Ministries in Jamaica, on the other hand, simply considered Rastafari to be “satanic.”

Rastafarianism is the devil let loose. Rastafarianism gives young people a very careless attitude towards life. They feel that they can get ten women pregnant because they are just “my girls.” They can just smoke ganja and do anything. Rastafarianism is a degrading thing, you know, they just take off their shoes, take off their good clothes and live any old way.¹²⁵⁴

In truly evangelical style, Keane’s mission was to convert the misguided youths to Christianity, for which he had already found the recipe.

The first method in presenting the Gospel to the Rastafarian is not to argue with him. You don’t argue with a Rastafarian. You have to love him. If he sees enough love and concern in you then he will begin to see God and a superior way of life.¹²⁵⁵

American-based fundamentalist and pentecostal churches were booming in Jamaica, and to save the soul of a Rastafarian was just about the biggest triumph imaginable for their evangelical crusade.

Rent-a-dreads and the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church

“If it weren’t for the marihuana, we would be the Moral Majority.”

During the 1970s, as discussed in chapter 4, the surging popularity of Rasta and reggae had resulted in the emergence of what Beckford and Witter called “a counter-culture, the culture of Dread.”¹²⁵⁶ It was a diverse group, which included fake Rastas, Natty Dreads and secular Rastafarians, or as Jabulani Tafari called them “wolves (criminals), goats (hypocrites), foxes (tricksters), and jackasses (fad followers).”¹²⁵⁷ Some were merely following the fashion, others had adopted Rastafarian symbols and values as a form of social protest or as a “livity” and a new personal identity. The 1980s, however, were to witness the rise of two new commercial, but quite different Rastafarian spin-offs: the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church and the Rent-a-dreads, Flower Power drop-outs who used religion as a cloak for large-scale drug trafficking and Third World gigolos active in the flourishing tourist industry.¹²⁵⁸

When reggae became increasingly popular outside Jamaica, record companies and producers introduced some of their own ideas about both the sound and image of reggae music and musicians. While the sound was adapted to Western ears by bringing in more rock, pop or soul elements, the artists had to have a recognizable image. Some record companies even made the growing of dreadlocks a condition for signing contracts. After all, ever since the days of Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and the numerous other “roots reggae” giants, reggae music had been inextricably bound up with wildly flying locks, red, gold and green, praises to the Most High and giant ganja-spliffs. With the commercialization of reggae, only the locks and the colors remained. The music and the socially-engaged lyrics of the Third World Rasta-rebels of the Marley years gave way to mainstream pop tunes and hollow lyrics performed by flashy, mundane beach trotters.

The diffusion of reggae music was not only a result of tailoring reggae to Western preferences, but also the result of the incorporation of reggae elements into pop music. Already in 1971 Paul Simon had recorded his *Mother and child reunion* in Kingston with local reggae musicians. Three years later Eric Clapton recorded Bob Marley’s *I shot the sheriff*. Popular musicians and bands used reggae styles and themes in their recordings, as for example The Police (e.g. *Don’t stand so close to me*), Ten CC (*Dreadlock holiday*), The Rolling Stones (*Cherry oh baby*) or Patti Smith Group (*Radio Ethiopia*). And mega-stars like Stevie Wonder and Mick Jagger recorded songs and performed together with Bob Marley and Peter Tosh.¹²⁵⁹

In the late 1970s, numerous young Americans and Europeans became fascinated with the exotics of Rastafari and reggae, in either its pure or commercialized form, and quite a few decided to make a pilgrimage to the island of their idols. Whereas the Jamaican tourist industry had traditionally targeted the upper segments of the American market, the international triumph of reggae brought increasing numbers of young and adventurous back-packers to the island. Events like the Reggae Sunsplash Festival greatly contributed to the rise of reggae tourism. First staged in 1978, Sunsplash became an annual summer holiday fixture, a five-day concert party attended by just about every reggae performer of any standing. *Suncash*, as one commentator once dubbed it, soon became the undisputed number one reggae festival in the world, attracting thousands of overseas visitors and Jamaicans alike.¹²⁶⁰

But the reggae-Rasta influence on tourism was by no means limited to events like Sunsplash. Throughout the year, the whole North coast seemed to be done up in red, gold and green. A thriving market in reggae-Rasta paraphernalia had developed, providing employment and income to hundreds of vendors, known in the British Caribbean as “higglers.” Knitted tams and scarves, buttons and belts, t-shirts and underwear, in short, every conceivable souvenir on sale was in one way or another decorated with “the Rasta colors.” So-called *Ital* craft, mainly woodcarving, had become a thriving business in itself and was probably the only sector in which considerable numbers of genuine Rastafarians were active. Of course, there were also the countless reggae concerts and reggae bands.

By the 1980s reggae-Rasta symbolism had become an informal trademark for the Jamaican tourist industry and its use was no longer confined to small entrepreneurs, but was increasingly a matter of big business and official government policy. During the late 1980s, for instance, a red, gold and green labelled *Reggae Rum* appeared on the shelves of Jamaican supermarkets. And in 1990 the Jamaica

Tourist Board (JTB) was to launch a multi-million dollar advertising campaign, with a video commercial that displayed some of the island's most attractive spots and highlighted a Bob Marley clone mimicking "Come to Jamaica and feel alright" to the tune of Marley's hit *One Love*.¹²⁶¹ It was the first time that the JTB had used reggae and Rasta images in its advertisements.

Against the backdrop of this thriving reggae-Rasta tourist industry, another set of small entrepreneurs emerged on the scene, popularly known as the Rent-a-dreads. What they held, apart from their bodies, was an image. The exotic nature of Rasta and reggae, the anti-establishment stance, the smoking of ganja and the fierce masculinity of the dreadlocks seemed to be especially appealing to certain American women looking for a Caribbean adventure. Rasta, or better dreadlocks, had become a symbol of male sexuality in the United States.¹²⁶² The Rentas fulfilled this new demand for Rasta companionship. Suzann Dodd described the Rent-a-dreads with biting sarcasm:

Rentas usually wear a sapsy smile, affect an American accent and are always opportuning. ... [They] come in all shapes and sizes. Some have short locks, meaning they are new and probably cheaper than the man with chest length locks. Some Rentas wear a number of gold cow chains (gifts from satisfied customers). Others may affect the modified raggamuffin look. Some work on commission, others have a flat rate but may charge extra for exotic performances. Usually a good serviceable Renta can be had for three meals a day, sleeping accommodation and US\$ 10 pocket money per diem. Credit cards are (up to press time) not being accepted.¹²⁶³

Wherever the Rentas were able to work out an agreement with the security men of the tourist resorts, they could be found parading along the beaches, and through hotel compounds and shopping centers. The tactics employed ranged from just sitting around and looking cool to overt and aggressive self-advertisement. Once a deal was made, the Renta - always a personal friend of Bob Marley - would keep company with his new friend for the rest of her holiday and introduce her to the real Jamaican experience: the best reggae, how to empty a coconut, Rastafari doctrine, the beauty of as yet undiscovered spots, the basics of Jamaican patois and more. When fun time was over, the tourist would leave Paradise Isle in the firm belief that she had been lucky enough to meet a genuine Rastafarian. The Renta, after a week of hard work, would return home to his "baby mother," a few dollars and presents richer.¹²⁶⁴

It was hardly surprising that the Jamaican public had difficulty distinguishing between the Rent-a-dreads and the Rastafarians. Many middle and upper-class Jamaicans, often conservative, devoutly Christian and Victorian in their moral attitudes, firmly believed that Rastafari was a lot of quasi-religious gibberish and outward adornment, used to mask the lawlessness and ganja-addiction of a set of lazy people, unwilling to work for a decent living. The Rent-a-dreads were often pointed out as proof for such opinions. Many of these Jamaicans were deeply offended by the behavior of the Rentas and their clients. As residents of Negril, one of the most popular tourist centers, complained in 1981:

The behaviour of some women tourists and their rasta friends in the tourist resort of Negril is causing much concern among locals who fear that they could do harm to the image of the area. ... [T]hese women tourists, mostly from America, get friendly with Jamaican rasta men and then they go on ganja-smoking sprees. They are always scantily dressed in dirty clothes and they often sleep under trees or in huts with dirt floors.¹²⁶⁵

Others were even more disturbed by the idea that many tourists got the wrong impression of Jamaica and the Jamaicans, since they only met the "Rastafarians" (Rent-a-dreads). Some complained that people abroad tended to think that all Jamaicans were Rastas, wore locks, smoked ganja and played reggae all day.

The emergence of the Rent-a-dreads, like the rise of the fashionable fake Rastas, Natty Dreads and "secular" Rastafarians, served to move the meaning of Rastafari further away from its original religious essence. It created more misunderstanding in Jamaican society, since it became even more difficult to distinguish between the true and the false Rastas. As the spin-offs became more visible, the conviction grew that the Rastafarian movement as a whole was fake. The behavior of Rent-a-dreads and other impostors confirmed many in their belief that the Rastafarians were doing exactly the opposite of what they preached.

One of the most curious spin-offs of the Rastafarian movement came to public attention in the same month in which Bob Marley died. *The Daily Gleaner* had reported on the alleged involvement in large-scale drug smuggling of a small group of cultists in St. Thomas, known as the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church (EZCC). A few days later, JBC Television also highlighted the Coptic's dubious activities.

Although Horace Campbell maintains that the Coptics "claimed to be Rastafari," the EZCC neither was

nor claimed to be Rastafarian.¹²⁶⁶ It was, however, often associated with the Rastafarian movement and was undoubtedly a spin-off, although a rather peculiar and criminal one. Nevertheless, many Rastafarians had initially regarded the Coptics as brothers-in-arms.¹²⁶⁷

At the end of the 1960s the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church had been a small, inconspicuous group located in the hills around Kingston. Its founder was one Louva Williams, who had become active some time during the 1940s. When he died in 1969, the “church” threatened to collapse, but a certain George Baker Ivy set out to revive it and began to invite American hippies to the group’s meetings. At that time, around 1970, American hippies were frequently hopping over to Jamaica looking for more flower-power on “the island in the sun,” renowned not only for its spectacular beaches, but also for its abundant supply of cheap top-quality marihuana.¹²⁶⁸ Among this new category of tourists were a number of Peace Movement dropouts, who in one way or another came in contact with Baker Ivy and his Coptics, and soon took control.

One of these American hippies was Thomas Francis Reilly (alias Ronald Jeffrey Schwartz), born in Boston, the son of a Catholic sales representative. Having flopped at Miami University, Reilly became a salesman, started his own little business, only to get caught up in the San Francisco hippie scene. Traveling from one rock festival to another and experimenting with every possible kind of dope, he finally ended up in Jamaica where he became the mouthpiece of the EZCC. Reilly was popularly known as Brother Louv and officially ranked third in the Coptic hierarchy. Second in the hierarchy, though not as well-known as Brother Louv, was another white American, Clifton Ray Middleton (alias Peter Sheets, alias Stanley Gilmore), whose role within the organization remains obscure. Coptic number one, at least officially, was Jamaican-born Keith “Nyah” Gordon, a former peanut vendor, also known as The King.¹²⁶⁹

The vague theology of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church centered around Bible reading and ganja-smoking, “for the healing of the spirit.” The Coptics considered the weed to be a holy sacrament, comparable to the host and wine in the Roman Catholic Church. But whereas they openly advocated the use of ganja in their worship, they fiercely denied any involvement in drug trafficking and dealing. The Coptics claimed to follow the Levitical laws. They lived a “natural” life and grew their hair, though not in dreadlocks, and beards. Women were believed to be inferior to men, homosexuality, birth-control and fornication were abhorred, and the use of alcohol and hard drugs was absolutely taboo. “If it weren’t for the marihuana, we would be the Moral Majority,” Brother Louv once said.¹²⁷⁰ The Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church worshipped *Jes-us* as a black man, crucified in Jamaica during racial disorders. Emperor Haile Selassie I, however, was considered to be a despot, “a cowardly lion.” The Coptics considered themselves to be Black Jews, the chosen representatives of the black race and although they professed racial equality, mixed marriages were prohibited.

Under the leadership of Gordon, Middleton and Reilly, the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church started to direct its energies towards farming. Their enterprise was to become remarkably, if not suspiciously, successful. Having started near Alligator Pont in the parish of Manchester, they soon moved nearer to Kingston. Within a few years, the Coptics had acquired the Rozelle estate in St. Thomas, followed by Creighton Hall, White Horses (where they established their headquarters), Orange Park and Danvers Pen. By the late 1970s they had also purchased six properties near Bogue, in the parish of St. Elizabeth. They owned another 350 acres near Whitehall, St. Mary, and in Trelawny a further 25 acres. Altogether, the Coptics owned some 7,000 acres of land, which made them the biggest private landowners on the island. The Ethiopian Zion Coptic Farm, as their agro-business was called, was incorporated under *The Registered Companies Act* on 17 April 1975 and the Church itself on 2 April 1976.¹²⁷¹

Apart from the extensive agricultural properties, the EZCC also owned a container hauling company, a car parts firm, a gas station, a supermarket, a store, and several mansions in exclusive residential areas in Kingston, such as Beverly Hills, as well as in Mandeville. Furthermore, the Coptics owned an airplane, several large yachts and some 400 motor units and heavy equipment. In Florida the church owned several more properties, including 43 Star Island, a luxurious mansion in Miami Beach, bought for a quarter of a million dollars and paid for in cash. Star Island served as their United States embassy. In total, according to US authorities, the Coptics purchased property worth about US\$ 7.5 million, dispersed over at least six States. By 1980 the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church was a multi-million dollar business.¹²⁷²

On their efficiently run and almost completely self-sufficient farms in Jamaica, the Coptics pastured a herd of some 2,000 head of cattle and hundreds of sheep and goats, and raised poultry. In addition, they cultivated and reaped tons of rice, sugarcane, corn, peanuts, cashew, limes, citrus, tobacco, carrots, yams,

onions, bananas, plantains, pimentos, tomatoes, cabbages ... and ganja, all of which provided employment for several hundreds of people. The Coptic Farm made a strong impact in the eastern part of Jamaica. It supplied top-quality foodstuffs at very reasonable prices and the Coptics bought almost every piece of land that was for sale. Neighboring peasants, with no chance of competing against the Coptic Farm's large-scale production methods, soon began to complain about its expansion.

The EZCC also published its own newspaper, the *Coptic Time*, which claimed a circulation of 300,000, two thirds in Jamaica, the remainder in the United States. Whatever the worth of that claim, it appears that the *Coptic Time* did have a rather wide circulation in Jamaica. Even today one frequently comes across cars with "I Louv Coptic" or "Coptic Time" bumper stickers. But in spite of the wide circulation of their newspaper, the actual membership of the EZCC was comparatively small. Police estimates later spoke of a following of 200 at best.

While the Coptics expanded their business in Jamaica almost undisturbed, the United States authorities, engaged in a crusade against drugs, began to monitor the activities of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church. Trouble started in November 1977, when the police raided a farm in the northern part of Florida and discovered over 27,000 pounds of ganja. The farm belonged to Peter Sheets, an alias used by Coptic number two, Clifton Middleton. Several persons were apprehended, among them a prominent American member of the EZCC, lawyer Carl Swanson. They were granted bail and released. In February 1978 the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was again successful. This time they caught a number of Coptics off-loading nineteen tons of ganja in the Everglades. Not only Swanson was arrested this time, but King Nyah Gordon as well. But both cases had to be dropped due to lack of evidence. The EZCC was, however, presented with a bill for back-taxes amounting to US\$ 3 million and had its tax-exempt status withdrawn. Apart from that, the Customs Department demanded a US\$ 15 million penalty for illegal import of ganja. The Coptics hired a score of top lawyers, including former Attorney-General Ramsey Clarke, and bluntly refused to pay.¹²⁷³

In September 1979 Swanson crashed with a small airplane. The police found 2,000 pounds of ganja next to his decapitated corps. In October that same year the police struck again and seized a boat loaded with some 1,200 bales of marihuana. Amongst those arrested was Clifton Middleton. Not much later, the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church came to national attention in the United States, when Dan Rather presented the "ganja church" and its spokesman in his CBS Television program *Sixty Minutes*. Brother Louv fiercely defended his "constitutional right" to smoke as much marihuana as he wanted to.¹²⁷⁴

Within a year the full force of the Drug Enforcement Agency descended upon the Coptics' stronghold, 43 Star Island. Officers of the DEA raided the luxurious Coptic embassy in Miami Beach and arrested Brother Louv, Clifton Middleton and Nyah Gordon, along with sixteen other members of the church. In April 1981 they went on trial, charged with the possession, importation and distribution of a total of 105 tons of marihuana. Gordon, Middleton and Reilly also faced a charge of "conducting a continuing criminal enterprise." Nine Coptics, including Clifton Middleton, were sentenced to several years behind bars. Keith "Nyah" Gordon had to be released, much to the disappointment of the DEA. Brother Louv was later sentenced to ten years and a fine on "charges of illegally distributing 4,235 lb. of marihuana and of having unlawfully, wilfully, knowingly and intentionally engaged in a continuing criminal enterprise by trafficking in multi-ton plane-loads and ship-loads of ganja," as the verdict summarized it. Upon hearing the verdict, the mouthpiece of the EZCC immediately appealed to the prison authorities "to be allowed to get an ounce of marijuana a day for use as a religious sacrament."¹²⁷⁵

The imprisonment of the two leaders of the church did not mean the end of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church and its ganja business in the United States. In the following month US police arrested 24 members of the EZCC during raids on ten locations in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.¹²⁷⁶

In Jamaica, in the meantime, the Coptics suffered from occasional police raids on Creighton Hall. In 1978, as a police officer later testified, there had been at least three raids, but only individual members had been arrested for possession of the illegal drug and no suspicion had arisen (at least not officially) that the Coptics were involved in the cultivation of ganja.¹²⁷⁷ The officer had noticed a plot with ganja, but was not sure whether it was on the EZCC's property. Another raid on the Creighton Hall and Rozelle properties occurred on 29 January 1980. Members of the church vigorously resisted the police, using a bulldozer to block the road, throwing stones and even setting the road on fire. After a battle lasting for two hours, the police force succeeded in arresting seven Coptics.

The Coptics not only suffered from occasional police raids, but from “constant harassment from thieves” as well, and they complained about not getting any assistance from the police.¹²⁷⁸ In late 1979 four members of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church, including three executives, shot a thief, who had stolen seventeen bags of ganja, and then set his house on fire.¹²⁷⁹ They were arrested and brought before the infamous Gun Court.¹²⁸⁰ A few months later, in early February 1980 three members of the EZCC were shot and killed by gunmen near Danvers Pen. It is still unknown whether the two incidents were connected.¹²⁸¹

In early 1981 the state took action against the Coptics, but not because of ganja. The Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church was sued for failure to pay over J\$ 40,000 in property taxes on three farms. The case was brought before the Morant Bay court in St. Thomas and here, too, the Coptics hired the best lawyers. In their defence they stated that the EZCC was a religious organization, that their economic activities “were used [solely] for charitable and educational purposes” and that the church therefore qualified for tax-exempt status under section 9 (1) of *The Property Tax Act*.¹²⁸²

While the property tax lawsuit was still proceeding, *The Daily Gleaner* published a lead article on the church’s activities, focusing on its cultivation, excessive use and (suggested) trafficking in ganja. Within a few days it was followed by a feature in a similar vein on JBC Television.¹²⁸³ By the end of May 1981, the burst of publicity prompted the Police High Command to assure the media that it was “very extensively” investigating “the possible involvement of the Coptics in ganja traffic,” something which the US authorities had already established for a fact. Commissioner Bowes added that “persons have been prosecuted on an individual basis from time to time but nothing to the extent portrayed in the [newspaper] publication had been found.”¹²⁸⁴ This in turn, provoked the *Gleaner* editors to suggest that the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church enjoyed the protection of influential politicians.

There have been ugly rumours about involvement of politicians from both parties with the Coptics. But these are what they are - rumours, the foundation for which we have been unable to trace. But just perhaps the fact that they had not been prosecuted, though it has been known for years that they use ganja openly, suggests a certain reluctance or perhaps failure to get indictable evidence.¹²⁸⁵

Rumors of Jamaican politicians being involved in ganja trafficking and other sorts of criminal offenses were as old as Jamaican politics. While most Jamaicans agree that corruption is widespread, evidence has been lacking in all but a few cases.¹²⁸⁶ Whatever the involvement of politicians in the Coptic’s ganja business (as late as 1990 persistent rumors have pointed to a well-known former Minister who has acquired an astonishing amount of land in the eastern part of the island), the Jamaican government refused to take action.

Although little was heard of the EZCC in Jamaica after 1982, the organization seems to have continued its ganja business. In September 1986 a police squad uncovered 1,500 pounds of ganja on a Coptic property at Elim, St. Elizabeth. However, the police officers failed to arrest the pilot of a small plane which had attempted to land on the “international length” illegal airstrip.¹²⁸⁷

The relationship between the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church and the Rastafarians was somewhat ambivalent. Both groups shared their adoration of ganja as “the wisdom weed,” the holy sacrament. This and the fact that the EZCC was an important supplier of the weed, created at least some interest in the Coptics among the Rastas. It appears that some sections of the Rastafarian movement initially looked upon the Coptics as allies in the struggle to legalize ganja. Rasta intellectual and former lecturer at the Department of Sociology of the UWI Dennis Forsythe, for instance, considered the EZCC to be one of the “houses” within the movement, one of the groups “fighting to get US officials as well as the Jamaican Government to ‘free up’ the plant on religious grounds.”¹²⁸⁸ But the Coptics’ inclusion of white Americans in their leadership, together with their capitalist approach to agriculture caused them to be viewed with suspicion. When it became clear that the Coptics had nothing but contempt for Haile Selassie and repatriation, the core of the Rastafarian movement lost whatever sympathy it may have had for the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church. But on a non-spiritual level, the Coptics remained an interesting group, since they provided not only ganja, but work and food as well. Quite a number of young urban Rastas seem to have worked on the Coptic farms.¹²⁸⁹

To the Jamaican general public the EZCC and Rasta were initially one and the same, if not because of their similar attitude towards ganja, then because the EZCC’s name echoed those of Rastafarian organizations. As early as 1976, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church thought it necessary to write to the editor of the *Jamaica Daily News*: “What we wish not to be confused with is the so-called Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church whose origin we know not of, but we can definitely state comes neither from Ethiopia nor Alex-

andria, Egypt.”¹²⁹⁰. When the Zion Coptics hit the front pages of the Jamaican newspapers in 1981, most Jamaicans soon realized that the EZCC was at best pseudo-Rasta. Many of my informants, however, maintained that “lots of Rastas” were involved in the farming of ganja on the EZCC’s properties. But while some held that the Rastafarians had been well aware of what was going on, quite a few thought that they had been shrewdly misused by the Coptics.

The report of the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice

“We don’t need to be recognised by the Vatican as a religious people.”

While in Jamaica Coptics and Rent-a-dreads further blurred the dividing lines between true and fake Rastafarians, and while the churches regarded Rastafari as either “a challenge” or “the devil let loose,” the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) in London issued a report on the Rastafarian movement in which it argued strongly for recognition of Rastafari as “a valid religion.”¹²⁹¹. The CCRJ acted as “an advisory body to the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, [and had been] established to assist the Church in developing its ministry within a multiracial, multicultural society.” As such it had periodically published reports on issues like *Education and the multi-racial society*, *Filipino migrants in Britain* or *Racism in British society*.¹²⁹². The report on *Rastafarians in Jamaica and England*, which appeared in January 1982, was the tenth in the series and was to stimulate an informal dialogue between Rastas and the churches in Jamaica.

After presenting a brief outline of the movement’s history and beliefs, and discussing the negative reactions to Rastafari in British society, the commission submitted that

two basic points may be recognised and accepted: first that the Rastafarian movement as such is not a negative or destructive force; and secondly that the direction in which the movement goes in the future will to some extent depend on the way in which society reacts to its presence.¹²⁹³

In their conclusions, the authors warned that “it would be a mistake to underestimate the Rastafarian movement, a movement which has, for many black people in this country and in Jamaica, provided an answer to the question of black identity in the western world.” Nevertheless, the CCRJ cautiously added:

It is not that the Commission accepts the Rastafarian world view uncritically. We are very aware, for instance, that Rastafarians attach more significance to “race” and “racial identity” than we do. Also, the concept of Africa as the “true home of the black man” (along with the corollary of “repatriation”) is, if taken literally, a racially based idea that we do not share.¹²⁹⁴

However, the commission also noted that its reservations were “not to be taken as a rejection of the Rastafarian world view.”

Having taken its lead from the *Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions*, compiled during the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the commission made several recommendations “for the attention of individuals within and outside the Catholic Church and especially for those in positions of authority and responsibility in religious and secular institutions.”

- Rastafarianism should be recognised as a valid religion, and the members and leaders of other religious groups should attempt to engage the proponents of Rastafarianism in dialogue with a view to mutual learning and sharing.
- Christians and Christian Churches should take whatever opportunities they may have or be able to create to relate to Rastafarians as they would to the believers of the other non-Christian faiths. For instance, Rastafarians often lack places to meet; and the Christian churches could consider allowing Rastafarians use of their premises.
- The Christian Churches and other religious groups should exercise appropriate influence over their own institutions (for example schools, children’s homes, etc.) so that they may relate to the members of the Rastafarian movement with true knowledge and sound understanding rather than with an attitude born of fear, ignorance and prejudice.
- Rastafarian styles of dress (e.g. locks and head-dress) should be accepted as authentic religious expressions and legitimate cultural forms.
- All authority figures should scrupulously avoid harassment or discrimination against Rastafarians. It is especially important that professional workers such as teachers, social workers, police, prison and probation officers should be sensitive to the tendency to stereotype black people in general and Rastafarians in particular.¹²⁹⁵

Richard Zipfel, at the time secretary of the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice and the principal author of the report, later explained the motivation for writing the report, published within several months of the disorders in Brixton, as follows:

Our decision to publish the original report was not related to the Brixton disorders but to our general feeling that Rastafari was becoming increasingly important to black youth while being either unknown or totally misunderstood by most of the white communities and some in the black community. We had a general feeling that Rastafari had a positive effect on black youngsters but we were not sure ourselves whether to treat it as a cultural phenomenon or as a religion. Therefore, we decided to do some research into Rastafari and to communicate the results of that research to the churches and the wider community.¹²⁹⁶

In preparing the report, the commission had “some very long interviews with individual Rastafarians.” But, as Zipfel commented, the report on the Rastafarian movement was “one of the hardest reports the commission wrote.” It took some twelve to eighteen months and six or seven drafts before all those involved could subscribe to the contents. The problem was to avoid any “wrong impressions,” both about the movement and the CCRJ’s position.¹²⁹⁷

After the presentation of the report at a press conference on 18 January 1982, the reactions from within the Catholic Church were “mixed.” According to the secretary of the CCRJ, this was mainly due to “almost hysterical newspaper coverage which caricatured our report as suggesting the smoking of marijuana in churches.” But as Zipfel added: “those in the church who took the trouble to read the report tended to respond favourably.” Still, some Catholic newspapers gave the report “very bad publicity.”¹²⁹⁸ *The Catholic Herald*, for instance, wrote:

Take a little-known anti-semitic sect committed to racial division on grounds of skin colour, and consequently to repatriation of blacks and to complete separate development for them in this country. Then ask the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice what they think of them. You might expect a stiff answer. Yet the Commission has recommended in one such case that the sect be accepted as a “valid religion” and be offered the use of Catholic churches when they have nowhere to meet. This sect is Rastafarianism. What is it about it that has made the Commission act so strangely?¹²⁹⁹

Not all the newspaper reports were so negative, although the majority did focus on the ganja issue. Patrick McCartie, President of the CCRJ and Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham, had to assure the press that the Roman Catholic Church would not condone ganja smoking on its premises and that, when the commission had recommended making premises available to Rastafarians, it had been referring to halls, schools and other buildings, not to churches.

Reactions from the Rastafarian community in England were sparse. The commission received several letters and a request from one of the leading Rastafarians, Jah Bones, to discuss the report. He and a dozen others from the Rastafari Universal Zion group later had a meeting with the commission, during which they expressed both positive and negative feelings, the latter being related to the fact that the report made no recommendations on the issue of repatriation. According to Richard Zipfel, the subject “could simply not be raised,” since it would inevitably have provoked controversy. A positive recommendation on repatriation, it was felt, might well have been compared with ultra-right Powellian ideas of deporting black people.¹³⁰⁰ But all in all, the Rastafari Universal Zion group seemed to welcome the report. In *The Guardian* quoted a spokesman as saying: “What they say is good as a lot of people are putting Rastas down.”¹³⁰¹

Less positive was Sledge Robinson, “one of North Kensington’s leading Rastas.” In an interview with *The Paddington Mercury* he maintained:

“We are a people with a history and a civilisation and one of the first and oldest churches on this earth - we don’t need to be recognised by the Vatican as a religious people.” The Catholic Church, he said, was trying to atone for the atrocities committed against Ethiopians ... “but we don’t want congratulations, we want liberation.”¹³⁰²

In Jamaica the report became front-page news in *The Daily Gleaner*. At first it only referred to the report’s publication and quoted, without comment, from the press conference.¹³⁰³ Later the *Gleaner* reprinted an extremely negative article from *The Spectator*.

This week ... the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice declared: “Rastafarianism should be recognized as a valid religion ... Christians and churches should relate to them and allow them to use church premises.” What is it that Christians are supposed to relate to? Rastafarianism is, in fact, an anti-semitic sect dedicated to conflict between the black and white races, and to racial segregation.¹³⁰⁴

The *Gleaner's* Rasta columnist, Arthur Kitchin, noted accurately that the report had “come as a surprise to many.” He nevertheless concluded that the fact that “the Roman Catholics in Britain have been able to recognize Rastafari is encouraging, and opens the door for more dialogue between Rastafari and the Jamaican Catholic Church, as well as with other members of the Jamaica Council of Churches.”¹³⁰⁵ Ras Historian, secretary of the Rastafari Movement Association, also called for a dialogue:

We the brothers and sisters of the Rastafari Movement Association (R.M.A.) Church Street, Kingston take note of the important utterances by the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales and are calling upon the churches here in Jamaica to do the same. Rastafarians in Jamaica were looking forward before now for such an argument, so we are glad to know that a part of the prophecies are being revealed at this time. ... We are again calling upon the Jamaica Council of Churches to give us a hearing concerning certain reasoning towards humanity.¹³⁰⁶

But while some Rastafarians in Jamaica welcomed the report, in spite of the fact that it was published by - of all churches - the Roman Catholic, it appears that many others chose either to ignore the report or to view it as a deception.¹³⁰⁷ After all, in Rastafarian theology the Roman Catholic Church was still the center of Babylon, “the dwelling place of the devil and the symbol of degenerate Western civilization where Satan and his spirits carry out the prostitution of the world through the Vatican and the figurehead of the Pope,” as the Rastafarian poetess Farika Birhan once expressed it.¹³⁰⁸

Nevertheless, Reverend Bevis Byfield, chairman of the Church and Society Commission of the Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC), received two letters, both requesting a dialogue and recognition of Rastafari by the established churches. One came from Amanuel Foxe, the leader of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, the other from Prince Emmanuel of the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress Church of Salvation. The JCC decided that it would investigate Rastafari and its request for recognition as a valid religion. In preparation for the dialogue, Reverend Byfield was asked to do some research and to prepare a report.¹³⁰⁹ But the research of the Jamaica Council of Churches was never published. As Byfield later explained:

We are looking at a revolutionary movement and we do not know how to deal with it. So, you just keep quiet. ... If you're not certain how to deal with a situation, why deal with the situation ... you could be embarrassed. So, you leave it alone. And I tell you what are some of the problems: the problem of slavery, the problem of race, the problem of culture, and the problem of social change. All those would have to be put on the table. ... We don't have the nerve and the wherewithal to deal with a revolutionary situation. The church is oriented to the past.¹³¹⁰

In the event, the Jamaica Council of Churches did not find it difficult to reach a conclusion about the request to recognize Rastafari as a church. “Rastafarianism is not really a church, it's a religion. The Jamaica Council of Churches is a council of churches. So, on that basis the Rastafarians could not be recognized as a member of the council.”¹³¹¹

Those who had called upon the Jamaica Council of Churches for a dialogue, seemed to have done so in vain. But although the recommendations of the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice and the research of the Jamaica Council of Churches did not lead either to formal recognition or to a formalized dialogue between the Rastafarian movement and the established churches, it did help to create an atmosphere conducive to a more constructive relationship. There were several informal meetings and discussions between individual Rastafarians and progressive, liberal leaders of the established churches. As Reverend Ashley Smith, a former chairman of the JCC and President of the United Theological College, later explained:

Well, most of these [meetings] don't take place officially. The leaders of my church know that I am always in conversation with people like Marxists and Rastafarians and so on, but they wouldn't necessarily arrange any of these meetings at a sort of synodical level. But they know that certain of us ... do this on their behalf. And this is how it is done in Jamaica. Most of these meetings are held on the premises of our United Church, the Webster Memorial Church - that's a popular meeting place. ... A lot goes on that isn't regarded as official, but the people who are involved in that, are people who are legitimate leaders in their churches.¹³¹²

But apart from a handful of progressive individuals, the churches in Jamaica did not know how to react to the calls for dialogue and recognition, for which, it must be said, there was little or no support among its membership. In reacting to another proposal for a meeting between church leaders and Rastafarians, a member of one of the established churches no doubt expressed the feelings of many Christians, when she denounced the suggestion as a move to “sanctify stupidity.”

Christianity is as much above Rastafarianism as the sunlight is above the candlelight, very dim in a dark corner of the earth. Rastafarianism is a religion dedicated to a king who has millions stored away in Swiss banks while his

people were dying of starvation in Ethiopia.¹³¹³

Perhaps the lack of official follow-up on the CCRJ's report in Jamaica, had also to do with the fact that it was a call from England. Although they never explicitly said as much, several church leaders made it clear that they felt that the "good-old British" should mind their own business, instead of telling the Jamaican churches whom to talk to and whom to recognize.

Many Rastafarians, in the meantime, were equally uncertain about how to fit the Catholic Commission's call for recognition into their world view, although the issue later continued to provide a convenient argument with which to challenge the Jamaican churches and the wider society to recognize Rasta. As the Church Triumphant of Jah Rastafari once wrote:

As the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice recommends in their January 1981 [sic] Report on Rastafari in Great Britain and Jamaica: an end must be put to all victimization of I and I Black cultural livity and national birthright. Touch not the Lords' Anointed.¹³¹⁴

For more and more Rastafarians formal recognition and accommodation with Jamaican society was becoming the prime objective. Jamaican society, however, was not prepared to recognize Rastafari as a valid religion. As we shall see, schools continued to bar dreadlocked Rastafarian students, prison authorities continued to trim Rastafarian inmates and Parliament turned down a request for formal recognition from the Judah Optics. Growing social acceptance was one thing, but formal recognition was a different matter altogether.

Dreadlocks, school and the court

"I'm not prepared to change their culture to suit any little teacher."

The exclusion of dreadlocked Rastafarian children from both public and private schools continued during the 1980s. The Catholic Commission for Racial Justice had no sooner recommended that "all authority figures should scrupulously avoid from harassment or discrimination against Rastafarians," when once again the personal intervention of a politician was required, this time Prime Minister Edward Seaga, to get a dreadlocked Rastafarian student placed in school. Ironically, shortly before Orel Buckley was refused admission to Pembroke Hall Secondary School, the JLP government had introduced the first phase of its *Compulsory Education Program*.¹³¹⁵ Orel's father contacted Minister of Education Mavis Gilmour, whose spokesman simply replied that such matters were decided by the school boards and that neither the Ministry nor the Minister could interfere.¹³¹⁶ Jennifer Ffrench, writing in *The Daily Gleaner*, expressed another opinion:

What is clear is that individual action can no longer be considered adequate to deal with the matter. A child should not have to wait on the intervention of a Prime Minister, his wife or the Minister of Education to be accepted into school. If education is his right, this right cannot be dependent on his religion. ... Besides, the practice of turning away children because they wear locks ... is discriminatory. It is time that the Ministry lay down the law on accepting children to school.¹³¹⁷

But the Ministry of Education consistently declined to take responsibility in this matter. In 1978 it had issued "deliberately vague" guidelines, which in effect sanctioned the barring of Rastafarian children, but left it to the school boards to make the final decision.¹³¹⁸ Essentially, these guidelines were little more than a weak attempt to integrate the law stipulating "equal access" with specific regulations about "proper grooming." Though the text explicitly mentioned the Rastafarian religion, it concluded by stating that the guidelines "in no way infringe the Constitutional rights of persons or the right to religious freedom as they are to be interpreted as applying to all religions and persons equally." On the same page, however, the guidelines made a very clear statement about the Ministry's general position on Rastafari:

If a student adopts the Rastafarian religion the parents or guardian would be required to approve if the student is below the age of 18 years. In cases where students resort to Rastafarian or other practices as part of a protest against established authority, the school has a positive role to play in the guidance and counseling of such students to develop their awareness of societal norms and disciplined behaviour.¹³¹⁹

Backed by these guidelines, the Minister remained silent. But when the case of Orel Buckley was brought to the attention of Edward Seaga, he had the young Rastafarian admitted to Tivoli Gardens Comprehensive School in his own constituency.¹³²⁰ In reporting the affair, the *Gleaner's* Rasta columnist Arthur

Kitchin commented:

There are some who will say that the Prime Minister's intervention on behalf of the dreadlocked student was more inspired by political motives than by genuine concern and benevolence. Others may go even further and point out that this may be the first of several overtures aimed at winning more support from the Rastafari Movement, as the government seeks to regain its popular majority. But in my opinion, this act confirms the political and personal maturity of Mr. Seaga, especially as how it was not done in the full glare of publicity trumped up to applaud his benevolence publicly, but engineered quietly without fuss and publicity.^{1321.}

Two years later, in September 1984, the plight of another Rastafarian student barred from school was finally brought before the courts. Eleven-year-old Kirk Navado Johnson had been awarded a place at Camperdown High School after successfully passing the Common Entrance Examination. Like so many before him, he was refused admission because of his locks. His parents requested the help of the Jamaica Council for Human Rights (JCHR) and Michael Anthony Lorne, the dreadlocked Rasta lawyer. While the JCHR demanded, in vain, that the Ministry of Education clarify its position on the rights of Rastafarian students, Lorne, on behalf of Kirk Johnson's parents, took the case to the Supreme Court.^{1322.} On 11 October 1984 the Judge ruled that, pending a decision of the Full Court, the school board of Camperdown had no right to deny Kirk Johnson entry. The Magistrate based his decision on *The 1980 Education Regulations*, Section 23 (2), which read:

... no person who is eligible for admission as a student to a public educational institution shall be refused admission thereto except (a) on the ground that accommodation is not available at that institution or (b) on any other ground, approved by the Minister either generally or in a particular case.^{1323.}

At the end of October, a few weeks after the start of the school term, Kirk Johnson went to Camperdown, without, as the *Gleaner* reported, causing a stir.^{1324.}

After the court ruling in the Johnson case, no other cases of Rastafarian students being barred from schools came to public attention. The ruling, however, did not mean that dreadlocked Rastafarian children could now enter every educational institution. In 1990 the present writer carried out a short survey among 50 school principals throughout the island. It turned out that more than half of the schools included in the survey refused to accept dreadlocked Rastafarian students.^{1325.} Most of the principals who did not allow students to wear locks were quite firm in their refusal. Some were even offended by the question. Asked, for the record, if that meant no, they would not accept dreadlocks, one rather straightforward headmistress replied: "What do you think? We're running a school here, and a good one, not a mental clinic. Our parents would never ever accept it."^{1326.}

Nine principals were not sure what they would do if a dreadlocked Rastafarian student applied for a place, but six said they would be inclined to allow it, although the final decision would be up to the school board. Only fifteen (or less than one third) of the principals surveyed said that their school accepted students with locks, although even then most of these schools imposed certain conditions, such as the wearing of a tam.^{1327.} The number of dreadlocked students in these schools was surprisingly small. Only six schools reported to have one or more dreadlocked students enrolled, altogether no more than sixteen. Four schools reported to have had dreadlocked students in the past and two principals proudly declared that they employed dreadlocked teachers. A few principals, however, stated that they did have several "well-groomed" children of dreadlocked Rastafarian parents at school.

Since the number of dreadlocked children enrolled at the 50 schools in the survey was almost negligible, it appears that many Rastafarians either trim their children or keep their dreadlocked offspring at home, in spite of the fact that the Rastafarians have generally ascribed great importance to education as a means to "emancipate yourself from mental slavery." As the conclusions and recommendations of the First International Rastafarian Conference in July 1982 stated:

Since Rastafarians usually have an organic relationship with the Earth and Nature in general, I and I usually begin to educate ourselves in areas such as farming, pottery making and other activities directly related to the land. ... Still I and I know that to educate ourselves within the Babylonian system is crucial for it is good to have a knowledge of one's environment and to apply that knowledge in a feasible way.^{1328.}

Yet, at the same time, many Rasta parents have always had strong objections to the curriculum taught in the Jamaican schools, which they consider to be Euro-centric and indoctrinating. This objection has often been used to justify the decision to keep children at home by those who refused to trim them. As a Rastafarian mother from the Port Antonio area told Cypress:

They don't allow dreadlock children in the schools around here; I teach them at home. It's hard work, but I don't want them to face a whole heap of negative vibes which is usually what they'd get. And I'm not prepared to change their culture to suit any little teacher at school either.¹³²⁹

In the 1970s, efforts to start Rastafarian schools, as we have seen, were largely unsuccessful. But apparently the Rastafarians did not give up. During the late 1980s, Leahcim Semaj operated an African-oriented school for a few years, until it had to be closed down for lack of finance and support.¹³³⁰ In July 1989 a group of Rastafarians from Portland founded the Rastafari Hiwat Mamar Cultural School in Port Antonio. Two years later it had 25 students between the ages of four and seventeen, and three voluntary teachers, who received as little as J\$ 400 a month plus some money for bus fares. Headed by Terro Nelson from Ghana, the school followed the standards and curricula of the Ministry of Education and prepared its students for the regular examinations. The students were also taught Amharic and Garveyite philosophy, in addition to which they produced all sorts of crafts.¹³³¹ Although struggling, the Hiwat Mamar School appears to be one of the first successful attempts to establish a Rastafarian school.¹³³²

Besides organizational and financial problems, ideological problems have also hampered the establishment of Rasta schools, especially among the orthodox Rastafarians. During the Second International Rastafarian Conference education was one of the main subjects of discussion. There was "almost unanimous support for the idea that the present system of education in Jamaica dealt with 'oppression segregation' and was a 'Babylonian system'."¹³³³ But the dilemma of the Rastafarians was whether the idea of building schools was compatible with repatriation.

Were I and I to accept "Babylon" forms of institutionalised teaching for ourselves and our children? Or was Rastafari "livity" to be taught specifically in a specially prepared environment? If I and I were preparing for Repatriation now, how could I and I build (School) structures to last for 10 to 20 years in the West?¹³³⁴

This, however, was a dilemma not only with regard to education, but also with regard to the position of Rastafari in Jamaican society in general. The question of whether they should await repatriation in isolation or involve themselves fully in Jamaican society had become the most crucial problem for many Rastas. Some had taken a clear position, like the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, which maintained that Ethiopia should be liberated first, or like the Twelve Tribes of Israel, which continued to strive towards repatriation, but saw nothing wrong in full participation in Jamaican society, since even Babylon was part of the fulfillment of prophecy. But for others, including the orthodox Rastafarians, it was a dilemma that in many ways paralyzed the movement and no doubt contributed to its apparent decline and loss of adherence during the second half of the 1980s.

The Rastafarian movement in decline?

"I no really condemn me brethren if him cut off him locks. It sadden me, but we still pray fi him ... and ask Jah for blessing."

By the mid-1980s it appeared as if the impact of Rastafari on Jamaican society was diminishing and that the movement was losing adherents, especially among the lower classes. Several commentators noted the movement's apparent demise and not only tried to come up with explanations, but also eagerly confronted the Rastafarians with this development.

The most convenient explanation was the passing of Bob Marley and the subsequent decline of the popularity of "roots reggae." Dub music now ruled the Jamaican dancehalls and King Yellowman, Sugar Minott, Tiger, Ninjaman, Shabba Ranks and scores of other deejays did not exalt "Rastology" and often seemed to be politically conservative. The mystical soul-rebel music of Marley's heydays had been replaced by the "raggamuffin" style and "rubbadub-deejay slackness" of the "real men," who most of all bragged about their competence as deejays and their abilities as "womanizers." The new fad was a short haircut and a flashy glamour-dress, topped off with giant gold chains and shiny rings.¹³³⁵

At dancehall clashes, the deejays competed for the favor of the audience and the title King of the Dancehall, which was reserved for the fastest, most humorous, suggestive and ribald deejay. Slackness became increasingly popular. What had started with innocent lyrics like "raise your hand and tell me your panty size!" soon became, as Carolyn Cooper succinctly described it, "a precise listing of body parts, almost exclusively female, and an elaboration of their mechanical function." But as Cooper also pointed out, it was not merely slackness.

Though DJ slackness ... is perceived as politically conservative, it can be seen to represent in part a radical, underground confrontation with the pious morality and conservative gender ideology of fundamentalist Jamaican society. ... For Slackness is not mere sexual looseness - though it certainly is that. Slackness is a metaphorical revolt against law and order; an undermining of consensual standards of decency.¹³³⁶

Of course, both the JBC and RJR boycotted all songs which were in one way or another considered to be vile and obscene or otherwise undesirable. And as always, a boycott was the best guarantee for surging sales. For the middle and upper classes deejay dub was a lowly, backward form of ghetto music. Quite a few Upper St. Andrew citizens expressed their disgust over the dancehall lyrics and many now pointed to the once castigated reggae stars as examples of decent musicians.

The audiences in the dancehalls and stadiums, however, were no longer interested in their former idols, who played what was now “classical” reggae. Many of the former superstars preferred to perform abroad, where they were welcomed with applause instead of boo’s and hisses. In the late 1980s the boo’s and hisses were replaced by bottles, stones and gunshots. In 1988 Maxi Priest was routed off the stage and during the “Sting ‘90” concert at the National Stadium Bunny Livingstone, one of the living legends of “roots reggae” and a member of the original Wailers, received the same treatment.¹³³⁷ The Jamaican establishment, which had loudly decried the Rastafarian reggae artists during the 1960s and 1970s now, in the face of such incidents, expressed its great sorrow and condemnation.¹³³⁸ *The Daily Gleaner* even devoted an editorial to the Sting incident and concluded that

it would be a matter of extreme irony if the country which gave birth to reggae should now seek to bury it. A truly Jamaican art form which has won international recognition deserves more honour from its fans at home.¹³³⁹

To a certain extent, the developments in music were merely a reflection of the dramatic change in the social climate after the 1980 election victory of the Jamaica Labour Party.¹³⁴⁰ The JLP government had promised to put an end to all kinds of radicalism and many Jamaicans still thought of Rastafari as one of these excesses. As one commentator wrote in late 1984:

Since the coming of the J.L.P. Government (1980), there is one claim of fulfilling campaign promise that it could make; that of “breaking the tide of radicalism.” One of the things I have used to judge the apparently suspended tide of radicalism is the subsiding of Rastafari fad.¹³⁴¹

Under Edward Seaga there was little or no room for talk about social equality or rethinking cultural identity. The JLP was dedicated to consolidation, tight budgets and hard currency, in short no-nonsense economic recovery along the lines prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The JLP government made Jamaica the closest United States’ ally in the Caribbean, which according to Anthony Payne, was “a status neatly symbolised by Seaga being the first head of state to be invited to the White House by President Reagan after the latter took office at the beginning of 1981.”¹³⁴².

Production for the export market, after the examples of Puerto Rico and the so-called Newly Industrializing Countries of South East Asia, was to ensure economic development and growth. In order to achieve this, the JLP government successfully set out to acquire new loans, especially from the IMF and the World Bank. Already in April 1981 Seaga had obtained a US\$ 698 million loan from the IMF under much more favorable conditions than had ever been given to the PNP government. Several loans from other financial institutions followed. As a result, the external debt doubled from US\$ 1,866 million or 88.5% of the GDP to US\$ 3,499 or an unprecedented 160.7% of the GDP, within five years. To create a favorable climate for foreign investment and to meet IMF conditions, a program of deregulations and divestment had been initiated, which resulted in painful cut-backs in public expenditure and extensive lay-offs.¹³⁴³

But the JLP’s economic recovery program brought hardly any noticeable improvements for the mass of the population. In addition to the lay-offs, the Jamaican dollar had been devalued from J\$1.78 to 5.50 against the American dollar within two years, while prices for food and basic consumer goods had soared. For many Jamaicans the standard of living had declined rather than improved, and the inequalities in wealth had once again increased. As they had under previous governments of both the PNP and the JLP, the Jamaican masses quickly became impatient with the failure to realize the improvements promised during the election campaign.¹³⁴⁴

By the end of 1983 not only Eddie’s image as a financial wizard, but also the prospects of rapid economic recovery, had been shattered. In March and September that same year Jamaica had twice failed the IMF test, forcing the government to negotiate a new agreement. Faced with the continuing decline of support for its policies, the JLP made a surprising move. On 25 October 1983, after just three of the regular five

years in office, Seaga announced general elections, fixed nomination day for 29 October and the elections for 15 December. The PNP was taken completely by surprise, the more so since there had been a mutual agreement that there would be electoral reforms and new voter lists before the next elections. Thousands of young Jamaicans eligible to vote were not on the out-dated lists. The PNP decided to boycott the elections and so in early 1984 the JLP found itself unopposed - with all 60 seats - in the House of Representatives and with a new "mandate" for another five years. For many Jamaicans the elections had been a hoax, effectively making Jamaica a one-party state.¹³⁴⁵

Within little more than a year, in January 1985, the discontent with the JLP's economic measures culminated in two days of rioting in downtown Kingston. Barricades were erected, shops and business places burned down and looted, and in the clashes between demonstrators and police at least seven persons were killed. Seaga was not impressed and refused to change the direction of his economic policy.

But the reasons behind the "eclipse" of Rastafari during the 1980s could not simply be explained by the death of Bob Marley, the declining popularity of "roots reggae" and Rasta fashion or the change in the social climate under the JLP government. One of the *Gleaner's* columnists on religious affairs, Eron Henry, thought that the reason why the movement had "lost appeal to its most fertile evangelical field - the nation's youths" was that "its dogmas and primitive theology are out of touch with the present realities that the young are now facing."

The truth is that the young today have no desire nor inclination to be repatriated to the African motherland. What they are concerned about is how to deal with and to overcome the restrictiveness, the discrimination and the oppressiveness within their own borders in particular, and western society in general. To add to that, most regard the return to Africa with an element of fear seeing that continent and Ethiopia in particular, as representing greater oppression and oppressiveness.¹³⁴⁶

Henry expressed his surprise at the apparent fact that "highly intelligent and aware" Rastafarians like Michael Anthony Lorne and Leahcim Semaj "refused to give substance to the notion that rehabilitation is a necessity in order to ensure the longevity and the relevance of the movement."

Reacting to Eron Henry's analysis of the "eclipse" of Rastafari, Amanuel Foxe argued that "the decline of Rastaism came about when Rastas in Jamaica failed to oppose the Russian-backed 1974 overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie." This failure, he added,

allowed the creation of "personalism" by the "superstar" Rastas who visited Ethiopia and came back and sat on television shows, stating that everything was fine in Addis Ababa, hugging up the regime of Mengistu and betraying the trust of the Emperor, creating a false image and the dilemma of Rastaism in Jamaica, because of no collective direction.¹³⁴⁷

Henry, according to the International President of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, had been misled by "the so-called intellectual Rastas."

The emergence of Leahcim Semaj and Michael Lorne within the forefront of the movement was not a democratic consensus. This was like Simon in Acts 8:13, 18-20 - upper class infiltrators embracing the system, sitting behind our (Rastas') backs at seminars with foreigners and Christians, making decisions on the movement without the consent of the membership.¹³⁴⁸

Confidently, but somewhat contradictorily, Foxe maintained that "the youth are supporting the Movement more than before."

Leahcim Semaj also responded to Henry's article, but did not devote a single word to Foxe's accusations. According to Semaj, "rumours about our demise have been greatly exaggerated." In the 1970s Rasta had been fashionable and the social and cultural climate had been favorable for the Rastafarian ideas. Since 1980, with the change in the social climate and the "movement" of Bob Marley, the movement found itself in a new phase. As a result, Semaj maintained, "there has been a pruning of dead wood. Those who were not prepared nor chosen to do the work are ceasing to visibly identify themselves as Rastafari."¹³⁴⁹ But it was not merely a "pruning of dead wood." In spite of both Foxe and Semaj's claim that "rumours about our demise have been greatly exaggerated," Rasta lawyer Michael Anthony Lorne, in an interview with the present writer, admitted that the movement had indeed lost adherence over the past few years. But he also saw a positive development.

What you have now [is that] more children are being born dreadlocked Rastafarian and trodding and holding to

the faith of Rastafari. So, the minus on the one hand is surpassed by the pluses on the other hand. In other words, you have more Rastafari families and their children growing up, you know, dreadlocked Rastafarian. So, if you were to visit a Nyabingi celebration now, you'd probably see more children than adults, whereas ten, fifteen years ago you would see a lot of adults and not as much dreadlocked Rastafarian children, which in effect means that the quality and the more rooted and in-depth nature of I an I is stronger, much stronger.¹³⁵⁰

On the other hand, the "eclipse" of Rastafari was also partially a matter of visibility. Not only had large numbers of pseudo-Rastas, Natty Dreads or otherwise marginal followers decided to change their coiffure, but quite a few committed and deeply devoted dreadlocked Rastas had also cut their locks. Especially among the middle-class Rastafarians the idea that one could be a devout believer without the outward symbolism of the locks came to be more and more accepted, not least because of the liberal position taken by such groups as the Twelve Tribes of Israel. In addition, many urban Rastafarians seemed to be retreating to the rural areas, while during the late 1980s, as noted in the previous chapter, several leading elders of the Theocracy Government had chosen to stay in the United States following a trip to Washington.¹³⁵¹

Already in April 1983 the Rastafarian *Gleaner* columnist Arthur Kitchin had gone to a barber shop to have his locks trimmed. He devoted one of his columns to his "dramatic decision" and assured his readership that it was "only an outward change." Although he did not feel obliged to give any explanation for his move, he insisted that he had "not trim[med] in expectation of any reward or the offer of a highly paid job."¹³⁵²

Kitchin was only one of the many Rastafarians who voluntarily gave up his dreadlocks. Wearing the dreads provoked all kinds of negative reactions in the family or on the streets, traveling abroad with dreadlocks was quite hazardous and for many of those aspiring to move up the social ladder, dreadlocks were a disadvantage. The majority of employers still refused to hire anyone with locks. As one desperate Rasta wrote:

I have been to job interviews so many times only to be told that I am qualified and of an intelligent mind, but to get the job I must first cut my dreadlocks. ... Are we excluded from certain rights? I am sure when voting time comes around it will not matter who votes, whether dreadlocks or combed-head.¹³⁵³

A short survey among personnel managers of 25 of the largest private companies in 1990 revealed that only four companies employed dreadlocked Rastafarian workers - all in low-skilled jobs - while three managers insisted they would, but had none at the time. Of the remaining eighteen, four refused to answer the question on the grounds that they did not provide information about their personnel. Six managers said no without further explanation and eight claimed that the company rules did not allow the hiring of personnel with long hair (for reasons of hygiene, safety or otherwise), although all but one hastened to emphasize that they personally had nothing against Rastafarians. Several managers of banks and hotels explained that their clients would not appreciate being served by a dreadlocked employee, since dreadlocks were not commonly regarded as a sign of proper personal care and immaculate appearance.¹³⁵⁴

Although Michael Lorne contested the claim that "considerable numbers" of Rastafarians had trimmed during the 1980s, he agreed - and regretted - that "some" had done so. But he also understood that for many the burden was too heavy and had no hard feelings towards those who separated from the outward symbolism of Rastafari.

For different reasons a man may have started out upon a road and he might carry a cross when it becomes too heavy for him and he may decide that him can't carry it no further. But that don't mean that that individual really is an evil individual. It's just that for him strength, him just couldn't carry it no further, ... cause it's a heavy cross, you know, a heavy cross. So, I no really condemn me brethren if him cut off him locks. It sadden me, but we still pray fi him and we still wish him well, and we still love him and ask Jah for blessing.¹³⁵⁵

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that adherence to Rastafari was decreasing.

Apart from the change in the social climate, the collapse of "roots reggae," the rise of the middle class and reggae superstars within the movement, the failure to oppose Mengistu and whatever other reasons the commentators might advance, there were clear signs that the movement was caught in a dilemma of isolation versus involvement, repatriation versus integration. Rastafari was divided more than ever before. There were differences and conflicts between the elders and the young, the lower and the middle classes, the intellectuals and the ghetto-dwellers, the orthodox and the liberal, the urban and the rural-based

groups, the politically and religiously-oriented groups, the pro and contra repatriation groups, the dreadlocks and the baldheads and so on. The Rastafarians differed on every conceivable issue and were continuously fighting over the direction the movement should take.

Whereas the elders, especially in the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and the Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government, persisted in their conviction that the Rastafarians should remain isolated from Jamaican society while awaiting repatriation, younger and often better educated Rastas had either dropped the idea of a return to Africa altogether or saw nothing wrong in active involvement in Jamaican society. Already in 1982 the *Gleaner's* Rasta columnist Arthur Kitchin had in one of his articles severely and extensively criticized the elders' unwillingness either to centralize the movement or to involve themselves fully in Jamaican society.

The greatest danger to the Rastafari Movement was, in my opinion, not so much from devious outsiders and observers, but to be found within the ranks and leadership of the Movement itself. ... [A] continuing alienation and disunity ... characterizes practically every established Rastafari assembly or House, whose captains apparently prefer to remain isolated rather than lead their disciples into a total relationship with brethren at large. ... A further complication is created by those who adopt a double standard towards the policy of non-involvement in political affairs and social rehabilitation. While these brethren may openly condemn such political and social activity, they secretly support political candidates or parties and endeavour to gain land grants and financial support from public or private sources. In addition, those who appear to be defending Rasta aims of repatriation to Africa can show no concrete program apart from gaining headlines and buying radio time, their rhetoric becoming empty, ineffectual protest which threatens to undermine the integrity of the entire Movement. ... Not only will the captains and elders be eventually replaced as spokesmen by the younger Rasta intelligentsia, but they may find themselves discredited by their failure to grasp the initiative and set practical programmes for the Movement.¹³⁵⁶

There were, however, few groups who were unequivocal in their opinion that the Rastafarians should drop the idea of repatriation and work towards the full integration of the movement in Jamaican society. Brother G. Lee of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation (IEWF) wrote that the days when the Rastas were waiting for repatriation had passed and that every Rastafarian should devote his energies towards participation in Jamaican society.

We the Royalist Rastas refuse to go to, or support a communist Ethiopia. We could never think of going to Ethiopia until the eradication of the Russian-backed Marxist regime, headed by "Mengistu", which is a must. Therefore in order to survive in Jamaica until that eventuality it is necessary to participate in the development of the community of which we are a part.¹³⁵⁷

But in spite of their frequent and sometimes harsh criticism of the young, the elders still exerted substantial influence over the movement. Many Rastafarians on the one hand acknowledged the necessity of further involvement in Jamaican society, but on the other hand accepted the view of the elders, who insisted that repatriation remained the ultimate goal. Some tried to bring the conflicting ideas about repatriation and involvement together. In a reaction to Brother Lee's call, Ras Mikeman from St. Catherine judged that both the elders and the IEWF were right, since Lee's statement implied "waiting for certain conditions to accrue or precipitate [sic] in Ethiopia." Confident that repatriation would be fulfilled around the year 2000, he concluded:

everyone can see that it is timing [sic] as we still have some more nuclear scares to go through, a lot more people to die from AIDS, more war, and of course the correct conditions to accrue in Ethiopia. So the elders were right. Wait I and I must. However the IEWF Inc. is also right because the waiting period will be much easier, and the burden much lighter if we pull together and help each other in communal assistance while waiting.¹³⁵⁸

The dilemma of isolation versus involvement, repatriation versus integration, and the failure to unite into one effective overall organization were important reasons for the movement's "eclipse" and its diminishing social significance as a catalyst for change.

The Judah Coptics and the quest for recognition

"Yes, ... there is Apartheid here in Jamaica. Apartheid against the Rastafarians."

By the mid-1980s Rastafari seemed to have lost its sting, its attitude of radical and total rejection of Babylon. As Arthur Kitchin remarked in 1987, "there is a noticeable absence of public agitation among Rastas."¹³⁵⁹ Co-opted by the wider society, deeply divided and in decline, its revolutionary potential

seemed to have been reduced to virtually nil. While the middle-class and politically-oriented Rastafarians were preoccupied with gaining acceptance and recognition in Jamaica, the elders and the orthodox still appeared to be locked in conflicts over the course the movement should follow. Were they to hold on to isolation from Jamaican society while awaiting repatriation or were they to strive towards improvement of their lot in Babylon as long as they were still there? By the end of the decade it became clear that the orthodox Rastafarians in the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church had decided to surrender their principle of non-involvement in “politricks.”

Ever since the 1960 *Report* of the University of the West Indies, many Rastafarians had expressed the wish to have their faith formally recognized as a valid religion by the Jamaican government and the established churches. The report and recommendations of the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice of 1982 had once again raised the issue. On the more practical side, recognition as a valid religion would imply recognition of the right to wear dreadlocks at school and at work, and perhaps the right to smoke ganja as a religious sacrament. Formal recognition might act as a safeguard against discrimination and harassment by the security forces. In a broader sense, however, formal recognition by the government could also be seen as implying acknowledgment of the right to be repatriated to Africa. Whereas the more political-minded groups had concentrated on the practical advantages of formal recognition, strictly religious groups, like Prince Emmanuel and his Ethiopian African International Congress Church of Salvation, had continuously petitioned not only the Jamaican government, but also the British Crown and the United Nations for recognition of their moral right to repatriation. However, none of the many different groups had ever taken the necessary steps to secure formal recognition (or incorporation) of Rastafari as a church. Most had not even bothered to register their organization with the government. Even within the moderate Ethiopian World Federation only two groups, Locals 31 and 19 both led by Cecil G. Gordon, had done so.

But in 1987 the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church formally petitioned Parliament for incorporation as a church and in so doing considered that they were requesting recognition of the Rastafarian movement as a whole. The main criteria for incorporation were that a religious organization should have been active in Jamaica for some time, should have reasonable support and involvement in the community, and should own or administer property on the island. The Judah Coptics met all criteria and their application, along with those of seven other (foreign) religious groups, was to be reviewed by the parliamentary Joint Select Committee on 27 October 1987.

The Rastafarians realized that one of the possible obstacles to incorporation could be their openly declared adoration of “the wisdom weed.” At the time of the application, the ganja problem was once again a hotly debated issue. The Jamaican government was under heavy pressure from the United States, involved in a crusade against drugs under the patronage of Ronald and Nancy Reagan, to drastically curtail marijuana cultivation and trafficking. As a result, the penalties for ganja growers, dealers and users were under discussion, and conservatives both inside and outside the government were pressing for higher sentences. Prime Minister Edward Seaga had already announced “draconian” measures and Billy Hall, one of the most influential and conservative opinion-shapers in the evangelical churches, fully supported his “war on drugs,” but demanded additional action against the Rastafarians:

Certainly, the Rastafarian movement, touted to be a religion, defends the free use of ganja as a sacrament for their religious rites. To my knowledge no similar religious body exists to so glorify liquor and cigarettes. An interesting implication is to be contemplated or taken against a “religious” group devoted with a missionary passion and program to inculcate as many of the nation’s youth as possible into ganja smoking.¹³⁶⁰

In September 1987, while the debate about the ganja problem continued, Michael Anthony Lorne announced that his recently established Ethiopian International Unification Committee (EIUC) was preparing a statement on ganja and its use by Rastafarians, to be “presented to government and the entire nation for its scrutiny and, hopefully, for its support.” Lorne explained that there were many other serious problems affecting the Rastafarians, especially “the trimming of brethren by force, malicious arrest and detention and brutal treatment to some brethren by members of the security forces.” However, with “ganja high on the agenda,” a public statement on this issue was more urgently needed.¹³⁶¹

The Ethiopian International Unification Committee was a new organization, which had been founded in March 1987, when Prince Dawit Makonnen, a grandson of Emperor Haile Selassie, had paid a visit to Jamaica. Dawit Makonnen, who had been living in exile since the coup in Ethiopia, and a small number of Ethiopian royalists in the United States, had founded the Ethiopian National Alliance to Advance Democracy (ENAAD). Its aim was to unite the opposition and guerrilla groups in Ethiopia, and to restore the

monarchy. His visit to Jamaica was intended to “forge links particularly with those Jamaicans interested in going to live in Ethiopia.”¹³⁶² Makonnen thus met with leaders and members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation and several other Rastafarian representatives, including Michael Lorne. The EIUC, of which Lorne became chairman, aimed, as the name already indicated, to unite the Rastafarian movement into one organizational structure, an aim similar to that of several other groups. In particular Amanuel Foxe of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, which had been established by Crown Prince Asfa Wossen in 1983, perceived the EIUC as a threat and denounced Prince Makonnen as “disqualified” under the Ethiopian Constitution, his involvement in the establishment of the EIUC as “unconstitutional,” Lorne as a “usurper” and the EIUC itself as “the opposition platform against Emperor Haile Selassie’s I.E.W.F.”¹³⁶³ But the influence of the EIUC was considerable, if only because Lorne, as an attorney, was a respected member of the Rastafarian community.

Nevertheless, the EIUC’s statement on ganja soon turned out to be superfluous. As the newspapers reported in late October 1987, the parliamentary Joint Select Committee had rejected the application of the Judah Coptics on the ground that it did not want to “recommend the incorporation of this Church, or any other religious organization, which uses an illegal drug in its worship ceremonies.” According to a statement of the members of Parliament:

The Joint Select Committee was advised by the representatives of this Church that ganja was burnt as incense during their worship ceremonies. The Joint Select Committee cannot condone such use of an illegal drug, the cultivation, possession, dealing with, etc. are serious criminal offenses attracting heavy penalties inclusive of imprisonment.¹³⁶⁴

Although following the People’s National Party’s election boycott of 1983, only the Jamaica Labour Party was represented in Parliament, two members of the committee had issued a minority report in favor of incorporating the Judah Coptic Church. They argued that sufficient evidence had been brought forward to conclude that the Coptics met all criteria. The Coptics’ use of ganja in their worship was, according to the minority report, “a matter where legislation regarding illegal drugs should take its course and not prevent the incorporation of a religious organization in existence for decades and which is still growing in membership.”¹³⁶⁵

The rejection of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church sparked a lively debate, although there was no public reaction from the leaders of the House itself. The editors of the *Gleaner* supported the decision of Parliament. In their opinion:

[I]t would not do to have a church openly espousing an illegal practise on the ground of religious freedom. If this were to be accepted it would open the gates to all manner of ganja users to claim similarly that they were exercising their right to worship as they wished, thereby providing an ecclesiastic cloak for nefarious trafficking that is doing so much harm.¹³⁶⁶

One of the first Rastafarian reactions came from Michael Anthony Lorne, who concluded: “Yes, ... there is Apartheid here in Jamaica. Apartheid against the Rastafarians.”

Every September Rastafarians are systematically turned back from Government schools throughout Jamaica. ... Police are still trimming the locks of Rastafarians ... In prison our locks are cut off immediately and our diet is not provided for. Our form of worship is denied and respect is nil

Ironically, on the same day that it rejected the request for the incorporation of the Rastafarians, the Joint Select Committee had decided positively on official recognition for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, commonly known as the Mormons.¹³⁶⁷ Lorne was outraged:

The Mormons are a white church, founded by a white man, headed by a white man with its Headquarters in a white country, and they are accepted. The same Mormons who wrote in their theology that Black people are not entitled to go to heaven and for quite some time refused to accept Black people in their membership and up until two years ago did not see anything wrong in the situation in South Africa are now accepted by a Parliament which the day before was addressed by an African President (on racism in Africa).¹³⁶⁸

Another commentator wrote that the rejection of the Rastafarians was “yet another display of hypocrisy by the country’s leaders.” He reminded the committee that not so long ago Bob Marley, “a man known for using ganja,” had received “the nation’s highest honour approved by the same Parliament.”¹³⁶⁹

The Rastafarians also obtained unsolicited support from *Gleaner* columnist Conrad Lindo, who con-

cluded: “it seems that the Coptics should not have been rejected, but accepted.”¹³⁷⁰. Clinton Chisholm, a Baptist minister and columnist, also found that Lorne’s “sentiment” about the acceptance of the Mormons and the refusal of the Rastas, was “not without some merit.” He advised the Rastafarians to “simply issue an official pronouncement banning the use of ganja in the Church building” and in the meantime do as they please. According to Chisholm, the Mormons had done much the same in their 1890 manifesto forbidding polygamy and in their 1978 pronouncement against racism.¹³⁷¹

Finally, there was the almost inevitable reaction from Amanuel Foxe, the President of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation (IEWF). Foxe, however, commented not so much on the parliamentary committee’s negative decision, as on the letter of his rival, Michael Anthony Lorne. He considered the rejection of the Judah Coptic Church on the ground of ganja use an insufficient reason “to support the cry of apartheid against Rasta in Jamaica.”¹³⁷²

Elections, lawsuits and silence in the late 1980s

“Frivolous, vexatious and an abuse of the process of the court.”

Only a month before the Judah Coptics’ application for incorporation was turned down in the House of Representatives, the Rastafarian movement had once again lost one of its most forceful, though not always subtle messengers. On 11 September 1987 Winston Hubert MacIntosh, better known as Peter Tosh, was shot and killed during a robbery. The former member of the original Wailers and Bob Marley’s uncrowned successor as King of Reggae was murdered when robbers burst into his house in uptown Kingston. A friend, Wilton “Doc” Brown, also lost his life. Five others, among them Tosh’s wife Marlene and the popular deejay Jeff Dixon, were seriously wounded.¹³⁷³ While the murder of Tosh had little or nothing to do with his Rastafarian beliefs, murders motivated by Rasta-hate still occurred. On 4 December 1988 a Rastafarian was shot dead in Kingston by a 20-year-old man. The murderer was reported to have justified his act with the succinct remark: “all dread must dead.”¹³⁷⁴

Although the persecution of Rastafarians by the security forces had certainly declined since the 1970s, incidents of police brutality were still reported. In February 1990, for instance, a Rastafarian on trial at the Spanish Town court for attacking an uncle, related how he had been molested by the police. A policeman who had gone to the Rasta’s house to investigate the wounding had

shot him in the left leg, then “stick me up an a go roun’ me like a game cock trying fi shoot me in the other foot,” ... beat him in his chest and back with the machete and “bruk up” a piece of board on him, ... beating him merciless with whatever he could find [and] hit him with a piece of metal pipe in the head.¹³⁷⁵

After the policeman had handcuffed his victim, he had gone off to a bar and upon returning had beaten the Rastafarian again until he finally took him to the Spanish Town police station.

As usual, only a handful of cases of violence against Rastafarians made the press. Especially in the ghettos of Kingston, the police still seemed to get away with intimidation, trimming of dreadlocks, beatings and outright torture.¹³⁷⁶ Most of the victims suffered in silence and many of those who took their plight to Michael Lorne or the Jamaica Council for Human Rights (JCHR) either lacked the financial means to go further or saw no use in pressing charges in a Babylonian court that was still inclined to assign more weight to the words of a policeman than the words of a ghetto-dweller, particularly if he was a Rastafarian.

While during the 1970s the harassment of Rastafarians by the security forces had been castigated in reggae songs, by the late 1980s it apparently had become something to laugh about. In April 1988 one of Jamaica’s most popular deejays, Lieutenant Stitchie, released a song called *Natty Dread*, in which he ridiculed a Rasta look-alike or Natty Dread, arrested, trimmed and severely beaten for no apparent reason by a policeman. While many Jamaicans smiled about the lyrics, most Rastafarians considered that the song ridiculed one of theirs and thus felt offended, in spite of the fact that Lieutenant Stitchie began his song with:

Now this one is commin’ from Lieutenant Stitchie
and only meant to be humorous
and naw meant to cause a fuss.
Dedicated to all Natty Dreadlocks,

Natty Dreadlocks different from Rastaman, seen?
Follow me now, come now.¹³⁷⁷

Members of the Ethiopian International Unification Committee, led by Michael Anthony Lorne, organized a demonstration at the offices of the Gleaner Company and demanded, in vain, that the song be banned from the air. They maintained that Lieutenant Stitchie's song had "led members of the society to be hostile towards them, jeer them and discriminate against them."¹³⁷⁸ According to Rasta intellectual Leahcim Semaj:

Lieutenant Stitchie's song presented a case of brutality fostered by the police against a Rastafarian: without admonition, critique or reprimand, this amounts to acceptance. We asked only one question: if the roles in the song/video had been reversed would RJR and JBC have aired it?¹³⁷⁹

In a way, it was the world turned upside down. Rastafarian texts had been repeatedly banned from the air because of what the directors of the radio stations considered to be blasphemous, ganja-promoting, agitating or disrespectful lyrics. The Rastas had always insisted on their constitutional rights of freedom of speech and expression of opinions. Now, with the controversy around Lieutenant Stitchie's song, part of the movement found itself on the other side of the line.

While Lorne and Semaj protested against *Natty Dread*, the Judah Coptics had more important things to think about. They were preparing to assume power in Jamaica, not through revolt or insurrection, but through the official political channels. On Monday 27 June 1988, more than a quarter of a century after Ras Samuel Brown and his Black Man's Party had unsuccessfully contested a seat in the 1962 elections and received no more than 85 votes, the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church called a press conference at the Duhaney Park Community Centre, where they announced the founding of the African Comprehensive Party (ACP). The ACP, as Abuna Stedrick Whyte told his audience, intended to take part in the next general elections with at least eighteen candidates. Whyte, as the leader of the ACP, would contest the West Central St. Andrew constituency in the ghettos of West Kingston. According to a *Gleaner* report, quoting in part from the Abuna's words, the program of the African Comprehensive Party was:

"the elimination of the IMF policy and the closing down of all capitalist banks." An ACP government would wipe out national minimum wages and people would be paid on the basis of productivity. "The big guys who are getting paid without doing any jobs would have their salaries slashed and they would be taxed at the same rate," Mr. Whyte said. Also the ACP proposes a national policy of self-reliance on "indigenous values and resources." All idle lands will be put to use to boost production.¹³⁸⁰

Some two years before the official launching of the African Comprehensive Party, the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church had already issued a *Rastafari Manifesto* containing its political program.¹³⁸¹ In *The Ethiopian-African Theocracy Union Policy (EATUP) and True Genuine Authentic Fundamental Indigenous Original Comprehensive Alternative Policy (FIOCAP)*, as the 100-odd pages *Manifesto* was entitled, the elders of the Judah Coptic Church outlined their ideas for the transition of authority from the "discredited, immoral degeneracy of [the] European Throne of Gt. Britain to the Divine Constitutional Monarchy & Ancient Biblical African Empire of Ethiopia." According to the schedule accompanying the *Manifesto*, the transfer of power should be initiated immediately, commencing with the dissolution of Parliament:

- The Sixty (60) presently seated Members of Parliament; &
The Twenty One (21) presently seated Senators of the Jamaica National Legislature;
- are morally Constitutionally & legally required within receipt hereof; and within reasonable and morally responsible time schedule; (30-60 days): mutually determined; in consultation with JAH RAS TAFARI ROYAL ETHIOPIAN JUDAH COPTIC CHURCH & HAILA SILLASE I THEOCRACY GOVERNMENT; Producers & Authors of this TRUE GENUINE AUTHENTIC ORIGINAL COMPREHENSIVE ALTERNATIVE POLICY; &
 - in accordance with just schedule, of impeachable evidence & indictment herein;
 - to introduce a resolution in Parliament providing; "Affirmative vote of a majority of all the members (Of House of Representatives) thereof has resolved that it has no confidence in the Government, the Governor-General shall by Proclamation published in the Gazette dissolve Parliament."¹³⁸²

Following the demanded dissolution of Parliament, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet should resign, the opposition should declare itself to be "Non-Alternative to Governmental Succession" and the Governor-General should invite the elders of the Judah Coptic Church "to form & implement the legitimate National Government of Principals and Morality," as laid down in the *Manifesto*. Should such "moral integrity, and mature sense of responsibility to national interest" be absent among the politicians in power, the Judah Coptics mandated a month-long general strike.

In their *Manifesto* the Rastafarians also described at length the evils and injustices of the existing order in Jamaica and, with a wealth of illustrative biblical quotes and fragments from speeches by Haile Selassie, set out their “prescription for national reunification, reconciliation, revival and redemption.” In so doing, they had given precedence to “policy & political organization; rather than delegatable, structural administrative detail.” As such, the Judah Coptics proposed the creation of a “twin-legislative Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy,” with a new office of Head of State and with seventeen new National Ministries. As part of the “Ancient Biblical Empire of Ethiopia,” the “Sovereign Titular Executive Authority” in Jamaica was, of course, to be vested in His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. A Titular Head of State, not unlike the existing function of Governor-General, would represent the Sovereign, while an Executive Head of State of Jamaican birth would, just like the present Prime Minister, act as the head of the new National Ministerial Cabinet.

The Judah Coptics’ *Manifesto* furthermore proposed a complex system of electoral representation. Essentially, local representatives would form parish councils, whose members would together form a “National Ombudsman Opposition Parliament” at the national level. There would also be two Houses of Representatives, one elected, the other appointed. The elected representatives would appoint the Executive Head of State, who would appoint, in consultation with the House, a Cabinet of seventeen Ministers.¹³⁸³ The better part of *The Ethiopian-African Theocracy Union Policy and True Genuine Authentic Fundamental Indigenious Original Comprehensive Alternative Policy*, however, consisted of a description of the tasks and responsibilities of the seventeen new Ministries and the Office of the Head of State.¹³⁸⁴

On 23 July 1986 the *Manifesto* was submitted in the form of a resolution to the House of Representatives. But apparently the representatives lacked the “moral integrity, and mature sense of responsibility to national interest” to dissolve both Parliament and Cabinet. Nor did it come to a month-long general strike.¹³⁸⁵ When it became clear that resolutions in Parliament would not work, the dreadlocks of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church decided to apply for incorporation as a valid religion, which, as we have seen, was equally unsuccessful. The decision to take part in the elections was apparently made only after the Joint Select Committee had turned down their request. In the *Gleaner* Abuna Stedrick Whyte was quoted as saying that “if they reject us as clergymen then we would gladly serve as politicians to get acceptance.”¹³⁸⁶

By the time Abuna Whyte announced his candidacy, the Jamaica Labour Party had been in office and unopposed in Parliament for almost five years, ever since the PNP’s boycott of the 1983 elections. As usual in Jamaica, the electorate had had more than enough of the ruling party after its two terms in office. Seaga and the JLP had carried out harsh financial reforms, had terminated most of their predecessors’ social programs and had rigorously opened up the Jamaican market for foreign investors. But unemployment had increased even further and although, contrary to the situation under the PNP in the late 1970s, the shelves of the supermarkets were once again well-stocked, few Jamaicans were able to afford even the bare necessities. As Omar Davies and Michael Witter concluded: “In the 1980s, there developed a popular perception that there was a small section of the society that had become phenomenally rich, while the majority were struggling to keep from sinking deeper into poverty.”¹³⁸⁷

While his image as a financial wizard had long been shattered, Eddie Seaga could not get rid of his aura of authoritarianism. Once described as “hard as a nail and cool as a cucumber,” he stubbornly held to his aim to bring improvement through foreign investment, private enterprise and IMF loans, regardless of the deterioration of the economy. This policy implied total dependence on the United States, which gave him the additional image of a puppet of the White House and big business. As “Mr. Reagan’s man in the Caribbean,” Seaga had supported the American invasion of Grenada in 1983 and, despite heavy criticism, had dispatched a small contingent of Jamaican soldiers. The People’s National Party, on the other hand, had been able to shake off its image as a “communist” party, in spite of the JLP’s relentless efforts to remind the voters of the horrors of the late 1970s. Manley behaved as a compassionate realist, publicly declared that he and his party had made mistakes during their reign in the 1970s, and now promised to “put people first.”¹³⁸⁸

Even though for many Jamaicans the choice between the JLP and the PNP was increasingly a matter of choosing the lesser of two evils, third parties and independent candidates never had much of chance at the ballot box. The leader of the African Comprehensive Party apparently realized this and did not expect to break the power of the People’s National Party and the Jamaica Labour Party immediately. At his press conference Abuna Whyte declared: “We do not anticipate victory at the polls this time around but

there has to be a beginning.”¹³⁸⁹.

Yet even a beginning was hard to realize. On 28 March 1988, shortly before the press conference and long before the elections were due, Clarence G. Stone, Campaign Manager for the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church, had written a letter to Noel Lee, the Director of the Electoral Office, with the request to be assigned a party symbol:

Please note, it's our attention, to present Mr. Stedrick Whyte as an Independent Candidate for the up coming general Election. Constituent: South West Saint Andrew; Kindly send our electoral Symbol, the Hart/The Lion. We trust to received your reply soon, the sooner the better. We trust to received your guidance; and service [unedited quote].¹³⁹⁰.

On 6 April the Director had replied that “your request for the symbol of the Heart/the Lion will be considered at the appropriate time,” which meant after the official announcement of election day.¹³⁹¹ This was routine procedure. Applications for an electoral symbol could only be considered after nomination day. Besides, as Lee later said, he had not taken the Judah Coptics’ application seriously at the time, since the Electoral Office was not unaccustomed to receiving requests from “all kinds of crackpots.”¹³⁹²

At the end of the year, the dates were announced. The general elections were to be held on 9 February 1989 with nomination day on 23 January. Seaga and Manley reconfirmed their peace truce of the previous August, but as the elections came nearer, violence flared up once again. In the meantime, the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church joined forces with the Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly (RITA), after an attempt to merge with the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation had apparently failed. The liaison between the two groups took place at the last minute. A meeting to seek support for the alliance was to be held on 29 January 1989.

On nomination day Abuna Stedrick Whyte went to the Calvary Prep School, where the nomination center for the West Central St. Andrew constituency was located, to register as a candidate for the general elections. There, however, he was told by the Returning Officer that “he could not be nominated because he had no emblem.”¹³⁹³ The Abuna left without being registered.

A few days after nomination day, Whyte complained to the press that he “was not properly briefed” by the Electoral Office. He claimed that he had been promised that all the necessary information concerning his candidacy would be mailed to him, but he had never received anything. According to the Director of the Electoral Office the absence of an election symbol could not have been a reason for rejecting the nomination, since the regulations for nomination stated that on nomination day a candidate has to fill out a widely available nomination paper, which should be signed by ten enumerated persons.¹³⁹⁴ Only after presenting the nomination form in the appropriate constituency and paying a deposit of J\$ 100, would a candidate be assigned an election symbol to be used on the ballot papers. Lee also insisted that on nomination day nothing had been heard from the Abuna, who could have made a complaint at the Electoral Office. Instead Whyte had turned up several days later, too late to be nominated.

Why Abuna Whyte was not allowed to register his candidacy remained obscure, but the Judah Coptics and their allies in the Assembly concluded that they had once again been denied their constitutional rights, and denounced the explanation given by the Electoral Office as “shameful.” Few Jamaicans, however, were interested in whether or not the Judah Coptics had been deceived by the Electoral Office. For them the question was simply JLP or PNP and on 9 February 1989 the Jamaican voters answered that question in favor of Michael Manley and the People’s National Party. The President of the RITA, Eric “Ras Historian” Clement, however, was already looking forward to the local elections next year and told *Jamaica Record*: “We are aware that babylon system will do everything to keep rastafarian out of the political arena but we are confident that we will win.”¹³⁹⁵

The local elections were set for 6 March 1990 and were to become another overwhelming victory for the People’s National Party. On nomination day, 15 February, Abuna Whyte again went to the Returning Officer for the St. Andrew West Central constituency to be nominated as an independent candidate. It is not clear whether Whyte still wanted to nominate under the banner of the African Comprehensive Party.¹³⁹⁶ According to the Officer, however, the Abuna “had everything wrong with his papers.” One of the problems appeared to be that Whyte wanted to register in the wrong constituency. He was referred to the Returning Officer for St. Andrew West residing at Duhaney Park. The Abuna left, but changed his mind and returned with the request to contest for the St. Andrew West Central seat. This was allowed, but when the names of the persons supporting Whyte’s nomination were checked, two of them could

not be found on the voters' roll and candidates required the signatures of ten enumerated voters.¹³⁹⁷ The Returning Officer later told the *Gleaner*: "I would have forgiven everything else if he had the 10 names but I searched through the 25,000 names on the list and couldn't find two of them."¹³⁹⁸ Whyte was not nominated and declared that he would take his case to the media.

Two days later the *Jamaica Record* carried his side of the story. Abuna Stedrick Whyte complained about "unjust treatment" and having been "denied his constitutional right." He insisted that the two persons not on the voters' list had voted in the last general elections and should therefore have been enumerated. The Abuna had proposed going back to bring two other persons who were on the voters' list, but this was not allowed. Whyte demanded that the decision of the Returning Officer should be overruled and that he should be allowed to run for election. "All the people are for me, but they deny me all the way. If I did not mean this nation good, I would not be doing this."¹³⁹⁹ The Abuna's demand was in vain. The elections were held without his name on the list of candidates for the St. Andrew West Central constituency.

While the Judah Coptics and the members of the Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly had decided to employ a political strategy to achieve their goals, Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards had opted for a legal tactic. A few days after the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church had called its press conference at Duhaney Park to announce the founding of the African Comprehensive Party, Prince Emmanuel had sued Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Shearer, and demanded £ 20 million for repatriation to Africa.

After the destruction of Back-O-Wall in 1966, Prince and his small following had spent four years trying to find a new "yard" in Kingston. But, as described in chapter 4, they had suffered from continuous police harassment. In 1972 Prince decided to leave Kingston. The Bobo Dreads found a piece of government land high on a hill (rebaptized Mount Zion) near Bull Bay, ten miles east of Kingston, where the authorities left them alone. Here, on a spot with a magnificent view of the Caribbean Sea, the Bobo Dreads built a camp which expanded steadily. By the late 1980s it consisted of a large Tabernacle, a Church of Salvation, a canteen, several houses for men and women, and a number of other buildings, including the School of Jerusalem, all surrounded by red, gold and green palisades. There were an estimated sixty to a hundred people in the camp, most of them young men, and an unknown number living outside the camp. There were persistent rumors that the membership of the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress Church of Salvation included quite a few ex-convicts and former members of street gangs, who were using the camp as a hide-out.¹⁴⁰⁰

Whatever the case, the Bobo Dreads, always dressed in long white robes and turbans, made a living out of producing and selling reed brooms, sandals and mats, for which the Bobo Dreads owned a workshop, a generator and two small trucks. Most of the brooms were sold in Kingston for prices which depended on their customers' affluence. Apart from their broom factory, the Bobos also planted their own food in the vicinity of the camp, which made them almost self-sufficient. Here, too, there were persistent but unsubstantiated rumors that the thriving economic activities of the Congress Church included ganja trafficking.¹⁴⁰¹

Within the camp discipline was strict. The Bobos were divided into priests and prophets. The difference between the two was not always clear, apart from the fact that the latter could not lead the Sabbath services. Prince remained the absolute authority, even in minor issues, although he hardly ever appeared in public during the late 1980s.¹⁴⁰² In many respects, the commune of the Bobo Dreads resembled the Pinnacle commune of Leonard Howell during the 1940s and early 1950s. And just like Howell, Prince assumed divine status for himself as the Black Christ, part of the Holy Trinity together with the Father of Creation King Alpha (Haile Selassie) and Marcus Garvey.¹⁴⁰³ Prince, who in 1966 had caused a controversy by shaking hands with the Emperor with his gloves still on, later claimed that Selassie had paid him a secret private visit in 1970 to acknowledge his divine leadership as the "King of the Rassess," the son of God, Adonie I Emmanuel, "Dada" (father) to his followers. His wife Eigita Morris was known as the Empress, while their only son was named Jesus.

Prince's ascension to divinity did not, however, change the central concern of the Bobo Dreads: repatriation to Africa. As we have seen, they relentlessly bombarded the Jamaican government, the British Crown and the United Nations with petitions and demands. But in 1988 Prince Emmanuel apparently decided that writing letters and presenting petitions did not work, and that other strategies were necessary if the Rastafarians wanted to enforce repatriation. In a somewhat unexpected move the "Right Honourable King Emmanuel Charles Edwards, Worthy Founder, Leader President, God and King of the

Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress Church of Salvation” sued Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Shearer and demanded £ 20 million for repatriation of the former slaves back to Africa.

The case was brought before the Supreme Court on 6 July 1988. The Assistant Attorney-General argued that the summons should be rejected because it was “frivolous, vexatious and an abuse of the process of the court.” Besides, there was “no cause of action” and if anyone was to be sued at all, it should have been the Attorney-General and not the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The lawyer appearing as *amicus curiae* for Prince Emmanuel countered that Shearer was sued as a representative of the people, that it had not been possible to bring the case to court shortly after the abolition of slavery in 1834, and that this was the “plaintiff’s only means of obtaining redress.” The Judge refused to handle the case. A *Gleaner* reporter, reviewing the Bobos’ summons, concluded that the case was not as unrealistic as it appeared to be if treated as a suit under international law rather than under domestic law.¹⁴⁰⁴

Two months later, on 12 September 1988, Hurricane Gilbert hit Jamaica, leaving the island in a state of chaos with an estimated 500,000 people homeless, all crops ruined and some US\$ 5.5 billion damage.¹⁴⁰⁵ It was the greatest disaster on the island since the 1907 earthquake which destroyed Kingston and as always it was the poor who suffered most. Amanuel Foxe, International President of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, made a passionate plea for assistance to the Rastafarians, “who are more prone to suffering than the average Jamaica-nationals, who have the PNP and the JLP and other benevolent organisations to assist them.” Foxe found that “irrespective of our religious conviction and isolationist behaviour,” the Rastafarians deserved help, and thanked *The Daily Gleaner* for publishing his appeal.¹⁴⁰⁶

The Bobo Dreads’ camp, high on Mount Zion and close to the shore, was severely damaged, but as usual Prince Emmanuel took an uncompromising stand. When ten days after the hurricane’s destructive visit, a group of government officials arrived at the commune with rice, flour, cornmeal and milk powder, the Bobos bluntly refused to accept the supplies. On their way down the officials met Rita Marley, chairperson of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church’s assistance fund, also on her way to bring the Bobo Dreads some relief. She took over the government supplies and made a second attempt to present them to the Bobo. They declined again. Prince later declared: “I refused what they offered. I do not want those things. I want seven, nine or thirteen miles of high water ships to take my people to our rightful home in Ethiopia.”¹⁴⁰⁷

After the failed lawsuit against Hugh Shearer and the torment by “wild Gilbert,” Prince Emmanuel again changed his tactics on repatriation. For years the Congress Church had insisted that repatriation was a moral right and should be organized and funded by the Jamaican government, the British Crown or the United Nations and its member states. Time after time, Prince had angrily dismissed any suggestions of “emigration,” but the repeated failure to achieve anything apparently prompted him to change his mind.

In December 1989 three representatives of the Congress Church called on Nigeria’s Foreign Minister General Ike Nwachukwu, who was on the island for a four-day visit, to request him to send ships for the 144,000 black people who wanted to return to Africa. The General listened to them and, according to the Bobo Dreads, promised to “give what aid he could.”¹⁴⁰⁸

But no aid arrived and so, in February 1991, eight members of the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress Church of Salvation left Jamaica on a mission to Ethiopia, Nigeria and Ghana “to rally support for an action plan to repatriate black to Africa.” Prince stayed in Jamaica sending the delegation in charge of “Vice President” Carlton Campbell and “Parliamentarian Priest” Albert Lee-Case. The delegation of the Bobo Dreads claimed to be traveling with a plan which they said was “the most comprehensive of its kind” and which would be discussed with government officials “at the highest level,” in order to be submitted to the Organization of African Unity. Priest Lee-Case added: “We are confident that we will get a favourable reception to our initiatives as the basis for our work is underpinned by spiritual commitment.”¹⁴⁰⁹

Apart from actions like the Bobo Dreads’ lawsuit and the Judah Coptics’ failed attempts to take part in the elections, little seemed to happen on the Rastafarian front during the late 1980s and early 1990s, and even such actions as these were directed through official Babylonian channels.

Nothing at all was heard of the Rastafarian leaders of the 1960s and 1970s, men like Mortimo Planno, Ras Shadrack, Ras Boanerges or the “three wise men” Alvaranga, Mack and Clayton. Ras Samuel Brown,

Ras Dizzy, Ras Daniel Heartman and many others had made careers as creative artists and had their works exhibited all over the world. The various Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation remained silent as well. The members of the Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly continued to issue their *Rasta Voice Magazine* and remained active in all sorts of community projects. Their President Eric “Ras Historian” Clement had also become President of the United Vendors Association, but that did not prevent him from calling for the organization and centralization of the movement.

Reverend Claudius V. Henry, the Repairer of the Breach, who had caused so much turbulence during the late 1950s and 1960, and again during the 1972 election campaign, had died in 1986. He had left a complicated will, dividing the estate between his children and his Peacemakers’ Association. Problems ensued and in late 1990 the will had still not been probated, almost completely paralyzing the bakery, block making factory and other activities at Green Bottom. The small group of remaining members remained loyal to the Marxist Worker’s Party of Jamaica and had requested the assistance of Trevor Munroe in settling their difficulties and reviving the economic projects. The leader of the WPJ had since then been in close contact with the remaining members of the Peacemakers’ Association, who were said to regard him as the reincarnation of Claudius Henry. Asked about his status as the new Repairer of the Breach, Munroe remarked evenly:

That’s quite possible. I mean, the religious views of the Jamaican people are quite way out of orthodox. ... But what that means in effect, in secular terms, is that they regard what I am doing in relation to the disadvantaged in some sense as a continuation of Reverend Henry’s work. I would not be too preoccupied with the form of the expression, but more with the substance.¹⁴¹⁰

The Marley clique, in the meantime, was also entangled in an endless lawsuit about the King of Reggae’s multi-million dollar legacy. There was, as Arthur Kitchin had correctly noted, hardly any public agitation. Most groups kept a low profile and were minding their own business. The fire seemed to have gone out; as one elderly Rastafarian expressed it, “Rasta done with.”

The Twelve Tribes of Israel, in the meantime, seemed to be wrestling with internal conflicts. In early 1987 the prophet Gad had returned from a long journey which had taken him to Africa and New Zealand.¹⁴¹¹ Not long after Gad’s return, the successful monthly dances, which had usually attracted hundreds of participants, were discontinued. Although members were very reluctant to speak about it, it seemed that there were serious conflicts between the prophet and members of the executive board, as well as within the board itself. Details remain obscure, but it appears that there was dissatisfaction with the authoritarian behavior of some older executives and their uncritical attitude towards the prophet Gad. Some complained that discussion was impossible because everything Gad said and did was unquestionably true. There was criticism of the fact that executives held their seat on the board for life, as a result of which younger and often better educated members had little or no say. There also seemed to be criticism of the long journeys and life style of the prophet, and some insisted that “the leader is taking to himself too much praise, and praise belongs to His Imperial Majesty.”¹⁴¹² Others decried the deviant behavior of some members, who refused to follow the principles of the Tribes. In any case, the tensions had increased to such an extent by late 1987 that some time around the end of that year, the Twelve Tribes suspended all its dances (parties) and meetings. By late 1990 the situation had not yet changed for the better, but members remained as tight-lipped as always.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had developed into a respected and established church, which maintained close contacts with the other established churches in Jamaica. In 1979 Laike Mariam Mandefro had been ordained *Abuna* (Archbishop) and thereafter became known as Abuna Yeseshaq. His diocese covered New York City, Los Angeles, Bermuda, Trinidad, Guyana and Jamaica. From his base in New York City, he regularly visited the Jamaican branch, which was led by a priest-in-charge, assisted by a growing number of deacons (there were seven by 1981). Apart from its religious activities, the EOC was involved in several social and educational programmes, including a basic school, Amharic lessons and sewing classes, and there were plans to start a dental clinic.¹⁴¹³ In 1981 the EOC was admitted as a member of the Jamaican as well as the Caribbean Council of Churches.¹⁴¹⁴

Initially, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had used the premises of other churches, but some time during the late 1970s it obtained its own church building at Maxfield Avenue, where it resides to this day. The ground-breaking ceremony was attended by Governor-General Sir Florizel Glasspole, who had earlier also agreed to be patron of its fund-raising committee. Olivia “Babsy” Grange, JLP Senator and trusted aide of Edward Seaga, along with Portia Simpson, later Minister in the PNP government, represented the two major political parties. The Jamaican establishment was eager to demonstrate its support for the

Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which they perceived as a useful instrument in defusing “the Rastafarian challenge.”

In January 1988 the EOC announced the building of a J\$ 3 million cathedral on its Maxfield Avenue site; the ground-breaking ceremony was attended by Roman Catholic archbishop Samuel Carter.¹⁴¹⁵ There was, however, a serious setback to these plans when in September 1988 the EOC’s church building was severely damaged by Hurricane Gilbert.

By 1988 the EOC claimed to have 15,000 members island-wide and six more churches besides the main one in Kingston.¹⁴¹⁶ The Ethiopian Orthodox Church had evidently grown and expanded its activities, but although many still perceived it to be a Rastafarian church, there was a substantial non-Rasta membership as well. The relationship between the Rastafarian movement and the EOC remained ambivalent. Rastas not only objected to the teachings and ritual of the church and its ecumenical orientation, but also to the hierarchical structure within the EOC. But in spite of the fact that the EOC did not worship in the name of Haile Selassie, it was still the Ethiopian church and the church of which Emperor Haile Selassie was not only a devout member, but also the titular head. As Michael Lorne summed up the feelings of many Rastas:

His Majesty is a member of that church. So, it is important in terms of the historical significance and strength. The present hierarchy of the church doesn’t pay as much homage and praises unto the High Majesty Haile I Selassie I. So you find that there’s a little gap between them and I and I at this time. But nevertheless, the structure, the principle of the church stand strong within I and I heart.¹⁴¹⁷

Many of those Rastafarians who remained in the EOC, combined the worship of “Yesus Christos” with their belief in the divinity of Haile Selassie. Others effectively became Christians, but many of them continued to ascribe a special role to the Emperor, no longer as God, but as a spiritual symbol. Many continued to wear locks. The leadership of the EOC manoeuvred carefully in order not to provoke conflicts with its Rasta membership, but its goal always remained to convert the Rastafarians to the Ethiopian orthodox version of Christianity. As such the church made concessions, from gestures like pronouncing Jesus Christ as “Yesus Christos” and mentioning Marcus Garvey in its worship, to emphasizing the role of Haile Selassie as the supreme defender of the faith.¹⁴¹⁸

Michael Anthony Lorne, in the meantime, continued to defend those Rastafarians who had run into trouble with the law or were fighting to keep their dreadlocks in prison. Whereas in November 1990 the United States Supreme Court upheld a ruling that prison authorities violated the First and Fourteenth Amendment if they forced Rastafarian inmates to have a haircut, the Jamaican prison authorities continued to trim Rastafarians against their will on the basis of the *1947 Prison Rules*, which stated that “every prisoner shall obey such directions as may from time to time be given by the Superintendent with regard to washing, bathing, shaving and hair-cutting.” Many Rastas suffered in silence, but some - with the help of Lorne - took their case before the courts, like a Rastafarian in the St. Catherine District Prison, who had filed an official request to keep his locks, but was nevertheless forcibly trimmed before his case could even be considered by the courts. It was somewhat ironic that while dreadlocks were officially recognized as religious symbols by both the British and the United States governments, the Jamaican law refused to consider dreadlocks as anything more than a hairstyle.¹⁴¹⁹

Lorne’s brother-in-arms Leahcim Semaj got caught up in a dispute with Clinton Chisholm, a Baptist minister from Spanish Town who emerged as a persistent antagonist of Rastafarian beliefs. In a series of articles in the *Jamaica Record* he tried to invalidate the Rastafarian theology.¹⁴²⁰ In essence, the minister tried to “demolish” the religious claims of the Rastafarians, notably the claim of Haile Selassie’s divinity, with historical data. He argued that the prophecy of Marcus Garvey had not so far been documented, that the titles of Haile Selassie were not unique to him and that the claim to a genealogical link between Haile Selassie and King Solomon was false. Semaj countered with the remark that “the answer is simpler than you think: it is only after one becomes a Rastafarian that one comes to know the mysteries of Jah.” Chisholm, in turn, concluded that if such were the case Semaj might just as well conclude that “a slice of Bologna is God.” According to Chisholm, any faith should be based on verifiable fact and scientific empirical research. Apparently, the minister assumed that as such the Christians had more reason to believe in Christ than the Rastafarians had to believe in Haile Selassie. Chisholm later even issued a tape recording in which he addressed the central themes of Rastafarian belief, the divinity of Haile Selassie and Ethiopia as the Promised Land.¹⁴²¹

Meanwhile, the President of the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, Amanuel Foxe, wrote letters to

the newspapers on every conceivable issue, ranging from extending his best wishes to Nelson Mandela upon his release from prison to his views on an alleged homosexual affair of the biblical King David. And even such issues provided an opportunity to call on all Rastafarians to unite under the banner of the “Royalist Rastas” to fight Mengistu and to restore the monarchy.¹⁴²²

If Rastafarian columnists and writers of letters to the editor did not manage to draw attention to Rastafari, the press usually did this for them, reporting on reggae stars or other amusement-related sensationalism. An event in the latter category was the “fairy tale wedding” between a Jamaican dreadlocks, “the son of a humble farmer,” and an English teacher from an aristocratic and apparently very rich family. The bride, according to *The Daily Gleaner*, was “even said to be a distant relative of Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II,” commonly known among Rastafarians as “Queen Elizabeth, the Whore of Babylon,” a fact which the reporter - if he was aware of it - wisely kept to himself.¹⁴²³

The same newspaper also reported on “The Rasta beauty” Pinksque Green, a 19-year-old dreadlocked Rastafarian member of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, who contested the Miss City of Montego Bay title in May 1990. Whereas Rastafarian “Queens” and “Dawtas” had always placed great value on “keeping their dignity” and normally dressed in sober long skirts, Green paraded in a bathing suit. She not only hoped to win the prize of J\$ 84,000, but also wanted to demonstrate “that rasta women are also beautiful.”¹⁴²⁴ Although food for sensationalist boulevard journalism, such events were in a sense symbolic of the changing position of Rastafarian women, who were increasingly emerging from the long shadows cast by their Kings.

One of those Rastafarian women was reggae singer Judy Mowatt, who complained about the “slackness” and abuse of women in contemporary deejay songs. The former member of Bob Marley’s vocal backing group, the I-Trees, explained her lack of success with “roots reggae” songs by the fact that Rasta was not as “strong and vocal” as it had been during the 1970s, and nicely summarized the developments of the 1980s when she added: “You will not see as many Rastas now as then. It is not that they have actually gone away. ... It is just that they have fallen by the wayside.”¹⁴²⁵

Chapter 7.

Wait I and I must: From millenarian hopes to political action

In the previous chapters an attempt has been made to describe the development of the Rastafarian movement and its interaction with the wider Jamaican society. Although certain general trends in its development may be observed, drawing straightforward general conclusions about the evolution of the Rastafarian movement remains a precarious exercise, if only because of its unusually divided and multi-faceted character. Change and development in the movement as a whole have been anything but linear.

Although the Rastafarians have, for instance, increasingly found social acceptance in Jamaican society, discrimination and persecution have continued. The movement has increasingly attracted adherence from the middle and upper classes, yet it has remained predominantly a lower-class phenomenon. More and more Rastafarians have dropped the idea of physical repatriation to Africa in favor of involvement in Jamaican society, yet many, as Carole Yawney correctly observes, have held on to the millenarian dream as “its one guiding imperative.”¹⁴²⁶ The movement has increasingly resorted to political means to achieve its goals (be they repatriation or integration), yet has failed to develop effective strategies for political action.

In this brief final chapter I would like to highlight two major themes. Firstly, the origins and emergence of the Rastafarian movement, a discussion which has recently been the subject of a renewed debate, with Barry Chevannes arguing that Rastafari is a “world-view movement” rather than a “political movement” and also “a more authentic expression of [African] tradition than generally thought.”¹⁴²⁷ This debate is obviously not only about the origins of Rastafari, but also more essentially about its nature. The second theme under discussion in this chapter relates to the movement’s growth and development, from a local millenarian “cult” into a widely scattered and multi-faceted movement and subculture, and to the impact of the wider Jamaican society’s reactions on its evolution.

The origins of Rastafari

“A radical departure from all that had gone before it?”

In the Introduction it was suggested that although compelling, (multiple and/or relative) deprivation theories of whatever type are of limited use in explaining the emergence of religious movements. They cannot account for the non-cases, for the non-occurrence under similar conditions, and deprivation does not appear to be an indispensable condition for either the emergence or flowering of religious movements. Furthermore, deprivation theories are framed in such general terms that they are not only difficult to refute, but also contribute little to our knowledge of the specific nature of religious movements.

All this is not to deny that at the time of the inception of the Rastafarian movement there was no identifiable crisis - social, cultural, political and economic - affecting the mass of the black population, both urban and rural, in many different ways. Nor does it imply that deprivation did not play a role in the emergence of the movement. As we have seen in chapter 1, ever since colonization Jamaican society had been in an almost permanent state of crisis or, as Anthony Wallace termed it, a phase of cultural distortion.¹⁴²⁸ At the time of the emergence of the Rastafarian movement, Jamaican society was experiencing yet another stage in this crisis, which was, as usual, especially hard felt by the black Jamaican lower classes. Harsh colonial oppression, uneven distribution of power and wealth, frustrated expectations concerning social and political reforms, a cultural identity crisis and the economic hardships of the mass of the black population, deepened by the effects of the global recession, all shaped and molded the ideas and beliefs of the Rastafarians, and no doubt contributed to a fertile recruiting ground for the first “ambassadors of Ras Tafari.” But although it may not be too difficult to identify reasons why the late 1920s and early 1930s were in one way or another extraordinary in this respect, all this would hardly explain the advent of the movement as such, nor its nature.

Since deprivation theories provide so “little insight into any particular movement, the form it takes, or its history,” as William Lessa and Evon Vogt write, the evolution and character of such movements can only be understood when placed within a broader historical and cultural context.¹⁴²⁹ Hence, in chapter 1 an attempt was made to trace the development of religious ideas prevalent among the black population,

not only in Jamaica, but also elsewhere in the New World. As we have seen, the Rastafarian movement emerged from a widespread tradition of back-to-Africa ideologies and Ethiopianism, which reached their height during the 1920s under the influence of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. The Rastafarians were far from unique in either their longing for a return to Africa, their belief that they were the true biblical Israelites or their veneration of Ethiopia as the vanguard of African redemption. Various combinations of elements from these traditions were to be found in many different, secular as well as religious, movements elsewhere in the English-speaking black world, notably - or perhaps just best documented - in the United States.

The yearning for a return to Africa was as old as slavery itself and led to several organized, though controversial efforts, often supported by white interests. In the United States, organizations like the American Colonization Society, the United African Republic Emigration Society, the African Civilization Society, the Niger Valley Exploring Party or the International Migration Society, actually succeeded in repatriating thousands of black people to Africa. In Jamaica, however, repatriation always remained an unattainable dream, except for the deportation of rebellious Maroons and the migration of a few black missionaries. Yet the idea was certainly latent and received a new impulse in the mid-nineteenth century with the arrival of the several thousands of African indentured laborers. Many of these people, as Monica Schuler writes, "longed for Africa with such a feeling that ... they 'would have walk foot and go back to Africa'."¹⁴³⁰ Their impact on the (creole) black population and their belief in the possibility of a brighter future in their fathers' land is difficult to document, but must have been significant.¹⁴³¹

With the introduction of Christianity, numerous black people around the world began to identify with the biblical Israelites and/or Ethiopians and to see in them the promise of an African redemption. Throughout the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century black ministers in the United States, Southern Africa and Jamaica preached on Psalm 68:31 and the message of the chosen black race, scattered in the African diaspora, enslaved and exiled in modern Babylon, but destined once to return to Zion. While such beliefs were expounded by Native Black Baptists and other "African" or "Ethiopian" congregations as early as the 1780s, it was not until the early twentieth century that various movements emerged in which the idea of a parallel between the black race and the biblical chosen figured prominently. While Black Muslims in the United States looked to the Islamic world, Black Hebrews shared with the Rastafarians their belief in being the true biblical Israelites. But although some of these groups linked themselves to the Ethiopian Falashas, they did not perceive Ethiopia as the Promised Land. Yet even in this the Rastafarians were not unique. Numerous adherents of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, the short-lived Star Order of Ethiopia and Ethiopian Missionaries to Abyssinia, commonly known as the Abyssinians, and sections of the Ethiopian World Federation in the United States, along with several "Ethiopianist" churches in South Africa and a number of diminutive organizations throughout the New World, shared their perception of Ethiopia.

What set the Rastafarians apart from most other movements within this tradition of back-to-Africa ideologies and Ethiopianism, was their reverence for the Ethiopian Emperor as the Messiah returned. Although deification of the Ethiopian monarch occurred elsewhere during the 1930s, it was only in Jamaica that the idea of Haile Selassie as the Savior of the exiled black race gained currency.¹⁴³² Why this was so, is a difficult question. The answer, given our limited data, must remain somewhat speculative.

The fact that Ethiopianism seems to have been largely restricted to the English-speaking world is, as George Shepperson suggests, likely to be related to the King James version of the Bible where references to "black" are translated as "Ethiopian."¹⁴³³ There were, furthermore, frequent and close contacts between black people in the English-speaking world, including the United States, Jamaica and South Africa, all regions in which the presence of strong Ethiopianist tendencies has been relatively well-documented. As we have seen, many of the first Black Baptist preachers in Jamaica originated from the United States, while the United States-based African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, for example, was well-represented in both Jamaica and South Africa, as was the South African-based Afro-Athlican Constructive Gaathly (AACG) in Jamaica. It was, of course, the Universal Negro Improvement Association which during the late 1910s and 1920s provided the most extensive linkages. Many of these black leaders, including most of the early Rastafarian preachers, had traveled widely and had no doubt come in contact with Ethiopianist ideas elsewhere. But although they were perhaps more intense, contacts between black people were, of course, not restricted to the English-speaking world and Jamaicans were, needless to say, not the only ones who had traveled.

What then made the Jamaican situation unique? Black Baptists, the AME Church, the AACG or the UNIA

had all been influential elsewhere, and in any case Ethiopianist tendencies were not restricted to these groups. Historical coincidence or conjunction of circumstances, though always somewhat unsatisfactory, becomes an inevitable element in the explanation. André Köbben points out that in the explanation for the emergence of religious movements the “personal factor,” the “coincidental presence” of a personality with prophetic gifts (or charisma), is far more important than generally assumed (prophetic gifts, of course, in the sense of its social recognition, rather than any intrinsic personal quality). While social and cultural factors may provide favorable conditions for the rise of religious movements in a significant number of cases, the “personal factor,” according to Köbben, seems to be decisive.¹⁴³⁴

Yet countless “prophets” arise all over the world. Few, however, are successful in the sense of winning a following and establishing a movement. The success of prophetic figures can hardly be as “coincidental” as their presence.¹⁴³⁵ For one thing, prophets need to legitimize their own special role, in order for their claims to be recognized. This may require deeds that can only be “explained” by divine blessing, like Alexander Bedward’s healing practices - but which none of the early Rastafarian leaders is known to have performed. Less spectacular claims may, however, also serve to legitimize a prophetic role. Howell is known to have claimed to have fought in the Ashanti war and to have visited Ethiopia, a claim similar to the one later made by Claudius Henry.

But while such claims may contribute to legitimizing the role of the prophet, they do not necessarily authorize his message. In the case of the Rastafarian movement, it appears likely that the achievements of Howell, Hinds and the other early preachers were for a large part made possible only by the myths which had evolved around Marcus Garvey - including his alleged prophecy about the coronation of a black king in Africa - among sections of the black lower classes in Jamaica. The tendency to perceive Garvey as a John the Baptist to the Black Messiah, was, as far as we know, a uniquely Jamaican interpretation. It may very well then be, that it was precisely this reference to both the prestige and the “philosophy and opinions” of an already established leader, often accorded semi-divine status himself, coupled with the popular belief in his prophecy about the advent of a kingly African Savior, which lent the claims of the first Rastafarian preachers the legitimacy so crucial to their success.

But whereas back-to-Africa ideologies and Ethiopianism molded the most central elements in “Rastology,” many other beliefs, rituals and elements of Rastafarian life-style were shaped and influenced by Jamaican folk culture and religion, notably Revival and local Hindu religion. Although it goes beyond the direct concern of this study, some space has to be devoted to this question here, if only because several authors have argued that Rastafari has too easily been placed within the “Judaeo-Christian” tradition of Ethiopianism, a debate which has recently attracted renewed attention and has shifted to the question of whether and to what extent Rastafari, through Revival, can be regarded as a continuation of African religious traditions.¹⁴³⁶

Unlike Haitian Vodun, Cuban Santería, Trinidadian Shango or Jamaican Revival (Myal), Kumina, Pukumina or Convince, Rastafari has generally been viewed as one of the few - perhaps the only - Caribbean religions or religious movements which did not adopt identifiable elements of African religious traditions in its core doctrine or ritual.¹⁴³⁷ Yet in its early stages Rastafari was certainly strongly influenced by Revival. As we have seen in chapter 2, despite hostility between the two groups, the early Rastafarian preachers adopted many customs and rituals from Revival, to such an extent that during the 1950s this led to friction between young, radical Rastas and the “established” leadership. There is, to be sure, nothing new about the observation that Rastafarians adopted several Revival traditions. Leonard Barrett points out that the early Rastafarians had “assimilat[ed] much of the native religious culture.”¹⁴³⁸ Robert Hill also underlines the importance of these traditions, when he writes:

It ... remains important to recognize the depth to which popular belief in the power of the occult played a formative role in the early stages of Rastafari consciousness. But this ought not to be surprising, since in its early stage it possessed close and organic links with the belief and ritual systems of Jamaican folk religion.¹⁴³⁹

Barry Chevannes’ recent study of direct and indirect traces of Revival in Rastafarian ritual and ideology is an important contribution to our understanding of the roots of Rastafari.¹⁴⁴⁰ Among the direct traces, Chevannes lists the structure of ritual (divided into two parts: first drumming and singing, then Bible reading and preaching), the ritual instruments (the drums), divination (especially the power of the Bible to expose evil), the importance of and preference for herbs, and the significance of visions. Indirect traces of Revival in Rastafari include the belief in the power of the spoken word, the contamination of death, the designation of women as a source of evil and the divinity of man.¹⁴⁴¹ One could even add a few more trac-

es of Revival in Rastafari such as the turban worn by Prince Emmanuel's Bobo Dreads or Robert Hinds' custom of baptizing his followers in the Ferry River. Hinds, as Chevannes is well aware, but does not mention in his article, was a follower of Revival leader Alexander Bedward before he became one of the most influential early Rastafarian leaders. Apart from that, there is, of course, the connection between Revival and Rastafari stemming from the fact that numerous adherents of the movement were no doubt raised in Revivalist families and churches.

Although, as Chevannes notes, Rastafari was, "a radical departure from all that had gone before it," these similarities between elements of Revival and Rastafarian beliefs lead the author to conclude that Rastafari could be regarded as the "fulfillment" of Revival and might also, because of its close links with Revival, be "a more authentic expression of [African] tradition than generally thought."¹⁴⁴² However, the evidence is not completely convincing. As Chevannes himself indicates, Mervyn Alleyne, in his study *Roots of Jamaican culture*, concludes:

Whereas Africa remains very high among Rastafarians at the level of ideological consciousness, there isn't much of African continuity in the system of religious belief and religious behaviour. For example, "spirit possession, which ... remains the most abiding link with Africa in the Jamaican religious behaviour, is totally absent in Rastafarianism."¹⁴⁴³

Alleyne nevertheless identifies two African continuities: the dreadlocks and the plastic art (mainly wood-carving) of the Rastafarians.

As we have seen in chapter 2, the precise origin of the dreadlocks remains obscure. Smith, Augier and Nettleford maintain that the dreadlocks emerged at the Pinnacle commune of Leonard Howell.¹⁴⁴⁴ This seems unlikely, if only because in the extensive press coverage of police raids on the commune dreadlocks were not mentioned anywhere, while Howell was known to have displayed a "personal dislike" for dreadlocked Rastas. As a common style the dreadlocks appeared some time during the mid-1950s or early 1960s, and may have been introduced, as Chevannes suggests elsewhere, by young and radical members of organizations like Youth Black Faith as an expression of their anti-social position.¹⁴⁴⁵ The Rastafarians themselves, however, commonly regard it as an expression of African identity. Among the inspirations named for the origin of the Rasta hairstyle, are examples of Ethiopian warlords (from pictures in the *National Geographic Magazine*) and Mau Mau warriors in Kenya, whose pictures regularly appeared in magazines and Jamaican newspapers during the 1950s. Also mentioned as a source of inspiration were the lion's mane, (the symbol of African power), biblical decrees, especially the "Nazarite vow" of Numbers 6 and the Levitical laws (19 and 21), the story of Samson (and Delilah), and even the example of Christ. But whatever the exact origins and meaning(s) ascribed to the locks, it is a "tradition" dating back no further than the 1950s.

Little is known about the origin of the Rastafarians' plastic art, but it, too, appears to be a "tradition" which emerged in the 1960s or perhaps a little earlier. Rastafarian art as a distinctive style was first noted by art critics and collectors during the late 1960s. Its full development and rise to prominence did not occur before the 1970s. There is, according to Alleyne, no "historical record in Jamaica" to account for either the wearing of locks or the plastic art of the Rastafarians. Whatever the exact period of its development, the typical style of Rasta woodcarving (and painting) thus seems to fall into the same category as the dreadlocks: "continuities" paradoxically described by the Alleyne as "reintroductions." But are the locks and the plastic art of the Rastafarians reintroductions of genuine African traditions or perhaps "merely" traditions *perceived* to be African, the creative results of a search for a lost African identity? Do not the dreadlocks and the woodcarving of the Rastafarians rather fall into Eric Hobsbawm's category of "invented traditions," including "both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less traceable manner within a brief and dateable period - a matter of a few years perhaps - and establishing themselves with great rapidity."¹⁴⁴⁶

The second type of African "continuities" Alleyne mentions are "the product of the historical process of continuity and change," including the mystical powers ascribed to herbs (ganja), food taboos, the concept of Earth as Mother, the rejection of "another world," the use of drums and belief in the power of the word. Alleyne merely summarizes these items, which "may be" continuations. But although there is little detailed knowledge of the origins and prevalence of these beliefs and rituals in Jamaica, a few comments can be made here.

The Rastafarians themselves have generally justified their use of ganja with biblical references (e.g. Genesis 1:29 or Revelation 22:2). Although many Rastas use it, the smoking of ganja is not believed

to be essential for obtaining religious inspiration.¹⁴⁴⁷ Unlike dreadlocks, ganja is not, to the best of my knowledge, explicitly considered to be an African tradition (except in so far as everything Rastas do is believed to be African by virtue of the fact that they are Africans). Much the same goes for food taboos, especially pork and salt, which are primarily regarded as biblical in origin and are justified by references to biblical injunctions; and as far as pork is concerned, “also because of the animals’ known susceptibility to disease, its insanitary habits, its scavenging manner, its white meat and its general association with the white man.”¹⁴⁴⁸

The widespread use of ganja in Jamaica has commonly been linked to the arrival of East Indian indentured laborers between 1845 and 1917.¹⁴⁴⁹ Though, as Alleyne noted, “the use of marijuana in this way has not been documented in Africa,” Kenneth Bilby argues that “claims for an exclusive Indian origin are ... premature,” in spite of the fact that “documentation of cannabis use among Africans during the slavery period in Jamaica is lacking” as well.¹⁴⁵⁰ According to Bilby, there may have been a Central and East-African influence, perhaps through the arrival in the mid-nineteenth century of indentured African laborers. He concludes: “The question of the derivation of the ‘Jamaica ganja complex’ cannot be treated as an either/or position, a matter of ‘Indian’ versus ‘African’ influences. That syncretism between the two has long been occurring is evident.”¹⁴⁵¹ All this, to avoid misunderstanding, by no means implies a denial of the possibility of African influences, which are most certainly - and logically, in a culture dominated by descendants from Africans - present in one way or another. But is not the ganja complex, itself part of the mystical power ascribed to herbs, as the “syncretism” of African and Indian influences or “the product of the historical process of continuity and change,” inevitably and more than anything else a trait distinctively Caribbean i.e. Jamaican, molded and shaped by centuries of culture contact and merging of religious ideas? The point is not that there are no African “connections” in Rastafari, but that so far they have not yet been persuasively substantiated as direct African continuities, certainly not the central elements in “Rastology.”¹⁴⁵² And even if the mystical powers ascribed to herbs, the food taboos, the concept of Earth as Mother, the rejection of “another world,” the use of drums or the belief in the power of the word were convincingly demonstrated to be direct continuations of African traditions rather than distinctively Caribbean traits, they would still remain “secondary” in Rastafari. The movement then, as Alleyne concludes, “is extremely Africa-oriented, but Africa has become here more a conscious ideological focus than a historical point of departure for a system of belief and behaviour.”¹⁴⁵³

Much the same can be said about the claims of an (exclusive) Indian Hindu “connection” for Rastafari, put forward by Ajai and Laxmi Mansingh.¹⁴⁵⁴ Even more so than for the efforts to demonstrate a direct link with African religious traditions, there are major objections to such an approach. While there are no doubt some valid observations in all these studies, the evidence is often based on a perceived formal correspondence between African or Indian and Rastafarian customs, rituals or belief, which does not as such necessarily prove a direct continuity. Secondly, in order to support their argument, these authors tend to downplay or, in the case of the Mansinghs, even completely dismiss the formative influence of back-to-Africa ideologies and Ethiopianism as embodied most notably in Garvey and the UNIA.¹⁴⁵⁵

With their claim that “the basic concepts, rituals and codes of Rastafarianism are akin to, *and obviously derived from*, parochial Hinduism which has been practiced in Jamaica since 1845,” the Mansinghs carry both this comparison in form and neglect of Garveyism to the extreme.¹⁴⁵⁶ Arguing that Garvey’s alleged prophecy about the coronation of a black Messiah has not been documented, whereas his harsh criticism of Haile Selassie, following the outbreak of the Italian-Ethiopian war (1935-1941), is a matter of record, the authors completely reject any organic links between Marcus Garvey and Rastafari. However, as Chevannes has demonstrated elsewhere, it was the myths about Garvey rather than the actual documentation of his words, which both inspired and gave legitimacy to the early Rastafarians, who were probably never even aware of Garvey’s denunciations of the Emperor.¹⁴⁵⁷ In contrast to Chevannes, the Mansinghs also maintain that: “Rastafarianism cannot be considered as a variant of Revivalism since the two movements differ significantly from one another in their concepts and practices. There is no room for Haile Selassie, ganja, reincarnation, etc. in Revivalism.”¹⁴⁵⁸

According to the Mansinghs, it was the Hindu philosophy of the over 36,000 East Indian indentured laborers, which inspired the first Rastafarian leaders, especially Leonard Howell and Nathaniel Hibbert. It was, for instance, the Hindu concept of Lord Rama and Krishna after which the first Rastas supposedly modelled their belief in the divinity of Haile Selassie, as the African equivalent of “a temporal ruler by ... divine birthright and a divine ruler by ... spiritual enlightenment.”¹⁴⁵⁹ Nathaniel Hibbert, who told the authors that he had begun to study Hindu beliefs in the God-incarnates some twelve years before the coronation of Haile Selassie, apparently “conceived the idea of an African God-incarnate, similar to Rama,

Krishna and Buddha.” The Rasta concept of Jah, commonly believed to be a corruption of Jehovah of Jahwe, has “apparently been derived from the Hindu phrase *Jai Bhagwan*.”¹⁴⁶⁰

The Mansinghs dubiously claim that the back-to-Africa philosophy in Rastafari was based on “the back-to-India cries which were most frequently heard during the indentureship period” and which culminated in a large protest march in Kingston in 1948. It appears highly unlikely that this led to the emergence of a back-to-Africa sentiment among the Rastafarians, since the repatriation ideology had been present in many parts of the New World well before the arrival of the first indentured laborers, and among the Rastas well before 1948. A link with earlier Ethiopianist traditions and especially with the popular interpretation of the ideology of Marcus Garvey is far more credible.

According to Mansingh and Mansingh, not only were the concepts of a divine ruler and repatriation derived from Hindu influences, but other Rastafarian customs and symbols as well. The Rasta dreadlocks, the authors claimed, are an adaption from the “not so uncommon” tradition among Indian holy men in Jamaica of wearing locks (*Jatavi*). Hibbert is quoted as saying that a few Rastas started wearing locks in the 1930s, which were then referred to as *Jagavi* or *Jatavi*. The ceremonial use of ganja for religious inspiration, vegetarianism, the taboo on contact with menstruating women, the belief in reincarnation and the cyclical concept of time are some of the other spheres in which the influence of Hinduism is said to be evident.

It is, of course, as difficult to repudiate such claims as it is to substantiate them. In the absence of solid historical evidence, however, they remain at best speculative. One might wonder also why such a development should have taken place in Jamaica and not in Trinidad, Guyana or Surinam, where both the numerical strength and cultural impact of Hindu indentured laborers far exceeded their influence in Jamaica.

To conclude: while deprivation certainly played a role in both the emergence and formulation of Rastafarian ideas, it can by itself not explain the rise of the movement nor the nature of its belief system. Rather than looking upon the movement as the product of social and economic circumstances only, it should explicitly be seen as part of older traditions, the continuation and reinterpretation of already existing secular as well as religious ideas. Historical coincidence and conjuncture of circumstances, such as the presence of prophetic figures, the myths about and (alleged) prophecy of Marcus Garvey and the legitimacy this gave to the early preachers, were the most important direct catalysts for its emergence.

Both Revival and, to a lesser degree, Hinduism, were of crucial importance in shaping elements of Rastafarian beliefs, ritual and life-style. Yet to consider Rastafari as a linear continuity of either of these traditions, is to neglect the formative influence of back-to-Africa ideologies and Ethiopianism, which can convincingly be demonstrated to have molded the most central elements in “Rastology:” the Rastafarians as the true biblical Israelites, Ethiopia as Zion and Haile Selassie as the Messiah returned. Moreover, those who endeavor to uncover linear continuities should take into account the possibility of “invented traditions,” born out of a desire to re-establish an African identity.

Rastafari, then, was not so much “a radical departure from all that had gone before it,” as a synthesis of three dominant trends or traditions deeply rooted among the black population of Jamaica: back-to-Africa ideologies, Ethiopianism (both embodied in Garveyism) and black Jamaican folk-religion. Neither Revival, Hinduism nor back-to-Africa ideologies Ethiopianism alone can convincingly explain a complex and above all multi-faceted movement like Rastafari. The relative importance of these traditions for the movement is, of course, debatable, and depends on the aspects of Rastafari under discussion. As the repatriation idea and the focus on Ethiopia were no doubt directly inspired by Garveyite teachings and Ethiopianism, ideas about the power of the spoken word, the contamination of death, women as a source of evil or the taboo of salt and pork may have been adopted from Revival beliefs, whereas the use of ganja was most likely adapted from local Hindu religion. It seems, moreover, that the impact of these traditions varied between the different groups and factions within the movement. Whereas Robert Hinds may have been strongly influenced by his Revival past and former adherence to Alexander Bedward, Howell and Hibbert seem to have adopted more Hindu influences than other early Rastafarian preachers. Others, like Ferdinand Ricketts or Paul Earlington, seem to have been predominantly influenced by Garveyite teachings. More research is needed to establish the precise connections, research which takes into consideration all the various sources of inspiration rather than one and does not exclude beforehand the probability of “invented traditions.”

Leadership and organization

“The first step in the struggle for survival is unification.”

If we return to Wallace’s scheme for the revitalization process, as outlined in the Introduction, it becomes clear that the Rastafarian movement has fulfilled the first two “major tasks” or “functional phases,” maze-way reformulation and communication, quite successfully; which is only logical, since these tasks are in fact essential preconditions for the actual emergence of a movement. Independently, several prophets (re)formulated a fairly similar “mental image of the society and its culture, as well as of its own body and its behavioral regularities,” including an image of a better world, “a more satisfying culture,” and the ways and means by which the transition to the new order would take place.¹⁴⁶¹

Whether this occurred “abrupt[ly] and dramatic[ally], ... as a moment of insight, a brief period of realization of relationships and opportunities” or “in its initial form in the mind of a single person,” is unfortunately unknown.¹⁴⁶² The historical data on the early preachers are still too meager to enable us to determine whether their inspiration derived (primarily) from visions, although we do know that at least Archibald Dunkley needed more than two years of Bible studies before he was finally convinced of Haile Selassie’s divinity. Our information is, in fact, even too meager to determine whether all of these four early preachers can actually be considered typical “charismatic leaders,” to whom their followers ascribed some sort of exceptional quality or “fascinating personal power” believed to stem from the prophet’s special relationship with the divine. Hinds’ and Dunkley’s leadership may have been non-charismatic. Hibbert claimed to be the “incarnated body,” probably of the Judean King Josiah, and may have been a typical charismatic leader.¹⁴⁶³ Leonard Howell is known to have claimed and been ascribed such qualities in his role as “ambassador of Ras Tafari.” Later during his years at Pinnacle, The Gong no longer claimed a special relationship with the divine; he claimed to be (the manifestation of) the divine himself. We have also seen such a development in the case of Prince Emmanuel as the Black Christ. Both in fact made a gradual transition from prophet to Messiah.¹⁴⁶⁴

Communication of the message was initially undertaken, at least by Howell and Hinds, at relatively large meetings, which may or may not have been combined with “quiet persuasion.” However, repression by the colonial government as well as continuous confrontations with their lower-class neighbors soon forced these Rastafarian leaders to adapt their strategy. Large meetings attracted too much attention and provoked harsh reactions, and although it is known that Robert Hinds organized marches and public meetings again during the late 1930s and early 1940s, the other Rastafarian groups seem to have relied primarily on quiet, personal communication of their message. It was, of course, the advent of reggae music as an internationally acclaimed style during the 1970s, which triggered the diffusion of the movement and message of Jah people. A more powerful communication force is hardly imaginable. However, it has also been an uncontrolled force, leaving room for all sorts of different interpretations and thereby giving rise to more diversity in and, most of all, outside Jamaica.

With regard to organization, the third “major task” identified by Wallace, it must again be recalled that from its very inception the Rastafarian movement was somewhat extraordinary, in the sense that it was formed not by a single prophet, but rather by several prophets, who formulated similar ideas and beliefs for the most part independently of one another. Although the early preachers all established their own “missions” in the early phase of the movement, several attempts were made to cooperate. Hinds acted as Howell’s deputy, while Nathaniel Hibbert also briefly worked together with Howell and his following, and later with Dunkley. Splits, however, soon occurred, while at the same time entirely new groups were established under new leaders, among whom were Ferdinand Ricketts and Vernal Davis.

A propensity for schism, as Worsley notes, “is an outstanding feature of movements of this kind,” which he not only linked to their reliance upon direct divine inspiration, but also to “a protestant ethic” and a fondness of “ranks, titles, offices, badges.”

The prosperity and worldly success that many sects achieve through enjoining upon their followers a ‘Protestant ethic’ of industrious devotion to one’s calling in life itself often introduces new distinctions of rank and status, a tendency to abandon the old puritan codes in favor of more comfortable beliefs and practices. Fundamentalists then react against this by calling for a return to the old simplicity of faith and the former democracy in organization. Thus new splits are born from the clash between the prosperous and the doctrinal modifiers on the one hand, and the lowly and the fundamentalists on the other.¹⁴⁶⁵

If reliance on divine inspiration makes religious movements more vulnerable to fissiparity than secular

movements, the Rastas' insistence on *equality of authority* in their communications with the Almighty has no doubt been a crucial element in the movement's extremely diffuse organizational structure, certainly in its later stages. The insistence that "no man can stand between the I and the Almighty" leaves little room for formal leadership.

Worsley's linkage of schism in religious movement to a "protestant ethic," however, constricts the process more than necessary. A proclivity for fission can be observed in situations in which "movement officials" do not invoke a "protestant ethic" among their adherents, while the pursuit of "a protestant ethic" does not necessarily lead to schism. The Rastafarian movement, which can hardly be considered an extreme example of "protestant ethics" has been an extremely fragmented movement. The Nation of Islam, on the other hand, known for its vigorous pursuit of American "middle class virtues," was, until a split in 1975, an exceptionally tight-knit movement.

Clearly, there are more general causes of schism at work in such movements as well: ideological differences, class and ethnic antagonisms and mundane leadership struggles, to name but a few. Thus, a simple increase in prosperity among adherents, whether it results from a "protestant ethic" or from the inclusion of more prosperous adherents, creates class differences. In the case of the Rastafarian movement, the tensions between, on the one hand, the orthodox lower-class Rastafarians in groups like the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Theocracy Government and, on the other hand, the Rastafarian reggae stars or the "snobbish and middle class biased" Twelve Tribes of Israel, are an example, as are the conflicts between lower-class spokesmen like Amanuel Foxe and the intellectual "usurpers" like Michael Anthony Lorne and Leahcim Semaj.¹⁴⁶⁶

Up to the late 1940s, as we have seen, the movement was dominated by groups under charismatic or at least strong personal leadership, and organizations marked by all sorts of ranks and offices.¹⁴⁶⁷ During the late 1940s and early 1950s young and radical Rastafarians in groups like Youth Black Faith developed a new kind of organization, which eventually laid the basis for the Theocracy Government and House of Nyabinghi. Membership was open to all, "members" could come and go, and leadership became informal and multiple, based on seniority, experience, knowledge, eloquence and other "respected" personality characteristics, rather than on claims or recognition of an extraordinary relationship with the Almighty or on rank and office.

With regard to effective and coordinated action towards a certain goal, the loose and informal organizational structure of the "House" has obviously been a serious disadvantage. The events surrounding the preparations for the mission to Africa in 1960-1961 and the failed attempts to form and register the African Comprehensive Party for the elections of 1989 and 1990, are typical of the inability of orthodox Rastafarians to take effective action. While the House has in some cases managed, after thorough discussions, to reach a consensus, the absence of strong leadership has drained much of its potential to play the governing role it has always claimed in the movement. On the other hand, one might argue that given its extremely loose organizational structure, it is astonishing to see how much the Theocracy Government has still been able to achieve.

The groups under charismatic leadership within the Rastafarian movement, Howell's Ethiopian Salvation Society, Claudius Henry's Peacemakers' Association, Prince Emmanuel's Bobo Dreads - who all established isolated communes - and the Prophet Gad's Twelve Tribes of Israel, appear in some ways to have been more successful. No doubt in many cases charismatic leadership has facilitated coordinated action and a pooling of resources, certainly in a commune setting. To varying degrees, this has enabled these leaders to improve at least the economic position of their following - Henry and Prince Emmanuel's achievements are particularly noteworthy - or, as the Twelve Tribes have successfully done, to mobilize resources to initiate repatriation programs. Yet much the same applies to many of the groups under strong personal but non-charismatic leadership, as for instance the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari with its flourishing community center.

Charismatic leadership, as Wallace observes, is likely to pose the problem of the "routinization of charisma" and thus problems of continuity.¹⁴⁶⁸ Sooner or later such leaders must transfer their power and authority to others, if the group is to survive their death or failure. The demise of Howell's Ethiopian Salvation Society and the partial disintegration of Claudius Henry's Peacemakers' Association are examples, although it is interesting to note that some of the remaining followers of Henry have attempted to transfer the charisma ascribed to their leader to an outsider, Trevor Munroe, the leader of the Workers' Party of Jamaica. Whether the Bobo Dreads and the Twelve Tribes will in time survive the death or failure of

their respective prophets remains to be seen, but appears unlikely. The same problems, however, may again be observed within all those (informal) groups led by single “elders,” such as Ras Dizzy, Mortimo Planno, Samuel Brown or Michael Lorne. Multiple leadership, as in the case of the Judah Coptics and Theocracy Government, as well as groups in which leadership is primarily related to offices, as in some Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation, may be less prone to such problems of continuity.

For the Rastafarian movement as a whole, however, its acephalous organization has been a major obstacle. “A continuing alienation and disunity ... characterizes practically every established Rastafari-an assembly or House,” concluded Arthur Kitchin. Lack of organization and centralized leadership has manifestly prevented the movement from realizing many of its goals and having the impact on Jamaican society it could have had. Despite its occasional (and often indirect) successes, its history sometimes reads as a sad tale of failures. Comparison with other movements, for example with the economic success of the Nation of Islam or with the Black Hebrews, who migrated in large numbers to Africa and Israel, is tempting, but hazardous and beyond the scope of this study.

The Rastafarians are themselves perfectly aware of their constant failure to organize and centralize their movement. The persistent calls for unity by groups like the Rasta Movement Association, the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation and, more recently, the Ethiopian International Unification Committee, bear testimony to this. “The first step in the struggle for survival is unification,” wrote the IEWF in one of its numerous letters to *The Daily Gleaner*. But like most other groups, it considered unification to be possible only under its leadership.

The Rastas themselves have often argued that the divisions within the movement were inevitable during the early years, when the movement was subjected to harsh repression. A centralized movement under a single-headed leadership, they maintained, would not only have been easy to eradicate, but could also have been easily betrayed by unreliable leaders.¹⁴⁶⁹ While this claim obviously has some validity, it is at best a partial truth. The movement has been just as incapable of overcoming its internal differences at times when repression did not threaten its existence and coordinated action was necessary in order to achieve its goals. As a matter of fact (and, as I hope, has become clear from the previous chapters) virtually all attempts to organize the movement, from the preparations for the mission to Africa to the attempts to unite during national and international conferences, have only resulted in further division.

Hence, its accomplishments should be sought not so much in tangible results as in ideological changes. The Rastafarian movement as a whole may not have realized mass-repatriation, or have fundamentally changed Jamaican power relationships and it may not even have significantly improved the social and economic position of the majority of its adherents. It has, however, undoubtedly had some affect on the cultural, ethnic and class-awareness of some sections of the Jamaican population. It has forced society to realize that a large part of its heritage lies in Africa and that Jamaican people of African descent have long been oppressed and exploited.

Repression, subversion and co-optation

“The only method of suppressing the movement will be by sociological means.”

In Wallace’s revitalization scheme “adaptation” is identified as the fourth major task or “functional stage” a movement has to fulfil in order to achieve its goals, however vaguely perceived. It is hoped that the previous chapters have, for one thing, illustrated the rapidity with which changes in the Rastafarian movement have occurred. Throughout its sixty years of existence, the nature of the movement has undergone several extensive changes, often within the space of a decade. From typical millenarian radicalism during the 1930s, for instance, it retreated - as far as we know - into quiet, isolated sectarianism in the 1940s to re-emerge as radical millenarianism during the 1950s. And from being a persecuted and despised minority during the 1960s, it gained remarkable popularity during the 1970s, only to be thrown back into oblivion during the 1980s.

As noted in the Introduction, many of the more theoretical and/or comparative studies have tended to rely on sources that are not only inadequate, but also grossly outdated. Such static approaches are doomed to produce theoretical caricatures, which tell us more about the author’s limited knowledge of specific cases than they contribute to an understanding of the general processes of a movement’s

evolution or its nature. To construct theories about *the* Rastafarian movement on the basis of descriptions of the movement at the time of, for instance, the Henry fiasco, is to treat an extremely dynamic phenomenon as existing in some sort of timeless vacuum, impervious to change. While it may appear all too obvious to remind us, as Stephen Glazier does, that “many changes have taken place in both Caribbean religions and Caribbean societies over the past thirty years,” such admonitions, unfortunately and surprisingly, remain necessary as long as there are authors who, in 1986 and 1993 respectively, still maintain that the Rastafarians are “*all* from the working class, are unemployed, often illiterate and living on their wits” or “live in a state of extreme poverty ... are most often unemployed ... have no political rights ... and do not send their children to government schools.”¹⁴⁷⁰ In such studies a number of major developments during the last decades have been overlooked.¹⁴⁷¹

It was also noted in the Introduction that Wallace pays relatively little attention to adaptation, focusing mainly on a movement’s internal dynamics and the resistance mounted by its antagonists. As should have become clear from the previous chapters, many of the changes in the Rastafarian movement can only be understood when placed in a broader social, political and economic context. While the death of leaders, the failures of prophecy, the rise of new generations or the organizational divisions, certainly influenced the course of the movement’s development, internal dynamics alone cannot account for its evolution, which at various times was greatly affected by many different developments in and outside Jamaica, which directly or indirectly related to or influenced the movement. As Eric Wolf wonders: “If there are connections everywhere, why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomena into static, disconnected things?”¹⁴⁷²

It will not be necessary to reiterate in detail all these developments and their effects on the movement here. The various ways in which such events have influenced the Rastafarian movement have been discussed in the relevant chapters. Let it suffice here to recall that they ranged from the abdication of King Edward VIII to the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian war, from decolonization processes in Africa to the Cuban revolution, from the Manley administration’s experiment with democratic socialism to the international success of Eric Clapton’s version of the Marley song *I shot the sheriff*, from the Marxist coup in Ethiopia to Fidel Castro’s “mistake” in sitting on the Emperor’s throne, from the 1980 election victory of the Jamaica Labour Party to the Smithsonian Institution’s Festival of American Folklife.

Repression is but one of the reactions from its immediate social environment to which a movement may have to adapt itself. Since the main aim of this study is to analyze the reactions of the wider Jamaican society towards the Rastafarian movement, and the ways in which this in turn has influenced the movement’s development, it may be useful to look at this theme in more detail here.

Wallace is not alone in failing to take into account reactions other than repression; much the same goes for most of the literature on Rastafari. Considerable attention has been paid to the repression and persecution of the Rastafarians, but the effects of manipulation have been largely neglected. As we have seen, up to about 1960 the dominant strategy of the colonial state with regard to the Rastafarians was one of direct repression, although there was an initial reluctance among the authorities to persecute Howell and Hinds in the early 1930s, because it was felt that they would “revel in the advertisement of a persecution.” Nevertheless, such objections were soon cast aside when the newspapers began to report on their activities in St. Thomas. In the following years the Rastafarians experienced continuous persecution. Howell, Hinds, Hibbert, Dunkley and other early preachers were all arrested and either imprisoned or hospitalized for psychiatric treatment. Medicalization was routine procedure during the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. Adherence to a movement like Rastafari, or before that to Bedward’s Jamaica Native Free Baptist Church, was diagnosed as a weird disease which could best be treated at Bellevue Mental Hospital.

The case of Leonard Howell may serve as an example here. In 1934 he was sentenced to two years in prison for sedition. He was released in mid-1936 and already in January 1937 was reported to have attracted hundreds of followers to his meetings in St. Thomas. Within a very short time he was sentenced to several months in the mental hospital and, after being released, took up residence at Pinnacle, together with hundreds of followers. In 1941 he was again sentenced to two years behind bars, but again his following remained faithful. What eventually led to his fall as a leader was, as far as we know, the fact that during the years at Pinnacle he began to claim divinity for himself.

Repression as a means of dealing with the Rastafarians continued during the 1950s and 1960s. Sanctioned, if not ordered by the government, the reactions of the police following the murder of Sidney

Garrell in 1951, the 1958 grounation, the fracas at Coronation Market in 1959, the Henry rebellion of 1960, the Holy Thursday massacre of 1963, the demolition of Back-O-Wall in 1966, the raids on Claudius Henry's commune in 1967-1968 or the Rodney riots of October 1968 were clear examples of large-scale retaliation. Yet the movement continued to grow and, partially as a result of the persecution it was subjected to, experienced a process of radicalization.

It should be noted again here that repressive reactions did not come only from the government. Particularly in the early years the Rastafarians were in constant conflict with their lower-class neighbors. Leonard Howell was chased out of St. Thomas by an angry mob in 1937 and Robert Hinds and his following had several violent clashes with youth gangs in the 1930s and 1940s. The 1951 murder case resulted in unprecedented public outrage which threatened to develop into spontaneous rioting, while after the Ronald Henry rebellion of 1960 and the Holy Thursday Massacre of 1963, citizens "wholeheartedly" assisted the police and army in chasing the murderers and rounding up every "beard" in the area. Numerous other cases of Jamaican citizens using force and violence against individual Rastafarians have occurred throughout the sixty years of the movement's existence. Sometimes such actions may have had little to do with the victims' beliefs, but in several cases, such as the person who murdered a Rastafarian because "all dread must dead," they were clearly related to the Rastas' faith.

After the 1960s, in effect following the coming to power of the People's National Party in 1972, such large-scale repressive operations were no longer (officially) approved of or authorized by the government. The rising popularity of Rastafari during the 1970s, in part due to the (international) success of reggae music, contributed to declining persecution as well. If not altogether sympathetic towards the movement, more and more Jamaicans came to recognize that it did not pose the evil threat to national security that it had been portrayed as representing during the 1960s and earlier. And quite a few Jamaicans even began to recognize some positive values in Rastafari. At the same time, the movement itself was only rarely responsible for actions which might provoke harsh reactions from the security forces. In fact the Rastafarians' insistence on peace and love stood in sharp contrast to the rapid escalation of political gang warfare. The security forces, however, kept harassing and persecuting Rastafarians, though less openly and on a smaller scale. Numerous incidents were reported, ranging from breaking up Rastafarian meetings and arbitrary arrests, to beating up or even killing individual Rastas. In spite of periodic calls to halt these practices, the government refused - or was unable - to take effective measures.

It is difficult to assess whether the Rastafarians today are still more vulnerable to police persecution and harassment than other Jamaicans. Adherents of the movement themselves will answer in the affirmative, whereas the security forces would deny it - as they deny almost all incidents of brutality and harassment. Police brutality is, however, rampant in Jamaican society and charges are pressed in only a few cases.¹⁴⁷³ There are persistent stories about Rastafarians being forcibly trimmed, beaten up and arbitrarily arrested by the police. But whether these actions are directed against the Rastafarians as such or are simply part of endemic police brutality in general is hard to say, though not unlikely. Although many Jamaicans are nowadays quick to assert - some sincerely, others less so - that they have nothing against "the smoking class," there is still a widespread animosity towards Rastafarians in Jamaican society, including among the police. Many Rastafarians are easily recognizable by their locks and known for their devotion to "the weed," and thus easy victims under *The Suppression of Crime (Special Provisions) Act*. But even if the persecution of Rastas has declined almost to the point where they are neither more nor less subject to police brutality than other citizens, that would hardly matter from the Rastafarian point of view. The fact is that they continue to be persecuted and as long as this situation persists, it will confirm many in their belief that Jamaica is Babylon, an evil system designed to keep the poor black sufferers "downpressed."

Much the same goes for the chronic discrimination against Rastafarians. While they are not legally excluded from certain rights as Rastafarians, the adherents of the movement still experience various forms of discrimination. Many employers refuse to hire those who are visibly recognizable as Rastas. The majority of the schools, backed by the Ministry of Education, decline to enroll dreadlocked students. Contrary to the situation in the United States and England, Rastafarians in Jamaican prisons are not allowed to keep their locks. Parliament has denied the movement formal recognition as a valid religion. In everyday life, those who manifestly adhere to the movement experience discrimination in countless other ways. People in the streets may bully them, shop-keepers may deny them entrance, neighbors may chase them away and Judges may be prejudiced against them. Rastafarians are still often looked upon as thieves and criminals, blasphemous nuisances and drug addicts. Apart from that,

the Rastafarians themselves also feel discriminated against because they are denied their “universal human right” to African citizenship, including the right to return to and settle in Africa, and their “constitutional right” to worship in freedom, including their right to smoke ganja as a religious sacrament.

Continuous repression and discrimination have, if anything, contributed to the continued existence of the movement, rather than to its decline. Wallace’s view that “probability of failure” for revitalization movements is “directly correlated with amount of resistance,” needs to be turned around.¹⁴⁷⁴ Up to the point of total containment or extermination, repression is more likely to strengthen such movements, since it not only creates martyrs, but also confirms the adherents in their conviction that the existing order is evil and corrupt.

Nevertheless, repression, as described above, was but one of the strategies the Jamaican establishment employed in its dealings with Rastafari. An occasional author has noted, though without further clarification, “subversive” or “co-optative” efforts by the Jamaican governments with regards to Rastafari. Colin Prescod, for instance, notes that “oppressed ideologies must be subverted by the ruling classes in defence of their privileges. The response of Jamaica’s ruling classes to Rastafarians provides a revealing example of the *ad hoc* sophistication of neo-colonial politics in the Caribbean.”¹⁴⁷⁵ According to Prescod, the effect of this subversion of the Rastafarian movement was that it “at least diverted its development,” although how and in what ways the author does not explain. Carole Yawney also points out that “co-optation and repression of millenarian movements need to be examined in more detail. One cannot ascribe certain developments or the lack of them within millenarian movements to the intrinsic properties or dynamics of millenarian movements alone.”¹⁴⁷⁶

Terms such as co-optation, subversion or manipulation have sometimes been used quite loosely. It may be useful, therefore, to make an analytical distinction between subversion and co-optation, while remembering that the two may go hand in hand. A subversive strategy, as a deliberate effort to create doubt about beliefs and ideas, is always aimed at containing if not annihilating a movement. Co-optation, as the assimilation of (part of) a movement’s beliefs, ideas, rituals and symbolism, may be an integral part of the former, but is not necessarily a strategy and not necessarily aimed at containing a movement, although it may be used as such. Co-optation may simply reflect increased identification with ideas and beliefs by groups outside the movement, who subsequently claim and consider such ideas and their symbolic representations as characteristic of a larger group than the original protagonists. The assimilation of Rastafarian ideas, beliefs and symbols by part of the Jamaican youth, both lower and middle class, during the 1970s is an obvious example of this. Within a short time much of the symbolism and rhetoric was no longer considered Rastafarian, but rather “Jamaican.” Quite a few Rastafarian words and phrases (Ital, Irie, I-man, Hail, greetings, brethren, etc.) rapidly became an integral part of Jamaican patois, while the dreadlocks, the tam or the red, gold and green paraphernalia became “normal” expressions of popular Jamaican (sub)culture. Co-optation, however, becomes a strategy when it is used to achieve certain more or less clearly defined goals although even then its prime objective may not be to contain a movement. For instance, it may be used in the hope of profiting from a movement’s sway over certain sections of a society, as was the case with some of the reggae artists and record companies, the Rent-a-dreads and the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church, the North coast higglers and *Reggae Rum* producers, the Jamaican Tourist Board and the political parties.

As we have seen, both the government and individual representatives of the wider Jamaican society made several attempts to subvert the beliefs of the Rastafarians. The first known attempts were made by Governors Foot and his successor Blackburne, who wrote letters to the British ambassador in Addis Ababa and the Colonial Secretary, respectively, in an effort to have Emperor Haile Selassie publicly deny both his alleged divinity and the idea that black Jamaican migrants would be welcome in Ethiopia. Not surprisingly, these attempts came at a time when the Rastafarian movement, despite firm repressive measures, was beginning to manifest itself as a radical and potentially violent force. As Governor Blackburne, in one of his letters to the Colonial Office, wrote: “[I]n the long term there is little doubt that the only method of suppressing the movement will be by sociological means.”¹⁴⁷⁷ In a sense, both Governors tried to provoke a failure of prophecy for the Rastafarians, no doubt hoping that this would at least halt their growing impact on the lower classes. However, both attempts failed. Although a similar private effort by the editor of *Public Opinion* in 1961 did result in a written denial of divinity from the Emperor, it had little or no impact on the Rastafarians, partly because it went largely unnoticed. In reality, their conviction was so strong that it later never even crossed the minds of the mission delegates to ask the Emperor about his divinity. A denial, even from the Messiah himself, would not have shaken the faith of the true believers, as the “death” of His Imperial Majesty several years later was to demonstrate.

But Governor Blackburne also had another strategy: conversion to Christianity by the Moral Rearmament movement. With the assistance of the Custos of St. James, Francis Kerr-Jarrett, a group of Rastafarians from Montego Bay was sent on a course at the MRA's headquarters in Michigan in 1959. Unfortunately, our information is too fragmentary to determine whether this attempt had any significant effects, but from the mere fact that only one other such venture has been reported since (in 1961 four Rastafarians from Kingston also visited Mackinac), it may be assumed that the MRA did not embark on a large-scale conversion plan. Yet the trip did result in serious conflicts within the Montego Bay group and eventually led to a split.

The Moral Rearmament movement's efforts, though supported by the Governor and the Custos of St. James, appear to have been private initiatives rather than official government policy. The major change in the government's strategy came only after the 1960 *Report* of the University College of the West Indies. The mission to Africa of 1961, as described in chapter 3, was - with all its good intentions - a well-considered plan to create doubt among the Rastafarians about their milk-and-honey image of Africa, and thereby to undermine their desire for repatriation. The effects of this effort on the movement as a whole are difficult to assess with any precision. It appears not to have affected the belief in repatriation directly, in part because of the intense conflicts which accompanied the formation of a representative delegation, resulting in the delegates already being denounced as "a bunch of trip-seekers" long before they had left. Yet in the long run the mission no doubt helped to create a more realistic approach towards repatriation, with regard to both its desirability and the ways and means by which to pursue it. The mission also created goodwill and thereby contributed to a lessening of tensions between the Rastafarians and the wider society. The government's support for the mission indicated that it was willing to give earnest attention to the plight of the Rastafarians and thereby, despite the harsh reactions from the general public, gave the movement credibility with at least some sections of society. But, at the same time, it determined and regulated the manner in which the Rastafarians' demands and desires were, if at all, to be addressed: not by resistance in whatever form, but by negotiation and dialogue. Another, probably unintended, but no less important side-effect was that it also contributed to further divisions within the Rastafarian movement.

The invitation to Haile Selassie to visit Jamaica in 1966 was, whatever other motives the government may have had, yet another attempt to undermine the belief in the divinity of the Ethiopian Emperor. Again, its effects are hard to measure. In a sense, the state visit had the reverse effect. There is reason to believe that for some marginal adherents the confrontation with Selassie, the "miraculous" change in the weather at the airport and the rumors about his crucifixion marks, were decisive pieces of evidence for his divinity. The visit may have convinced others that he was just another mortal man, but there are no indications for such an effect. Contrary to establishment expectations, there was also no clear and direct denial of divinity from the Emperor himself. But had there been one, its effects on the beliefs of the orthodox Rastafarian would probably have been limited.

What resulted from the state visit, nevertheless, was a further lessening of tensions. The inclusion of Rastafarian leaders in the official ceremonies and welcoming parties gave the Rastas "a boost in prestige." While the Rastafarian leaders clearly enjoyed the respect paid to them, it also contributed to a better understanding and a little more tolerance for the movement in the wider society. In addition, young and politically-minded Rastafarians used statements made by the Emperor to justify their goal of active involvement in Jamaican society. The claim of royal guidance gave extra credibility and cogency to their case, but it is quite likely that this development would still have come about without this claim. In any case, it again provided an additional ground for conflict within the movement.

The last major effort to undermine the Rastafarian beliefs came with the foundation of a branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in 1970. Although generally believed to be the result of persistent requests from Rastafarians, the founding of the branch was probably more the result of the desire among Jamaican politicians, and perhaps even of Haile Selassie himself, to use the church as an instrument to convert Rastafarians to Christianity. Although large numbers of Rastafarians became members of the EOC during the early 1970s, many soon dropped out again when they discovered that the theology and ritual of the church had little to do with Rastafarian beliefs and were, in many respects, close to the despised Roman Catholic teachings. Moreover, the church was seen as a hierarchical and authoritarian institution. Nevertheless, many Rastafarians viewed it as the church of the Emperor and the church from the Promised Land, and maintained at least a loose relationship with it. While not regularly attending its services, they frequently used the EOC for baptism of their children, funerals and sometimes weddings.

As a respected church, supported by both the political and religious Jamaican establishment, the EOC certainly contributed to the movement's respectability. Furthermore, it seems not unlikely, though our material does not provide the information to draw a more than tentative conclusion, that over the past twenty years the presence of the EOC has also affected the doctrine of parts of the Rastafarian movement, especially with regard to Haile Selassie after his "disappearance." And like the mission to Africa, the MRA's involvement with the movement and Haile Selassie's state visit, the presence of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was a new cause for conflict and division among the Rastafarians.

All these efforts to subvert the basic beliefs of the Rastafarians, and thereby to contain the movement, signaled a realization that repression alone did not work and might even have an adverse effect. At the same time, these efforts also betrayed a misunderstanding of the nature of religious movements. Denials of divinity or a more realistic perception of the Promised Land and the difficulties of mass-repatriation had less pronounced and less immediate effects on the Rastafarian movement than expected. Their distrust of the status quo, their deep and unshakable convictions coupled with the ability to interpret new information selectively, their deep-rooted suspicion of self-styled leaders plus their lack of organizational unity, enabled the Rastafarians to adapt to these developments with relative ease. It remains true, however, that in the long run these developments contributed to more "realism" within the movement and also to a general easing of tensions *vis-à-vis* the wider society. After all, the attempts to undermine the movement were not presented as such, but rather as efforts by the wider society *in casu* the government, to take the demands of the movement seriously. They were presented as signs of goodwill, growing acceptance and recognition. Finally, the subversive tactics all created new causes for conflict and division within the already divided movement, and in that respect were certainly effective.

Co-optation strategies, that is deliberate efforts to assimilate (part of) a movement's beliefs, ideas, rituals and symbolism, were not used primarily to contain the movement, but rather to extend (political) influence among those sections in which the Rastafarians were rapidly gaining popularity, mainly the young. Co-optation strategies came at a time - the late 1960s and early 1970s - when the tensions between the Rastafarians and the wider society had subsided to a degree where the movement could hardly be seen as a direct threat any more.

During the late 1960s, Black Power activists and left-wing intellectuals were probably the first to co-opt Rastafari, followed by the People's National Party during its election campaign of 1972. The co-optation of Rastafari by Black Power and the PNP, in turn reinforced the further assimilation of Rastafarian symbols and rhetoric by the wider society, as it gave added credibility and respectability to the movement. Both the Black Power movement and the PNP, and later also the Jamaica Labour Party and the Worker's Party of Jamaica, used the acceptance of Rastafarian ideas among the young for their own (electoral) advantage. Hence, co-optation, in the form of adopting Rastafarian argot and reggae lyrics, the wearing of tams and beards, the use of the "rod of correction" and the inclusion of Rastafarians in the party organization and policies, occurred mainly during election campaigns. As a PNP campaign manager said: "We had the feeling that Rasta talk was understood across the country."¹⁴⁷⁸

During its years in power, the PNP tried to contain the movement not so much with outright co-optation, but with superficial recognition and acceptance of its demands. Manley and his government seemed or (as many Rastas later concluded) pretended to pay sincere attention to the Rastafarians' demands. They received Rastafarian delegations, hinted at the possible legalization of ganja, called for an end to police harassment and discrimination, but effectively did little to improve the Rastafarians' position. On a few occasions the PNP administration also tried to use the Rastafarians to achieve some of its own political objectives. The inclusion of Rastafarian delegates on missions and the offer to donate land to the Judah Coptics are illustrations of this. The PNP, however, had to maneuver carefully between the popularity of Rasta among the young on the one hand and the widespread hostility towards the movement among the establishment on the other. In order not to risk losing its support among the opponents of Rastafari, the PNP refused to support repatriation, legalize ganja or force schools to accept Rastafarian children.

The Jamaica Labour Party administration of the 1980s in a sense did much the same as its predecessor, though it was far less inclined to pay serious attention to the Rastafarians and in any case ruled the country in a time when the popularity of Rastafari was rapidly declining. But it could not neglect the influence of the movement either, and on several occasions used it for electoral purposes. JLP Ministers also received Rastafarian delegations, while the party was quick to honor Bob Marley with the Order of Merit and, upon his death, with an official state funeral and statue. As Timothy White remarked about the Order of Merit decision: "the surest way for a society to subdue an outlaw is to make him a laureate."¹⁴⁷⁹

Although the general implication of such a statement is certainly correct, it was in this case no longer necessary to “subdue an outlaw.” By the 1980s neither Rastafari nor Marley posed a serious threat to Jamaican society. Whatever Seaga’s other motives may have been, gaining popular support and electoral advantage were no doubt decisive considerations. Marley, after all, was a celebrity for far larger groups than the Rastafarians alone and, in the popular perception, was associated with the opposition. Later on, during the 1980s, when the JLP administration bluntly turned down the Judah Coptics’ petition for formal incorporation, it made it abundantly clear that it was not prepared to grant the Rastafarians more than token recognition.

From millenarian hopes to political action

“Neither will there be need to wage war to free themselves.”

Perhaps the most important effect of this strategy of balancing repression and discrimination with accommodation, using subversion and co-optation presented as recognition and acceptance, has been the defusion of the Rastafarians’ millenarian expectations. While it has also served to increase internal conflicts and organizational divisions, its main effect has been to lessen the tensions, contribute to more “realism” among the Rastafarians and define the parameters within which society and government were prepared to deal with the movement, if at all. Its long-term results have been increased reliance on political means and a gradual shift to a quest for recognition and involvement in Jamaican society.

This is not to say that a growing reliance on political action or the shift towards involvement in Jamaican society can be linked exclusively to the reactions of the wider Jamaican society. Other developments, as noted before, also played a role. The decolonization process in Africa, the repeated failures of prophecy and the growing involvement of the educated middle class and intelligentsia within the movement also encouraged this process. As described in chapter 2, the struggle for freedom and independence in Africa, as well as the Castro revolution in Cuba and the move towards independence in Jamaica and elsewhere in the Caribbean, must have almost inevitably forced upon the Rastafarians the idea that liberation and redemption could be achieved by the people, the masses themselves. The radicalization this caused, was in fact little else than a sign of growing awareness that political action by the adherents themselves could bring about change and it was among the young and rising generation that these ideas gained a foothold.

It may be argued that the repeated failures of prophecy have also contributed to the realization that, as the Twelve Tribes of Israel sometimes express it, God will help only those who help themselves.¹⁴⁸⁰ Practicing patience for decades and maintaining the faith in spite of the repeated failure of prophecy - including the disappearance of the Messiah - is far from easy. We have seen that in the face of growing impatience, especially among the younger generation, the elders have time and time again called for patience and persistence, but in the end have had difficulty remaining faithful themselves. The increasing influence of better educated middle-class and intellectual Rastafarians - plus the Black Power movement - may also have helped to develop political awareness and faith in direct political action. Although direct causal relations are difficult to pin down, it is clear that the combination of all these factors has led to the effects outlined above.

When the Rastafarian movement emerged in the early 1930s it was as a movement with clear millenarian tendencies. The early preachers announced what Yonina Talmon described as an “imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly, collective salvation.”¹⁴⁸¹ The message was also messianic in the sense that it was believed that salvation would be brought about by a single divine savior, Emperor Haile Selassie I. The Rastafarians expected redemption to take place within a very short time and Leonard Howell had even set a date: 1 August 1934. Salvation was seen as a collective return of black Jamaicans to Africa. As usual with millenarian movements, perceptions of the way in which the transition to the new order would be accomplished or the way in which the new order would be organized were vague and mythical. Howell issued “passports” for a free return to Africa and it appears that the early Rastafarians expected the Emperor’s ships to come to take them home. When 1 August 1934 passed without the prophecy being fulfilled, Rastafarians in Portland were reported to have planned a march across the Atlantic, vowing to cleave the water with their beards.

In the history of the Rastafarian movement there were, however, relatively few such outbursts of millenarian activity provoked by proclamations of a “miraculous” return. Only Prince Emmanuel’s 1958 pronouncement and Claudius Henry’s announcement of a “deadline date” in October 1959 are known to have

triggered heightened expectations and frantic collective activity (including the selling of possessions) in the firm belief of an imminent fulfillment of prophecy by divine intervention. Yet it is clear that millenarian expectations received new impetus on a number of occasions. The message about the land grant in 1955, the decision of the Norman Manley administration to accept the university's recommendation to send a mission to Africa in 1960 and the state visit of Haile Selassie in 1966 may all be safely assumed to have encouraged the belief that redemption was close at hand. Large gatherings and occasional incidents of Rastafarians trying to board ships or airplanes destined for Africa were reported, but none of these events led to the selling of belongings in anticipation of a miraculous transfer to the fathers' land, as had happened with the grounation of 1958 and the Henry fiasco of 1959. Moreover, none of these proclamations had an impact on the movement as a whole. Henry, for instance, was distrusted and strongly opposed by other Rastafarian leaders, like Archibald Dunkley, who denounced his activities as "a racket."

In spite of the few eruptions of mass-excitement, millenarian expectations of salvation in Africa have continued to dominate the Rastafarian movement. To quote Yawney: "Whatever else Rastafarianism may share in common with other types of social movements, its one guiding imperative is a vision of the Millennium to come."¹⁴⁸² However, as time passed, there was a gradual change in the character of Rastafarian millennialism, a process of many years and far from linear. First of all, its imminence gave way to an expectation of redemption in a vaguer, more distant future. Although, Rastas occasionally made elaborate Bible-based calculations to determine the date on which redemption would ensue, it was not necessarily expected at a fixed date in the very immediate future. Purists may want to argue about whether, in the absence of a prophecy of salvation on a fixed date in the imminent future, a movement should still be considered millenarian in the narrow sense. Here, however, imminent is to be understood as referring to a point within - say - the lifetime of the adherents rather than to a fixed date.

Secondly, in some sections of the movement there was a gradual, not always conscious, separation between the expectation of the millennium to come and the notion of repatriation to Africa. The belief that the return to Africa would be brought about by divine intervention gave way to a growing belief that repatriation could be accomplished without divine mediation. This by no means implied that the Rastafarians no longer believed in the ultimate realization of the millennium through the intervention of the Almighty. It did mean a growing awareness that in anticipation of the fulfillment of prophecy, the adherents could somehow play an active role, as a first step in the right direction. In other words, the Rastafarians increasingly began to rely on political tactics to achieve their goals.

The relative absence of millenarian outbursts is a major reason for Barry Chevannes' recent suggestion that it would be more fruitful to approach Rastafari as a "cultural" or "world view movement" rather than as a "political movement," and thus - I assume - a movement which seeks to explain the world rather than to change it.¹⁴⁸³ Following Ken Post, Chevannes defines "world view" as "a system of beliefs and a state of consciousness."¹⁴⁸⁴ Although I do not intend to go into this discussion here in full, a few brief remarks need to be made.¹⁴⁸⁵

Rather surprisingly, Chevannes argues that Rastafari is not a repatriation movement, "despite the centrality of and insistence on this belief." He writes that there have only been three "repatriation initiatives:" in 1934 (Howell's prediction), 1958 (Prince Emmanuel's grounation) and 1959 (Claudius Henry's announcement of a "deadline date"). As noted above, these were indeed the most important *millenarian* initiatives, in the sense of outbursts of frantic group activity in anticipation of imminent salvation through divine intervention. However, as we have also seen, these were certainly not the only *repatriation* initiatives. The activities surrounding the mission to Africa of 1961, the privately organized mission of Alvaranga, Mack and Clayton in 1965, the stream of petitions, the law suit and eventual private mission to Africa of Prince Emmanuel's Bobo Dreads, the survey by the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari, the repatriation offensives of the Judah Coptics, the repatriation programs of the Ethiopian World Federation and the Twelve Tribes of Israel are only the major examples. All these initiatives were expressed in political terms. They were not inflamed by the expectation of divine intervention, but were dependent on the actions of the followers themselves. Although there is no denying that Rastafari is more than just a repatriation movement, this would hardly seem to justify the conclusion that Rastafari is not a repatriation movement at all or that Rastafari is a "cultural" rather than a "political" movement. If anything, it signaled an increased reliance on political action, instead of millenarian expectations only. The two are, to be sure, by no means mutually exclusive.¹⁴⁸⁶

Now that we discuss Chevannes' suggestion that Rastafari is essentially a "cultural" or "world-view movement," it may be useful to briefly sidestep the issue of increased political action to address the second ar-

gument in support of the world-view thesis: the “acephalous and somewhat spontaneous” organizational structure of the movement, which shows “a remarkable similarity to Revival.”¹⁴⁸⁷ If Rastafari is a world view movement this might explain the absence of centralized organization, although Chevannes wonders whether this is sufficient explanation and has also left open the question of how to interpret the place of charismatic leadership within the movement. With reference to the earlier discussion of organization and leadership in this chapter, the present writer fails to see a necessary relationship between the absence of centralized organization and the characterization “world-view movement” and, by implication, the presence of centralized organization and the characterization “political movement.” The extent to which a movement can be regarded as “political” is determined by the question of whether its adherents rely on their own action in their quest for change or whether they rely upon the divine to make “the revolution.” The degree of organization is merely one of the factors which determine the effectiveness of such action. As Chevannes recognizes himself, action is “inherent in the appropriation of any new ideas about the cosmos and ... is obviously present in the Rastafari movement.”¹⁴⁸⁸ Finally, it may be noted that defined as “a system of beliefs and a state of consciousness,” Rastafari certainly qualifies as a world-view movement. But, to paraphrase Chevannes, is that what it is all about?

Wallace considers the increased use of political means a “natural tendency” for revitalization movements, which he attributes it to “problems of organization, adaptation and routinization becom[ing] more pressing,” without, unfortunately, further elaboration.¹⁴⁸⁹ Both Hobsbawm and Worsley regard millenarianism as an essentially integrating force which reflects growing political and revolutionary awareness among the masses, in other words, a pre-political form of protest.¹⁴⁹⁰ Such movements, they maintain, can develop or be absorbed into full-fledged social or (revolutionary) political movements.

While this tendency, as noted above, is certainly present in the case of the Rastafarian movement, it is clear that the movement as a whole so far has neither developed nor been absorbed into a full-fledged political movement. Millenarian tendencies remain present, even among those who have adopted political tactics. Many, especially orthodox, Rastafarians still do not believe it necessary to take action themselves. Repatriation will be realized once Jah thinks the time is ripe, no sooner, no later. The belief in divine intervention normally leads to a certain passivity. As Joseph Owens writes:

Most Rastafarians feel that no special effort will be required on their part, aside from being well-disposed and having technical skills so as to be of service to the homeland. Just as there will be no need to pay their way home, neither will there be need to wage war to free themselves from the chains of Babylon.¹⁴⁹¹

Yet as we have seen, even among the orthodox this conviction has gradually given way to efforts to somehow affect their situation themselves. Those who quite radically concluded that physical repatriation to the fathers’ land was no longer a prerequisite for obtaining the freedom from oppression that they were pursuing went furthest. In these groups the millenarian dream dissolved completely, giving rise to a socio-political wing within the movement. Some, like the Rastafarians who became involved in the Black Power Abeng group and, to a certain extent, Claudius Henry’s Peacemakers’ Association, who teamed up with the PNP and later the Marxist WPJ, were partially integrated into broader political coalitions. Yet these groups, while seeking alliances with secular parties, at the same time continued to lean towards sectarian organization and were preoccupied with striving towards “inward personal perfection,” as Ernst Troeltsch describes it.¹⁴⁹²

Many Rastafarians, however, were unable to let go of the idea of ultimate repatriation to and redemption in the Promised Land. To varying degrees, they maintained that while they were still in Babylon, they should or might as well try to improve their situation and - one step further - try to effect change in Jamaica. Ras Samuel Brown or the Rastafari Movement Association clearly chose the latter option, but without dropping the idea of ultimate repatriation to Africa. The Twelve Tribes of Israel and the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, both in their own ways and for their own reasons, concentrated on action towards repatriation rather than on trying to change Babylon. For none of these four groups, was there any conflict between striving towards repatriation and full involvement and participation in Jamaican society. But while Brown and the RMA displayed reformist, and perhaps even revolutionary characteristics, the IEFW and certainly the Twelve Tribes, in accepting the status quo as part of the fulfillment of prophecy, remained largely conservative.

Yet for many other Rastafarians this position, however defined, was inherently ambivalent and for some it created a virtually insoluble dilemma of isolation versus integration, of repatriation versus liberation. “Wait I and I must,” concluded one Rasta in an effort to reconcile RMA calls for “vigilant participation”

in Jamaican society with the elders' summons to practice patience. The elders of the orthodox groups, such as the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Haile Selassie I Theocracy Assembly or Prince Emmanuel's Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress Church of Salvation, managed for a long time to hold on to the principle of total non-involvement in Babylonian affairs. While Brown, the RMA, the Twelve Tribes and the IEWF all came to the conclusion that they themselves had to work towards either changing Babylon or repatriation to Zion, the orthodox Rastafarians initially turned to the successive Jamaican governments, the British Crown, the various African leaders or the United Nations. Although even this signalled a slide from millenarian hopes to political action, it at the same time betrayed a feeling of dependence. So that while the RMA called on "all Brothers to stop worrying the government about sending us to Africa and unite ourselves," Prince, in one of his many letters to the United Nations, wrote: "we would be grateful if you could gather all the heads of the United Nations and heads of states to come together with her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the Prime Minister of Jamaica, to free us the people under our own vine and fig tree."

By the 1980s, however, there were clear signs of a change in their position. The Judah Coptics in a sense followed Sam Brown and opted for participation in politics. In their *Manifesto* they designed an elaborate "program for action" and a detailed plan for the "transfer of power." Involvement in Jamaica became the central concern, although the idea of ultimate repatriation was retained and the transfer of power in Jamaica was to be achieved not by revolution, but along the accepted lines: by taking part in the general elections. The "purest" of all repatriation groups, Prince Emmanuel and his Bobo Dreads, sued the Minister of Foreign Affairs and eventually followed the Twelve Tribes of Israel in sending their own mission to Africa to arrange for repatriation.¹⁴⁹³

However they defined their goals and whatever strategy they chose, all these groups and sections within the movement sooner or later realized that it would be their own actions, rather than divine intervention or even the arbitration of secular powers which would be decisive. As such they all became more and more political in orientation. But for many, political action was merely a means of realizing the journey home. As such they remained, broadly speaking, millenarian, expecting redemption in the Promised Land, "total, ultimate, this-worldly, collective salvation," but no longer "imminent."

Others, however, began actively to seek change in Jamaican society itself, with or without holding on to the millenarian dream of ultimate redemption at the hand of the Almighty. Most of those who finally resorted to political initiatives, became either conservative or at best reformist rather than revolutionary. This may be explained in part by the millenarian dream many held on to. But two other explanations should also be taken into account. First of all there is the Rastafarian insistence on "peace and love," the strong sense of pacifism which has prevented them from developing a truly revolutionary political ideology. The use of force, let alone violence, is inconceivable for the vast majority of the Rastafarians, in spite of occasional verbal threats. Secondly, the movement has lacked a sufficiently strong class or racial consciousness or, put another way, it has merged class and racial consciousness. While the Rastafarians identify primarily with the lower classes and the "sufferers," they have never regarded themselves as a class movement, precisely because of their (racial) identification with black Africans. Paradoxically, although they identify themselves along racial lines, the majority of the movement's adherents, at the same time, strongly believe in the equality of all races and the universal brotherhood of man. This multiple ambivalence has, together with their insistence on peace and love, precluded them from choosing ultra-radical options. Barrett's fear that "the Rastafarian movement with its unorganized militancy could be a fertile ground for guerilla resistance," has proven to be completely unfounded.¹⁴⁹⁴ Instead of exploding in revolutionary fury, many groups in the movement have sought accommodation with the status quo, social and formal recognition and acceptance in Babylon, although many were quick to add: "until such time as I and I repatriate to Ethiopia."

Rastafarian millennialism has continued to exist side by side with readily accessible political alternatives. Only small factions in the movement have been absorbed into or sought alliances with broader political coalitions and the transition to "purely" political thinking has so far been slow and embryonic, especially in the orthodox sections of the Rastafarian movement. Neither has the movement developed into a "passive sect." Worsley's prediction that millennialism in its activist form is "destined to disappear or become a minor form of political expression among backward [sic] elements," has in the case of the Rastafarian movement some merit, but the process has been far from complete and not as "mechanical" as suggested.¹⁴⁹⁵

As mentioned earlier, Carole Yawney suggests the possibility

that conservative political forces would actively seek to perpetuate millenarian activities among a segment of the population which is potentially explosive, rather than risk the possibility that such people would seek a more radical alternative.¹⁴⁹⁶

Our material does not warrant such a conclusion, but does not exclude it either. Until the early 1970s successive governments actively sought to repress and undermine the movement. Efforts to perpetuate its existence have not been recorded. Later on, both the PNP and JLP tried to prevent further radicalization and disruption by combining repression with co-optation, superficial recognition and acceptance. Both parties seem to have sought some sort of balance between repression and accommodation. At most one can say that no further large-scale efforts were made to eradicate the Rastafarian movement. But it appears more likely that this resulted from the fact that the movement no longer posed a threat and had gained considerable popularity, rather than from any desire to sustain it.

Yawney has even gone a step further, hinting at “the real probability of infiltration by *agents provocateurs*.”¹⁴⁹⁷ The author refers to the release of Claudius Henry, some three years before his ten-year prison term had expired. Henry dropped the repatriation idea and instead established a peaceful commune. The author maintains that since “Henry’s political affiliations are well-known ... we need to ask what was the nature of the agreement reached between such leaders and conservative political elements.”¹⁴⁹⁸ The example is somewhat puzzling, since Henry supported the People’s National Party, although his preferences were not publicly known before 1971. Henry, however, was released in 1966 or 1967, during the second term in office of the Jamaica Labour Party and subsequently, as we have seen, he and his Peacemakers were subject to at least three raids by the security forces in the two years immediately following his release. Apparently there were still fears of a repetition of the events of 1960, fears which also resurfaced after the Rodney riots of 1968 when Prime Minister Hugh Shearer alleged a connection between Claudius Henry and the “subversive” activities of Walter Rodney. Given this situation, it seems improbable that there could have been an arrangement between the JLP and Claudius Henry, or that the JLP could have expected any benefits from perpetuating Rastafarian millennialism in this way. If there was an arrangement at all, it was a badly informed move on the part of the government, if only because Henry, following the 1958-1960 fiasco, had been discredited with the majority of the Rastas and his influence was negligible.

Despite this disputable example, infiltration as such is not as fictitious as it may at first appear.¹⁴⁹⁹ Many Rastas claim that there are and have been numerous “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” the common designation for all sorts of fakes, infiltrators and spies. Most of those carrying out fieldwork among the Rastafarians have been suspected, at one stage or another, of being a CIA, KGB, MI-5 or Jamaican government spy. Rastas are extremely wary of this possibility - and not without reason. Both the Special Branch of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, at least during the colonial years and no doubt afterwards, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency during the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s, have closely scrutinized the Rastafarians. As Timothy White writes:

By means of request made under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) during 1982, I received documentation from the CIA confirming that it and other United States Government agencies have indeed kept files on the Jamaican reggae scene, the Rastafarian movement and the activities of Bob Marley.¹⁵⁰⁰

Occasional infiltration and undercover police investigations by intelligence units cannot be ruled out, although there is - hardly surprisingly given the nature of such actions - little supportive evidence. In view of the reactions of successive governments towards the movement, however, it appears that the Rastafarians’ fear of widespread infiltration by “agents provocateurs” is for the most part a phantom inherited from the “destabilization” paranoia of the 1970s Manley administration. That such methods were applied with the objective of perpetuating the movement’s existence, in order to deflect its adherents from more radical options, seems unlikely.

The persistence of millenarian hopes have more to do, I think, with the many stumbling blocks on the road from “purely” millenarian to “purely” political thinking. The reliance on divine mediation is, of course, an intrinsic limitation of religious movements. It entails a vague perception of the new order and of the ways and means of realizing the transformation from the existing to the new order. “Purely” religious movements lack a program for action as well as clearly defined goals, making them almost by definition unsuitable as effective vehicles for change. The transition to political thinking can only be made if adherents of such movements realize that they themselves can make a significant contribution to such a process. Cultural traditions, including what Michael Manley describes as “the psychology of dependence,” religious principles like the stress on peace and love, intractable leadership, imperfect

understanding of both the causes of oppressive and exploitative relations and the possibilities of correcting them, may prevent such movements from developing the notion that revolutions can be made by the human factor.¹⁵⁰¹ Even after such a notion has evolved, all sorts of practical obstacles may prevent the effective employment of political ideas. Ineffective organization and limited resources are of major importance. In the Jamaican case, it was above all the counter actions of the wider society which defused the movement's revolutionary potential. By combining repression and discrimination with subversion and co-optation, thereby provoking further internal conflicts and organizational divisions, by lessening the tensions, contributing to more "realism" and clearly defining the parameters within which conflicts could be solved, society and government not only defused its millenarian hopes, but also effectively took the sting out of Rastafari.

Appendix I.

List of Rastafarian organizations and related groups

Many Rastafarian organizations and in one way or another related groups have demonstrated an out-spoken preference for high-sounding names. In addition they have often made use of similar or almost identical adjectives, while some of these groups have repeatedly changed their name. Altogether the text refers to some seventy organizations. As this may cause confusion for the reader - as it sometimes did for the organizations themselves - the following list may serve as a quick reference aid. The list provides, when known:

name of the organization and an abbreviation or acronym (if current)

- name(s) of the leader(s)
- approximate) date of foundation
- (approximate) date of discontinuation
- the location of the headquarters
- *a brief description*

An asterisk * refers to a cross-reference.

African Comprehensive Party (ACP)

- Abuna Stedrick Whyte
- Established in 1988
- Still in existence
- Based at Welcome Avenue, Kingston
- *Political wing of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church*, failed to register for the 1989 general and 1990 local elections*

African Cultural League

- No particular leaders known
- Established in the 1940s
- Partly merged into Ethiopian World Federation Local 37* around 1955
- Based in Kingston
- *Moderate, low-profile group, no further details known*

African Descendants United Association

- Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert
- Established in the late 1940s or early 1950s
- Merged into Ethiopian World Federation Local 27* around 1955
- Based in Kingston
- *Auxiliary to Nathaniel Hibbert's Ethiopian Coptic Faith**

African Reform Church

- Claudius Henry and Edna Fisher
- Established in 1958
- Became the New Creation Peacemakers' Association* in 1967
- Based at Rosalie Avenue, Kingston
- *Rastafarian back-to-Africa group, came to public attention after a failed repatriation attempt and the discovery of weapons during the late 1950s*

Afro-Caribbean League

- Monsell B. Douglas
- Established on 19 September 1957
- Probably defunct
- Based in Kingston
- *Succeeded the Afro (West Indian) Welfare League*; non-Rastafarian back-to-Africa organization, represented in the 1961 Mission to Africa*

Afro-West Indian Brotherhood

- Brother Dawkins
- Established in the late 1940s
- Merged into the Ethiopian Orthodox Church* in 1970
- Based in West Kingston
- *Former members of Robert Hinds' King of Kings Mission**

Afro Welfare League [a.k.a. Afro West Indian Welfare League (a)]

- Monsell B. Douglas

- Established in August 1954
- Became the Afro Caribbean League* in September 1957
- Based in Kingston
- *Non-Rastafarian back-to-Africa organization*

Afro-West Indian Welfare League (b)

- Z. Munroe Scarlett
- Established in 1948
- Still in existence in the late 1970s
- Based in Kingston
- *Non-Rastafarian back-to-Africa organization, represented in the 1961 Mission to Africa*

Brotherhood Solidarity of United Ethiopians

- Sam B. Spence
- Established in 1941
- Merged into Ethiopian World Federation Local 37* in 1955
- Based in Kingston
- *Moderate, low-profile group, no further details known*

Church Triumphant of Jah Rastafari

- Ras Shadrack (Frank Dixon) and Ras Daniel Heartman
- Established in the 1950s
- Still in existence in the late 1970s
- Based in the Foreshore area, Kingston
- *Orthodox Rastafarians prominent during the early 1960s*

Daughters United Working Towards Africa (DAWTAS)

- No particular leaders known
- Established in 1980
- Still in existence
- Based in Kingston
- *Women's organization aiming to improve the position of females within the movement*

Ethiopia Africa International Black Congress Church of Salvation [a.k.a Ethiopian National Congress]

- Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards
- Established probably in the mid-1950s
- Still in existence
- Based in West Kingston until 1972, later in Ten Miles, St. Andrew
- *Isolated, orthodox religious commune of the Bobo Dreads under charismatic leadership*

Ethiopian Coptic Faith [a.k.a. Ethiopian Coptic Church]

- Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert
- Established in 1932 or 1933
- Merged into Ethiopian World Federation Local 27* in 1955
- Based in Kingston
- *One of the very first Rastafarian groups, mystical and masonic in orientation*

Ethiopian International Unification Committee (EIUC)

- Brother Miguel (Michael Anthony Lorne)
- Established around 1985
- Still in existence
- Based at Tower Street, Kingston
- *Group with links with the Ethiopian royal family, aiming to unite the movement under one banner*

Ethiopian Orthodox Church [unofficial group]

- Dennis Chin
- Established in the 1960s
- Ceased to exist in 1970 when members joined the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*
- Based in Kingston
- *No further details known*

Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC)

- Abuna Yesehaq (Laike Mariam Mandefro)
- Established in Jamaica in 1970
- still in existence
- Based at Maxfield Avenue, Kingston
- *Ancient Coptic Christian church from Ethiopia, whose Jamaican branch attracted many Rastafarians*

Ethiopian Salvation Society

- Leonard Percival Howell
- Established in 1939
- Largely defunct by 1954
- Based at the Pinnacle estate, Sligoville, St. Catherine
- *Succeeded Leonard Howell's King of Kings Mission*, branch of an American organization, commune under charismatic leadership*

Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. (EWF) [a.k.a. Local 1]

- Dr. Malaku Bayen and others
- Established in 1937
- Still in existence
- Based at Lennox Avenue, the Bronx, New York City
- *Non-Rastafarian organization with numerous branches, established to co-ordinate aid for Ethiopia during the Italian occupation*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 7

- Raphael Downer
- Established around 1955
- still in existence in the late 1970s
- Based in Kingston
- *Former members of the United Afro-West Indian Brotherhood* and Ethiopian Youth Coptic Faith**

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 11

- No particular leaders known
- Established around 1955
- Still in existence in 1970s
- Based in Rock Hall, St. Andrew
- *No further details known*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 13

- Sam B. Spence
- Established probably in 1957
- still in existence in 1970s
- Based in Kingston
- *No further details known*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 15

- Brother Gad (Vernon Carrington)
- Established probably in the late 1960s
- Became the Twelve Tribes of Israel* in the early 1970s
- Based at Davis Lane, Kingston
- *Religious group with many middle-class members, under charismatic leadership*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 17

- Paul Earlington, L.F.C. Mantle, Nathaniel Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley
- Established in 1938
- Still in existence in the late 1970s
- Based in Kingston
- *First Jamaican Local of the Ethiopian World Federation*, barred dreadlocked Rastafarians*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 19

- Cecil G. Gordon
- Established in 1955
- Still in existence in the 1960s
- Based at Maiden Lane, Kingston
- *Officially registered and moderate Ethiopian World Federation* Local*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 25

- Wilfred Redwood and Locksley Austin
- Established around 1955s
- Still in existence in the 1970s
- Based in Bog Walk and Linstead, St. Catherine
- *No further details known*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 27

- Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert
- Established around 1955s

- Still in existence in the late 1970s
- Based at Fisher Avenue, Kingston
- *Former members of the Ethiopian Coptic Faith and Local 17**

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 31

- William Powell, Ferdinand Ricketts, Cecil G. Gordon and Vernal Davis
- Established around 1940
- Still in existence during the 1960s
- Based in Kingston
- *Moderate, officially registered Local, broke away from from Local 17**

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 32

- No particular leaders known
- Established probably in the late 1950s
- Probably still in existence
- Based in Montego Bay
- *No further details known*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 33

- No particular leaders known
- Established around 1955
- Probably still in existence
- Based in Kingston
- *Former members of Ethiopian Youth Coptic Faith**

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 37

- Sam B. Spence, Mortimo Planno, Mervyn Green
- Established in 1955
- Probably still in existence
- Based in Kingston
- *Former members of the Brotherhood Solidarity of United Ethiopians* and the African Cultural League**

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 41

- No particular leaders known
- Established around 1955
- Probably defunct
- Based in Kingston
- *Local consisting of female members only*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 43

- Keith Baker
- Established around 1955
- Still in existence in the late 1970s
- Based at Mission Road, Kingston
- *No further details known*

Ethiopian World Federation, Local 77

- Archibald Dunkley
- Established around 1955
- Still in existence in the late 1970s
- Based at Wildman Street, Kingston
- *Succeeded Archibald Dunkley's King of Kings Mission**

Ethiopian World Federation, Emperor Yohannes Local 33

- Asento Amanuel Foxe
- Established in 1972
- Became the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Asfa Wossen Local 1* in 1983
- Based at Portobello Road, London, Birmingham and Leicester
- *Former members of the Universal Black Improvement Association**

Ethiopian Youth Cosmic Faith

- Brother Edie
- Established probably during the late 1940s or early 1950s
- Members merged into Ethiopian World Federation Locals 7* and 33* after 1955
- Based in Kingston
- *No further details known*

Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church (EZCC)

- Keith Gordon, Clifton Middleton, Francis Reilly
- Established in the 1940s
- Still in existence
- Based in St. Thomas and Miami
- *Non-Rastafarian organization involved in large-scale marihuana trafficking*

First Africa (or Ifrika) Corps (FAC)

- Ronald Henry and David Ambrister
- Established in 1958
- Ceased to exist in 1960
- Based in the Bronx, New York City
- *Small, militant non-Rastafarian group, involved in an alleged coup attempt in 1960*

Imperial Ethiopian World Federation (IEWF), Asfa Wossen Local 1

- Gabre Kristos, Pablove Hebrew
- Established in 1983
- Still in existence
- Based at Talbot Road, London
- *Officially replaced the Ethiopian World Federation*, former members of Emperor Yohannes Local 33**

Imperial Ethiopian World Federation (IEWF), Zara Yacob Local 2

- Ascento Amanuel Foxe
- Established in 1983
- Still in existence
- Based in Kingston
- *Officially replaced the Ethiopian World Federation**

Israelite Group

- Altamont Reid
- Established around 1935
- Defunct by 1940
- Based in West Kingston
- *Minor, radical group during the late 1930s*

Jamaica Ethiopia Blood-Brotherhood

- Ross Manassa L. Tapper
- Established in 1970
- Probably defunct
- Based in Montego Bay
- *Small group which proposed agricultural training for Rastafarians in preparation for repatriation*

King Alpha and Queen Omega Theocracy Daughters

- No particular leaders known
- Established in 1980
- Still active
- Based at Salt River, Clarendon
- *Group of Rastafarian women within the Theocracy Government**

King of Kings Mission (a)

- Leonard Percival Howell
- Established in 1933
- Became the Ethiopian Salvation Society* in 1939
- Based at Princess Street, Kingston, later Port Morant, St. Thomas
- *One of the first and most influential early groups in the movement*

King of Kings Mission (b)

- Robert Hinds
- Established in 1934 or 1935
- Largely defunct by the late 1940s
- Based at North Street, later Laws Street, Kingston
- *Influential group during the early 1940s; an offshoot of Howell's King of Kings Mission**

King of Kings Mission (c)

- Henry Archibald Dunkley
- Established in the early 1930s
- Merged into Ethiopian World Federation Local 77* around 1955
- Based at Oxford Street, Kingston

- *Small, low-profile group of some prominence during the 1930s*

Militant Church in Haile Sellassie

- Ras Peter the Great
- Established probably during the late 1940s, early 1950s
- Still in existence during the 1960s
- Based in the Foreshore area, Kingston
- *Orthodox group in West Kingston prominent during the early 1960s*

Mystic Revelation of Rastafari (MRR)

- Count Ossie (Oswald Williams)
- Established during the late 1940s or early 1950s
- Still in existence
- Based in the Wareika Hills, Kingston
- *Orthodox group of internationally acclaimed musicians and community leaders*

New Creation Peacemakers' Association

- Claudius Henry, Edna Fisher
- Established probably in 1967
- Still in existence
- Based in Green Bottom, Clarendon, with branches elsewhere
- *Isolated Rastafarian group under charismatic leadership, succeeded the African Reform Church**

Nyabinghi Order

- Informal leadership of several elders
- Emerged in the mid-1930s
- Still in existence
- No firm base
- *Loosely structured, informal umbrella organization of orthodox Rastafarians, Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government**

Orange Street Gully Group

- Aubrey Brown
- Emerged during the 1950s
- Largely fell apart in late 1959
- Based in Montego Bay
- *Major Rastafarian formation in Montego Bay; visited the Moral Rearmament movements' headquarters in Michigan*

People's Democratic Party (PDP)

- Asento Amanuel Foxe and Norman Adams
- Established during the late 1960s
- Dissolved in early 1970s
- Based in London
- *Political wing of the Universal Black Improvement Organization**

Rainbow Healing Temple

- Father Ernest Leopold Gooden
- Established in 1943
- Still in existence in the late 1960s
- Based at Spanish Town Road, West Kingston
- *Religious group combining Christianity with elements of Rastafarian beliefs, active in business*

Ras Dizzy Group

- Ras Dizzy (Clive Gillespie)
- Established during the early 1960s
- Still in existence in the 1970s
- Based in Kingston
- *Informal group led by a prominent Rastafarian artist and writer*

Rases of East and Central Kingston

- Filmore Alvaranga and Douglas Mack
- Established in the late 1950s
- Dissolved in the early 1960s
- Based in Kingston
- *A fusion of several Rastafarian groups, represented in the 1961 Mission to Africa*

Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly (RITA)

- Ras Historian (Eric Clement) and others
- Established in the early 1980s
- Still in existence
- Based at Church Street, Kingston
- *Formerly the Rastafari Movement Association*, politically-oriented and socially engaged group, trying to unite the movement under one banner*

Rastafari Movement

- Ras Samuel Brown, Mortimo Planno and others
- Established around 1960
- Probably still in existence
- Based in Kingston
- *Politically-oriented group of Rastafarians from West Kingston*

Rastafari Movement Association (RMA)

- Eric Clement (Ras Historian), Ras DaSilva and others
- Established in 1968
- Became the Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly* in the early 1980s
- Based at Church Street, Kingston
- *Politically-oriented and socially engaged group, trying to unite the movement under one banner*

Rastafari Universal Zion (RUZ)

- Jah Bones
- Established in the 1970s
- Still in existence
- Based at Roslyn Road, London
- *One of the most active Rastafarian groups in Britain during the 1980s*

Rastafarian Advisory Centre

- No particular leaders known
- Established in 1982
- Still in existence
- Based at Netherwood Road, London
- *Organization established to provide information about Rastafari to the general public*

Rastafarian Brethren Repatriation Association

- Filmore Alvaranga, Douglas Mack, Samuel Clayton
- Established around 1965
- Still in existence in the early 1970s
- Based in Kingston
- *Moderate group which actively sought to arrange repatriation during the 1960s*

Rastafarian Brethren United Front

- Gladstone Graham, Trevor Campbell
- Established probably in the late 1950s
- Still in existence in the 1960s
- Based in Kingston
- Orthodox Rastafarian group
- *No further details known*

Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government

- Abuna Blackheart, Jah Lloyd, Ras Makonnen and other elders
- Established in the early 1970s
- Still in existence
- Based at Welcome Avenue, Kingston
- *Umbrella organization of orthodox Rastafarians with informal membership, often regarded as the most important representation within the movement, Nyabinghi Order**

Twelve Tribes of Israel

- Brother Gad (Vernon Carrington)
- Established in 1968
- Still in existence
- Based at Hope Road, Kingston, with several branches outside Jamaica
- *Formerly Ethiopian World Federation Local 15*; large, efficiently organized group under charismatic leadership with considerable middle-class membership*

United Afro-West Indian Brotherhood

- Raphael Downer
- Established probably during the late 1940s
- Merged into Ethiopian World Federation Local 7* in 1955
- Based in Kingston
- Moderate, low-profile group
- *No further details known*

United Ethiopian Body

- Claudius Stewart and Joseph Myers
- Established probably during the early 1950s
- Still in existence in the 1960s
- Based in Kingston
- *No further details known*

United Rases Organ (or Organization)

- George Williams
- Established during the late 1950s
- Still in existence during the 1960s
- Based in Kingston
- *Representation of Rastafarians from West Kingston*

Universal Black Improvement Organization (UBIO)

- Ascento Amanuel Foxe and Norman Adams
- Established in 1968
- Merged into Ethiopian World Federation Emperor Yohannes Local 33* in 1972
- Based in London
- *One of the first Rastafarian organizations in Britain*

Youth Black Faith

- Brothers Taf, Firsup and others
- Established in 1949
- still in existence during the 1950s
- Based in Kingston
- *Radical and activist group which propagated the wearing of beards and dreadlocks*

Appendix II.

A note on the sources

The data and material on which this study is based were collected over a period of seven years between 1985 and 1992. During this time I spent about sixteen months in Kingston, Jamaica, divided into three periods, one in 1986-1987 and two during 1990-1991. The first research period was in partial fulfillment of the M.A. program Cultural Anthropology at Utrecht University.¹⁵⁰² The research then concentrated on the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the growing involvement of the middle classes in the Rastafarian movement.¹⁵⁰³ The second and third visits to Jamaica were made with a research grant from the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO), while - and here it gets a little complicated - employed by the Netherlands Foundation for Scientific Research (NWO) and attached to the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies (CARLAS) of the Department of Cultural Anthropology of Utrecht University and the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Research Institute (ISOR) of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Utrecht University. NWO, WOTRO and ISOR provided additional grants for three visits to London to complete research in various archives (in 1989, 1991 and 1992) and another to Berlin to visit the *Rastafari Kunstausstellung* at the Berliner Haus der Kulturen der Welt (1992). The Department of Cultural Anthropology, ISOR and WOTRO also made financial means available for correction and publication of this thesis. I am, of course, grateful for their support.

The major sources of information, as the text no doubt reveals, have been reports and articles from newspapers, along with pamphlets from Rastafarian organizations and individuals, files from the Colonial Office and interviews. Newspapers and magazines as a source of information for this research project had advantages as well as disadvantages. First of all, the newspaper business in Jamaica is a virtual monopoly of the Gleaner Company, which has published *The Daily Gleaner* since 1834, its Sunday edition since 1939 and an overseas weekly summary of the regular edition for Jamaicans abroad, *The Weekly Gleaner*, since 1951. As the island's most widely read newspaper, "Gleaner" has for most Jamaicans become literally synonymous with "newspaper." The Gleaner Company also publishes an evening tabloid, *The Star*, which features mainly the sensational news, entertainment gossip, horoscopes and cartoons. In so far as they were available, *The Daily* and *Sunday Gleaner*, have been consulted for the entire period between 1930 and 1990, while occasional use has been made of *The Weekly Gleaner* and *The Star*.¹⁵⁰⁴

As the only newspaper in Jamaica which has been published without interruption during the sixty years that the Rastafarian movement has been in existence, *The Daily Gleaner* is an inevitable source. Its virtual monopoly is, however, an obvious disadvantage. The Gleaner Company is a powerful institution in Jamaican society, completely controlled by the nation's elite. Before independence it reflected the typical colonial attitudes of the ruling class. Until the early 1970s it was, though conservative, politically neutral. Since the Manley administration's experiment with democratic socialism the *Gleaner* has openly and forcefully displayed a pro-Jamaica Labour Party bias (the newspaper was for a considerable period managed by former JLP chairman Hector Wynter), causing it to be dubbed "The Daily Misleader" by its (political) opponents.

The information it disseminates is thus to be treated with care. In this case, however, where the focus has been on the relationship of the Rastafarian movement and the wider society, it was, at the same time, often an advantage that the *Gleaner* clearly reflected the attitudes of the middle and upper classes. An additional advantage of *The Daily Gleaner* is that it has always devoted considerable space to letters from its readers, although the selection naturally remained in the hands of the editors. Also, the *Gleaner* has a relatively widespread and well-developed network of correspondents.

But, as noted above, using the *Gleaner* was not always a matter of free choice. While there have been several attempts to break its monopoly with more progressive dailies and weeklies, most of these were relatively short-lived and never reached the circulation of the *Gleaner*. Until some time in the 1960s there was the weekly *Public Opinion*, which has been consulted for those periods in which important events took place. Between 1972 and 1983 the *Jamaica Daily News* was another attempt to establish an alternative to *The Daily Gleaner*. It has been examined for the period 1975 to 1983; the previous years' editions were not readily available. The *Jamaica Record* first appeared on the streets in July 1988 and was, though struggling, still being published at the time of the research.¹⁵⁰⁵ The years up to 1990 have been included in the research. Occasional use has been made of daily and weekly newspapers with a very short life and/or limited circulation in the period 1930-1990, including *The Jamaica Times*, *The Tribune*

or the Black Power weekly *Abeng*.

The reports and articles from Jamaican newspapers were collected from various institutions: the Main Library of the University of the West Indies, the National Library of the Institute of Jamaica, the archives of the Gleaner Company, all in Kingston, the Newspaper Library of the British Museum, London University's Institute of Commonwealth Studies and the Commonwealth Institute, also in London. Several friends and acquaintances in Jamaica also provided copies, while the Catholic Association for Racial Justice and Committee for Community Relations of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales kindly provided copies of its newspaper clippings file about the Rastafarian movement in England. Altogether some 1,200 newspaper reports and articles have been collected and processed.¹⁵⁰⁶

Apart from newspapers, a considerable number of pamphlets and magazines put out by Rastafarian individuals and organizations were collected. There are, with one notable exception, no regularly published Rasta magazines which have appeared over a considerable period of time, in spite of the fact that there have been numerous attempts to establish Rastafarian weeklies and monthlies. Most have not got further than volume 1, number 1. *Rasta Voice Magazine*, which originally appeared as *The Rases Voice*, has, however, come close to being a regular Rasta magazine. It has been published, with interruptions, by the Rastafari Movement Association since 1970. Like all Rastafarian pamphlets and magazines, *Rasta Voice* has an internal circulation of at best a couple of hundred copies. Most of the pamphlets and issues of magazines were acquired from Rastafarian organizations and individuals directly, and in a few cases from libraries and research institutions in Kingston and London, as well as from individual collectors.

Also consulted were the files of the Colonial Office at the Public Record Office at Kew, Richmond. These mainly included original and confidential correspondence between the Governor of Jamaica and the Colonial Office, correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office, copies of Rastafarian pamphlets and intelligence reports of the Jamaican police. Only files up to 1959 had been released at the time of research.

Needless to say, the literature on the Rastafarian movement was a vital source of information as well. Finally, other minor, but sometimes important pieces of information were obtained from such diverse sources as photographs, films, television and video documentaries, radio broadcasts, (private) correspondence, government circulars, reggae magazines and records, album covers, posters and invitation cards.

In the course of the research, approximately fifty Rastafarians were interviewed, both members of the various groups and Rastas not affiliated with any of the "Houses." The majority of these interviews were informal and not recorded on tape, while on several occasions given on the condition that the identity of the informants would not be revealed. Some were interviewed only once, others were "interviewed" up to a dozen times. Four members of three different Rastafarian organizations could be considered key informants, friends who patiently answered my many difficult, delicate or plain stupid questions, and kindly shared their knowledge, beliefs and opinions with me in countless "chats."

Interviews were also conducted with a relatively large number of both prominent and not so prominent Jamaicans. Especially the former were often formal and recorded on tape, the latter were usually informal and unrecorded. Again, in a number of cases the information was, for not always obvious reasons, considered so sensitive that the informants requested that they not be identified or - as happened in a few cases - afterwards refused to give permission for the information provided to be used.¹⁵⁰⁷ Among the "nameless" Jamaicans were beggars, household workers, gardeners, taxi drivers, construction workers, newspaper sellers, higglers, housewives, school children, university students, teachers, principals, a chemist, two doctors, a businessman, pensioners, two policemen, five self-declared gunmen, and others whose profession remained obscure. In all an estimated 120 interviews, long and short, formal and informal, structured and unstructured, taped and untaped, were conducted. About twenty formal interviews were taped.

However, in spite of the fairly large numbers of interviews conducted, readers will find comparatively few references to or quotes from interviews in the text. The main reason is that the interviews were mostly conducted to secure general background information, to elucidate information from other sources or to obtain opinions. Moreover, much of the interview material consists of lengthy discussions of specific events and developments, which could not be extensively addressed in this study. Another reason is that only a few interviews were recorded, whereas in other cases it was sometimes impossible to use the material in direct quotes without revealing the identity of the informant. In the case of interviews with

members of the Rastafarian faith the subject was usually “Rastology,” and though interesting and necessary, it is not the prime subject of this thesis.¹⁵⁰⁸

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who in one way or another provided information or assisted in obtaining it.

Appendix III.

Rastafari in the 1982 population census

As noted in the Introduction, there are no reliable data at all on the numerical strength of the Rastafarian movement. Lacking an overall organizational structure, the Rastafarians themselves do not have any data about their numbers. Some organizations, like the Twelve Tribes of Israel, do register their members, but the counts are not meant for the eyes of outsiders. There are, of course, the estimates of individual members, like the one from Ras Samuel Brown, who thought that during the mid-1970s six out every ten Jamaicans was either Rastafarian or a sympathizer.¹⁵⁰⁹ Also, there are fanciful references to the biblical number of 144,000. Finally, there are the speculations of researchers, like Leonard Barrett's estimate of 100,000 Rastas and sympathizers island-wide, which in spite of the fact that it is little more than a wild guess has found almost general acceptance.

In the population censuses of 1943, 1960 and 1970 Rastafari was not included, unlike such religions as Bedwardite (332 in 1943), Confucian (303) or Pocomania or Pukumina (811 in 1960). But even if Rasta had been included, it is doubtful whether its adherents would have cooperated. Many Rastafarians, as Joseph Owens notes, strongly oppose to registration of personal data, especially by the government or related institutions and individuals, out of fear that census information can and will be used against them. Writing in the mid-1970s Owens states:

It is to be wondered ... just how many Rastafarians would submit to being counted in the census (for the 1970 census some 22,200 people in Kingston alone refused to respond or were unavailable for response for some reason).¹⁵¹⁰

When in 1982 the government for the first time included Rastafari in its population census, only 14,249 persons were listed as "Rastafarian" in question 14 on religion, which was, of course, self-perceptive.¹⁵¹¹ Out of the total Jamaican population of 2,190,357, the Rastafarians on this reckoning would only constitute 0.65%, an extremely low figure, which is most certainly nowhere near the true number. The problem lies, as could be expected, within the category of non-response. No fewer than 243,614 persons (or 11.12%), for one reason or another, did not answer question 14 on religion and were listed as "not stated."¹⁵¹² This category did not include those listed as "none" and "other." Because many Rastafarians are known to object to census taking, it is likely that the group "not stated" included a large number of Rastas, although information on this is, unfortunately, non-existent. Still, it may be safely assumed that the total number of 14,249 Rastafarians in the 1982 census represented a case of grave under-recording.

Although this certainly restricts the value of these data, it does not make them worthless altogether. As noted before, there is a complete lack of other, let alone better, data and as such these figures do at least provide a basis for somewhat less wild estimates. Also, since the data are not likely to be published in any detailed form elsewhere, I think they are important enough to be made available to other researchers.¹⁵¹³ Keeping the limitations in mind, we could consider the 1982 census data on Rastafari as a large random sample, providing rough indications for the demographics of the Rastafarian movement. The further interpretation of the census data should be seen in this light.¹⁵¹⁴

Let us, however, first, consider some of the earlier estimates about the movement's adherence. George E. Simpson writes that: "In 1953, there were at least a dozen Ras Tafari groups operating in West Kingston, with membership ranging from approximately twenty to one hundred and fifty or more."¹⁵¹⁵ In another publication Simpson estimates the number of Rastafarians in West Kingston to be somewhere around 1,800.¹⁵¹⁶ There is, however, reason to believe that Simpson underestimated the numerical strength of the movement, even for the West Kingston area, since many Rastafarians were not affiliated to any groups. At the time there were, outside the "Rasta Vatican" of West Kingston, an estimated 600 members in Leonard Howell's Pinnacle commune and considerable concentrations of Rastas in the Wareika Hills and along Palisadoes Road, while there were known to be relatively large groups in places like Spanish Town and Montego Bay, and several small pockets in the rural areas. In 1960 Smith, Augier and Nettleford make a much higher estimate for the entire Kingston area when they write:

If the declared Ras Tafari brethren in Kingston are estimated between ten and fifteen thousand, the undeclared but closely integrated sympathizers may be an equal number. ... Since many Ras Tafari brethren are beardless and live dispersed through the City, the actual strength of the movement is hard to estimate.¹⁵¹⁷

Writing four years later, Orlando Patterson follows this estimate of Smith *et al.*, as do most other authors writing in the 1960s.¹⁵¹⁸ In 1968, however, Leonard Barrett estimates the Rastafarians in Jamaica, including sympathizers, to number no fewer than 70,000 island-wide, while in his updated edition of *The Rastafarians*, published in 1977, he increases his estimate even further.

The present membership of the Rastafarian movement, including sympathizers, may number one hundred thousand. No census has yet given an accurate account of the membership, but a knowledgeable Rasta leader states that six out of every ten Jamaicans are either Rasta or sympathizer.

Somewhat surprisingly, Barrett includes undefined “sympathizers” in his guess, without further specification of the ratio of members to supporters. Around the same time, in 1976, Joseph Owens notes that Barrett’s 1968 estimate is perhaps a little too optimistic:

If one were to estimate 50,000 Rastafarians to be living in Kingston, it would be a very large number indeed once one considers that there are approximately 300,000 poor people there, of whom only half (150,000) are adults, and of whom only half again (75,000) are adult males.

Unfortunately, later authors have not made any new estimates. Instead they have taken Barrett’s estimate of 100,000 by the end of the 1970’s more or less for granted, with the result that the number has become almost generally accepted.¹⁵¹⁹

Obviously, all these figures presented were little more than “guesstimates.” Anyone who has ever tried to estimate the number of people in a large crowd knows how difficult this is. Estimating a group of people, not always outwardly identifiable, never all together, but living dispersed over an island with some two and a half million inhabitants, is virtually impossible. As for Barrett’s estimate of 100,000, I am afraid that 50,000 would have been as likely as 150,000 or 200,000.

Because of the high number of non-responses (almost 250,000), the 1982 population census has not solved this problem, although it provides a basis for another guess. If we assume that 25% of those who did not respond to the question on religion were Rastafarians, this would result in a total number of about 75,000 for all Jamaica. At 50% the number would be around 122,000 and at 75% the number would amount to almost 183,000.

Although hazardous and little more than another “guesstimate,” I would consider a number of at best 50,000 to be closer to the truth than 100,000. If we take into account the 1982 census data, the fact that one of the largest Rastafarian organizations, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, has an active membership of at best some 1,000 and the fact that, to the best of my knowledge, national Rastafarian assemblies or Nyabinghi’s have never attracted crowds larger than two or three thousand, a reasonable estimate of the number of Rastafarians in all of Jamaica in the early 1980s could hardly go beyond 25,000 to 50,000, including children, but excluding the vague category of sympathizers.¹⁵²⁰ One thing is sure, however: whatever the actual strength of the movement, the influence of the Rastafarians and their impact on Jamaican society has always far exceeded their numbers.

While the 1982 census may not have solved the question of total numbers, it may - viewed as a random sample - provide some indications about the demographics of the movement. The division by age groups, separated into male and female, can be found in Table I and Graph vi, which shows that 2,436 or 17.10% of all Rastafarians in the census were 14 years or younger in 1982. For all Jamaica this figure was over 38%. It may be safely assumed that the majority within this group are children of Rasta parents, rather than youths who have taken on the faith by themselves, and were listed as Rasta by their parents. Only 14.21% of the Rastafarians was 40 years of age and over, and a mere 1.04% was over 65. For comparison, the latter category for all Jamaica was almost 7%. The Rastafarians are thus relatively under-represented among the young and the old, and as a consequence over-represented in the age group 15 to 65 years. No fewer than 9,787 or 68.68% of all Rastafarians in the 1982 population census were between the ages of 15 and 39. This is lower than Barrett’s observation of 1977 that: “Up to 80 percent of those seen in camps and on the streets are between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five,” a statement which referred to male adherents.¹⁵²¹ It is even lower (63.43%) if we take into account the fact that the percentage of female Rastafarians in the age group of 15 to 39 years is somewhat higher than average, namely over 73%.

As for the sex ratio, the data illustrate that the male Rastafarians make up 81.84% of all Rastas and the female Rastafarians only 18.26%, a ratio near 8 to 1. Apart from that, Graph vi shows that the female under 15 age group accounts for the high percentage of approximately 43% of all female Rastafarians,

compared to some 11% males in the same age group. Since the majority of this age group is likely to consist of children of Rastafarians, a more representative sex ratio for the movement as a whole would be the age group of 15 years and over. This group shows a distribution of over 87% males and some 12% females, a ratio of 9 to 1.

Table I. Rastafarians in Jamaica by age group and sex, 1982

Age group	number			percentage		
	male	female	total	male	female	total
0-4	567	502	1,069	4.86	19.40	7.50
5-9	437	390	827	3.75	15.07	5.80
10-14	310	230	540	2.66	8.89	3.79
15-19	657	191	848	5.63	7.38	5.95
20-24	2,306	416	2,722	19.78	16.07	19.10
25-29	2,813	322	3,135	24.12	12.44	22.00
30-34	1,773	181	1,954	15.20	6.99	13.71
35-39	1,015	113	1,128	8.70	4.37	7.92
40-44	696	77	773	5.97	2.98	5.42
45-49	422	54	476	3.62	2.09	3.34
50-54	295	26	321	2.53	1.00	2.25
55-59	170	31	201	1.46	1.20	1.41
60-64	81	27	108	0.69	1.04	0.76
65-69	55	10	65	0.47	0.39	0.46
70-74	33	12	45	0.28	0.46	0.32
75+	31	6	37	0.26	0.24	0.26
total	11,661	2,588	14,249	99.98	100.01	99.99

All authors on Rastafari have noted that the movement is male dominated. Women are said to form a small minority and Sheila Kitzinger even describes them as “peripheral.”¹⁵²² Although there are signs of a change in the role and position of female Rastafarians in the movement as well as a growth in their numbers, the data of the 1982 population census still support the observation that, with regard to numbers, the movement remains male dominated.¹⁵²³

The regional distribution of Rastafarians in Jamaica (see Table II and Graph vii) reveals that in 1982 34.46% of all Rastafarians resided in the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew, which together constitute the urban center commonly known as Kingston or, formally, the Kingston-St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC).¹⁵²⁴

Studies of the Rastafarian movement have mainly been restricted to the Kingston urban area, not only for practical reasons, but also because the capital is regarded as *the* center of Rastafarian activity. Taking into account the fact that less than 27% of the total Jamaican population lived in the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew at the time of the population census, the almost 35% of the total Rastafarian population is a relatively high figure.

In the other parishes the percentages of Rastafarians, compared to the percentage distribution of the total Jamaican population, differ only slightly. The only parish, except for Kingston and St. Andrew, with relatively more Rastafarians, is St. Thomas, where only 3.67% of the population but 5.82% of the Rastafarians live. As we have seen, St. Thomas was, next to Kingston, the most important stronghold of Rastafari during the early years.

What is striking is that the male/female ratio in St. Andrew, and to a lesser extent in St. Catherine, Clarendon and St. James, shows a comparatively high percentage of female Rastafarians. A somewhat speculative and partial explanation for this may lie in the large urban centers in these parishes, notably Spanish Town and Portmore in St. Catherine, and Montego Bay in St. James, if at least we assume that it

is the larger urban centers where most of the middle-class Rastafarians are to be found. A point made by Kitzinger and also, indirectly, by Patterson in his novel *The children of Sisyphus*, is that the lower-class Rastafarian male has little to offer a female companion in terms of social and economic status.¹⁵²⁵ For middle-class Rastafarians, such an explanation would, of course, not hold and it might very well be that the majority of female Rastafarians are to be found in the middle-class sections of the movement, and thus in the larger urban centers rather than in the country. Such an explanation would be in accordance with my own observation that the number of female Rastafarians in the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the haven for middle-class Rastafarians, is comparatively high.¹⁵²⁶ What we need in order to falsify this hypothesis, however, are data on the economic or occupational status of the Rastafarians and data by enumeration district to see whether there is indeed a correlation between socio-economic status and urban residence.

In conclusion, it can be said that the data on Rastafari in the 1982 population census should be treated with utmost care. It is almost certain that the census suffers from serious under-counting. Nevertheless, the data do provide a basis, however fragile, for further interpretation. Besides, these are all and therefore the best we have. Viewing the census data as a large random sample of unknown representativeness, we can tentatively conclude that they confirm some of the observations of earlier authors on Rastafari. However, based on these data, I would assume the total number of Rastafarians to be lower than the often agreed estimate of 100,000 island-wide. A figure of at best 50,000 seems more likely.

With regard to the age structure of the movement, the census data seem to confirm the observations of several authors that the vast majority of the Rastafarians are between the (approximate) ages of 15 and 39 years. Again, the often mentioned percentage of 80 seems a bit to high. The census data suggest a figure of 60 to 70%.

Table II. Rastafarians in Jamaica by parish and sex, 1982

Parish	number			percentage		
	male	female	total	male	female	total
Kingston	717	112	829	6.15	4.33	5.82
St. Andrew	3,108	973	4,081	26.65	37.60	28.64
St. Thomas	690	139	829	5.92	5.37	5.82
Portland	360	49	409	3.08	1.89	2.87
St. Mary	551	94	645	4.73	3.63	4.53
St. Ann	594	67	661	5.09	2.59	4.64
Trelawny	395	44	439	3.39	1.70	3.08
St. James	709	163	872	6.08	6.30	6.12
Hanover	347	46	393	2.98	1.78	2.76
Westmoreland	657	110	767	5.63	4.25	5.38
St. Elizabeth	547	70	617	4.69	2.70	4.33
Manchester	496	92	588	4.25	3.55	4.23
Clarendon	879	218	1,097	7.54	8.42	7.68
St. Catherine	1,611	411	2,022	13.82	15.88	14.19
KSAC	3,825	1,085	4,910	32.80	41.93	34.46
All Jamaica	11,661	2,588	14,249	100.00	99.99	99.99

The sex distribution in the 1982 population census, with males accounting for almost 90% of all adult Rastafarians, confirms that the movement, as observed, is still male dominated, at least with regard to numbers.

The regional distribution, finally, shows a spread of Rastafarians over the whole island, roughly in accordance with the percentage distribution for the total Jamaican population. Only Kingston and St. Andrew have, as was to be expected, a significantly higher percentage of Rastafarians. One third of all Rastafarians live in the Jamaican capital.

Endnotes

Notes Introduction

1. I follow Rex Nettleford in my use of the term “wider” Jamaican society to indicate that in spite of the “two extreme positions taken by the Rastafarians (the ‘captive’ Israelites) and the representatives of the status quo (‘Babylon’ to the Rastafari, in effect Government, private citizens, the police, sections of the Press, etc.),” the Rastafarians are part of Jamaican society, whether they want or not. In an effort to keep the text readable, I have, however, usually omitted the adjective (*Identity, race and protest in Jamaica* (New York, William Morrow, 1972), p. 41).
2. Ken Post, *Arise, ye starvelings: the Jamaican labour rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p. 196.
3. Robert A. Hill, “Leonard P. Howell and millenarian visions in early Rastafari.” *Jamaica Journal* 16, 1 (1983): 24-39, p. 24.
4. There is also an article based on archival research, on Leonard Howell’s Pinnacle commune by Michael Hoenisch (“Symbolic politics: perceptions of the early Rastafari movement.” *The Massachusetts Review* 29, 3 (1988): 432-449).
5. For discussions of the literature on Rastafari see: Barry Chevannes, “The literature of Rastafari.” *Social and Economic Studies* 26, 2 (1977): 239-290; Joseph Owens, “Literature on the Rastafari, 1955-1974.” *Savacou* 11-12 (1975): 86-115; Kenneth M. Bilby, “The half still untold: recent literature on reggae and Rastafari.” *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 59, 3-4 (1985): 211-217. The most comprehensive, though not exhaustive, annotated bibliography on the movement is Rebecah Michele Mulvaney’s, *Rastafari and reggae: a dictionary and sourcebook* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1990).
6. Barry Chevannes, *Jamaican lower class religion: struggles against oppression* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1971) M.A. thesis; “The impact of the Ethiopian revolution on the Rastafari movement.” *Socialism: Theoretical Organ of the Workers Liberation League* 2, 3 (1975); “The Repairer of the Breach: Reverend Claudius Henry and Jamaican society.” In: Frances Henry (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Americas* (The Hague, Mouton, 1976), pp. 263-290; “The literature of Rastafari.” *Social and Economic Studies* 26, 2 (1977): 239-290; “Rastafarianism and the class struggle: a search for a methodology.” In: Louis Lindsay (ed.), *Methodology and change: problems of applied social science research techniques in the Commonwealth Caribbean* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies, 1978), pp. 244-271; *Social origins of the Rastafari movement* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies, 1978); In: Carl Stone and Aggrey Brown (eds.), *Perspectives on Jamaica in the seventies* (Kingston, Jamaica Publishing House, 1981), pp. 392-422; “Rastafari: towards a new approach.” *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 64, 3-4 (1990): 127-148; “Healing the nation: Rastafari exorcism of the ideology of racism in Jamaica.” *Caribbean Quarterly* 36, 1-2 (1990): 59-84. Carole D. Yawney, “Remnants of all nations: Rastafarian attitudes towards race and nationality.” In: Frances Henry (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Americas* (The Hague, Mouton, 1976), pp. 231-262; *Lions in Babylon: the Rastafarians of Jamaica as a visionary movement* (Montreal, Department of Anthropology, McGill University, 1978) Ph.D. thesis; “Dread wasteland: Rastafarian ritual in West Kingston, Jamaica.” In: N. Ross Crumrine (ed.), *Ritual symbolism and ceremonialism in the Americas: studies in symbolic anthropology* (Greeley, Colorado, Museum of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado, 1979), pp. 165-167; “To grow a Daughter: cultural liberation and the dynamics of oppression in Jamaica.” In: A. Miles and G. Finn (eds.), *Feminism in Canada* (Montreal, Black Rose Press, 1983) p. 121. John P. Homiak, “The mystic revelation of Rasta-far-eye: visionary communication in a prophetic movement.” In: Barbara Tedlock (ed.), *Dreaming: anthropological and psychological approaches* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1985); *The ‘ancient of days’ seated black: eldership, oral tradition and rituals in Rastafari culture* (Waltham, Brandeis University, 1985). Ph.D. thesis; “Dub history: soundings on Rastafari livity and language.” In: Barry Chevannes (ed.), *Rastafari and other African-Caribbean worldviews* (New York, MacMillan, 1993). [forthcoming]; “From yard to nation: Rastafari and the politics of eldership at home and abroad.” In: Manfred Kremser (ed.), *Ay Bobo: Afro-Caribbean cults: resistance and identity* (Proceedings of the Second Interdisciplinary Congress of the Society for Caribbean Research) [forthcoming].
7. With the word “conventional” I refer to what one might want to call the “official,” “formal” or “dominant” side of the story. I am aware that this touches upon a highly problematic debate about (the construction of) knowledge and reality. A further elaboration of these themes both falls beyond the scope of this study and the expertise of this writer.
8. Klaus de Albuquerque, *Millenarian movements and the politics of liberation: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (Blacksburg, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1976) Ph.D. thesis; Leonard E. Barrett, *The Rastafarians: a study in messianic cultism in Jamaica* (Rio Piedras, Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico, 1968) Ph.D. thesis, and *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977 (revised edition 1988); Sheila Kitzinger, “The Rastafari brethren of Jamaica.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9, 1 (1966): 34-39 and “Protest and mysticism: the Rastafari cult of Jamaica.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8, 2 (1969): 240-262; Joseph Owens, *Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (Kingston, Sangster, 1976); Frank Jan van Dijk, “The Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rasta and the middle class.” *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West Indische Gids* 62, 1-2 (1988): 1-26.
9. Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, pp. 39-112 and Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*.
10. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 19.

11. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 158-160 and 172 (Reference to Barrett's thesis under the same title will be made by adding between parenthesis: (1968)).
12. There are also quite a few studies which have addressed specific elements of "Rastology," such as Rastafarian attitudes to race, the position of women in the movement, the Rastafarian *Ital* diet and so on.
13. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*.
14. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*.
15. Chevannes, "The Repairer of the Breach."
16. Chevannes, *Social origins*.
17. Homiak, *The 'ancient of days' seated black*.
18. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell."
19. Van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel." Among the recent studies two do not explicitly restrict themselves to a particular group in the movement: Anita Waters' *Race, class and political symbols: Rastafari and reggae in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Books, 1985) concentrates on the use of Rastafarian symbolism in the Jamaican elections. Horace Campbell analyzes the movement from a somewhat curious and above all subjective kind of Marxist perspective. The author seems to be more concerned with a political message, than with detailed and careful analysis, although he would probably dismiss this remark as typical of the conspiracy of the "imperialist" (p. 118), "bourgeois" (p. 5), "anti-people" (p. 4), "anti-black" (p. 105) and "jet-set anthropologists and sociologists who exploited the friendship and hospitality of the Rastas in their pursuit of the project to confuse" (p. 132) (*Rasta and resistance: from Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney* (London, Hansib, 1985).
20. This field of study has attracted attention especially since the mass suicide of members of Jim Jones' People's Temple in Guyana in 1978. For reviews of the literature on New Religious Movements and some general studies see: James T. Richardson, *Conversion careers: in and out of the new religions* (London, Sage, 1978); Bryan R. Wilson (ed.), *The social impact of new religious movements* (New York, Unification Theological Seminary, 1981); David G. Bromley and Anson D. Schupe, *The great American cult scare* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1981); Eileen Barker (ed.), *Of Gods and men: new religious movements in the West*. (Macon, Mercer University Press, 1984); Roy Wallis; *The elementary forms of the new religious life* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984); James A. Beckford, *Cult controversies: the societal responses to the new religious movements* London, Tavistock, 1985); Diane Choquette, *New Religious Movements in the United States and Canada: a critical assessment and annotated bibliography* (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1985); Eileen Barker, "Religious movements: cult and anti-cult since Jonestown." *Annual Review of Sociology* 12 (1986): 329-346; Thomas Robbins, "Cults, converts and charisma: the sociology of New Religious Movements." *Current Sociology*, 36, 1 (1988) [special issue]; Eileen Barker, *New religious movements: a practical introduction* (London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1989).
21. The distinction between the interests of historians, theologians, sociologists and anthropologists is of course merely a rough generalization. Historians have concentrated on traditional anthropological fields, anthropologists on traditional sociological fields, and so on. For some of interesting studies of religious movements in non-Western societies see: James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance religion and the Sioux outbreak of 1890* [edited and abridged by Anthony F.C. Wallace] (Chicago, University Press of Chicago, 1965 [1896]); Francis E. Williams, *The Vailala madness and the destruction of native ceremonies in the Gulf Division* (Port Moresby, Papuan Anthropology Reports, 1923); Wilhelm E. Mühlmann et al. (eds.), *Chiliasmus und Nativismus: Studien zur Psychologie, Soziologie und historischen Kasuistik der Umstürzbewegungen* (Berlin, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1961); Bengt G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu prophets in South Africa* (London, Oxford University Press, 1961); Sylvia L. Thrupp (ed.), *Millennial dreams in action: studies in revolutionary religious movements* (The Hague, Mouton, 1962); Vittorio Lanternari, *The religions of the oppressed: a study of modern messianic cults* (London, McGibbon & Kee, 1963); Peter Worsley, *The trumpet shall sound: a study of 'Cargo Cults' in Melanesia* (New York, Schocken Books, 1968); Kennelm O.L. Burrige, *New Heaven, New Earth: a study of millenarian activities* (London, Oxford University Press, 1969); George E. Simpson, *Religious cults in the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica and Haiti* (Rio Piedras, Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico, 1970); Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The death and rebirth of the Seneca: the history of the Great Iroquois Nation, their destruction and demoralization, and their cultural revival at the hands of the Indian visionary Handsome Lake* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1973); Willy Decraemer, Jan Vansina and Renée C. Fox, "Religious movements in Central Africa." *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 18, 4 (1976): 458-475; Fokke Sierksma, *Een nieuwe hemel en een nieuwe aarde: messianistische en eschatologische bewegingen en voorstellingen bij primitieve volken* (Groningen, Konstapel, 1978); James W. Fernandez, "African religious movements." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1978): 195-234; Michael Adas, *Prophets of rebellion: millenarian protest movements against the European colonial order* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Bryan R. Wilson, *Magic and the millennium: a sociological survey of religious movements of protest among tribal and Third-World peoples* (London, Heinemann, 1973); Harold Turner, "New religious movements in the Caribbean" In: Brian Gates (ed.), *Afro-Caribbean religions* (London, Ward Lock, 1980), pp. 49-57; James A. Beckford (ed.), *New religious movements and rapid social change* (Paris, Sage Publications, 1986); H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen and Ineke van Wetering, *The Great Father and the Danger: religious cults, material forces, and collective fantasies in the world of the Surinamese Maroons* (Dordrecht, Foris, 1988); Garry W. Trompf (ed.), *Cargo cults and millenarian movements: transoceanic comparison of new religious movements* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1990).
22. Vittorio Lanternari, *The religions of the oppressed: a study of modern messianic cults* (London, McGibbon and Kee, 1971). It was originally published in Italian in 1963 and makes use of George E. Simpson's "Political cultism in West Kingston, Jamaica." *Social and Economic Studies* 4, 2 (1955): 133-149 and his "Jamaican

- Revivalist cults." *Social and Economic Studies* 5, 4 (1956) (whole issue).
23. Laënnec Hurbon, "New religious movements in the Caribbean." In: James A. Beckford (ed.), *New religious movements and rapid social change* (Paris, Sage Publications, 1986), pp. 146-176. The sources referred to here are: Barrett, *The Rastafarians* (1968); Smith *et al. Report*; George E. Simpson, *The religious cults of the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica and Haiti* (Puerto Rico, Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1970); Ernest Cashmore, *Rastaman: the Rastafarian movement in England* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1981); Sebastian Clarke, *Jah music: the evolution of the popular Jamaican song* (London, Heinemann, 1980) and K. Williams, *The Rastafarians* (London, Ward Lock Educational, 1981). It should be noted that Hurbon's work is only one of the numerous examples of publications which aspire to make theoretical contributions based on a few partly irrelevant and outdated empirical studies. Outdated sources and static representations are, unfortunately, not only a problem in the theoretically-oriented literature. Karlene Faith, publishing on Rastafari in 1990, relies entirely upon works published during the 1960s ("One love - one heart - one destiny: the Ras Tafarian movement in Jamaica." In: Garry W. Trompf (ed.), *Cargo cults and millenarian movements: transoceanic comparison of new religious movements* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 295-342).
 24. Reference here is to Ioan Lewis' *Ecstatic religion: an anthropological study of spirit possession and shamanism* (Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1971). Stephen Glazier, "Prophecy and ecstasy: religion and politics in the Caribbean." In: Jeffrey K. Hadden and Anson Schupe (eds.), *Prophetic religions and politics: religion and the political order* (New York, Praeger House, 1986), pp. 430-447, p. 431. Also see: Stephen Glazier, "Religion and contemporary religious movements in the Caribbean: a report." *Sociological Analysis* 41, 2 (1980): 181-183.
 25. Apart from that, the aspirations of some scholars to include the Rastafarian movement in their comparative studies of religious movements sometimes lead to amazing errors of fact. Although it is tempting to list some of these often outrageous examples here, let it suffice to conclude that such conspicuous inaccuracies merely betray a totally inadequate knowledge and understanding of the movement.
 26. Bryan R. Wilson, *Magic and the millennium: a sociological survey of religious movements of protest among tribal and Third-World peoples* (London, Heinemann, 1973), pp. 67-69. A revolutionist movement is defined as a "response to evil" which maintains that only the destruction of the existing (social) order will bring salvation. "Believers may themselves feel called upon to participate in the process of overturning the world, but they know that they do no more than put a shoulder to an already turning wheel ... It will be changed only by divine action" (p. 23). It should be noted that in virtually all comparative works on religious movements which mention Rastafari, the Henry rebellion and thus the revolutionary orientation of the Rastafarian movement are greatly exaggerated. Hardly surprising, since most of these authors have used the same few sources (see, for instance, Michael Barkun, *Disaster and the millennium* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 174-175.
 27. Another issue which is frequently overemphasized is the alleged racism of the Rastafarians. In *Magic and the Millennium* Wilson also describes the Rastafarians, with their "simplicity of faith" and "simple-minded literal expectations," as "racist," an opinion repeated in a more recent publication (Bryan R. Wilson, *The social dimensions of sectarianism: sects and new religious movements in contemporary society* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 34).
 28. Smith *et al., Report*.
 29. Ralph Linton, "Nativistic movements." *American Anthropologist*, 45, 1 (1943): 230-240.
 30. Yonina Talmon, "Millenarian movements." *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 7, 2 (1966): 159-200.
 31. Wilhelm Mühlmann (ed.), *Chiliasmus und Nativismus: Studien zur Psychologie, Soziologie und historischen Kasuistik der Umstürzbewegungen* (Berlin, Dietrich Reimer, 1961).
 32. André Köbben, *Van primitieven tot medeburgers* (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1971), pp. 94-154.
 33. Leonard Barrett, for instance, wonders whether the Rastafarian movement is a millenarian or messianic movement and decides that the best way out is to designate the movement as millenarian-messianic (*The Rastafarians* (1968), pp. 15-18). Asmarom Legesse treats the Rastafarian movement as a prophetic movement without making the, in my view, necessary analytical distinction between the role of the prophets and the role of the messiah ("Prophetism and social change" In: Walter E.A. van Beek *et al.* (ed.), *African religions: experience and expression* (Michigan, Curry and Heinemann [forthcoming]).
 34. Anthony F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization movements." *American Anthropologist* 58, 1 (1956): 264-281.
 35. Wilson, *Magic and the millennium*, pp. 16-30. To summarize: Wilson distinguishes between the following responses to evil (i.e. movements): the conversionist who believe that man can and should be changed rather than the world or the social order; the revolutionist (only the total destruction of the world will bring salvation); the introversionist (complete withdrawal from the evils of the world); the manipulationist (evil can be overcome by certain (new) techniques of dealing with it); the thraumaturgical (personal salvation from evil through, for instance, spiritual healing); the reformist (the world and its evils can be amended with religious insights) and, finally, the utopian (the world can be remade on the basis of certain divine principles). It is obvious that these responses partly overlap and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As such, the usefulness of these classifications would appear to be limited. One could argue, for example, that the Rastafarian movement, in its various groupings and at different stages in its development, qualifies for all seven designations. Wilson, however, categorizes the movement as "revolutionist."
 36. Weston LaBarre, "Materials for a history of studies of crisis cults: a bibliographical essay." *Current Anthropology*, 12, 1 (1971): 3-27, p. 9. One of the earliest attempts is by Ralph Linton, who proposes a four-fold classification, which excludes quite a few movements, while there are hardly any examples for some of his classifications ("Nativistic movements"). Other classifications are designed by Marian W. Smith ("Towards a classification of cult movements." *Man*, 59, 2 (1959): 8-12); and in the same issue of *Man* and under the same title Anthony F.C. Wallace (pp. 25-26) and Fred. W. Voget (pp. 26-28). Köbben constructs a complex classification based on content (goal) and form of "prophetic movements" (*Van primitieven tot medeburgers*). Less elaborate (and

- sometimes implicit) classifications can be found in many empirical as well as theoretical works on religious movements.
37. George E. Simpson, "Political cultism in West Kingston, Jamaica." *Social and Economic Studies* 4, 2 (1955): 133-149; H. Orlando Patterson, "Ras Tafari: the cult of outcasts." *New Society* 4, 111 (1964): 15-17; Len Garrison, "Rastafarians: protest movement in Jamaica." *Afras Review* 1, 1 (1975): 10-13; G. Llewellyn Watson, "Social structure and social movement: the Nation of Islam in the U.S.A. and the Rastafari movement in Jamaica." *British Journal of Sociology* 24, 12 (1973): 188-204; Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*; Horace Campbell, "Rastafari: culture of resistance." *Race and Class* 22, 1 (1980): 13-21.
 38. Another question is whether the term "movement" is the best suitable for the Rastafarians. Movement here is understood as a collective, more or less organized effort of a socially relevant group within a society to bring about fundamental change in that society, including change in the relations of power. It is debatable whether Rastafari, in its early stages or specific groups within it, should be defined as a movement. Perhaps the terms "cult" or "sect" would be more appropriate (nearly all early authors on Rastafari label it as a cult, but without any clarification). Although I do not intend to enter this thorny debate, it may be pointed out that a sect is often regarded as the product of a church schism and usually a rather tight-knit organization under central leadership, which is evidently not the case with Rastafari. Apart from its generally negative associations, cult provides several difficulties as well in relation to Rastafari, as Yawney points out (*Lions in Babylon*, pp. 61-63). Cults, for instance, tend to stress individual salvation, rather than collective salvation. It may be argued that the Rastafarian movement includes several cults, but as a whole the term movement is more appropriate.
 39. One might, and some authors do, consider the Rastafarian movement a social or political movement, rather than a religious movement. Here, however, the movement is regarded as a religious movement, originally a millenarian movement, which has later given rise to various secular spin-offs. The use of the adjective "religious" to movement does not, as we shall see, exclude political (or secular) tendencies or action within such movements. I follow Kennelm Burrige in his conclusion that "no religious movement lacks a political ideology," since both politics and religion are concerned with the relations of power, though from different perspectives (the first between different human groups, the latter between the human and the divine) (*New heaven, new earth: a study of millenarian activities* (London, Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 7).
 40. Norman Cohn, *The pursuit of the millennium*; Fokke Sierksma, *Een nieuwe hemel en een nieuwe aarde: mesianistische en eschatologische bewegingen en voorstellingen bij primitieve volken* (Groningen, Konstapel, 1978).
 41. Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels*; Peter Worsley, *The trumpet shall sound: a study of 'Cargo Cults' in Melanesia* (New York, Schocken Books, 1968). Lanternari also basically views all "modern messianic cults" as pre-political, but futile resistance against foreign, colonial domination. (*The religions of the oppressed*).
 42. David F. Aberle, "A note on relative deprivation theory as applied to millenarian and other cult movements." In: Sylvia L. Thrupp, *Millennial dreams in action: essays in comparative study* (The Hague, Mouton, 1962), pp. 209-214. Also see: Charles Glock, "The role of deprivation in the origin and evolution of religious groups." In: Robert Lee and Martin E. Marty (eds), *Religion and social conflict* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1964); Michael Barkun, *Disaster and the millennium* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974).
 43. Virginia H. Hine, "The deprivation and disorganization theories of social movements." In: Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone (eds.), *Religious movements in contemporary America* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 646-661, p. 651.
 44. Chris de Beet and Bonno Thoden van Velzen, "Bush Negro prophetic movements: religions of despair?" *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 133, 1 (1977): 100-135. Also see: Bonno Thoden van Velzen, "Bush Negro regional cults: a materialist explanation." In: Richard P. Werbner (ed.), *Regional cults* (London, Academic Press, 1977), pp. 93-118; H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen and Ineke van Wetering, *The Great Father and the Danger: religious cults, material forces, and collective fantasies in the world of the Surinamese Maroons* (Dordrecht, Foris, 1988).
 45. H.U.E. "Bonno" Thoden van Velzen and Walter E.A. van Beek, "Purity: a greedy ideology." In: Walter E.A. van Beek (ed.), *The quest for purity: dynamics of puritan movements* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1988), pp. 1-34, p. 26.
 46. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, *Reader in comparative religion: an anthropological approach* (New York, Harper and Row, 1979), p. 414.
 47. Lessa and Vogt, *Reader in comparative religion*, p. 414.
 48. L.G. Jansma and P.G.G.M. Schulten (eds.), *Religieuze bewegingen* (Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), pp. 7-8.
 49. Garry W. Trompf, "Introduction." In: Garry W. Trompf (ed.), *Cargo cults and millenarian movements: trans-oceanic comparison of new religious movements* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 1-34, p. 4. It goes beyond the scope of this Introduction to discuss this vast body of literature.
 50. Wallace, "Revitalization movements."
 51. LaBarre, "Materials for a history of studies of crisis cults," p. 10.
 52. Wallace, "Revitalization movements," p. 277.
 53. It should also be noted that the six major tasks, which according to Wallace have to be performed by revitalization movements in order to achieve the cultural change they are seeking, apply explicitly to *religious* revitalization movements (See: Wallace, "Revitalization movements, p. 270).
 54. Annemarie de Waal-Malefijt, *Religion and culture: an introduction to the anthropological study of religion* (New York, MacMillan, 1968), p. 331.
 55. Burrige, *New heaven, new earth*, p. 7.
 56. Wallace also writes that "some [movements] can be relatively less religious than others," which can be some-

what misleading since the “degree” of religiosity of movements as such is not necessarily related to the degree to which they can or will use political means to achieve its goals.

57. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 265.
58. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” pp. 265-266.
59. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” pp. 266-267 and 269.
60. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 266.
61. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” pp. 268-275.
62. Judith Marie Justinger, *Reaction to change: a holocultural test of some theories of religious movements* (Buffalo, State University of New York, 1978), p. 4.
63. Wallace implies that the six “major tasks” in the revitalization process are to be considered as “functional stages” in a movement’s development as well.
64. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 270.
65. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 270.
66. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” pp. 273-274
67. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” pp. 273-274. I am aware of the problematic connotations of the Weberian concept of charisma (to which Wallace devotes considerable attention). This is not, however, the place to get into a discussion of the concept of charisma in the social sciences. Charismatic is used here merely to indicate a type of leadership based on a strong loyalty among followers for a leader, who claims and is *ascribed* not only unique personality traits, but above all a special and intense relationship with the divine.
68. See: Legesse, “Prophetism and social change.”
69. See: Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*. Yawney considers the Rastafarian movement to be a “visionary” movement.
70. Worsley, *The trumpet shall sound*, p. 241.
71. Reference here is to the Peacemakers’ Association led by Claudius Henry. Since his death in 1986 the remnants of his organization have come to regard Trevor Munroe, leader of the small Marxist-oriented Workers’ Party of Jamaica, as his reincarnation (see chapter 6).
72. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 274.
73. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 279.
74. See: Martin King and Marc Breault, *Preacher of death: the shocking inside story of David Koresh and the Waco siege* (London, Signet/Penguin, 1993).
75. Hobsbawm’s use of “millenarian” and “revolutionary” movements may be somewhat misleading as he - correctly - considers “millenarian” movements to be revolutionary as well (as opposed to reformist), in the sense that both share “a profound and total rejection of the present, evil world, and a passionate longing for another and better one.” In fact the author’s distinction is one between “millenarian revolutionaries” and “political or secular revolutionaries” (*Primitive rebels*, pp. 56-65).
76. Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels*, pp. 57-58.
77. Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels*, p. 58-59 [emphasis mine].
78. That is not to say that millenarian dreams may not be important incentives for, sometimes fervent, activity. Yet outbursts of millenarian enthusiasm and action do not arise from a belief that the adherents can accomplish the transformation to a new world order by themselves. They rather act in the firm conviction that the end of days are very close at hand and that they, as the chosen, are protected by the divine.
79. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 277.
80. Talmon, “Pursuit of the millennium,” p. 50.
81. Worsley, *The trumpet shall sound*, p. 231.
82. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 16.
83. Talmon, “Pursuit of the millennium,” p. 56.
84. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, pp. 18-19.
85. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 19.
86. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 275.
87. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 275.
88. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” pp. 278-279. According to Wallace the amount of resistance and the degree of realism are closely interrelated. Realism in the prediction of the outcome of a power struggle with its opponents is, according to the author, of essential importance for a movement’s fate. There are several examples in which miscalculations in this respect (often born out of a firm belief in divine protection) have led to the demise of religious movements. David Koresh’ Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas, are, again, an example.
89. That, of course, is not to say that political programs may not be unrealistic - history provides countless examples. “Purely” religious programs, however, are doomed to fail sooner or later when they continue to rely on the protection or intervention of the divine. As such they are by definition “unrealistic.”
90. Failures of prophecy, as is commonly recognized, do not necessarily lead to the disintegration of a religious movement. If such failures can be “explained,” it may even result in heightened activity and intensified dedication. See: Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken and Stanley Schachter, *When prophecy fails: a social and psychological study of a modern group that predicted the destruction of the world* (New York, Harper & Row, 1964); Joseph F. Zygmunt, “When prophecies fail: a theoretical perspective on the comparative evidence.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 16, 2 (1972): 245-268.
91. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” p. 275.
92. Culture, “Babylon can’t study.” (*The Reggae Sampler*, Sahanachie, n.d.)
93. Rastafarian authors have made valuable contributions to the literature on their own movement. Grateful use has been made of these publications and insights, although I do not expect any Rastafarian to totally or even largely agree with my representation/construction of their reality. For an inside approach apology see:

- Leahcim Semaj, "Rastafari: from religion to social theory." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 22-31; Dennis Forsythe, *Rastafari: for the healing of the nation* (Kingston, Zaika Publications, 1983); Maureen Rowe, "The woman in Rastafari." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 13-21. For an explicit critique of the works of non-Rasta authors by a Rastafarian author see: Jah Bones, "Rastafari literature and authorship: a critique." *Westindian Digest* 9, 90 (1983): 28-34.
- There are also some (non-Rastafarian) scholars who regard this kind of work as "scientific colonization," intended to confirm the global status quo with scientific methods (an argument which implies that only Third World researchers themselves are able to represent correctly the reality of other Third World peoples). In the literature on Rastafari, Horace Campbell's work reflects such an opinion (*Rasta and resistance*). Although I consider Campbell's critique exaggerated and often unfounded, the scientific colonization "school" has triggered an important debate that neither the Third nor the First World researchers should ignore.
94. Morris Cargill, *Jamaica farewell* (Secaucus, Cinnamon Books, 1978), pp. 18-19, it might seem unnecessary, but to avoid misunderstanding, it may be useful to note here explicitly that such negative quotes about the Rastafarian movement do by no means reflect the opinion of this writer. They have been included with the intention of reflecting the opinions about the movement in the wider Jamaican society, which is, after all, a central theme in this study. Unfortunately, these opinions are, as we shall see further on, only too often negative.
95. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 104.
96. Since this thesis is primarily concerned with the development of the relationship between the Rastafarian movement and the wider Jamaican society, the discussion of Rastafarian beliefs has been kept as short as possible. For a fine study of Rastafarian theology see Joseph Owens' *Dread*, in which the author - by making extensive use of tape-recorded interviews - has successfully tried to let the Rastafarians speak for themselves.
97. See: Samuel Elisha Brown's "Treatise on the Rastafarian movement." *Caribbean Studies* 6, 2 (1966): 37-40; Prince Edward Emmanuel's *Black supremacy* (Kingston, 1978); Ras I. Dizzy, "The Rastas speak." *Caribbean Quarterly* 13, 4 (1967): 41-42; *Vision of black slaves* (Kingston, 1971); Millard Faristzaddi and Iyawata Farika Birhan et al., *Itations of Jamaica and I Rastafari* (New York, Rogner & Bernhard, 1982); Dennis Forsythe, "West Indian culture through the prism of Rastafarianism." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 62-81; *Rastafari: for the healing of the nation* (Kingston, Zaika Publications, 1983); *Hope* 1, 1 and 2-3 (Kingston, Ethiopian World Federation Local 77, 1977); *Imperial Chronicle* 1, 1 (London, The Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Inc. Asfa Wossen H.S. Local 1, January 1987); G.G. Maragh (Leonard P. Howell), *The promised key* (Accra [probably Kingston], 1935); Brother Miguel (Michael Anthony Lorne), *Rastaman chant* (Kingston, African Children Unlimited, 1983); *Rasta: a modern antique* (Kingston, Rasta Movement Association, 1976); "Readings in history and culture of Rastafari." (Kingston, Rasta Movement Association, n.d. [probably 1978]); Leahcim T. Semaj, "Rastafari: from religion to social theory." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 22-31; "Race and identity and the children of the African diaspora: contributions of Rastafari." *Caribe* 4, 4 (1980): 14-18; "Inside Rasta: the future of a religious movement." *Caribbean Review* 14, 1 (1985): 8-11 and 37-38; I. Jabulani Tafari, "The Rastafari: successors of Marcus Garvey." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 1-12; Ikael Tafari, "Rastafari in transition: cultural confrontation and political change in Ethiopia and the Caribbean, 1966-1986." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* 15, 1 (1989): 1-13; Ras J. Testa, *The living testaments of Rasta-for-i* (n.p. [probably Port of Spain], [Printed by] Lincia Graphics in ass. with L. Greenfield, n.d. [probably 1980]); Chris Ahkell Williams, *Rasta: Emperor Haile Selassie and the Rastafarians* (Port of Spain, [Printed by] Black Star Line, n.d. [probably 1982]).
98. See: Owens, *Dread*, pp. 90-124. Many Rastafarians consider Haile Selassie to be God, Messiah, Spiritual Head, Elect of God, King, Ruler, Warrior, Lion, Lamb, Man, all at once. As Owens expresses it: "The Emperor is all-in-all." Jah is said to be a shortened form of Jahwe or Jehovah (see Psalm 68: 4: "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him"). It seems rather strange that the Rastafarians did not become known as "Selassians." In the early days, however, Haile Selassie, a baptismal name which literally means "Light of the Trinity," was mostly referred to a Ras Tafari, in which "Ras" is a court title comparable to "Prince." Until the 1960s the Rastas were commonly referred to as Ras Tafarians, Ras Tafarites or its shortened form Rases (Rasses), and sometimes Ras Tafaris and misspellings like Rasta Fari's (in Jamaican patois Ras or Raas is a popular earthy way to refer to a person's behind, but this has never bothered the Rastafarians). Later the spelling Rastafarians and its shortened form Rastas became generally accepted. Except for quotes, I have followed this custom, which also allows for a clear distinction between Ras Tafari (the Emperor), Rasta or Rastafarian (the believer) and Rastafari (the doctrine). The latter form is preferred above Rastafarianism (sometimes Rastaism), since the Rastas abhor all sorts of *isms*. Occasionally Rastology (a Rastafarian invention) is used as an alternative for Rastafari (the doctrine).
99. *Ethiopian Orthodox Church St. Mary of Zion/The Ethiopian World Federation Inc. Emperor Yohannes Local* 33 (London, The Ethiopian World Federation, 1975), pp. 47-48. There are conflicting views about the role ascribed to Haile Selassie by the Rastafarians among the authors on Rastafari as well. Yawney, surprisingly, writes: "While Haile Selassie is regarded as a spiritual authority, he does not appear to be perceived as a "messiah". The author thus concludes that Rastafari is a "prophetic" or "visionary" movement (Lions in Babylon, pp. 114-115). Owens and several other authors, however, leave little doubt about the "messianic status" of Haile Selassie among the Rastas (*Dread*, pp. 102-124). In the literature on religious movements the various terms have been used quite loosely and often without explication. It appears that the two positions are not mutually exclusive if we make an analytical distinction between a prophet as "a visionary who claims divine inspiration" (as Yawney, following De Beet and Thoden van Velzen ["Bush Negro prophetic movements."], formulates it) and a messiah not as a mediator but rather as the divine (or manifestation of the divine) who is expected to bring about salvation. As such the Rastafarians are the prophets and Selassie the Messiah, while the Rastafarian movement is both a prophetic, visionary and messianic movement or rather a movement with such

tendencies. It may further be noted that a prophet can rise to the role of messiah (the Rastafarian movement provides several examples here, e.g. Leonard Howell and Prince Emmanuel).

100. Millard Faristzaddi and Iyawata Farika Birhan *et al.*, *Itations of Jamaica and I Rastafari* (New York, Rogner & Bernhard, 1982), n.p.
101. Faristzaddi and Birhan *et al.*, *Itations of Jamaica and I Rastafari*, n.p.
102. For a fine description of the Rastafarian concepts of Babylon and Zion see: Carole D. Yawney, "Remnants of all nations: Rastafarian attitudes towards race and nationality." In: Frances Henry (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Americas* (The Hague, Mouton, 1976), pp. 231-262.
103. Interview with Michael Anthony Lorne, Kingston, 16 November 1990.
104. Owens, *Dread*, pp. 57-63.
105. Yawney, "Remnants of all nations," p. 231.
106. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 115.
107. Owens, *Dread*, pp. 42-44 and 125-133.
108. Pamphlet of the Divine Theocracy Temple of Rastafari Selassie I, n.p., n.d.
109. For the Rastafarian diet see: Audrey Goodison, "Dietary survey and eating habits of the Rastafarians." (Kingston, Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, University of the West Indies, 1976) [unpublished paper]; J. Landman Bogues, "Rastafarian food habits." *Cajanus* 9, 4 (1976): 228-234; J.C. McLeod and A.A. Jackson, "Nutrition: the Rasta diet." *Cajanus* 14, 4 (1981).
110. Ganja is known under a score of other names, including kali, kaya, pot, grass, iley, sensimillia, king's bread, lamb's bread, the healing of the nation, etcetera.
111. See: Vera Rubin and Lambros Comitas, *Ganja in Jamaica: a medical anthropological study of chronic marihuana use* (The Hague, Mouton, 1975); Melanie Creagan Dreher, *Working men and ganja: marihuana use in rural Jamaica* (Philadelphia, Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982). Kenneth Bilby has argued that there is possibly an African connection with ganja use ("The holy herb: notes on the background of cannabis in Jamaica." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari*. (Kingston, Extra-Mural Department, University of the West Indies, 1985), pp. 82-95).
112. For the Rastafarian idiom see: Velma Pollard's publications, "Dread talk: the speech of the Rastafarians in Jamaica." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 32-41; "The social history of dread talk." *Caribbean Quarterly* 28, 4 (1982): 17-40; "Word sounds: the language of Rastafari in Barbados and St. Lucia." *Jamaica Journal* 17, 1 (1984): 57-62. Also see: Owens, *Dread*, pp. 64-68; Iyawata Farika Birhan, "Iyaric glossary." In: Millard Faristzaddi and Iyawata Farika Birhan *et al.*, *Itations of Jamaica and I Rastafari* (New York, Rogner & Bernard, 1982), n.p.
113. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 2.
114. A major problem with all these estimates is once again the definition of Rastafari and, more especially, the sympathizers. It seems somewhat odd to include an unspecified category like "sympathizers" in an estimate about the numbers of followers of a religious movement. If sympathizers are to be understood as those who for one reason or another, actively or passively support Rastafari or certain elements of its doctrine, then this category would include such diverse groups as reggae fans in love with the music and the Rasta-reggae symbols; those who - as they say in Jamaica - "respect" the Rastas for their uncompromising attitudes; left wing voters who regard the members of the faith as allies against the establishment; personal friends and neighbors or black nationalists who share the cultural focus on African identity with the Rastafarian.
115. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 2-3.
116. We may add, however, that there are some mulatto (or brown) and East Indian Rastas, and a handful of white Rastafarians, most of them not of Jamaican origin. As to former religion, it may be remarked that with the increase of second and third generation Rastas, the proportion of ex-Christians is obviously decreasing.
117. The maps of Jamaica and the Kingston Metropolitan Area depict the major towns and streets as well as towns, villages and streets referred to in the text and of relevance to the history of the Rastafarian movement.
118. Cargill, *Jamaica farewell*, p. 8.
119. There are seven population censuses for the twentieth century: 1911, 1921, 1943, 1960, 1970, 1982 and 1991 (in 1953 the government carried out a sample survey, which included approximately one in twenty households in Kingston and one in ten households in the rural areas). *Population census of Jamaica* is published by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), formerly Department of Statistics, Central Bureau of Statistics and General Register Office. Data from the last census were not yet available at the time of writing. One of the major problems with the population censuses is the traditionally high proportion of non-response. STATIN also publishes an annual *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica* and (an irregular) *Statistical Yearbook of Jamaica*. The comparability of the data from the various volumes of these issues is limited, due to continual changes in the methods and classifications employed.
120. *Population census 1982* (Kingston, Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), 1985). Estimate of population in 1989: *The Jamaica Record*, 12 May 1990, p. 4, data from STATIN.
121. *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica*, 1982.
122. Anthony Payne, *Politics in Jamaica* (London, C. Hurst, 1988), p. viii.
123. "Urban" in the definition used here is any town larger than 20,000 inhabitants.
124. The city of Kingston encompasses all of the parish of Kingston and part of the parish of St. Andrew. In the total population of Kingston/St. Andrew (KSA) in Graph iii "rural" St. Andrew is included as well. Hence the slightly higher figure.
125. Data from *Population Census of Jamaica 1982; Economic and Social Survey Jamaica*, volumes 1960-1989; George E. Cumper, "Preliminary analysis of population growth and social characteristics in Jamaica, 1943-60." *Social and Economic Studies* 12, 4 (1963): 393-431.

126. *Population Census of Jamaica 1982*. Included in this category is a group of Syrian/Lebanese, representing 0.03% of the total population.
127. These indentured laborers arrived after the abolition of slavery in 1834. Among them were also an estimated 10,000 Africans.
128. Ethnic origin is the description used in the population census. Without going into the discussions about “race” and “ethnicity,” I think a few short clarifications about the use here of words referring to racial or ethnic origin, skin color, etc. are in place. In most cases I have used the words “race,” “black,” “African,” “negro,” “brown,” “mulatto,” “white,” “European,” “Indian,” “Jew,” “Syrian,” and the like in the (not always very consistent) way in which they are generally used, in everyday conversation, by Jamaicans and by Rastafarians in particular. This study is not directly concerned with the complex system in which these terms are used to reflect social meaning or status. Finally, it should be noted that although some people insist that “black,” “white,” etc. should be written with a capital, I have not done so. For some publications on the complex (inter)relationship between color, race, ethnicity, class and social status in the Caribbean and Jamaica see: Jack Alexander, “The culture of race in middle-class Kingston, Jamaica.” *American Ethnologist* 4, 3 (1977): 413-435; Leonard Broom, “The social differentiation of Jamaica.” *American Sociological Review* 19, 2 (1954): 115-125; Aggrey Brown, *Color, class, and politics in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1979); Fernando Henriques, *Family and colour in Jamaica* (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953); Harry Hoetink, *The two variants of race relations in the Caribbean: a contribution to the sociology of segmented societies* (London, Oxford University Press, 1967); Mandeline Kerr, *Personality and conflict in Jamaica* (Liverpool, The University Press, 1952); Adam Kuper, *Changing Jamaica* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976); Katrin Norris, *Jamaica: the search for an identity* (London, Oxford University Press, 1962); Michael G. Smith, *The plural society in the British West Indies* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1965); Michael G. Smith, *Culture, race and class in the Commonwealth Caribbean* (Kingston, School of Continuing Studies, University of the West Indies, 1990); Carl Stone, *Class, race and political behaviour in urban Jamaica* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1973).
129. Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, p. 36. Also see Rex M. Nettleford, *Caribbean cultural identity: the case of Jamaica. An essay in cultural dynamics* (Kingston, Institute of Jamaica, 1978).
130. Data from *Population census of Jamaica 1891, 1911, 1943 and 1982*.
131. *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica*, 1982, pp. ix-x
132. *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica*, 1989. The value of the GDP and per capita GDP in US\$ has been calculated on the basis of the exchange rate at the end of 1989.
133. *Jamaica Record*, 1 April 1990, pp. 1 and 4. The research was carried out by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies.
134. Omar Davies and Michael Witter, “The development of the Jamaican economy since independence.” In: Rex M. Nettleford (ed.), *Jamaica in independence: essays on the early years* (Kingston, Heinemann, 1989), pp. 75-104.
135. The 1989 unemployment figures are low compared with those of the late 1970s and early to mid-1980s. In 1979, for instance, the average unemployment rate stood at 27.8%. It should be noted that a rather wide definition of unemployment is used in Jamaican statistics, including both “seekers” and “non-seekers.”
136. Carl Stone, *Class, state and democracy in Jamaica* (New York, Praeger, 1986), pp. 115-117.
137. Colin G. Clarke, *Kingston, Jamaica: urban growth and social change, 1692-1962* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975), p. 17; *Demographic atlas of urban areas: Kingston Metropolitan Area* (Kingston, Division of Census and Surveys, Department of Statistics, 1977).

Notes Chapter 1. Babylon and Zion

138. J.H. Parry, Philip Sherlock and Anthony Maingot, *A short history of the West Indies* (London, MacMillan, 1987), pp. 1-13.
139. Mervyn Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture* (London, Pluto Press, 1988), pp. 29 and 32.
140. Clinton V. Black, *History of Jamaica* (London, Collins, 1958), pp. 9-47.
141. Parry et al., *A short history*, pp. 57-59.
142. Black, *History of Jamaica*, p. 53.
143. Black, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 48-73.
144. Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and power: the place of sugar in modern history* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1986); Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the people without history* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982), pp. 149-151.
145. George W. Roberts, “Growth of the population.” In: George W. Roberts (ed.), *Recent population movements in Jamaica* (Paris, CICRED, 1974), pp. 2-5.
146. See, for instance, Barbara K. Kopytoff, *The Maroons of Jamaica: an ethnohistorical study of incomplete politics, 1655-1905* (University of Pennsylvania, 1973) Ph.D. thesis; Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: a history of resistance, collaboration and betrayal* (Granby, Bergin and Garvey, 1988).
147. The name then used in Jamaica to refer to slaves from the Gold Coast. The Coromantees (other spellings are in use as well) were named after the fortress Cormantine near which they had been captured. They were Akan people, including ethnic groups like the Asante (or Ashanti) and Fante.
148. Although there is a large body of research on this topic, it is neither necessary nor appropriate to address this matter in more detail here.
149. Ken Post, *Arise ye starvelings: the Jamaican labour rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), pp. 21 and 30.
150. Parry et al. *A short history of the West Indies*, p. 114.

151. Black, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 138-147
152. Black, *History of Jamaica*, p. 156.
153. Michael G. Smith, *The plural society in the British West Indies* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1965), p. 93.
154. Gad Heuman, *Between black and white: race, politics and the free coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Oxford, Clío Press, 1981).
155. Smith, *The plural society*, pp. 92-115; Michael Craton, *Searching for the invisible man: slaves and plantation life in Jamaica* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978).
156. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture*, p. 76.
157. Dale Bisnauth, *History of religions in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Kingston Publishers, 1989), p. 83.
158. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture*, p. 79.
159. William Wedenoja, "The origins of Revival, a Creole religion in Jamaica." In: George R. Saunders (ed.), *Culture and Christianity: the dialectics of transformation* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 90-116.
160. For a discussion of Myal see: Monica Schuler, "Myalism and the African religious tradition in Jamaica." In: Margaret E. Crahan and Franklin W. Knight (eds.), *Africa and the Caribbean: the legacies of a link* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), pp. 65-79.
161. Monica Schuler, "Alas, alas, Kongo": a social history of African immigration into Jamaica, 1841-1865 (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 33.
162. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture*, pp. 88-89.
163. Thirty years earlier four Moravian missionaries had already arrived on the island. Some missionary work might have been carried out among slaves owned by two Moravian planter families in the parish of St. Catherine before that time, but the Moravians were mainly concerned about the spiritual well-being of the slaves and did not challenge slavery.
164. George Lisle is also referred to as George Liele.
165. Mary Turner, *Slaves and missionaries: the disintegration of Jamaican slave society, 1787-1834* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 11-30.
166. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture*, p. 89.
167. Schuler, "Myalism," p. 68. There are conflicting interpretations on the precise character of these early Baptist missions. Whereas Turner (*Slaves and missionaries*, pp. 57-59) maintains that the Native Baptist were an "informal offshoot" of the Black Baptist missions of Lisle and others, other authors treat the Black and Native Baptists as one and the same (e.g. Leonard Barrett, *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977); Alleyne, *The roots of Jamaican culture*; Philip D. Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: the role of ideas in a tropical colony, 1830-1865* (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1955), p. 34.
168. Curtin, *Two Jamaicas*, p. 34.
169. George Lisle spent some time in jail because of debt, went to England in 1822 and died there shortly afterwards.
170. See: Turner, *Slaves and missionaries*; Curtin, *Two Jamaicas*; Harold Turner, "Caribbean Christianity." In: Brian Gates (ed.), *Afro-Caribbean religions* (London, Ward Lock, 1980), pp. 39-47.
171. Parry et al., *A short history of the West Indies*, pp. 137-162; Black, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 148-163.
172. Turner, *Slaves and missionaries*, p. 48.
173. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 41.
174. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 49.
175. Black, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 158-159; Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 38-51; Turner, *Slaves and missionaries*, pp. 148-178.
176. Black, *History of Jamaica*, p. 164.
177. Black, *History of Jamaica*, p. 169; Ajai Mansingh and Laxmi Mansingh, "Hindu influences on Rastafarianism." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1980), p. 100; Schuler, "Myalism," pp. 65-79.
178. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, pp. 30-31.
179. Many peasants saw the Crown as their last hope. Their petition was forwarded to Victoria through Governor Eyre who appended his own recommendations. The answer became known as the "Queen's Letter."
180. Schuler, "Alas, alas, Kongo," p. 102.
181. After the Great Revival, several distinctive movements developed out of Myalism. The impact of Christian theology was strongest on the primarily urban movements which became known as Pukumina (or Pocomania) and Revival (or Revival Zion). Christian elements were also adopted, to a lesser extent, by Kumina, which emerged in St. Thomas, and Convince, predominately active in Portland and St. Thomas. For Kumina, Convince, Revival and Pukumina see: Barry Chevannes, "Revival and black struggle." *Savacou* 5 (1971): 27-39; Leonard E. Barrett, *The sun and the drum: African roots in Jamaican folk tradition* (London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1976); Ivor Morrish, *Obeah, Christ and Rastaman: Jamaica and its religions* (Greenwood, South Carolina, Attic Press, 1982); William Wedenoja, "The origins of Revival, a Creole religion in Jamaica." In: George R. Saunders (ed.), *Culture and Christianity: the dialectics of transformation* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 90-116; Schuler, "Alas, alas, Kongo"; Alleyne, *The roots of Jamaican culture*.
182. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 35.
183. Black, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 191-206 and Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 51-63.
184. George W. Roberts, *The population of Jamaica* (New York, Kraus, 1979), p. 139.
185. Bessie Pullen-Burry, *Ethiopia in exile: Jamaica revisited* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), p. 140; See also: Frank F. Taylor, "The burial of the past: the promotion of the early Jamaican tourist industry." *Boletín de Estudios Latinamericanos y del Caribe* 40 (1986): 49-61.

186. The best source on the economic development during the nineteenth and early twentieth century is Gisela Eisner, *Jamaica, 1830-1930: a study in economic growth* (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1961).
187. Paul Edwards and James Walvin, "Africans in Britain, 1500-1800." In: Martin L. Kilson and Robert I. Rotberg (eds.), *The African diaspora: interpretative essays* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 173-204. Also see: James W. St. G. Walker, "The establishment of a free black community in Nova Scotia, 1783-1840." In: Martin L. Kilson and Robert I. Rotberg (eds.), *The African diaspora: interpretative essays* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 205-236.
188. See, for instance, David Jenkins, *Black Zion: the return of Afro-Americans and West Indians to Africa* (London, Wildwood House, 1975); Arthur T. Porter, *Creoledom: a study of the development of Freetown society* (London, Oxford University Press, 1963); Leo Spitzer, *The Creoles of Sierra Leone: responses to colonialism, 1870-1945* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).
189. Cit. in Merran Fraenkel, *Tribe and class in Monrovia* (London, Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 4.
190. The United States government did, however, indirectly support the ACS. The US Navy transported captives to Liberia and handed them over to the Society, which received funds from the government to settle them.
191. Fraenkel, *Tribe and class*, pp. 5-9.
192. William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, "The Negro Convention Movement." In: Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson and Daniel M. Fox (eds.), *Key issues in the Afro-American experience* (volume I) (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), pp. 191-210.
193. Cit. in Pease and Pease, "The Negro Convention Movement," p. 203.
194. Jenkins, *Black Zion*, pp. 92-95.
195. Edwin S. Redkey, "The flowering of Black Nationalism: Henry McNeal Turner and Marcus Garvey." In: Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson and Daniel M. Fox (eds.), *Key issues in the Afro-American experience* (volume II) (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), pp. 107-124.
196. Jenkins, *Black Zion*, pp. 154-157.
197. David Jenkins, *Black Zion*, p. 151.
198. Turner, "Caribbean Christianity," p. 43
199. See: Schuler, *Alas, alas, Kongo*.
200. Schuler, *Alas, alas, Kongo*, p. 89.
201. Schuler, *Alas, alas, Kongo*, p. 94.
202. See: George Shepperson, "Ethiopianism: past and present" In: C.G. Baëta (ed), *Christianity in tropical Africa* (London, Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 149-264. The translations of "black" as "Ethiopian" in the King James version is no doubt an important explanation for the fact that Ethiopianism appears to have been largely restricted to the English-speaking territories.
203. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 68.
204. According to scholars who may be supposed to know, Ethiopian words and terms are rather difficult to transcribe into English. In English publications on Ethiopia various styles are used, none of them absolutely accurate. I have followed Mockler, who has "gone for the most easy and, where possible, familiar form rather than the most accurate transliteration." For reasons of clarity, I have used these transliterations in quotes from other sources as well. Some terms may be in need of a short explanation. The most important are listed here (taken from Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians: an introduction to people and country* (London, Oxford University Press, 1972) and Anthony Mockler, *Haile Selassie's war* (London, Grafton Books, 1987)).
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|----------------------|---|
| <i>Abba</i> | Church title, equivalent to Father, used for priests and bishops |
| <i>Abuna</i> | Church title, corresponding to Archbishop |
| <i>Amhara</i> | Dominant ruling ethnic group of Ethiopia |
| <i>Ato</i> | Title of respect, similar to Mr. |
| <i>Dejazmatch</i> | Title, used for district chiefs, senior dignitaries. |
| <i>Echege</i> | Church title, Ethiopian head of the Church under the <i>Abuna</i> |
| <i>Ge'ez</i> | Classical, liturgical language of Ethiopia and its church |
| <i>Haile</i> | Power of |
| <i>Lij</i> | Title, used for young Nobles |
| <i>Mered Azmatch</i> | Crown Prince |
| <i>Negus</i> | King |
| <i>Negusa Nagast</i> | King of Kings, Emperor |
| <i>Ras</i> | Most senior (military) title, similar to Duke or Prince |
| <i>Selassie</i> | Trinity |
| <i>Woizero</i> | Lady |
- Terms like *Abuna* and *Ras* do not always appear in italics in the text. Wherever they form part of a name, as in *Abuna Basilius* or *Ras Tafari Makonnen*, they are written as such.
205. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 58.
206. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 70.
207. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 82.
208. Mockler, *Haile Selassie's war*, p. xxxvii.
209. After the Italian occupation, Emperor Haile Selassie opened negotiations for the appointment of an Ethiopian *Abuna*. In 1946-1948 it was agreed that upon the death of the Coptic *Abuna* Kyrill, an Ethiopian Archbishop would be appointed. When the Coptic Patriarch died on 22 October 1950, Echege Basilius became the first indigenous leader of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. However, he was, like his predecessors, consecrated in Cairo. For the history and theology of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church see, for instance: Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, pp. 93-110; Bertold Spuler, *Die Morgenländischen Kirchen* (Leiden/Köln, Brill, 1964); Paul

- Verghese, "Koptisches Christentum: die orthodoxen Kirchen Ägyptens und Äthiopiens." In: *Die Kirchen der Welt* (Band XII). (Stuttgart, Evangelisches Verlagswerk Stuttgart, 1973), pp. 133-149; Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church; The Ethiopian Orthodox Church St. Mary of Zion/The Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. Emperor Yohannes Local 33* (London, Ethiopian World Federation, Inc., 1975), pp. 32-33.
210. Bengt G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu prophets in South Africa* (London, Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 39.
211. George Shepperson, "Ethiopianism and African nationalism." In: Immanuel Wallerstein (ed.), *Social change: the colonial situation* (New York, John Wiley, 1966), pp. 478-488, p. 481.
212. Sundkler, *Bantu prophets*, pp. 56-57.
213. Bisnauth, *History of religions*, p. 113.
214. Jenkins, *Black Zion*, p. 32.
215. Barry Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach." *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 64, 3-4 (1990): 127-148; Robert Hill, "Leonard P. Howell and millenarian visions in early Rastafari." *Jamaica Journal* 16, 1 (1983): 24-39; Barrett, *The Rastafarians*.
216. See: Chevannes, "Rastafari".
217. As will be discussed in chapter 7, Rastafari was not only influenced by Revival, but also by local Hinduism.
218. Martha Warren Beckwith, *Black roadways: a study of Jamaican folk life* (New York, Negro Universities Press, 1929), p. 167.
219. Roscoe M. Pierson, "Alexander Bedward and the Jamaica Native Baptist Free Church." *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 4, 3 (1969): 65-76, p. 69.
220. W.F. Elkins, *Street preachers, faith healers, and herb doctors in Jamaica, 1890-1925* (New York, Revisionist Press, 1975), p. 12.
221. Several versions of these words have been recorded. The one quoted here are the words as remembered by the journalist W. Adolphe Roberts who interviewed Alexander Bedward in 1907. However, Roberts' version first appeared in an interview with *The Daily Gleaner* of 31 January 1960 and was then quoted in Pierson, "Alexander Bedward". Derek Bishton gives another version: "We are the true people: the white men are hypocrites, robbers and thieves. They are all liars. Hell will be your portion if you do not rise up and crush the white man. The time is coming. There is a white wall and a black wall, and the white wall has been closing around the black wall, but now the black wall has become bigger than the white wall, and they must knock the white wall down. The white wall has oppressed us for years; now we must oppress the white wall." The contents of his message, in whatever version, remain the same (*Blackheart Man: a journey into Rasta* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1986), p. 96).
222. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 January 1895, (cit. in Elkins, *Street preachers*).
223. Barry Chevannes, "Healing the nation: Rastafari exorcism of the ideology of racism in Jamaica." *Caribbean Quarterly* 36, 1-2 (1990): 59-84, p. 63.
224. Pierson, "Alexander Bedward," p. 72.
225. Pierson, "Alexander Bedward," p. 74.
226. Beckwith, *Black Roadways*, pp. 168-169.
227. Cit. in Elkins, *Street preachers*, p. 17.
228. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 November 1930, p. 1.
229. Elkins, *Street preachers*, pp. 33-38. Some years later England was visited by another "royal African" Jamaican. In October 1924 a black man calling himself Prince Shervington arrived in London, claiming to be the Prince of Kenya, son of the Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II and his mistress. He did not hide the fact that he came from Jamaica, but maintained that he had been taken to the island by Lord Kitchener. Prince Shervington called upon the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Austin Chamberlain, and told him that the present Regent of Ethiopia, Prince Tafari Makonnen, was an usurper. Prince Shervington advanced his right to the throne. The Foreign Secretary brought the matter to the attention of the Ethiopian Regent who, in July 1926, replied that no such Prince was known in Addis Ababa. Prince Shervington turned out to be one Cyril Linton Mitchell, an "ordinary" man from Jamaica. Before the reply from Ethiopia reached London he had moved to Rome. From Italy he announced that he was going to make "an international cleaning up at Addis Ababa." (Elkins, *Street preachers*, pp. 38-39).
230. Bedward has sometimes been considered as a forerunner of Marcus Garvey. See, for instance, Rupert Lewis, "Garvey's forerunners: Love and Bedward." *Race and Class* 28, 3 (1987): 29-40. I would argue that Bedward and Garvey represent two quite different strands in the struggle for black liberation, the former rooted in local Jamaican Revival traditions, the latter rooted in international black nationalism, which developed separately and were analogous, rather than mutually reinforcing.
231. Space does not allow a thorough treatment of Garveyism here. For some important works on Marcus Garvey and the UNIA see: E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: the story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1955); Amy Jacques Garvey (ed.), *Philosophy and opinions of Marcus Garvey or Africa for the Africans* (volume I and II) (London, Frank Cass, 1967); Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey movement* (San Fransico, Rampart Press, 1971); John Hendrik Clarke (ed.), *Marcus Garvey and the vision of Africa* (New York, Vintage Books, 1974); Robert A. Hill (ed.), *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association papers* (ten volumes, partly forthcoming) (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983 and after); Rupert Lewis and Maureen Warner-Lewis (eds.), *Garvey: Africa, Europe, the Americas* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1986) and Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (eds.), *Garvey: his work and impact* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1988).
232. Cronon, *Black Moses*, p. 8.
233. Cronon, *Black Moses*, p. 15.
234. Booker T. Washington (1865-1915) was born as a slave in Virginia, attended the Hampton Agricultural

- Institute and became principal of a small school in Tuskegee, Alabama. Booker T. transformed the school into one of the leading black educational centres, which attracted funds from such white philanthropists as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie. Washington was a moderate black leader who believed in the motto "separate but equal."
235. Cit. in Cronon, *Black Moses*, p. 17.
236. Cit. in Jacques Garvey (ed.), *Philosophy and opinions*, p. 127.
237. John White, *Black leadership in America, 1895-1968* (London, Longman, 1985), p. 76.
238. Thomas L. Blair, *Retreat to the ghetto: the end of a dream?* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 14.
239. White, *Black leadership*, p. 79.
240. Black, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 229-233; Parry *et al.*, *A short history*, pp. 253-257.
241. Vincent, *Black Power*, pp. 245-247.
242. Cit. in Jacques Garvey (ed.), *Philosophy and opinions*, p. 122.
243. Cit. in Philip Potter, "The religious thought of Marcus Garvey." In: Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (eds.), *Garvey: his work and impact* (Kingston, University of the West Indies), pp. 145-166.
244. See: Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a religious movement* (New York, Scarecrow Press, 1978). The AOC, aiming to become a universal black Christian church, was to develop close links with the Russian and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches.
245. Ernie P. Gordon, "Garvey and Black Liberation Theology." In: Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (eds.), *Garvey: his work and impact* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1988), pp. 135-143.
246. Cit. in Potter, "The religious thought of Marcus Garvey," p. 157.
247. Barry Chevannes, "Garvey myths among the Jamaican people." In: Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (eds.), *Garvey: his work and impact* (Kingston, University of the West Indies), pp. 123-131.
248. Unfortunately, space does not allow more than a superficial discussion of just the best-known of these religious groups, which in spite of the fact that they appear to be rather different in form, shared many basic ideas with the Rastafarians.
249. In the 1940s Father Divine retreated to Philadelphia. The Peace Mission Movement's influence rapidly declined. Divine died in 1965. See: Arthur H. Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro religious cults of the urban North* (New York, Octagon Books, 1974); Robert Weisbrot, *Father Divine: the utopian evangelist of the depression era who became an American legend* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1983).
250. Vincent, *Black Power*, p. 223.
251. See: Arthur H. Fauset, "Moorish Science Temple of America." In: J. Milton Yinger (ed.), *Religion, society and the individual: an introduction to the sociology of religion* (New York, MacMillan, 1957), pp. 498-507; Clifton E. Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims: the transition from separatism to Islam, 1930-1980* (Metuchen, Scarecrow Press, 1984).
252. After the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975 another schism occurred. One part of the Nation, led by Muhammad's son Wallace, converted to orthodox Islamic religion and continued under the name World Community of Al-Islam in the West, while another, more politically oriented wing under Louis Farrakhan founded the New Nation of Islam in 1981. For a comparison between the Nation of Islam and the Rastafarian movement see: G. Llewellyn Watson, "Social structure and social movement: the Nation of Islam in the U.S.A. and the Rastafari movement in Jamaica." *British Journal of Sociology* 24, 12 (1973): 188-204; Frank Jan van Dijk, "Religie en politiek: de Rastafari beweging in Jamaica en de Nation of Islam in de Verenigde Staten." (Utrecht, Vakgroep Culturele Antropologie, Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1986) M.A. thesis.
253. Malcolm X, "Speech at the Harlem Unity Rally, 1960." Cit. in John H. Bracy, August Meier and Elliot Rudwick (eds.), *Black nationalism in America* (New York, 1970), pp. 412-420. For the Nation of Islam see: E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black nationalism: the rise of the Black Muslims in America* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1966); C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1973); C. Eric Lincoln and C. Eric Lincoln 2nd, "The Black Muslims revisited or the state of the black Nation of Islam." *Afro-American Studies* 3 (1972): 175-186; Lawrence H. Mamiya, "From Black Muslim to Bilalian: the evolution of a movement." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 21, 2 (1982): 138-152; Manning Marable, *Race, reform and rebellion: the second reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1982* (London, MacMillan, 1984); Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims*; Dennis Walker, "The Black Muslims in American society: from millenarian protest to trans-continental relationships." In: Garry W. Trompf (ed.), *Cargo cults and millenarian movements: transoceanic comparison of new religious movements* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 343-390.
254. William R. Scott, *Going to the Promised Land: Afro-American immigrants in Ethiopia, 1930-1935* (Denver, 1971). Paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association.
255. Cit. in Essien-Udom, *Black nationalism*, p. 55.
256. During World War II the Ethiopian Peace Movement supported the Japanese and Mittie Gordon was sentenced to prison for advising black Americans to resist the draft. See: Essien-Udom, *Black nationalism*, pp. 56-57 and Vincent, *Black Power*, pp. 228-229. Some twenty years later, in 1951, a back-to-Africa group called the Joint Council of Repatriation was to support a similar bill of another right-wing Senator, as well as deportation schemes launched by racist groups like Lincoln Rockwell's American Party.
257. Black Jews prefer to be called Black Hebrews.
258. Jenkins, *Black Zion*, p. 247.
259. The Falashas (lit. strangers or emigrants) are black Ethiopian Jews living in the northern provinces around Lake Tana, calling themselves *Beta Isra'el* (House of Israel). According to Ethiopian tradition, the Falashas are the descendants of Jews from Jerusalem who came with Menelik, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Historians have offered several explanations for the Jewish faith among the Falashas in Ethiopia: one is

that Judaism was brought to Ethiopia, via the Red Sea, by merchants, soldiers, missionaries or even prisoners of war. Another one is that in times of trouble the Jews wandered southward and found the relatively fertile plateau of Ethiopia inhabited by the Agaw, with whom they intermarried. Ullendorff maintains that the claim that the Falashas are the lost tribe of Israel is historically “quite unwarranted” but suggests: “that the Falashas are descendants of those elements in the Aksumite Kingdom who resisted conversion to Christianity. In that case their so-called Judaism is merely the reflection of those Hebraic and Judaic practices and beliefs which were implanted on parts of south-west Arabia in the first post-Christian centuries and subsequently brought into Abyssinia.” (*The Ethiopians*, pp. 105-107)

Whatever the origins of the Falashas, in the sixteenth century Patriarch Radbaz of Egypt recognized them as descendants of the tribe of Dan. The Falashas know only the *Thora*, do not have Rabbi's but *kessim* (priests), and know no Hebrew. Because they refused to be converted to Christianity, they were subject to persecution and discrimination. During the 1920s and 1930s Jacques Faitlovitch and others brought the Falashas and their plight to public attention in the United States. The presence of these black Jewish people in Ethiopia led some black people in the New World to believe that the black race was indeed the true and only House of Israel. Isolated and living in deplorable conditions, the Falashas were not recognized as Jews by Israel until 1973-1975. This recognition conferred a right to settle in Israel, but the *Dergue*, the Ethiopian regime, refused to let them go. Instead, persecution of the Falashas increased. Finally, in 1984 Israel carried out “Operation Moses” and “Operation Sheba.” Some 16,000 Falashas were secretly air-lifted out of refugee camps in Sudan by air, but when the Peres administration informed the press about its operations, the airlift had to be halted. An estimated 15,000 Falashas had to remain in Ethiopia. In May 1991 Eritrean, Tigrean and Oromo rebel armies toppled the Marxist regime of Ethiopia and in the confusion preceding the fall of Addis Ababa, the Israelis brought most of the remaining black Jews “home.” For more detailed information about the Falashas see: Gerrit Jan Abbink, *The Falashas of Ethiopia and Israel: the problem of ethnic assimilation* (Nijmegen, Institute for Cultural and Social Anthropology, 1984) Ph.D thesis.

260. Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis*, p. 33.

261. Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis*, p. 39.

262. Compare, for instance, Fauset's description of the Church of God (*Black Gods of the Metropolis*, pp. 31-40) with this writer's article on the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Frank Jan van Dijk, “The Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rasta and the middle class.” *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 62, 1-2 (1988): 1-26).

263. Ulysses Santamaria, “Black Jews: the religious challenge or politics versus religion.” *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 28, 2 (1987): 217-240. There are small groups of Black Hebrews, as well as branches of the Nation of Islam, in Jamaica. Unfortunately, little or nothing is known about these groups, which have never attracted any attention, either from the press or from scholars.

264. Cit. in Jacques Garvey (ed.), *Philosophy and opinions*, p. 104.

265. Howard Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem: Negro nationalism and the dilemmas of Negro leadership* (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1964). Other authors, like Ulysses Santamaria, are still puzzled today by Ford's disappearance (“Black Jews,” p. 224).

266. K.J. King, “Some notes on Arnold J. Ford and New World black attitudes to Ethiopia.” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 10, 1 (1972): 81-87. During the 1960s there was a remarkable revival of Black Hebrewism in the United States. In 1965 black and white Jews together formed the *Hatza'ad Harishon*, which aimed at the further (religious) education of black people. In November 1967 four Chicago-based groups fused into the United Leadership Council of Hebrew Israelites (ULCHI). From this organization emerged the Chicago Fellowship of Racial Jews, an association led by Robert Devine, James Hodge, Richard Nolen and Wafrahi ben Israel. Their goal, too, was to set up teaching courses. One major but controversial group of Black Hebrews, the *B'nai Zakin Sar Shalom* congregation under Ben Ammi Carter, was excluded from the ULCHI. Also located in Chicago was a Black Hebrew group called One, led by Earl Carter and Shaleak Ben Yehuda. Another group, the *B'nai Zacken* congregation of Prince Amazait (Frederic Walters) ran into trouble with the police: weapons were recovered during a raid on their headquarters in 1967 arms were recovered. These were later said to have been intended for a return to Africa.

In that same year a group of “several hundred” American Black Hebrews emigrated to Liberia. This was apparently the result of a convention of Black Hebrews in Chicago in 1960, held to consider the possibilities of starting a rural community in the United States. “Then the desire for a Return took hold. There was considerable disagreement over whether this return should be to Israel or to Ethiopia. Finally the African faction prevailed. ... they believed that they would not be given visas for Ethiopia, so it was decided to emigrate to Liberia instead.” (Jenkins, *Black Zion*, p. 247). Although they were permitted to buy 300 acres of land - normally a prerogative of Liberian citizens -, the community turned out to be a failure. The Black Hebrews were poorly prepared for rural African conditions and within a few years almost all had pulled out. About half of them returned to the United States; the others tried to settle in Israel. Only a dozen or so remained in Liberia.

The first Black Hebrews arrived in Israel in 1969 and requested that they be accepted as Jewish immigrants. Pending further investigations into the status of the Black Hebrews, the first two groups were given tourist visas and brought to Dimona, a town in the Negev desert, where they worked in a textile factory. Before long, many more Black Hebrews made their way to Israel. The immigration authorities, however, concluded that the Black Hebrews had limited and above all erroneous religious knowledge, could not prove descent of Jewish mothers, and had not been properly converted. If they wished to stay in Israel they would have to be converted according to proper religious prescriptions. The Black Hebrews refused, brought their case to court, but lost. Most had given up their American citizenship and now found themselves being denied Israeli citizenship. The Israeli authorities, afraid of being accused of racism, tolerated their presence and by 1986 there were no fewer

- than 1,500 Black Hebrews in Israel, some practising polygamy, abstaining from meat, alcohol and tobacco, and claiming to be the true and only Israelites, related to the Ethiopian Falashas.
267. Cit. in Sundkler, *Bantu prophets*, p. 58.
268. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, pp. 161-162.
269. As will be discussed in chapter 2, Garvey's prophesy has not been documented.
270. For some interesting publications on Haile Selassie I see, for instance: Leonard O. Mosley, *Haile Selassie: the conquering lion* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1964); Herbert W. Armstrong, "Personal from Herbert W. Armstrong: I visited the man who might have changed the course of history." *The Plain Truth: a magazine of understanding*, December 1973; *Autobiography of Emperor Haile Sellassie I: My life and Ethiopia's progress* (edited by Edward Ullendorff) (London, Oxford University Press, 1976); Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Emperor: downfall of an autocrat* (San Diego, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983); Hans Wilhelm Lockot, *The Mission: the life, reign and character of Haile Selassie I* (London, Hurst and Co., 1989).
271. Mockler, *Haile Selassie's war*, p. 6.
272. Mockler, *Haile Selassie's war*, pp. 12-13.
273. Addison Southard, "Modern Ethiopia: Haile Selassie the First, formerly Ras Tafari, succeeds to the world's oldest continuously sovereign throne." *National Geographic Magazine* (June 1931): 679-746.
274. In 1955 the legend was included in the Ethiopian constitution. Article 2 reads in part: "The Imperial dignity shall remain perpetually attached to the line of descents without interruption from the dynasty of Menelik I, son of the Queen of Ethiopia, the Queen of Sheba, and King Solomon of Jerusalem." (Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 187).

Notes Chapter 2. The worst evil of all

275. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 November 1930, p. 12 (cit. in Ken Post, *Arise ye starvelings: the Jamaican labour rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p. 163).
276. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 November 1930, p. 6.
277. One of the critical passages proving the blackness of the Messiah is Revelation 1: 14. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire." In spite of the references to "white," "wool" has been interpreted here as a reference to curly, kinky, African hair. Jeremiah 8: 21 is even clearer: "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me." There are several more biblical references used as evidence of God's blackness. The mere fact that the Emperor was an African was, of course, sufficient proof in itself.
278. See, for instance: Derek Bishton, *Blackheart Man: a journey into Rasta* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1986), pp. 110-111. Robert A. Hill suggests that the words attributed to Garvey may have come from a Rev. James Morris Webb who spoke similar words at a UNIA speech delivered in the United States in September 1924. Hill adds, however, that the speech does not appear to have reached Jamaica before 1930. Another possible source, according to Hill, could be Paul Earlington who, until the late 1970s, maintained that Garvey had prophesied the coming of a greater man ("Leonard P. Howell and millenarian visions in early Rastafari." *Jamaica Journal* 16, 1 (1983): 24-39, pp. 25-26).
279. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell."
280. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell," pp. 28-32. A political activist in New York during the late 1920s, George Padmore left for the Soviet Union in 1929. Until 1933 he acted as an advisor on African Affairs to the Comintern, devoted to disseminating communist ideology world-wide. Howell apparently knew Padmore quite well. The two exchanged correspondence and literature.
281. M.G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, *Report on the Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica* (Kingston, University College of the West Indies, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1960), p. 6.
282. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *The Rastafarite cult, no. 0-1, Special Branch Intelligence Report* (Kingston, 5 January 1957, Public Record Office: CO 1031/2767). Reference here is to the files of the British Colonial Office at the Public Record Office's branch in Kew, Richmond, Surrey.
283. Garvey, as noted before, strongly disapproved of black sects and cults, which he considered backward and unworthy of the black man. Though on several occasions he addressed the issue in a general sense, Garvey is not known to have made any explicit statements about the Rastafarian movement. Yet *The Jamaica Times* (25 August 1934) reported of Garvey's opening address at the UNIA convention that "Mr. Garvey also referred to the Ras Tafari cult, speaking of them with contempt." (Cit. in Timothy White, *Catch a fire: the life of Bob Marley* (New York, Henry Holt, 1989), p. 8.
284. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell," p. 32 and Leonard E. Barrett, *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977), pp. 84-85.
285. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 6 and Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 164.
286. The Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Inc. Asfa Wossen H.S. Local 1, *Imperial Chronicle* 1, 1, (London, January 1987), p. 4.
287. *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 January 1980, p. 5 (message from Hibbert dated 16 January 1980). Jeremiah 1: 5 reads: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Jeremiah 1: 10 says: See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant." It is not known whether the Great Ancient Brotherhood of Silence, referred to by Hibbert, and the Ancient Mystical Order of Ethiopia, referred to by Post, are one and the same or different organizations.
288. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 7.
289. *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 January 1978, p. 5.
290. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 6.

291. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 166.
292. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 March 1934, p. 6 and Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 196.
293. Addison Southard's article in the *National Geographic* appears to have been of greater significance than the reports about Selassie's coronation in *The Daily Gleaner* ("Modern Ethiopia: Haile Selassie the First, formerly Ras Tafari, succeeds to the world's oldest continuously sovereign throne." *National Geographic Magazine* (June 1931): 679-746). At the time of the coronation Howell, Dunkley and Hibbert lived outside Jamaica and probably never saw the *Gleaner* reports. Hinds, who lived in Jamaica, later told of having seen pictures of Ras Tafari in "a magazine" (*The Daily Gleaner*, 17 March 1934, p. 1). Copies of the June 1931 *National Geographic* issue have since been circulating among Rastafarians.
294. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell," p. 32.
295. Michael Hoensch, "Symbolic politics: perceptions of the early Rastafari movement." *The Massachusetts Review* 29, 3 (1988): 432-449, p. 441.
296. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 December 1933, p. 1.
297. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 January 1934, p. 9.
298. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 March 1934, p. 21.
299. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 March 1934, p. 21.
300. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
301. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
302. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
303. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
304. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
305. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
306. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
307. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 20.
308. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 March 1934, p. 6.
309. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 March 1934, pp. 1 and 6.
310. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 August 1934.
311. Cit. in Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 166.
312. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 August 1935.
313. Barry Chevannes, *Social origins of the Rastafari movement* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1978), p. 132.
314. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 167.
315. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 239.
316. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 6.
317. *Public Opinion*, 26 August 1961, pp. 1 and 2.
318. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 6-7.
319. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell," p. 26.
320. Cit. in Wilson J. Moses, *Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms: social and literary manipulations of a religious myth* (London, Pennsylvania University Press, 1982), p. 162.
321. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 168. For an account of the activities in the United States see: Red Ross, "Black Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian relief, 1935-1936." *Ethiopia Observer* 15 (1972): 123-131; and for the Caribbean see: Robert G. Weisbrod, "British West Indian reaction to the Italian-Ethiopian war: an episode in pan-Africanism." *Caribbean Studies* 10, 1 (1970): 34-41; Cedric C. Robinson, "The African diaspora and the Italo-Ethiopian crisis." *Race and Class* 27, 2 (1985): 51-66. Later, a protest-meeting in Montego Bay attracted some 2,000 Jamaicans.
322. *Illustrated London News*, 11 January 1936. The photograph was printed in several newspapers around the world and has since circulated widely among Rastafarians.
323. See: Smith *et al.*, *Report*, appendix and Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, pp. 172-173. The article was written by one Frederico Philos. According to *The Jamaica Times* it was first published in *Magazine Digest*. The Jamaican weekly *Plain Talk* also carried the article, claiming as its source *Neues Wiener Tageblad*.
324. Cit. in Smith *et al.* *Report*, p. 43.
325. Cit. in Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 44 and 46.
326. There are several spellings for Nyabingi in use. Nyabingi is another common one.
327. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 136.
328. The baptism in the Ferry River is a fine example of Revival influences on Rastafari (in this case probably Bedward's influence on his former follower Robert Hinds). As noted in chapter 1, the early Rastafarians were to a considerable extent inspired by Revival as well as Hinduism.
329. G.G. Maragh (Leonard Howell), *The Promised Key* (Accra [probably Kingston], 1935), p. 1.
330. King George VI succeeded to the British throne in December 1936 without the usual coronation ceremonies after his brother, Edward VIII, abdicated after a ten months reign, to marry the twice divorced American Mrs. Simpson. The new King was not crowned before May 1937. Incidentally, Edward VIII had succeeded George V, who died in January 1936, only a few months after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. It may very well be that the Rastafarians at the time regarded the death of George V as a retribution for Britain's hesitant support for the African Empire.
331. Chevannes, *Social origins*, pp. 152-153.
332. Chevannes, *Social origins*, pp. 141-142.
333. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 January 1937, p. 28.
334. According to the Ethiopian calendar New Year starts on 7 January (of the Julian/Gregorian calendar). Most

- Rastafarians therefore celebrate on the 7th instead of the 1st. The Ethiopian New Year is an important dates for Rastafarians and is usually celebrated with a large meeting (now known as Niyabinghi). Other important dates are the anniversary of Haile Selassie's birthday (23 July), the anniversary of the Emperor's coronation (2 November) and the anniversary of the Emperor's visit to Jamaica (21 April).
335. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 January 1937, p. 28.
336. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 192.
337. Cit. in Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 192.
338. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell," p. 36. *The Daily Gleaner* (18 January 1937, p. 28) already printed a transcript of a prayer written in an unknown language, identified by Howell as the Cult Prayer. According to a *Gleaner* reporter the prayer was "a pivotal part of all Ras Tafari ceremonies, and after each incantation the cultists are thrown into a fanatical frenzy."
339. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *The Rastafarite cult, no. 0-1, Special Branch Intelligence Report* (Kingston, 5 January 1957, Public Record Office: CO 1031/2767).
340. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 March 1934, p. 1 and 17 March 1934, p. 6. Initially the press reported that nineteen Rastas had been arrested. It is not known what sentence they received.
341. See: Robert A. Hill, Dread History: Leonard P. Howell and millenarian visions in early Rastafari religions in Jamaica. *Epoché: Journal of the History of Religion* 9 (1981): 30-71.
342. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *The Rastafarite cult, no. 0-1, Special Branch Intelligence Report* (Kingston, 5 January 1957, Public Record Office: CO 1031/2767).
343. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 8.
344. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 130.
345. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 July 1941, p. 1.
346. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 132.
347. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *The Rastafarite cult, no. 0-1, Special Branch Intelligence Report* (Kingston, 5 January 1957, Public Record Office: CO 1031/2767).
348. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell," p. 35.
349. *The Jamaica Times*, 28 May 1938, pp. 9-10. Reference here is to the "Pepper Pot" column by "Ginger" or B.F. Cawes, a former English Army Major and estate manager in St. Thomas. G.G. Maragh (Leonard P. Howell), *The promised key* (Accra [probably Kingston], 1935).
350. Unfortunately, space does not allow an extended discussion of *The Promised Key*. However, 1935 seems a somewhat unlikely year of publication, given the fact that in March 1934 Howell was sentenced to two years imprisonment. On the other hand, as one of my critical readers remarked, more books have been written or published while the author was in jail. Still, the fact that the cover of *The Promised Key* also claims an (unlike-ly) publisher in Accra, also throws doubt on the date.
351. *The Jamaica Times*, 28 May 1938, pp. 9-10.
352. Cit. in Michael Hoenisch, "Symbolic politics: perceptions of the early Rastafari movement." *The Massachusetts Review* 29, 3 (1988): 432-449, p. 443. From correspondence (16 January 1941 and 15 February 1941) between the Central Board of Health and the Colonial Secretary.
353. Hoenisch, "Symbolic politics," pp. 444-445.
354. Hoenisch, "Symbolic politics," p. 443.
355. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 July 1941, p. 1.
356. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 July 1941, p. 1 and 14. In these newspaper reports mention was made of some 600 Howellites living at Pinnacle at the time. If we assume the police estimates and the figure of 1,600, which Smith *et al.* mention, to be at least near-correct, it may be that Howell lost a considerable part of his following during his first year in St. Catherine.
357. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 July 1941, p. 1. Also see: *Public Opinion*, 26 July 1941, p. 3.
358. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 July 1941, p. 1.
359. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 August 1941, p. 16.
360. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 154.
361. For an impressive account of the labor unrest in Jamaica see Post, *Arise ye starvelings*.
362. Alexander Bustamante was born as William Alexander Clarke on 24 February 1884. He came from a poor family in Hanover and received little schooling. From 1905 until 1934 he traveled to the United States, Cuba, Panama and Spain and worked at several odd jobs. After returning to Jamaica, he earned a living as a money lender in Kingston and in 1938 he became involved in the labor rebellions on the island, founded the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) and emerged as the chief spokesman of the working class, demanding improvements in work and pay, and pressing for political reforms. He was detained between September 1940 and February 1942, and formed the Jamaica Labour Party in July 1943. Under his leadership the JLP won the first general elections in December 1944, Bustamante became Minister and after 1953 Chief Minister. After the JLP's defeat in 1955 he remained Opposition Leader until April 1962 when he became the first Prime Minister of independent Jamaica. In 1967 he resigned from active politics and died a National Hero in August 1977.
- Norman Washington Manley was born on 4 July 1893, the son of a citrus planter and trader from Porus, Manchester. That the economically and politically powerful families in Jamaica were closely connected is evident from the fact that Manley's mother was born a Shearer (the family of Hugh Shearer who was Prime Minister for the JLP between 1967 and 1972) and that Manley himself was a cousin of Alexander Bustamante. Norman Manley attended Jamaica College and later taught at several schools. He won a Rhodes scholarship and studied law at Oxford. During World War I he joined the Royal Field Artillery and fought for three years in Belgium and France. In 1921 he established himself as a lawyer and married Edna Swithenbank (whose

- mother was also born a Shearer) and one year later returned to Jamaica. Manley became a successful lawyer and in 1937 founded the Jamaica Welfare Ltd. to promote social and cultural activities among the Jamaican peasantry. In 1938 he became involved in the labor rebellion as lawyer for his arrested and imprisoned cousin Bustamante. Manley founded the People's National Party in 1944 and was Prime Minister between 1955 and 1962. He died on 2 September 1969.
363. In 1952 the TUC broke with the PNP, when the party expelled four leading Marxist members. The PNP founded another labor union, the National Workers' Union (NWU).
364. A quick search through several volumes of the Jamaican newspapers did not produce any reports or even references to Rastafari during the 1940s. The developments during this period remain one of the most crucial gaps in research on the movement.
365. Bishton, *Blackheart Man*, p. 119.
366. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *The Rastafarite cult, no. 0-1, Special Branch Intelligence Report* (Kingston, 5 January 1957, Public Record Office: CO 1031/2767).
367. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 9.
368. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 9.
369. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 April 1981.
370. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 April 1954, p. 4.
371. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 April 1954, p. 4.
372. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 9.
373. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 April 1954, p. 4. Dixon was sentenced to nine months for wounding a woman, also from Pinnacle, in a fight over a bag of ganja.
374. This contrary to Smith *et al.*'s conclusion that Howell was among the "163" arrested, but later acquitted with three lieutenants on appeal (*Report*, p. 9).
375. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 May 1954, p. 1; 27 May 1954, pp. 1 and 11; 28 May 1954, p. 1.
376. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 June 1954, p. 5; 15 June 1954, p. 4; 17 June 1954, p. 5; 18 June 1954, p. 5; 22 June 1954, p. 4.
377. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 87.
378. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 May 1979, p. 1.
379. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 June 1951, p. 1.
380. A Judge even warned a bearded man who was in court for robbery, to shave "as many people did not seem to like bearded men." (*The Daily Gleaner*, 21 January 1954, p. 4).
381. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 March 1934, p. 21.
382. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 174.
383. Simpson, "Political cultism," p. 134.
384. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 June 1951, p. 6.
385. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 June 1951, p. 6.
386. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 June 1951, p. 6. For those not familiar with the tools of punishment listed by the author: the tamarind switch and the cat are two popular local varieties of the whip, both used for extremely severe punishment.
387. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 June 1951, p. 6.
388. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 June 1951, p. 1.
389. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 June 1951, p. 1.
390. George E. Simpson, "Political cultism in West Kingston, Jamaica." *Social and Economic Studies* 4, 2 (1955): 133-149, p. 133.
391. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 172. To avoid misunderstanding, this statement is not limited to the informal camps.
392. Simpson, "Political cultism," p. 145.
393. Simpson, "Political cultism," p. 145.
394. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 August 1960, p. 4.
395. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 April 1953, p. 4 and 9 April 1953, p. 5.
396. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 May 1953, p. 1.
397. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 11.
398. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 159.
399. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 April 1981.
400. In 1954, for instance, *The Daily Gleaner* (e.g. 4 March 1954, p. 1 and 11 March 1954, p. 6) carried pictures of the imprisoned Mau Mau leader General China (Waruhiu Itote), who was used by the British as a messenger to open peace talks with the Land and Freedom Army. He wore his hair in the short dreadlocks style known as Natty Dreads. It may very well be that the Rastafarians were inspired by the example of Mau warriors, since the latter's activities coincide with the time when dreadlocks are said to have appeared in the streets of Kingston.
401. According to E.S.P. McPherson and Leahcim Semaj Youth Black Faith was founded in the early 1940s by Ras Boanerges, Philip Panhandle and Breda Arthur ("Rasta chronology." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari*. (Kingston, Extra-Mural Department, University of the West Indies, 1985), pp. 116-119.
402. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 173.
403. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 179.
404. Chevannes, *Social origins*, pp. 179-181. Smith *et al.* (*Report*, p. 11) relate an incident in the early 1950s in which "one group of 18 was arrested, charged with contempt of court, then with rioting and finally with

- assembling with a view to rioting. Twelve of them were sent to goal for fifteen months each.” Presumably, it is the same incident, although the details differ.
405. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 April 1954, p. 1.
406. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 May 1954, p. 4.
407. Bongo is an abusive Jamaican patois term for “black.” Rastafarians have made it an honorary title.
408. Chevannes, *Social origins*, p. 176.
409. Ross, “Black Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian relief.”
410. The Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Inc. Asfa Wossen H.S. Local 1, *Imperial Chronicle* 1, 1 (London, January 1987), p. 6.
411. Post, *Arise ye starvelings*, p. 168.
412. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 10.
413. Ethiopian World Federation Inc. Emperor Yohannes Local 33, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church St. Mary of Zion/The Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. Emperor Yohannes Local 33* (London, 1975), p. 43.
414. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1959. See also Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 10–11.
415. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 September 1955, p. 1.
416. Cit. in Barrett, *The Rastafarians (1968)*, p. 79.
417. Cit. in Barrett, *The Rastafarians (1968)*, p. 79.
418. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 12–13. It must be doubted whether this particular event was related to the rumors about the land grant, since the authors mention June 1955 (several months before the visit of Maymie Richardson) as the time when the census was taken.
419. *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church St. Mary of Zion*, p. 44 and Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 10–12.
420. The Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Asfa Wossen H.S. Local 1, *Imperial Chronicle* (London, January 1987), p. 4.
421. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 10–12.
422. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 15.
423. Leonard E. Barrett, *The Rastafarians: a study in messianic cultism in Jamaica*. (Rio Piedras, University of Puerto Rico, Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1968), pp. 79–80.
424. E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: the rise of the Black Muslims in the U.S.A.* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1966), p. 57.
425. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 February 1990, p. 1 (article taken from the British newspaper *The Mail on Sunday*, 7 January 1990).
426. Hugh Foot (Governor of Jamaica), *Letter to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies M. Phillips* (Kingston, 19 November 1956, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
427. The term “grounation,” used to designate a Rastafarian assembly, was later replaced by “Niyabinghi.”
428. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 March 1958, p. 3. Harold van de Laar (*Echo’s uit Babylon: een Rasta kerk in Jamaica* (Tilburg, Universiteit van Brabant, Theologische Faculteit, 1988) M.A. thesis) writes that Prince was probably born in 1911. Gordon Lewis, writing in the *Gleaner*, recorded that Prince was born in 1909 and Barrett (*The Rastafarians*, p. 94) writes that Prince himself said in an interview that he was born in 1915. Van de Laar maintains that Prince had his vision in 1947, whereas Lewis cites 1943 as the year in which the communication with Jah occurred.
429. Smith *et al.*, *Report.*, p. 15
430. *Public Opinion*, 15 March 1958, p. 4.
431. *The Jamaica Times*, 8 March 1958, p. 1. The shocked reporter made the odd mistake of splitting Prince Emmanuel Charles Edwards into three different personalities when he wrote: “The leaders of the convention are ‘Prince Charles,’ ‘Prince Emmanuel’ and ‘Prince Edwards’ who is leading a delegation from Montego Bay.” It seems unlikely that the delegation from MoBay was led by Prince Emmanuel who by then had been a resident of Kingston for several years.. *The Star*, 6 March 1958, p. 1, reported that 300 Rastafarians attended the convention.
432. *The Jamaica Times*, 8 March 1958, p. 1.
433. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 15.
434. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 March 1958, p. 3. It is not clear to which incidents the Prince and King Priest Abraham referred, but it may be safely assumed that they were incidents in which Rastafarians were, with or without any reason, arrested and/or molested and probably forcibly shaved.
435. Edwards, Prince Emmanuel Charles, *Telegram to Queen Elizabeth II* (Kingston, 20 March 1958, Public Record Office: CO 1013/2767) and Mr. Weatley (Her Majesty’s Private Secretary), *Letter to P.J. Kitcatt of the Colonial Office* (London, 20 March 1958, Public Record Office CO 1031/2767).
436. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 92–95; Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 14–15.
437. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 15.
438. Van de Laar, *Echo’s uit Babylon*, pp. 28–29. Prince Emmanuel was defended in court by Peter Evans, who was later to act on the behalf of the Rastafarians involved in the Coronation Market fights and also on behalf of Claudius Henry and his followers.
439. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 June 1958, p. 13 and *The Tribune*, 30 June 1958.
440. *The Tribune*, 30 June 1958.
441. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *The Rastafarite cult, no. 0-2, Special Branch Intelligence Report* (Kingston, 13 January 1959, Public Record Office: CO 1031/2767).
442. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 October 1958, p. 1.
443. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 October 1958, p. 10.
444. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 November 1958, pp. 1 and 4.

445. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 December 1958, p. 4.
446. Interview with Morris Cargill, Kingston, 22 November 1990.
447. *Economic Survey Jamaica*, 1960.
448. Carl Stone, "Power, policy and politics in independent Jamaica." In: Rex M. Nettleford (ed.), *Jamaica in independence: essays on the early years* (Kingston, Heinemann, 1989), pp. 19-54.
449. Hugh Foot (Governor of Jamaica), *Jamaica: situation after the recent general election, Confidential report to Colonial Office* (Kingston, 12 April 1955, Public Record Office CO 1031/1337).
450. Colin Clarke, *Kingston, Jamaica: urban development and social change, 1692-1962* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975), pp. 77-87.
451. Basil Davidson, *Africa in modern history: the search for a new society* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1978), p. 221.
452. Sam B. Spence, *Letter to the editors of The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston, 30 May 1959, Public Record Office: CO 1031/2767). Spence wrote his letter in reaction to a *Gleaner* editorial about the "Back-to-Africa Movement." It appears that the letter was not actually published. The former President of Local 37 had left to become "Recording/Corresponding Secretary" of King Solomon Local 13.
453. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 May 1959, pp. 3 and 16.
454. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 May 1959, p. 3.
455. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 May 1959, p. 4.
456. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 May 1959, p. 8.
457. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 May 1959, p. 8.
458. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 May 1959, p. 8.
459. Kenneth Blackburne (Governor of Jamaica), *Confidential despatch 637 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd* (Kingston, 10 June 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
460. Kenneth Blackburne (Governor of Jamaica), *Confidential despatch 637 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd* (Kingston, 10 June 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
461. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 February 1990, p. 1 (article taken from the British newspaper *The Mail on Sunday*, 7 January 1990).
462. For a study of the Moral Rearmament movement until the late 1940s see: Allan W. Eister, *Drawing-room conversion: a sociological account of the Oxford Group movement* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1950).
463. A house party at Oxford University in the summer of 1921 is generally regarded as the start of what later became known as the Oxford Group movement. The name Oxford Group, however, was not used until 1928, when the conversion crusade of a group of students from Oxford received considerable attention in the South African media.
464. Steven M. Gelber and Martin L. Cook, *Saving the earth: the history of a middle-class millenarian movement* (Berkeley, University of Los Angeles Press, 1990), p. 66.
465. Although the Oxford Group was most successful in the United States and Europe, its activities extended to the Caribbean and South America, the Near and Far East, India, South Africa and several other parts of the world.
466. Eister, *Drawing-room conversion*, p. 9.
467. Gelber and Cook, *Saving the earth*, p. 67.
468. After the death of Frank Buchman in 1961 the MRA rapidly lost much of its following.
469. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 June 1959, p. 4.
470. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 May 1954, p. 4; 28 May 1954, p. 8 and 3 June 1954, p. 5.
471. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 June 1959, p. 1.
472. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 June 1959, p. 4.
473. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 August 1959, p. 10.
474. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 August 1959, p. 10.
475. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 October 1959, p. 12.
476. Jamaica Local Standing Intelligence Committee, *Extract of Report* (Kingston, September 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2767).
477. Efforts to get more information on the Moral Rearmament movement's activities among the Rastafarians have been without result.
478. In a letter dated 25 September 1992 Jake Homiak informed me that during his fieldwork in the 1980s he had on several occasions heard Rastafarian elders from West Kingston speak about "moral re-armament."
479. Unfortunately, space does not allow all the details of these actions to be discussed here. I hope to elaborate on the reactions of the Colonial Office elsewhere.
480. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1960, pp. 1, 4 and 5 and 31 October 1960, pp. 4 and 9.
481. Barry Chevannes, "The Repairer of the Breach: Reverend Claudius Henry and Jamaican society." In: Frances Henry (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Americas*. (The Hague, Mouton, 1976, pp. 263-290), p. 265. Jeremiah 1: 5 was later also mentioned as referred to in his vision.
482. There are conflicting data on Henry's travels to and from the United States. Police intelligence reports name 23 June 1957 as the date on which he left for the United States for the first time and, after a brief visit to Jamaica, again on 22 January 1958. (Jamaica Constabulary Force, *Secret Report of Headquarters no. P/5401* (Kingston, 9 April 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768)).
483. Chevannes, "The Repairer of the Breach," p. 266.
484. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 94-95. Barrett does not tell us the source of his information. It appears somewhat unlikely though, if only because Chevannes in his article on Claudius Henry ("The Repairer of the Breach") nowhere mentions a connection with Prince, whereas in the extensive newspaper reports of Henry's trial in 1960 no references were made to a visit to the grounation either.

485. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 October 1960, pp. 1 and 4.
486. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1960, pp. 1, 4-5 and 19. Evidence given by Henry during his trial for treason. It seems unlikely that Henry actually went to Africa, not least because of his own vagueness about the visit. Claims about visits to Africa were not uncommon among those who tried to establish themselves as leaders in the Rastafarian movement. As we have seen, Leonard Howell also claimed to have been to Ethiopia. Whatever the case, Henry claimed to have met with an Ethiopian Government official with whom he discussed the possibilities of repatriation.
487. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *Secret Report of Headquarters no. P/5401* (Kingston, 9 April 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
488. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1960, pp. 1, 4 and 5. The African Reform Church formally opened on 4 January 1959.
489. Claudius V. Henry, *Certificate of membership 'the Lepers Government'* (Kingston, 2 May 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768). The text on the cards is also cited by Smith *et al.* and reproduced by various other authors on the movement, but with a different content. (*Report*, p. 15-16). It has been claimed that Henry sold his cards at the price of a shilling each, but from the intelligence reports of the Special Branch of the Jamaica Constabulary Force it becomes clear that at least until September 1959 he did not charge for the "passports," apparently to the distress of the police, which was desperately looking for a justification for prosecution.
490. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *Secret Report of Headquarters no. P/5401* (Kingston, 9 April 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
491. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *Secret Report of Headquarters no. P/5401* (Kingston, 9 April 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
492. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 12; Barry Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach." *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide*, 64, 3-4 (1990): 59-84.
493. Later, during the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s migration continued on much the same scale, though most sought a brighter future in the United States and Canada, instead of Britain. In the period 1970-1979 about 135,000 Jamaicans left for the States alone, followed by another 199,000 during 1980-1989. (*Economic and Social Survey Jamaica, 1960-1989*; George W. Roberts (ed.), *Recent population movements in Jamaica* (Paris, CICRED, 1974)).
494. Jamaica Constabulary Force, *Secret Report of Headquarters no. P/5401* (Kingston, 7 May 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768). It is not clear whether Henry and his following actually marched through Kingston on 1 August 1959. He is known to have requested permission for his march, but it appears that his request was turned down and the march did not take place.
495. Claudius V. Henry, *Standing in the Gap with Unquestionable 'truth'* (Kingston, 11 May 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
496. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 October 1959, p. 10.
497. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 October 1959, p. 1 and 25 October 1960, pp. 1, 4 and 5. Again, to the best of my knowledge, the visit to Ethiopia has not been verified. Henry returned on a flight from New York and it is very likely that he never left the United States at all.
498. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 October 1959, p. 1.
499. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 October 1959, p. 1.
500. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 October 1959, p. 1.
501. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 October 1986, pp. 9 and 15.
502. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 December 1959, p. 1.
503. Kenneth Blackburne (Governor of Jamaica), *Confidential despatch 638 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd* (Kingston, 10 June 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
504. Claudius V. Henry, *Standing in the gap with unquestionable truth repairing the breach to fall the nations* (Kingston, 15 January 1960).
505. Rex Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest in Jamaica*. (New York, William Morrow, 1972), p. 101. According to Chevannes (*Social origins*, p. 109) this happened during the alleged second visit to Ethiopia, which Henry claimed to have made in September 1959.
506. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1960, pp. 1, 4-5 and 19.
507. *Public Opinion*, 20 February 1960, p. 1.
508. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 October 1960, pp. 1, 4-5 and 19.
509. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 April 1960, p. 1.
510. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 April 1960, p. 1; 9 April 1960, p. 1 and *Public Opinion*, 16 April 1960, p. 1.
511. *The Treason Felony Amendment Act* was drawn up in 1869 as a direct result of the Morant Bay Rebellion. A *Gleaner* report of Henry's trial, without providing details, mentioned that there had been more cases in the distant past. Later, in May 1981, two civilians and three soldiers of the Jamaica United Front were also charged under the Act after a somewhat clumsy plot to overthrow the government had been uncovered.
512. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 May 1960, pp. 1 and 7; 4 May 1960, pp. 1 and 14, and *Public Opinion*, 23 April 1960, p. 1.
513. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 May 1960, pp. 1 and 4.
514. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 May 1960, pp. 1 and 16. Letter cit in. Barry Chevannes, *Jamaican lower class religion: struggles against oppression*. (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1971 (thesis), p. 113 (taken from *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 October 1960). Quote un-edited.
515. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 May 1960, pp. 1 and 15.
516. Terry Lacey, *Violence and politics in Jamaica, 1960-1970: internal security in a developing country* (London, Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 82-84.
517. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 September 1960, pp. 1, 4-5 and 17.

518. *Public Opinion*, 7 May 1960, pp. 1 and 3.
519. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 June 1960, p. 1. Other rumors spoke about submarines on the south coast and an aeroplane dropping arms in the Wareika Hills (*Public Opinion*, 25 June 1960, pp. 1 and 2).
520. *Public Opinion*, 25 June 1960, pp. 1 and 2.
521. *Public Opinion*, 25 June 1960, pp. 1 and 2.
522. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 June 1960, p. 1.
523. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 June 1960, p. 1.
524. *Public Opinion*, 2 July 1960, pp. 1 and 2.
525. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 June 1960, p. 1.
526. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 June 1960, p. 1.
527. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 June 1960, p. 1.
528. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 June 1960, p. 1.
529. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 June 1960, p. 1.
530. *Public Opinion*, 2 July 1960, pp. 1 and 2 and *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 June 1960, p. 1.
531. *Public Opinion*, 23 July 1960, p. 1.
532. In July 1960, for instance, the influential American magazine *Time* featured an article about the events surrounding Claudius and Ronald Henry.
533. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 August 1960, p. 16.

Notes Chapter 3. A problem of grave magnitude

534. M.G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, *Report on the Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1960). The UCWI report was published in *The Daily Gleaner* between 3 and 16 August 1960.
535. George E. Simpson, "Political cultism in West Kingston, Jamaica." *Social and Economic Studies* 4, 2 (1955): 133-149. Also: "The Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica." *Social Forces* 34, 2 (1955): 167-170; "Culture change and reintegration found in the cults of West Kingston, Jamaica." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 99, 2 (1955): 89-92 and "The Ras Tafari movement in its millennial aspect." In: Sylvia L. Thrupp (ed.), *Millennial dreams in action: studies in revolutionary religious movements*. (The Hague, Mouton, 1962, pp. 160-165). Also see George E. Simpson, "Jamaican Revivalist cults." *Social and Economic Studies* 5, 4 (1956) (whole issue); *Religious cults in the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica and Haiti* (Rio Piedras, Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico, 1970); *Black religions in the New World* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1978) and George E. Simpson and G.J. Moore, "A comparative study of acculturation in Morant Bay and West Kingston, Jamaica." *Zaire: Revue Congolaise* 7 (1): 65-88.
536. As noted in the Introduction, the six-page history of the movement as described in the *Report* has long been viewed as the definitive account. Ken Post (*Arise ye starvelings: the Jamaican labour rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978) notes that the historical material presented in the *Report* should be "treated with care" and later on Robert Hill ("Leonard P. Howell and millenarian visions in early Rastafari." *Jamaica Journal* 16, 1 (1983): 24-39) also criticizes the "semi-canonical status" given to the description of the history of the Rastafarian movement. Though this criticism is justified - the *Report* was written in only a fortnight and was largely based on the oral accounts of a small group of Rastafarians - it should be noted that the authors have never claimed to have written a definitive account. It is the attitude of later researchers which deserves criticism, not the *Report* itself or its authors.
537. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 29.
538. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, pp. 33-34
539. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 38
540. Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, p. 44.
541. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 28.
542. Interview with Rex Nettleford, Kingston, 20 November 1990. Nettleford added that the use of the term rehabilitation, even at the time, was probably unfortunate.
543. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 August 1960, p. 1.
544. For a discussion of the reactions to and effects of the *Report* see: Rex M. Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest in Jamaica* (New York, William Morrow, 1972).
545. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 August 1960, p. 16.
546. Cit. in Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, pp. 74-75.
547. Smith *et al.*, *Report*, p. 33.
548. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 August 1960, p. 4.
549. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 August 1960, p. 1.
550. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 August 1960, p. 12.
551. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 September 1960, p. 14.
552. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 November 1960, p. 16.
553. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 September 1960, p. 12.
554. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 September 1960, p. 15.
555. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 September 1960, p. 11.
556. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 August 1960, p. 5 and *Public Opinion*, 13 August 1960, p. 1.
557. Radio Education Unit, *The cult of Ras Tafari: Ras Tafari and Africa, part 3* (Kingston, University College of the West Indies, n.d. [probably August 1961]) Transcript of radio-program.
558. Interview with Roy Augier, Kingston, 20 March 1990.
559. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 August 1960, p. 6.

560. *Public Opinion*, 6 August 1960, p. 3.
561. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 September 1960, p. 16.
562. For more letters to the editor about the mission to Africa see: *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 September 1960, p. 8; 12 September 1960, pp. 8 and 15, 13 September 1960, p. 12 and 18 September 1960, p. 7.
563. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 August 1960, p. 1.
564. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 August 1960, p. 3.
565. *Interview with Roy Augier*, Kingston, 20 March 1990.
566. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 August 1960, p. 1.
567. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 August 1960, p. 1.
568. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 August 1960, p. 3.
569. *Public Opinion*, 10 September 1960, p. 1.
570. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 September 1960, pp. 1 and 15. There were rumors among the Rastafarians that the so-called desperadoes were Black Muslims, members of the Nation of Islam. Leonard Barrett notes this, but adds that no definite proof had been uncovered (*The Rastafarians: a study in messianic cultism in Jamaica* (Rio Piedras, Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico, 1968) Ph.D. thesis, p. 86). It is highly unlikely, however, that Ronald Henry and his fellow rebels were linked to the Nation of Islam. The rumor was probably based on the fact that during their trial both Howard Rollings and William Jeter refused to swear on the Bible, claiming that they were Moslems.
571. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 September 1960, pp. 1 and 4; 21 September 1960, pp. 1, 4 and 17; 22 September 1960, pp. 1 and 4; 23 September 1960, pp. 1, 4-5 and 17; 24 September 1960, pp. 1 and 4; 27 September 1960, pp. 1 and 4-5; 28 September 1960; pp. 1 and 4-5; 29 September 1960, pp. 1-4 and 30 September 1960, pp. 1-4.
572. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 November 1960, p. 1; 9 November 1960, pp. 1 and 5 and 11 November 1960, p. 1. For the trial of Howard Rollings see: *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 February 1961, pp. 4 and 16; 3 February 1961, pp. 1 and 4; 4 February 1961, pp. 1 and 4; 7 February 1961, pp. 1 and 17 and 8 February 1961, pp. 1 and 14.
573. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 October 1960, pp. 1 and 13; 3 November 1960, p. 1; 29 March 1961, p. 1 and 30 March 1961, p. 1.
574. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 October 1960, pp. 1, 4 and 5.
575. *The Daily Gleaner*, various articles on 7-8 and 10-14 October 1960.
576. *The Daily Gleaner*, various articles on 18-22 and 25-26 October 1960.
577. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 October 1960, pp. 1 and 4.
578. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 October 1960, p. 1.
579. *The Daily Gleaner*, 31 October 1960, pp. 4 and 9.
580. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 September 1960, p. 4.
581. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 September 1960, p. 4.
582. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 October 1960, p. 1.
583. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 October 1960, pp. 1 and 18.
584. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 October 1960, pp. 1 and 14.
585. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 December 1960, pp. 1 and 25.
586. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 January 1961, p. 1.
587. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 November 1960, p. 5.
588. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 January 1961, p. 4.
589. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 November 1960, p. 1 and 19 November 1960, p. 1.
590. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 November 1960, p. 8.
591. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 November 1960, p. 14. Munroe Scarlett was one of the most influential black nationalists in Jamaica. He was born on 14 April 1902 in Kingston, the son of a businessman and a social worker. He received his education at the Kingston Technical High School and became a teacher. In 1923 he founded the Whitfield branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and, three years later, was elected its Executive Secretary. In 1930 he resigned and moved to St. Mary to work as a correspondent for *The Daily Gleaner*. However, within a year he returned to Kingston to continue his work for the UNIA, but now as Vice-President of the Kingston division. He worshipped in the African Orthodox Church of Alexander McGuire, and even had a shrine in his home in Jones Town, but was later baptized in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (see: *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 June 1977).
592. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 November 1960, p. 1 and 16 December 1960, p. 1.
593. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 December 1960, p. 1.
594. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 September 1960, p. 17.
595. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 September 1960, p. 10 ("The Church and Rastas" by Claude Green).
596. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 November 1960, p. 1.
597. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 December 1960, p. 9.
598. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 January 1961, p. 8.
599. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 December 1960, p. 1; 16 December 1960, p. 1 and 17 December 1960, p. 1. Also see: Hans Wilhelm Lockot, *The mission: the life, reign and character of Haile Selassie I* (London, Hurst, 1989), pp. 73-88.
600. *Report of the Jamaican mission to Africa (presented to Prime Minister the Hon. Norman W. Manley)*. (Kingston, Government Printer, 1961), p. 1.
601. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 December 1960, p. 1.
602. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 October 1960, p. 3 and 15 October 1960, p. 15.
603. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 October 1960, p. 18.
604. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 January 1961, p. 8.

605. *The Daily Gleaner* 4 January 1961, p. 4 and 14 February 1961, p. 21.
606. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 January 1961, p. 8.
607. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 March 1963, p. 1.
608. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 March 1961, p. 12.
609. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 June 1961, p. 22. In May the Secretary of the Governor wrote Scarlett that he should await the outcome of the mission. Nothing was heard of the petition afterwards.
610. *Report of the Jamaican Mission to Africa*, p. 16.
611. *Report of the Jamaican Mission to Africa*, p. 22. The (three) biblical wise men (Matthew 2) traveled from the East, of course.
612. *Report of the Jamaican Mission to Africa*, p. 17.
613. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 June 1961, p. 15.
614. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 June 1961, p. 5.
615. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 June 1961, p. 8.
616. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 June 1961, p. 1. That there were only eight of the original nine members of the mission at the airport is not because one had stayed behind, as Norman Manley had feared would happen when he announced that a mission would go to Africa. One of the advisors, Victor Reid, had left Africa for a private business trip to London two days before the other delegates returned to Jamaica.
617. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 August 1961, p. 10.
618. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 July 1961, p. 1 and 7 July 1961, p. 14.
619. *The Daily Gleaner*, 31 July 1961, p. iv.
620. *The Daily Gleaner*, 31 July 1961, p. iv.
621. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 June 1961, p. 1.
622. Interview with Roy Augier, Kingston, 20 March 1990.
623. *Public Opinion*, 19 August 1961, pp. 1 and 2.
624. *Public Opinion*, 19 August 1961, p. 1. The letter is quoted verbatim.
625. *Public Opinion*, 19 August 1961, p. 2.
626. Planno left Jamaica on 14 June, shortly after returning from Africa. He returned from the EWF conference on 18 August 1961 (*The Daily Gleaner*, 19 August 1961, p. 13) but I have not been able to find out whether Hoyte contacted Planno afterwards. *Public Opinion* and other newspapers, preoccupied as they were with the developments around the West Indies Federation and independence, carried no further comments on the effects of this letter on the Rastafarians.
627. *Public Opinion*, 19 August 1961, p. 1.
628. *Public Opinion*, 18 November 1961, p. 1.
629. *The Star*, 10 February 1962, p. 5.
630. In June 1962 London passed *The Commonwealth Immigration Act*, severely limiting, and from 1965 on almost halting, Jamaican migration to Britain, while the United States immigration regulations also became more and more restrictive.
631. Leonard E. Barrett, *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977), p. 147.
632. Samuel Elisha Brown, *The foundation of the Rastafarian movement* (quoted verbatim in Barrett, *The Rastafarians* (1968), pp. 103-104).
633. *The Daily Gleaner* (11 April 1962, p. 3). Almost 14,000 persons were eligible to vote in West Kingston; over 11,000 actually voted. Seaga won, and has continued to do so ever since, with some 5,700 votes. Thompson received about 5,100 votes and a mere 245 voters supported the People's Political Party.
634. *The Star*, 13 March 1962, p. 1.
635. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 147-156. Mortimo Planno, as we have seen, had been a member and representative of Local 37 of the EWF since 1960. It could be that he was still affiliated with Brown's group, but when we recall the troubles surrounding the formation of the mission to Africa, and Brown's remarks about the representatives, this seems unlikely. I would suspect therefore that the split between Planno and Brown dates back to 1960.
636. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 May 1962, p. 10.
637. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 May 1962, p. 10.
638. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 May 1962, p. 10. Wright/Cargill received both negative and positive reactions to his proposal. A student of the University College of the West Indies wrote a letter telling about a visit to a Rastafarian group and expressed both her disagreement with Wright and admiration for the genuine beliefs in the movement (*The Daily Gleaner*, 14 May 1962, p. 14). Another reaction came from someone who had presided over a session of the Petty Court in which two "hostile" Rastas were charged with minor offenses. After some citations of the Psalms had been exchanged they had "a very friendly talk." The author found the Rastas guilty but decided to give them a comparatively light sentence, explaining that "every disease has its peculiar treatment. ... I think it is the duty of all of us to get them back into fold" (*The Daily Gleaner*, 17 May 1962, p. 10).
639. The technical mission included the following persons: Rex Nettleford of the University of the West Indies; Wesley Miller of the Trade Administration; D.O. Mills of the Planning Unit and Aston Foreman, the Commissioner of Lands who headed the mission (Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, p. 70.)
640. Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, p. 70. The mission received hardly any attention in the press. *The Daily Gleaner* (7 April 1962, pp. 1 and 2) and *The Star* (12 April 1962, p. 6) briefly reported on its return and major findings. The JLP was clearly not interested.
641. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 May 1962, p. 10.
642. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 January 1962, p. 10.

643. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 April 1962.
644. For an extensive discussion of these conflicts see: Carole Yawney, *Lions in Babylon: the Rastafarians of Jamaica as a visionary movement* (Montreal, McGill University, 1978) Ph.D. thesis, pp. 308-322.
645. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 July 1962, p. 1.
646. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 July 1962, p. 10.
647. *The Star*, 16 February 1962, p. 1.
648. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 April 1963, pp. 1 and 2.
649. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 April 1963, p. 1.
650. *Public Opinion*, 27 April 1963, p. 4.
651. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 April 1963, p. 10.
652. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 April 1963, pp. 1 and 2.
653. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 April 1963, p. 1.
654. *Gleaner* cartoonist Leandro also depicted the Rastafarians queuing in front of a barber shop (*The Daily Gleaner*, 23 April 1963, p. 18).
655. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1963.
656. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 April 1963, pp. 1 and 2.
657. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 April 1963, p. 1.
658. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 April 1963, p. 2.
659. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 April 1963, p. 23.
660. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 April 1963, p. 2.
661. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 April 1963, p. 19.
662. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 April 1963, p. 12.
663. *Public Opinion*, 27 April 1963, pp. 1 and 2.
664. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 February 1963, p. 2.
665. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 May 1963, p. 2.
666. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 March 1965, pp. 3 and 23.
667. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 March 1965, pp. 3 and 23.
668. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 March 1965, p. 2.
669. Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, pp. 74-75.
670. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 April 1965, p. 1.
671. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 April 1963, pp. 1 and 23.
672. Edward Seaga was born on 28 May 1930, the son of well-to-do parents of Syrian descent. He attended Wolmer's Boy School and Harvard University (1948-1952) from which he received a B.A. in Social Anthropology. He did field research among Revivalists in West Kingston and was researcher and lecturer attached to the Extra Mural Department of the University College of the West Indies (see his "Cults in Jamaica." *Jamaica Journal* 3, 2 (1969)). In 1959 he became the youngest member of the Senate, representing the West Kingston constituency for the Jamaica Labour Party. In 1962 he was elected in the House of Representatives for the same constituency, and has remained its representative ever since. He succeeded Hugh Shearer as the leader of the JLP in 1974 and was Prime Minister of Jamaica from 1980 until 1989. Seaga has been described as a financial wizard, a ruthless autocrat and the most loyal associate of the United States in the Caribbean. His policy has been one of harsh financial and economic reforms, in conformance with the dictates of the International Monetary Fund.
673. *Interview* with Rex Nettleford, Kingston, 20 November 1990.
674. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 March 1954, p. 1. The statement that Selassie was the only independent African ruling monarch was at the time correct. Egypt had become a republic in June 1953 and Morocco was to become an independent monarchy in August 1957.
675. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 March 1954, p. 8.
676. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 April 1954, p. 8.
677. *Public Opinion*, 3 April 1954, p. 4.
678. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 March 1954, p. 8 and 27 March 1954, p. 1.
679. *Public Opinion*, 8 May 1954, p. 3.
680. *Public Opinion*, 1 May 1954, p. 3.
681. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 October 1960, p. 10.
682. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 October 1960, p. 8.
683. *Proceedings of the House of Representatives, April 1966*. (Kingston, Government Printer, 1966).
684. Timothy White, *Catch a fire: the life of Bob Marley* (New York, Henry Holt, 1989), p. 210.
685. *Public Opinion*, 1 April 1966, p. 4.
686. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 April 1966, p. 16. Ras Dizzy (born Albert Livingstone, but also known as Bongo Dizzy or Clive Gillespie) was born into a "top middle-class" family in Kingston in 1936. He became a Rastafarian in 1956 and in early 1964 led "an international march to the call of freedom and the true sense of deliverance out of semi-slavery" from Islington to Port Maria. According to his own claim, the rally was attended by some 8,000 people. A psychologist, poet, artist, carver and lecturer, Ras Dizzy later described himself as "a public trusteeship and spokesman as one of the black nationalistic leaders in the West [Kingston] and a Rastafarian representative ... supported by at least 15,000 to 20,000 people." (Ras Dizzy, *Vision of black slaves* (Kingston, 1971). In the 1980s Ras Dizzy spent considerable time in jail charged with manslaughter of which he was later found innocent. He developed into one of the leading Rastafarian painters. See: Wolfgang Bender, *Rastafari-Kunst aus Jamaika* (Bremen/Berlin, CON Medien- und Vertriebsgesellschaft and Berliner Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 1992), pp. 122-125.

687. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 April 1966, p. 2.
688. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1966, p. 14.
689. The fact that the rain stopped shortly before or after Haile Selassie's airplane landed, is still one of the favorite stories among Rastafarians, who commonly regard it as yet another sign of his divinity. The story has grown wilder and nowadays Rastafarians talk about a tremendous rainbow or seven white doves appearing in the sky to announce the arrival of Jah.
690. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1966, p. 22.
691. Morris Cargill, *Jamaica farewell* (Seacucus, Cinnamon Books, 1978), p. 18.
692. *Public Opinion*, 29 April 1966, p. 2.
693. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1966, p. 14.
694. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1966, p. 14.
695. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1966, p. 2.
696. The Abeng is the bull horn used by the Maroons.
697. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1966, p. 14
698. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 April 1966, p. 14.
699. These words went largely unnoticed in the newspapers. In one of its live broadcasts about the royal visit, RJR radio did put some stress on this indirect denial of divinity. In honor of its forty years of existence RJR re-broadcast this program in 1990.
700. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 April 1966, p. 1. The stone-laying ceremony was for a school building donated by His Imperial Majesty to the people of Jamaica. The Rastafarians have ever since considered the Haile Selassie I school as a school meant for Rastafarian children.
701. Father Gooden was a well-known figure in West Kingston. Born in Westmoreland sometime during the 1920s, he had come to the capital during the 1930s. In 1942 he left for a brief period in Panama, where he earned his living as a singer and was an active member in the Methodist Church. Upon returning to Kingston a year later, he "received the Holy Ghost" and established his Rainbow Healing Temple on Spanish Town Road. Gooden combined his Christian beliefs with elements of Rastafari and political activism, but was most of all successful in business. After a false start with popcorn production, he opened two (soon thriving) wholesale stores and a drygoods business, in which most of the members of his Rainbow Healing Temple found employment (*The Star*, 27 March 1962, p. 9).
702. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 April 1966, p. 24.
703. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 158-160 and 172.
704. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 April 1966, p. 24.
705. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 April 1966, p. 2. The audience was indeed initially announced as starting at 12:45.
706. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 April 1966, p. 1.
707. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 May 1966, p. 1.
708. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 May 1966, p. 10.
709. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 May 1966, p. 12 and 7 May 1966, p. 12.
710. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 May 1966, p. 14. Lulu also played the leading role in a story that did not make the press, but that later circulated among Rastafarians. During the visit there was a rumor that Prime Minister Donald Sangster had accidentally stepped on the Emperor's chihuahua during one of the dinner receptions. She roared like a lion. Not long after the visit Sangster became ill. Lulu's revenge was deadly. Exactly a year after the royal visit, in April 1967, the Prime Minister died unexpectedly. (See also Timothy White, *Catch a fire*, p. 212).
711. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 June 1966, p. 20.
712. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 May 1966, p. 16.
713. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 May 1966, p. 16.
714. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 May 1966, p. 20.
715. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 May 1966, p. 10.
716. *Public Opinion*, 29 April 1966, p. 4. The writer was referring to the local elections coming up later in 1966 and the general elections planned for early 1967.
717. Interview with Rex Nettleford, Kingston, 20 November 1990.
718. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 July 1966, p. 1. For an eye-witness account of the clearing of Back-O-Wall see: Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 156-158.
719. Terry Lacey, *Violence and politics in Jamaica, 1960-1970: internal security in a developing country* (London, Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 87-94.
720. Cit. in Anita Waters, *Race, class and political symbols: Rastafari and reggae in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Books, 1985), p. 84.
721. Shearer had been active in politics since 1944 and Vice-president of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union since 1960. Following the JLP's defeat in the 1972 elections, he resigned as leader of the party and, in 1974, was succeeded by Edward Seaga. Shearer has remained active in politics and held key positions in the JLP cabinets of 1980-1989.
722. Rhygin' (Vincent Martin) - in a sense the first Rude Boy - was a notorious gunman during the late 1940s, who used to move around the ghettos with two guns at his side. He was accused of robbery and arrested, but escaped from prison in April 1948. In spite of one of the largest manhunts in Jamaican history, he succeeded evading the police for weeks. Rhygin' narrowly escaped arrest on several occasions, committed a few more murders, but was finally killed by a police squad on Lime Cay. In 1973 Perry Henzell shot a movie about the life of Rhygin', *The harder they come*. The leading role was played by Jimmy Cliff and *The harder they come* became one of the most successful Jamaican films (see: Stephen Davis and Peter Simon, *Reggae international* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1983), pp. 49-51).

723. The University College of the West Indies had become an independent university in 1962. Prior to independence, it had a special relationship with the University of London, which issued the degrees and developed the courses. The UWI became a regional university with campuses on three different islands, Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados. For a penetrating account of Black Power in Jamaica see: Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, pp. 113-170.
724. Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power: the politics of liberation in America* (New York, Vintage Books, 1967); Malcolm X (with the assistance of Alex Haley), *The autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York, Penguin Books, 1965).
725. See: Walter Rodney, *Groundings with my brothers* (London, Bogle L'Ouverture, 1969), p. 61.
726. Anthony Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*. (London, C. Hurst & Co., 1988), p. 22.
727. Horace Campbell, *Rasta and resistance: from Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney* (London, Hansib, 1985), pp. 130-131.
728. See, for instance: Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, pp. 128-133. For a dramatized account of the Rodney riots see Andrew Salkey's novel *Joey Tyson*. (London, Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1974). In spite of the lifting of the ban by the PNP government in the early 1970s Walter Rodney never returned to Jamaica. He became active in the left-wing opposition in Guyana. On 13 June 1980 a car bomb put a premature end to his life.
729. Cit. in Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, p. 94.
730. *Abeng* 1, 6 (8 March 1969).
731. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 October 1969, p. 2.
732. Cit. in Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, pp. 64-65.
733. Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, pp. 71-72.
734. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 October 1968, p. 4.
735. Michael Manley was born on 10 December 1924, the son of PNP leader and Prime Minister, Norman Manley, and the British sculptor Edna Manley, who became one of Jamaica's leading creative artists. He studied at the London School of Economics and for a brief period worked with the BBC, before returning to Jamaica in 1951. He worked as a journalist and became active in the National Workers Union (NWU) of which he was elected Vice-President in 1955. In the following years Manley junior gained prominence as a trade unionist, especially after leading a strike at the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) in 1964. In 1962 he was appointed to the Senate and in 1967 he successfully contested his first general elections for the East Kingston constituency. In February 1969 Manley succeeded his father as the leader of the PNP, after a contest with lawyer Vivian Blake. Michael Manley was Prime Minister of Jamaica from 1972 until 1980 and from 1989 until early 1992, when he stepped down because of health problems. He was succeeded by his long-time associate Percival James "P.J." Patterson.>
736. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 July 1968, p. 3.
737. Derek Bishton, *Blackheart Man: a journey into Rasta* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1986), pp. 29-41.
738. *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 January 1977, pp. 6-7.
739. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 312.
740. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 312. The author relates that in 1967 Emperor Haile Selassie made a second land grant of 10,000 acres to the Ethiopian World Federation's Local in Chicago, which had previously broken with the headquarters in New York.
741. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 October 1969, p. 1.
742. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 October 1969, pp. 1 and 2.
743. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 313.
744. Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest*, p. 46.

Notes Chapter 4. A traditional hostility

745. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 January 1970, p. 5.
746. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 January 1970, p. 8.
747. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 February 1970, p. 12.
748. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 March 1970, p. 2.
749. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 January 1970, p. 10.
750. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 January 1970, p. 22.
751. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 February 1970, p. 28 and 22 February 1970, pp. 1, 10 and 12.
752. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 April 1970, p. 22.
753. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 February 1970, p. 2.
754. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 April 1970, p. 2. The barrister in question was not a Rastafarian.
755. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 April 1970, p. 4 and 21 April 1970, p. 4.
756. Anita Waters, *Race, class and political symbols: Rastafari and reggae in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Books, 1985), p. 104.
757. For Prince Emmanuel and his Bob dreads at Bull Bay see: Marcel Bayer, "Jah Rastafari, de zwarte verlosser leeft." *Onze Wereld* 27, 10 (1984): 6-9; Harold van de Laar, *Echo's uit Babylon: een Rasta kerk in Jamaica* (Tilburg, Theologische Faculteit, Universiteit van Brabant, 1988) M.A. thesis; Frank Jan van Dijk, "Een sabbat op Mount Zion." *CAhier: periodiek voor antropologisch onderzoek, Utrecht* 2 (3): 85-94.
758. See, for instance: Leonard Barrett, *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977), pp. 176-181.
759. Joseph Owens, *Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (Kingston, Sangster, 1976), pp. 241-242.
760. Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, p. 98.
761. Frank Jan van Dijk, "Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rasta and the middle class." *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New*

West Indian Guide, 62, 1-2 (1988): 1-26.

762. Cit. in Tracy Nicholas, *Rastafari: a way of life* (New York, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979), p. 43.
763. Nicholas, *Rastafari*, pp. 42-43.
764. For the major studies on the Theocracy Government see the work of John P. Homiak, *The 'ancient of days' seated black: eldership, oral tradition and rituals in Rastafari culture* (Waltham, Brandeis University, 1985). Ph.D. thesis; "The mystic revelation of Rasta-far-eye: visionary communication in a prophetic movement." In: Barbara Tedlock (ed), *Dreaming: anthropological and psychological interpretations* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 220-245; "From yard to nation: Rastafari and the politics of eldership at home and abroad." In: Manfred Kremser (ed.), *Ay Bobo: Afro-Caribbean cults: resistance and identity* (Proceedings of the Second Interdisciplinary Congress of the Society for Caribbean Research). [forthcoming]; "Dub history: soundings on Rastafari livity and language." In: Barry Chevannes (ed.), *Rastafari and other African-Caribbean worldviews* (New York, MacMillan, 1993) [forthcoming].
765. Before the official establishment of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in New York on 25 October 1959 there had been a long period of unofficial worship along church lines. Initially the EOC had two places of worship, one in Brooklyn and another in Harlem. In the early 1970s the EOC worshipped at 140 West 176th Street in the Bronx (a building purchased in December 1969 to replace the one in Brooklyn) and still somewhere in Harlem. In 1966 the EOC also bought a building in the Bronx to be used as a Youth Center. It appears that the membership in New York City was not as large as in Jamaica. In the early 1970s the EOC claimed 1,200 baptized members in the United States and 2,500 in Jamaica (Abba Laike Mariam Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church and its teachings in the West* (New York, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 1971), pp. 11-13).
766. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 October, 1959, p. 1.
767. It could very well be that the activities of Claudius Henry and the negative publicity about the Rastafarians during the late 1950s and early 1960s had deterred the *Abuna* from establishing an EOC branch in Jamaica.
768. Barrett writes that "quite possibly because of this recommendation [in the university report] the Ethiopian Orthodox church appeared in Jamaica in 1969." Apart from the fact that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was officially established one year later, it appears that Smith, Augier and Nettleford's recommendation had anything but direct results (*The Rastafarians*, p. 201).
769. Ethiopian Culture Committee House of Truth, *Ethiopian Heritage: a cultural magazine*, 1 (Kingston, 1962), p. 6.
770. Cit. in Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church*, p. 17.
771. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 November 1984, p. 2.
772. *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 January 1980, p. 5 (message from Hibbert dated 16 January 1980).
773. Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Inc. Asfa Wossen H.S. Local 1, *Imperial Chronicle* 1, 1 (London, January 1987), p. 4.
774. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 May 1970, p. 2.
775. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 May 1970, p. 1; 19 May 1970, p. 2 and 24 May 1970, p. 1.
776. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 May 1970, p. 2.
777. Cit. in Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church*, p. 31 (copy of undated article from *The Star*). It must be assumed that this event occurred on 24 May. Carole Yawney, who witnessed what was probably this "disorder," (though she dated it as 5 May), writes that the *Abba* had to be escorted away in a car, "that promptly sped off in a cloud of dust." One Rastafarian had caused considerable commotion when he shouted that Mandefro should baptize in the name of Haile Selassie, and was in turn berated by the chairman of the gathering, which "sparked off a controversy that threatened to get out of hand." (*Lions in Babylon: the Rastafarians of Jamaica as a visionary movement* (Montreal, McGill University, 1978). Ph.D. thesis, pp. 325-326 and 383-387.
778. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 November 1984, p. 2.
779. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 201-209.
780. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, early 1972), p. 5.
781. Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church*, p. 16.
782. Interview with Rev. Ashley Smith, President of the United Theological College and former Chairman of the Jamaica Council of Churches, Kingston, 23 April 1990.
783. Cit. in Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church*, p. 30 (copy of an advertisement in *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 september 1971).
784. Cit. in Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church*, pp. 31-32.
785. Cit. in Mandefro, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Te Wahedo Church*, pp. 30-31 (copy of a letter to the editor dated 19 November 1971, taken from *The Daily Gleaner*).
786. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 November 1970 p. 19.
787. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 July 1971, p. 2.
788. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 August 1971, p. 14.
789. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 April 1971, p.16.
790. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, December 1971) p. 8.
791. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, January 1972), p. 7.
792. There is a debate as to whether Rastafarian music has been influenced by burru alone or by both burru and kumina music. For the pros and cons of this argument see: Verena Reckford, "Rastafarian music." *Jamaica Journal* 11, 1-2 (1977): 2-13; Yoshiko S. Nagashima, *Rastafarian music in contemporary Jamaica: a study of socioreligious music of the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica* (Tokyo, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1984); Kenneth Bilby and Elliot Leib, "Kumina, the Howellite church and the

- emergence of Rastafarian traditional music in Jamaica." *Jamaica Journal* 7, 1 (1981): 22-27.
793. Burru is also referred to as buru or burra.
794. Reckford, "Rastafarian music."
795. Garth White, "Voices crying in the wilderness: talking drums/sound systems & reggae." In: Stephen Davis and Peter Simon (eds.), *Reggae international* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1983), pp. 25-32.
796. Reckford, "Rastafarian music," p. 8.
797. In 'classical' Rastafarian music three drums are used. The largest is the bass drum, with a diameter ranging from 55 to 90 centimeters, held on the lap and played with a short stick. The *fundeh* is a small (approximately 20 centimeters in diameter) long drum, which stands on the floor and played with the fingers. The *fundeh* plays the steady rhythm and the bass drum follows the line, sometimes varying in tone and rhythm. The third drum, the *peta* or repeater, is about the same size as the *fundeh*, but not as long. Held between the knees, it is played with the fingers. The *peta* plays the melody against the rhythm of the *fundeh* and bass drum, and thus requires great musical skill and sensitivity.
798. Udo Vieth and Michael Zimmermann, *Reggae: Musiker, Rastas und Jamaika* (Frankfurt am Main, Fisher Tashenbuch Verlag, 1981), pp. 135-137. Reckford, relates that Count Ossie achieved his breakthrough in the late 1950s when a then famous rhumba singer, Marguerita Mahfood, was invited to perform in Vere Johns' *Opportunity Knocks* show at the Ward Theater. Mahfood insisted that the Count be billed as well. "Johns was wary then, about using Rastas on his show." Eventually he gave in and Count Ossie became a hit and a regular performer on the Vere Johns shows ("Rastafarian music," p. 12). The same Vere Johns, as a columnist of *The Daily Gleaner*, had called on the colonial government in June 1951 to "stamp out" every last Rastafarian and proposed "the setting up of prison camps" for Rastas.
799. Born in Trinidad in 1941, Stokely Carmichael became one the most prominent advocates of Black Power in the United States during the 1960s. As a student at Washington's black Howard University he became involved in sit-ins and freedom marches, before being elected President of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Commission (SNCC) in 1966. A year later he left the Commission to become "Field Marshall" and "Prime Minister" of the radical Black Panthers. The alleged inventor of the slogan Black Power went to voluntary exile in Africa in the late 1960s. His publications had been on the list of prohibited literature in Jamaica during the JLP government (1962-1972), but the PNP lifted the ban and also allowed Carmichael to enter the island.
800. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 October 1976, p. 2 and 26 October 1976, pp. 1 and 6.
801. Garth White, "Ska and Rock steady." In: Stephen Davis and Peter Simon (eds.), *Reggae international* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1983), pp. 37-42; Udo Vieth and Michael Zimmermann, *Reggae*, pp. 25-31.
802. White, "Ska and Rock steady."
803. Stephen Davis, *Bob Marley: the biography* (London, Panther Books, 1983), pp. 70-71.
804. Davis, *Bob Marley*, p. 43.
805. For a few of the more interesting publications on reggae music see: Linton Kwesi Johnson, "Jamaican rebel music." *Race and class* 17, 4 (1976): 397-412; Adrian Boot and Michael Thomas, *Jamaica: Babylon on a thin wire* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1976); Stephen Davis, *Reggae bloodlines: in search for the music and culture of Jamaica* (New York, Anchor Press, 1977); Sebastian Clark, *Jah music: the evolution of the popular Jamaican song* (London, Heinemann, 1980); Garth White, "Reggae: a musical weapon." *Caribe* 4, 4 (1980): 6-10; Stephen Davis and Peter Simon (eds.), *Reggae international* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1983); Rebecca Read Medrano, "Reggae, roots and razzmatazz." *Américas* 36, 1 (1984): 34-39; Yoshiko S. Nagashima, *Rastafarian music in contemporary Jamaica: a study of socioreligious music of the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica* (Tokyo, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1984); Edna Brodber, "Black consciousness and popular music in Jamaica in the 1960s and 1970s." *Caribbean Quarterly* 31, 2 (1985): 53-60; Kenneth M. Bilby, "The Caribbean as a musical region." In: Sidney W. Mintz and Sally Price (eds.), *Caribbean Contours* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 181-218; Edna Brodber and J. Edward Greene, *Reggae and cultural identity in Jamaica* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies, 1988).
806. *The Daily Gleaner* 11 September 1976, p. 8.
807. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 July 1971, p. 10.
808. Bob Marley, *Simmer down* (Studio One, 1963)
809. For the major publications on Bob Marley see: Carolyn Cooper, "Chanting down Babylon: Bob Marley's songs as literary text." *Jamaica Journal* 19, 4 (1987): 2-8; Stephen Davis, *Bob Marley: the biography* (London, Granada Publishing, 1983); Timothy White, *Catch a fire: the life of Bob Marley* (New York, Henry Holt, 1989); Adrian Boot and Vivien Goldman, *Bob Marley: soul rebel - natural mystic* (London, Eel Pie, 1982). An interesting recent addition is a 60-page booklet in the CD-box *Bob Marley: songs of freedom - from 'Judge Not' to 'Redemption Song'* (Island Records, 1992).
810. Cit. in Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, p. 106.
811. Anthony J. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica* (London, C. Hurst & Company, 1988), p. 47.
812. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 February 1972, p. 18.
813. Klaus de Albuquerque, *Millenarian movements and the politics of liberation: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (Blacksburg, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1976) Ph.D. thesis, p. 269. Patterson, a Baptist, had accompanied Manley on his trip to Ethiopia. He succeeded Michael Manley as Prime Minister in 1992.
814. For a very fine study on the use of Rastafarian symbolism during the election campaigns from 1967 to 1983 see: Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*.
815. The biblical Joshua was the successor of Moses. He led the Israelites into Canaan, which was subsequently divided among the twelve tribes.

816. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, December 1971), p. 8.
817. Barry Chevannes writes that Henry was released in 1967. ("The Repairer of the Breach: Reverend Claudius Henry and Jamaican society." In: Frances Henry (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Americas*. (The Hague, Mouton, 1976), pp. 263-290). According to *The Daily Gleaner* (24 January 1968, pp. 1 and 2), however, he was released in November 1966.
818. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 January 1968, pp. 1 and 2.
819. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 July 1968, p. 14.
820. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 July 1968, p. 14.
821. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 March 1971, p. 5.
822. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 February 1972, p. 24.
823. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 February 1972, p. 18.
824. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 March 1972, p. 12.
825. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 February 1972, p. 24.
826. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 October 1986 (article by Barry Chevannes reviewing the life and work of Claudius Henry).
827. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 February 1972, p. 18.
828. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 February 1972, p. 24. The advertisements during election campaigns in Jamaica have never been examples of good taste. Both parties have made it a tradition to boost themselves by fiercely attacking their opponents rather than promoting their own candidates, let alone program (in what has been termed a messianic style of politics, programs have always been far less important than persons). The comparison of Michael Manley with Adolf Hitler is, though extreme, a good example of the Jamaican campaigning style. It also betrays a complete lack of comprehension of the atrocities committed during the Hitler years, an ignorance not uncommon in Jamaica, where the Third Reich and the Second World War are only history book reality to most people.
829. *The Daily Gleaner* 27 February 1972, p. 18.
830. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 February 1972, pp. 18-19.
831. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 February 1972, p. 23 and 27 February 1972, p. 6.
832. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 February 1972, pp. 9 and 15.
833. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 March 1972, p. 12.
834. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 October 1986 (article by Barry Chevannes reviewing the life and work of Claudius Henry).
835. Carl Stone, *Electoral behaviour and public opinion in Jamaica* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1974), pp. 25-27.
836. Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, p. 110.
837. Revelation 7:4 speaks about a 144,000 "of all the tribes of the children of Israel" to be saved in the Last Days.
838. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 June 1972, p. 4.
839. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice Special* (Kingston, 21 July 1972), p. 5.
840. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 June 1972, p. 4. Other delegates were Hartley Neita, Acting Director of the Jamaica Information Service, Don Mills, of the International Monetary Fund, and John Searchwell, President of the Jamaica Teachers Association.
841. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 June 1972, p. 1.
842. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 August 1972, p. 12.
843. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 March 1973, p. 8.
844. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 March 1973, p. 8. One of the delegations that visited Thompson also proposed to make Haile Selassie King of Jamaica.
845. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, June 1972), p. 7.
846. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, April 1973), p. 7.
847. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 October 1973, pp. 1 and 21.
848. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 April 1974, p. 5.
849. Barry Chevannes, *Social origins of the Rastafari movement* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1978), p. 224.
850. Initially, the revolution was supported by a broad coalition of progressive forces. The Marxists, however, soon took over and on 20 December 1974 the provisional military government announced that Ethiopia was to be a socialist state. Since Michael Manley had in September 1974 announced that "democratic socialism" was to be the leading ideology of the PNP government, the Rastafarians suddenly found both the island they wanted to leave and the country where they wanted to go socialist.
851. Though the developments in Ethiopia in 1974 are commonly referred to as a revolution, it should be noted that it was a relatively slow process, stretched over a considerable period and once described as the "Quiet Revolution."
852. Crown Prince Asfa Wossen had played a somewhat dubious role in the Bodyguard Coup and it is said that Selassie had always suspected that Wossen was not his own son, but born out of a liaison between his first wife and his rival Lij Iyasu.
853. For a brilliant description of the reign and fall of Emperor Haile Selassie see: Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Emperor: downfall of an autocrat* (San Diego, Brace Harcourt Jovanovich, 1983) (Originally published in Polish as *Cesarz* (Warsaw, Czytelnik, 1978).
854. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 211-212. According to Barry Chevannes this was a view expressed mainly by younger Rastafarians (*Religion and politics: impact of the Ethiopian revolution on the Rastafari movement* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1974).

855. Chevannes, *Religion and politics*, p. 6.
856. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 August 1974.
857. Chevannes, *Religion and politics*.
858. Not all members of the royal family were executed on Bloody Saturday, 23 November 1974. The *Dergue* has kept others in prison for over fourteen years without charges being pressed and without a trial. On 21 May 1988, seven female members of the royal family were eventually released, among them Haile Selassie's daughter Woizero Tenagne Worq.
859. Cit. in KapuŃci¹/₂ski, *The Emperor*, n.p.
860. Cit. in KapuŃci¹/₂ski, *The Emperor*, n.p.
861. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 August 1975, pp. 1 and 23.
862. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 August 1975, p. 1.
863. *Jamaica Daily News*, 5 September 1975, p. 19.
864. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 215-216; Joseph Owens, *Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (Kingston, Heinemann, 1976), pp. 256-279.
865. Timothy White, *Catch a fire: the life of Bob Marley* (New York, Corgi Books, 1983), p. 270 (slightly edited). *Jah lives!*, at the time released only on single, was recently included on the Bob Marley CD-box *Songs of freedom - from 'Judge Not' to 'Redemption Song'* (Island Records, 1992).
866. Van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel."
867. *The London Times*, 7 April 1977.
868. Dawit Makonnen had been a student in the United States at the time of the revolution. Together with Crown Prince Asfa Wossen he was one of the few members of the royal family who escaped arrest and imprisonment.
869. Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation Radio I, *Interview with Prince Dawit Makonnen by Barry Gordon* (Kingston, 12 March 1987) Tape recording. (Barry Gordon is better known as Barry G. or the Boogie Man)
870. *De Volkskrant*, 17 February 1992, pp. 1 and 4; Andrew Lycett, "Selassie's rise from the dead." *New African* 298 (July 1992), pp. 14-16. The news about the discovery of Haile Selassie's body came when the writing of this thesis was nearing its end. I have not been in Jamaica or spoken to Rastafarians elsewhere since. The expectation that this new twist will not immediately or directly affect the Rastas' belief that Haile Selassie is the Living God is based on the following: it has yet to be proven by any kind of - in the eyes of the Rastas - trustworthy institution or person that the body is indeed that of Haile Selassie. The Rastafarians are not inclined to take such reports at face value and might regard it as merely another effort by Babylon to discredit the Emperor and to fool his followers. Apart from the fact that it remains to be seen whether any persuasive evidence for the Rastafarians will follow, I would assume that the next logical step in the dismissal of this discovery will be an argumentation somewhere along the lines that it is a deception engineered by Haile Selassie himself to make the world believe that he is no longer around, while he continues to prepare for the fulfillment of prophecy in some other way. If God has the power to lay down and take up his physical structure, he might just as well change it. Those sections of the movement which are in close contact with the royal family, like the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation, will be waiting to see whether Crown Prince Asfa Wossen or Prince Dawit Makonnen will publicly accept the discovery of the body.
871. *JAHUG 2* (London, C. Gayle and Y. Gayle for Repatriation Productions, 1992), p. 40.
872. The Wailers now included: Alvin "Seeco" Patterson, Earl "Wire" Lindo, Junior Marvin, Tyrone Downie, Aston "Family Man" Barrett, Carlton "Carly" Barrett and Al Anderson, together with the backing vocals of Marcia Griffith, Judy Mowatt and Rita Marley.
873. Since the early 1980s the Twelve Tribes have occupied a headquarters at Hope Road, at a stone's throw from Island House. It is not unlikely that Bob Marley partially financed the acquisition of these premises.
874. It is only fairly recently that Rastafarian has art attracted more serious attention in the literature. See, for instance, Wolfgang Bender, "Liberation from Babylon: Rasta painters in Jamaica." In: Jürgen Martini (ed.), *Missile and Capsule* (Bremen, Universität Bremen, 1983), pp. 129-134, and *Rastafari-Kunst aus Jamaika* (Bremen/Berlin, CON Medien- und Vertriebsgesellschaft and Berliner Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 1992); Veerle Puopeye-Rammelaere, "The Rainbow Valley: the life and work of Brother Everald Brown." *Jamaica Journal* 21, 2 (1988): 2-14.
875. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 December 1975.
876. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 June 1977, p. 6.
877. George Beckford and Michael Witter, *Small garden ... bitter weed: struggle and change in Jamaica* (Morant Bay, Maroon Publishing House, 1982), p. 78.
878. Rastafarians attach great significance to words. The plural "men," for instance, is used to refer to non-Rastas and the singular "man," also when used in the plural sense, to Rastafarians.
879. The use of the term "secular Rastafarians" implies that Rastafari is here regarded as essentially and originally a religious movement and that a Rastafarian is someone who believes in the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I. As such the label "secular Rastafarian" is, of course, a contradiction in terms. I am also aware of the fact that many non-believers today regard themselves to be "genuine" Rastafarians, either because of their way of life or because of their adoption of the social and cultural ideas of Rastafari, since they do not consider the religious beliefs of the movement to constitute the essence of Rastafari. One could argue that the "secular Rastafarians" are merely (cultural) black nationalists, but since many of them have adopted such typical Rastafarian traits as dreadlocks and often follow the Rastafarian prescriptions for dress or *Ital* diet, and natural "livity" in general, such a general label is less accurate.
880. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*, p. 47.
881. Several publications have been dedicated to the Manley administration and the failed socialist experiment of

the 1970s. It is neither possible nor necessary to include all the ins and outs of that body of research here. For some interesting works on Jamaica under the PNP during the 1970s see, for instance: Carl Stone, "Democracy and socialism in Jamaica, 1972-1979." In: Paget Henry and Carl Stone (eds.), *The newer Caribbean: decolonization, democracy and development* (Philadelphia, Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1983), pp. 235-256; George Beckford and Michael Witter, *Small garden ... bitter weed: struggle and change in Jamaica* (Morant Bay, Maroon Publishing House, 1982); Michael Manley, *Jamaica: struggle in the periphery* (London, Third World Media, 1982); Michael Kaufman, *Jamaica under Manley: dilemmas of socialism and democracy* (Toronto, Lawrence and Hill, 1985); Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*; Omar Davies and Michael Witter, "The development of the Jamaican economy since Independence." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Jamaica in Independence: essays on the early years* (Kingston, Heinemann Publishers, 1989), pp. 75-104; Carl Stone, "Power, policy and politics in Independent Jamaica." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Jamaica in Independence: essays on the early years* (Kingston, Heinemann Publishers, 1989), pp. 19-54.

882. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*, p. 68.
883. Later Manley openly supported Cuba's armed intervention in Angola and invited Castro for a state visit to Jamaica in 1977.
884. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, August 1974), p. 5.
885. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* 86 (Kingston, early 1976), p. 5.
886. Ethiopian World Federation Local 77, *Hope* 1, 1 and 2-3 (Kingston, 1977), p. 8 (Interview of W. Roy Wright with Dunkley).
887. Nicholas, *Rastafari*, p. 86. Bongo Silly was born in 1929. He gained prominence as a wicker worker and wood carver. In the course of several years he built his own house from wicker and wood. "The Lion's Den," as his home was named, became an attraction for tourists, where Bongo Silly sold his art work. He died in 1991.
888. For studies on crime and violence in Jamaica see: Klaus de Albuquerque, "A comparative analysis of violent crime in the Caribbean." *Social and Economic Studies* 33, 3 (1984): 93-142; Dudley Allen, "Urban crime and violence in Jamaica." In: Brana-Shute, Rosemary and Gary Brana-Shute (eds.), *Crime and punishment in the Caribbean* (Gainesville, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, 1980), pp. 29-51; Dudley Allen, "Crime and treatment in Jamaica." In: Brana-Shute, Rosemary and Gary Brana-Shute (eds.), *Crime and punishment in the Caribbean* (Gainesville, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, 1980), pp. 52-57; William Calathes, "Jamaican firearm legislation: crime control, politicization and social control in a developing nation." *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 18, 3 (1990): 259-285; Faye V. Harrison, "The politics of social outlawry in urban Jamaica." *Urban Anthropology* 17, 3 (1988): 259-277; Terry Lacy, *Violence and politics in Jamaica, 1960-1970: internal security in a developing country* (London, Frank Cass, 1977). For Rastafari and youth gangs in Kingston see: Barry Chevannes, "The Rastafari and the urban youth." In: Carl Stone and Aggrey Brown (eds.), *Perspectives on Jamaica in the seventies* (Kingston, Jamaica Publishing House, 1981), pp. 392-422.
889. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*, p. 44.
890. *The Suppression of Crime Acts* has been lifted in some rural parishes. In 1990 the government also lifted the Act in Kingston, St. Andrew and St. Catherine, but within only a few months it was reimposed.
891. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, May 1973), p. 4.
892. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 February 1973, p. 14.
893. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 September 1975, p. 6.
894. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 September 1975, p. 31.
895. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 January 1976, p. 15.
896. One notorious dreadlocked criminal was a man called Starky, who was wanted on several charges of robbery, rape and murder during the mid-1970s.
897. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* 86 (Kingston, early 1976), p. 10.
898. News release of the Rastafari Movement Association. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 January 1976, p. 2.
899. Bob Marley and Lee Perry, *Smile Jamaica* (Island Records, 1976).
900. For more detailed information on the "Smile Jamaica" concert and the assassination attempt on Bob Marley see: Davis, *Bob Marley* and White, *Catch a fire*.
901. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 February 1977, p. 16. The writer of this letter was in for an unpleasant surprise. A few months later, in November 1977, reggae even penetrated the Christian church. At a service led by Reverend Bevis Byfield and Reverend Ernie Gordon reggae music was played in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin.
902. *Jamaica Daily News*, 28 May 1977, p. 7.
903. *Jamaica Daily News*, 4 June 1977, p. 2.
904. *Jamaica Daily News*, 1 July 1977, p. 2. The Rastafarians also complained about cartoons showing Rastas under the caption "Pay attention to strangers in your neighbourhood" and an article in *Jamaica Daily News* (13 April 1975) which said that Rastafarians would not find a home in Africa, which resulted in the Jamaican public ridiculing Rastas in the streets.
905. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice*, 87 (Kingston, late 1977 or early 1978), p. 10.
906. *Jamaica Daily News*, 21 August 1977, p. 1.
907. *Jamaica Daily News*, 26 February 1977, p. 7.
908. *Jamaica Daily News*, 14 July 1977, p. 3.
909. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 June 1977, p. 1.
910. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 July 1977, p. 1 and *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 July 1977, p. 3.
911. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 August 1977, p. 1 and *Jamaica Daily News*, 11 August 1977, p. 3.
912. *Jamaica Daily News*, 8 August 1977, p. 7.
913. *Jamaica Daily News*, 31 July 1977, p. 7.

914. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 August 1977, p. 8. In an interview with John Maxwell on the JBC radio program *Public Eye* (15 August 1977) Batts admitted that he had smoked ganja for the past four years. He added that he observed the so-called twelve hours rule which prescribes an interval of at least twelve hours between using alcoholic drinks and reporting for duty. Batts claimed that this applied to ganja use as well. An Air Jamaica pilot contested his view (*The Daily Gleaner*, 1 September 1977, p. 6).
915. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 August 1977, p. 8.
916. *Jamaica Daily News*, 23 August 1977, p. 7.
917. Cit. in *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 August 1977, p. 8.
918. *Jamaica Daily News*, 23 August 1977, p. 7.
919. *Jamaica Daily News*, 20 January 1979, pp. 1 and 23.
920. M.G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, *Report on the Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1960), p. 36.
921. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* (Kingston, June 1971), n.p..
922. *The Education Thrust of the Seventies* was an elaboration of previous plans, like the *New Deal 1966*, aiming to extend education and the equality of access. In 1977 *The Education Thrust*, in a somewhat modified form, was included in the *Five Year Plan for Education (1978-1983)*. After the JLP ousted the PNP in 1980, the new government continued along the same lines. Although these efforts were not without result, by 1990 only a mere 25% of all school children went on to High School. See, for instance: Michael Manley, *The politics of change* (Kingston, Heinemann, 1990), pp. 138-161; Millicent Whyte, *A short history of education in Jamaica* (London, Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1983), pp. 115-160 and Errol Miller, "Educational development in Independent Jamaica." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Jamaica in Independence: essays on the early years* (Kingston, Heinemann Publishers, 1989), pp. 205-228.
923. As far as could be ascertained no cases of Rastafarian children being excluded from schools were reported in the press before 1975. Yet it may safely be assumed that such cases occurred quite frequently.
924. *Jamaica Daily News*, 11 September 1975, p. 1.
925. Jamaica House is the name of the Prime Minister's offices. The school is located on the same premises. Hence the name and Mrs. Manley's involvement.
926. *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 September 1975, p. 1.
927. *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 September 1975, p. 7.
928. *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 September 1975, p. 7.
929. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 January 1978, p. 1.
930. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 January 1978, p. 1.
931. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* 87 (Kingston, late 1977 or early 1978), pp. 4-5.
932. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 February 1978, p. 1.
933. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 February 1978, p. 1.
934. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 February 1978, p. 1.
935. *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 February 1978, p. 3.
936. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 February 1978, p. 1. What became of them or what happened to the student of Trench Town Comprehensive High School remains unknown, but the three Kingston Technical students returned to school after they had convinced the Principal that they were properly groomed.
937. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 February 1978, p. 1.
938. The Smith Committee had been appointed in May 1977 and now, almost a year later, was having its report typed which, as reported, was expected to take a few months.
939. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 February 1978, p. 1.
940. *Jamaica Daily News*, 25 February 1978, p. 7.
941. *Jamaica Daily News*, 5 April 1978, p. 7.
942. *Jamaica Daily News*, 29 August 1978, p. 1. Prep or preparatory schools are private schools preparing students, between the ages of seven and twelve, for the Common Entrance Examination which determines whether a student can go on to High School.
943. I have not been able to find out what happened to Jahboukie after he was refused at these schools. The fact that no further reports appeared in the newspapers, may suggest that he found a school after all.
944. *Jamaica Daily News*, 25 September 1980, p. 11.
945. *Jamaica Daily News*, 10 October 1980, p. 7.
946. Cit. in *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 September 1976, p. 6. The letter was dated 16 June 1976.
947. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 December 1976. Also see: Van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel," pp. 21-21.
948. Marley was to visit Shashamane in December 1978. According to Timothy White it was an experience which left him "severely shaken," since he saw "the same slums and hungry faces, ... the same corrupt, strong-arm governments ... [and] discovered that his beloved Haile Selassie, the man he worshipped as God, had died in disgrace." (*Catch a fire*, p. 21).
949. *Jamaica Daily News*, 11 March 1976, p. 1 and *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 March 1976, p. 9.
950. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 July 1976, p. 15.
951. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 June 1976, p. 2.
952. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 September 1978, p. 1; 3 September 1978, p. 1 and 6 September 1978, p. 1.
953. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice* 87 (Kingston, late 1977 or early 1978), p. 16; Wolfgang Bender (ed.), *Rastafari Kunst aus Jamaika* (Bremen, CON Medien- und Vertriebsgesellschaft, 1984), p. 85.
954. The Rastafarians were also concerned about the developments in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, where Bishop Abel Muzorewa had just succeeded Ian Smith as Prime Minister. Muzorewa and his United African National Council (UANC) had won the majority of the seats in a Parliament consisting of 72 black and 28 white representa-

tives. Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe's African People's Union (ZAPU) demanded a fair representation for the black majority and continued their guerrilla against the UANC government. In spite of international condemnation of the elections and a continuation of the economic sanctions against Rhodesia, Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher initially seemed inclined to support the Muzorewa government, but in late 1979, Lord Carrington worked out an agreement between the rival parties, which included a brief return to Crown Colony status, new elections and independence in April 1980.

955. *Jamaica Daily News*, 9 August 1979, p. 3. Jah Lloyd (a.k.a Jah Lliijji) was born as Lloyd Young on 15 January 1939, attended Kingston College and traveled throughout the United States and Canada, where he attended Toronto's Art School for a brief period. Apart from being an influential spokesman for the Judah Coptic Church and Theocracy Government, Jah Lloyd is also a well-known and accomplished artist. See: Bender, *Rastafari Kunst*, p. 137.
956. *Jamaica Daily News*, 9 August 1979, p. 3.
957. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 August 1979, p. 13 and 18 August 1979, p. 8; *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 August 1979, p. 3.
958. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*, pp. 73-79.
959. In 1977, for instance, the police were responsible for what became known as the Green Bay massacre. PNP "badmen" had been instructed to go to Fort Clarence to collect a shipment of arms, someone informed the police, who executed all the (unarmed) men. Since the 1960s police violence has become more and more excessive. Between 1979 and 1984 alone the police was responsible for no fewer than 1,309 registered deaths (only 117 were wounded, which indicates a tendency to shoot-to-kill). The police usually justify these deaths by claiming that there has been either a "shoot-out" or "an attempt to attack the police with a knife or machete." For reports on police brutality in Jamaica see: Jamaica Council for Human Rights, *JCHR Speaks* (Kingston, 1982); Jamaica Council for Human Rights, *Annual General Report June 1984 - June 1985* (Kingston, 1985); Americas Watch, *Human rights in Jamaica: an Americas Watch report* (New York, 1986); Amnesty International, *Jamaica: the death penalty* (London, 1989).
960. White, *Catch a fire*, p. 301.
961. Davis, *Bob Marley*, p. 269.

Notes Chapter 5. The obnoxious minority

962. Unfortunately, it was not possible within the scope of this particular research project, to travel to all of the countries in which Rastafari has established itself, while information from colleagues and friends who have traveled more widely than this writer, usually does not go beyond confirmation that there are indeed Rastafarians - or at least people wearing dreadlocks - in Mali, Brazil, Belize or New Zealand.
963. Nancy Foner, *Jamaica farewell: Jamaican migrants in London* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978); Len Garrison, *Black youth, Rastafarianism, and the identity crisis in Britain* (London, Afro-Caribbean Education Resource project, 1979), p. 6. In the ten years following independence (1962) another 54,000 Jamaicans settled in England. In the period 1973-1989 only 12,500 were admitted. England as a migration destination was surpassed by both the United States and Canada in the late 1960s. In 1989, for instance, the United States admitted 19,000 Jamaican migrants, Canada almost 4,000 and England a mere 322. Data from *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica* (Kingston, Statistical Institute of Jamaica), several volumes 1960-1989.
964. Sheila Patterson, *Dark strangers: a study of West Indians in London* (London, Tavistock, 1963), pp. 354 and 360.
965. According to Ernest Cashmore (*Rastaman: the Rastafarian movement in England* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1979), p. 51) the People's Democratic Party "adopted as colours the red, green and black of Ethiopia in much the same was [sic] as Garvey had done for his movement." A rather puzzling statement since the colors of the Ethiopian flag are red, gold and green, while the official colors of Garvey's UNIA were indeed red, green and black.
966. Cashmore, *Rastaman*, p. 51.
967. *Imperial Chronicle*, 1, 1 (London, The Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Inc., Asfa Wossen H.S. Local 1, 1987), p. 7
968. Cashmore, *Rastaman*, p 53.
969. Cashmore, *Rastaman*, pp. 53-54.
970. Horace Campbell, *Rasta and resistance: from Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney* (London, Hansib, 1985), pp. 188-189.
971. *Ethiopian Orthodox Church St. Mary of Zion/The Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. Emperor Yohannes Local 33* (London, The Ethiopian World Federation, 1975), pp. 25-31.
972. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 April 1988, p. 6.
973. Cashmore, *Rastaman*, p. 62. Cashmore does not tell his readers who this *Abba* was, but it may be assumed that it was the priest in charge of the EOC's branch in London.
974. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, p. 188.
975. *JAHUG 1* (London, C. Gayle and Y. Gayle for Repatriation Productions, 1992), p. 2.
976. For some interesting publications on the influence of the Rasta-reggae subculture on both black and white youths in England see: Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style* (London, Methuen, 1979); Paul Gilroy, "You can't fool the youths ... race and class formation in the 1980's." *Race and Class* 23 (1982): 207-222; Paul Gilroy, *There ain't no black in the Union Jack: the cultural politics of race and nation* (London, Hutchinson, 1987); Simon Jones, *Black culture, white youth: the reggae tradition from JA to UK* (London, MacMillan Education, 1988); Terry Jones, "Oorlog in Babylon: de onlusten in Engeland." *Sociologische Gids* 82, 5 (1982), pp. 366-385.

977. Poem by Julie Roberts, cit. in Garrison, *Black youth, Rastafarianism*, p. 25.
978. There are hardly any reliable data to support the suggestions that the incidence of crime was higher among black youth, but it was generally taken as fact by the press, which devoted quite a lot of attention to “black muggers.”
979. Campbell, *Rastaman*, p. 196. Shortly after the Brixton disorders of April 1981, the prison rules were changed and Rastafarians were allowed to keep their dreadlocks.
980. John Brown, *Shades of grey: police-West Indian relations in Handsworth* (Birmingham, Cranfield Police Studies, 1977).
981. Brown, *Shades of Grey* (cit. in Cashmore, *Rastaman*, p. 215)
982. *The Birmingham Post*, 11 May 1976 and *The Birmingham Evening Post*, 25 November 1977.
983. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, pp. 197-198. Campbell’s interpretation is made from a rather subjective kind of Marxist perspective. Since the author does not always refer to his sources we should be cautious in taking statements like “the police promised assistance in repatriation” as fact. Eldridge Cleaver is a former spokesman of the Black Panthers.
984. Approximately 25 to 30% of the population of the Borough of Lambeth, of which Brixton is a part, was non-white, the majority of them of West Indian descent. Section 4 of *The Vagrancy Act 1824*, popularly known as “the sus law,” gave the police the power to arrest any “suspected person loitering with intent to commit an arrestable offence” (Jones, “Oorlog in Babylon,” pp. 372-373).
985. Lord Scarman, *The Brixton disorders, 10-12 April 1981: report of an inquiry* (London, Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1981), p. 44. Jah Bones of the Rastafari Universal Zion and representatives of the Rastafarian Collective gave evidence at the hearings.
986. Scarman, *The Brixton disorders*, p. 44.
987. Catholic Commission for Racial Justice, *Rastafarians in Jamaica and England* (London, Catholic Commission for Racial Justice, 1982).
988. *The Guardian*, 29 December 1982.
989. *Westindian World*, 10 December 1982. In July 1986 it organized a large exhibition and conference about Rastafari in cooperation with the Commonwealth Institute “to stimulate the understanding of the Rastafarian way of life.” (*The Daily Gleaner*, 26 March 1986, p. 12). The Rastafarian Advisory Centre was later transferred to Netherwood Road.
990. *Imperial Chronicle*, 1, 1 (1987), p. 7.
991. *Imperial Chronicle*, 1, 1 (1987), p. 7.
992. *Imperial Chronicle*, 1, 1 (1987), p. 11.
993. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 April 1988, p. 6.
994. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 May 1987, p. 7.
995. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 May 1987, p. 7.
996. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 April 1988, p. 6. The research on which this thesis is based (and the better part of writing it) was carried out before Mengistu was toppled. The defeat of the Marxist *junta* was no doubt greeted with great jubilation by the Rastafarians, especially those in the IEWF, but it is doubtful whether the current (mid-1992) situation in Ethiopia, under the interim-President Meles Zenawi, has made the country more attractive for repatriation. The former Empire is deeply divided between rivalling armies of the various ethnic groups, and although the situation has not yet become as hopeless as in neighboring Somalia, the prospects for a peaceful solution seem dim. Furthermore, it appears unlikely that the monarchy will be restored in the near future, in spite of the fact that Crown Prince Asfa Wossen has declared himself Emperor Ahme Selassie I in 1989, and I suspect that the IEWF will declare this a condition for again taking up the issue of a return to the fathers’ land.
997. Dominica an island of some 750 square kilometers, has a population of approximately 90,000. The island has a record of economic failures, massive unemployment and violent political and sometimes revolutionary actions. See: Lennox Honeychurch, *The Dominica story: a history of the island* (Roseau, Dominica Institute, 1984). For a discussion of political developments in Dominica in the 1970s also see: Bill Riviere, “Contemporary class struggles and the revolutionary potential of social classes in Dominica.” In: Susan Craig (ed.), *Contemporary Caribbean: a sociological reader* (n.p., Susan Craig, 1982)
998. Bert Thomas, “Revolutionary activity in the Caribbean: some notes on the Dreads in Dominica.” *Guyana Journal of Sociology* 1, 2 (1976): 75-92, p. 76. However, Chandar Gupta Supersad notes that the figure of about 200 has been disputed as being too high. In a speech in the House of Assembly (19 November 1974) Premier Patrick John spoke about “almost two-hundred” (*Political protest in a transitional society: a case study of the Dominica Dreads* (St. Augustine, University of the West Indies, 1986) M.A. thesis, p. 62). Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, pp. 158-159.
999. George E. Simpson, *Black religions in the New World* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 129.
1000. Supersad, *Political protest in a transitional society*.
1001. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, p. 158.
1002. Thomas noted that the Dreads probably borrowed some of their political ideas from the MND (“Revolutionary activity in the Caribbean,” p. 77).
1003. Supersad, *Political protest in a transitional society*, p. 62.
1004. Honeychurch, *The Dominica story*, p. 188.
1005. The death sentence was upheld by the Court of Appeal and the Privy Council.
1006. Honeychurch, *The Dominica story*, p. 188..
1007. Cit. in Supersad, *Political protest in a transitional society*.
1008. Simpson, *Black religions*, p. 129.

1009. Thomas, "Revolutionary activity in the Caribbean," p. 82. There are indications that the plot argument had been used from the very beginning, rather than being invoked at a later stage to justify the Act, as Thomas suggests. Already during the presentation of the Dread Act in the House of Assembly Patrick John had remarked: "Mr. Speaker, these activities are only the front line activities, but the true architects of this terrorist organization are working on a communist take-over." (Supersad, *Political protest in a transitional society*, p. 37).
1010. Thomas, "Revolutionary activity in the Caribbean," p. 84.
1011. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 September 1975, p. 4.
1012. Honeychurch, *The Dominica story*, p. 192.
1013. *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 December 1976, p. 4. When Dominica became independent, on 3 November 1978, members of the Rastafari Co-operative Community (RCC), once more called upon the government to grant them recognition and to stress their "contribution to the development of the country." In the same letter, the RCC also urged the government to release Desmond Trotter (*The Daily Gleaner*, 26 November 1978, p. 28).
1014. *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 December 1976, p. 4.
1015. *Jamaica Daily News*, 21 July 1979, p. 4.
1016. Although Trotter escaped from prison before Hurricane David hit Dominica (see *Jamaica Record*, 5 May 1990, p. 4), many Rastafarians in Jamaica believe that he escaped after the penitentiary was demolished. Part of the poem "The Man called Kabinda" by Michael Anthony Lorne reads:
 "But the Mighty hand of JAH reached down
 And with the terror of Hurricane David
 He smashed the prison walls
 And set Desmond KABINDA Trotter free"
 (*Rastaman Chant* (Kingston, Africa Children Unlimited, 1983) p. 87). There was, however, another Dread, Leroy Ettiene a.k.a. Pokosion, who did indeed escape from prison after it was destroyed by Hurricane David. Pokosion was in jail awaiting his trial for the murder on a school teacher. He was later held responsible for the abduction and murder of Edward Honeychurch (See: Honeychurch, *The Dominica story*, pp. 192 and 215-217).
1017. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14, 15, 17 and 18 February 1981. Honeychurch's wife, gardener and housekeeper were also kidnapped, but soon released.
1018. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 February 1981, p. 6 and 7 March 1981, p. 14.
1019. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 March 1981.
1020. *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 May 1981, pp. 5 and 22.
1021. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 June 1981, n.p.
1022. Amnesty International, *Urgent Action* 223/90, 31 May 1990. In 1988 Eric Joseph's appeal to the Privy Council was dismissed. Rastafarian organizations, Amnesty International and other groups have since been pressing the government of Dominica to grant Joseph clemency.
1023. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 July 1985, p. 7; 6 February 1990, p. 2 and 7 February 1990, p. 2.
1024. "Barbados press comment on the local Rastafari movement." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* 3, 7-10 (1977): 23-26, p. 23.
1025. According to Maxine McClean and Hyacinth Griffith, there were a few Rastafarians in Barbados in the early 1970s, but "many Barbadians were exposed to Rastafarianism in 1975 when Ras Boanerges and the Sons of Thunder performed in Barbados." ("Rastafarians: the revivors of leathercraft in Barbados." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* 15, 1 (1989): 31-36, p. 32).
1026. *The Advocate News*, 9 October 1977 (cit. in: "Barbados press comment," p. 24).
1027. *The Nation*, 4 October 1977 (cit. in: "Barbados press comment," p. 25).
1028. *The Advocate News*, 16 October 1977 (cit. in: "Barbados press comment," p. 25).
1029. Eudine Barriteau, "Recent developments on the Rastafari movement in Barbados." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* 6, 4 (1980): 21-24.
1030. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 December 1979, p. 8.
1031. Barriteau, "Recent developments," p. 22.
1032. Barriteau, "Recent developments," pp. 22 and 24.
1033. *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (Port of Spain, Rastafari Brethren Organisation, 1983), p. 12.
1034. Cit. in *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 February 1981, p. 5.
1035. McClean and Griffith, "Rastafari: revivors of leathercraft," pp. 31-32. The authors refer to the Twelve Tribes of Judea instead of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. A number of Rastafarians in Barbados have been active in producing and selling leathercraft since 1978. They built up a thriving business in the commercial center of Bridgetown, but in 1981 the police moved them to another section of the town.
1036. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, pp. 171-173. Unfortunately, Campbell does not tell his readers who, what, when and where, which makes it difficult to assess the value of these statements. Much the same goes for a statement like: "The main influence of the Rasta formation [in Guyana] came from the Dreads, though a small minority wanted to centralise the person of Haile Selassie."
1037. Reprinted in *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 November 1978, p. 3.
1038. According to an engineer from Linden, Guyana whom this writer met in Jamaica, this does not seem to have changed during the 1980s.
1039. *Jamaica Daily News*, 22 September 1979, p. 14. The lion is, of course, the symbol of Emperor Haile Selassie, the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah. A similar incident has been reported from Trinidad, where a "Rasta" was torn apart and killed after he climbed into the lion's cage. Several informants in Jamaica also told about a Rasta being killed by a lion in Kingston's Hope Zoo during the 1960s, but I have not been able to confirm this story. We should, of course, be cautious in assuming that they were indeed Rastafarians. Mentally

- unstable persons in Jamaica have often been described as Rastas because of their unshaven, long-haired appearance.
1040. *Jamaica Daily News*, 28 June 1980, p. 4.
 1041. *Jamaica Daily News*, 17 February 1981, p. 5.
 1042. Burnham's reaction to a question posed by the editors of *Rastafari Speaks* at a CARICOM press conference (5 July 1983) in Trinidad.
 1043. *Rasta Voice*, 95 (May 1986), n.p.
 1044. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, p. 163.
 1045. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, p. 163.
 1046. *Jamaica Daily News*, 15 October 1979, p. 1.
 1047. *Torchlight*, 10 October 1979 (cit. in Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, p. 165).
 1048. *Jamaica Daily News*, 14 October 1979, p. 2 and 18 October 1979, p. 7.
 1049. *Jamaica Daily News*, 15 October 1979, p. 1; 16 October 1979, p. 3 and 17 October 1979, p. 4 .
 1050. In December 1984 general elections were held, which brought the New National Party under Herbert Blaize to power. Eric Gairy, who returned to Grenada after the invasion, managed to win some 35% of the votes. Since the American troops left Grenada in 1985, the Blaize administration has struggled to rebuild the nation's economy (James Ferguson, *Grenada: revolution in reverse* (London, Latin America Bureau, 1990).
 1051. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 December 1979, p. 1; 10 December 1979, p. 9; 12 December 1979, p. 2; 14 December 1979, pp. 26-27 and 17 December 1979, p. 9. There was no mention in these reports of the rebels being Rastafarians. Horace Campbell, however, writes that "Rasta youths led the protest" (*Rasta and resistance*, pp. 160-161).
 1052. *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 October 1980, p. 21.
 1053. *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 October 1980, p. 21.
 1054. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 May 1978, p. 5. Owens' lecture had been organized by the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement, the opposition party, in collaboration with the Caribbean Ecumenical Youth Association. Owens delivered a speech at an alternative symposium, which was attended by a large group of Rastafarians.
 1055. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 June 1979, p. 24.
 1056. *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 October 1980, p. 21.
 1057. *Jamaica Daily News*, 13 December 1980, p. 6.
 1058. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 February 1983, p. 3. The two musicians were D.J. Michigan and Glenn Browne.
 1059. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 February 1983, p. 15.
 1060. *Caymanian Compass*, 4 February 1983 (reprinted in *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 February 1983, p. 8).
 1061. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 February 1983, p. 8.
 1062. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 April 1989, pp. 8 and 13.
 1063. Leahcim Semaj, "Inside Rasta: the future of a religious movement." *Caribbean Review* 14, 1 (1985): 8-11 and 37-38.
 1064. See, for instance, *Caribbean Week*, 20-26 October 1990.
 1065. Several Trinidadians, who had spent a few years in Jamaica as students, assured me that one encounters more Rastafarians in Trinidad than Jamaica. However, not only did they - like so many other people - identify Rastafarians by their locks, but they also carefully avoided most lower-class areas in Kingston (despite their insistence that they never had any problems whatsoever walking the streets of Port of Spain's slum area Laventille). The best source on Rastafari in Trinidad is the Ph.D. thesis of Ansley H. Hamid, *A pre-capitalist mode of production: ganja and the Rastafarians in San Fernando, Trinidad* (New York, Columbia University, 1981), although it must be added that Hamid was preoccupied with the ganja trade in Trinidad and the role of the Rastafarians in this trade during the later half of the 1970s.
 1066. Hamid, *A pre-capitalist mode of production*, p. 188.
 1067. One informant from the Twelve Tribes of Israel in Jamaica insisted that there were Rastafarians in Trinidad as early as 1960.
 1068. *Trinidad Guardian*, 9 September 1983 (reprinted in *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (1983), p. 30).
 1069. *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (1983).
 1070. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 March 1980, p. 1.
 1071. *Rastafari Speaks* 11 (1983), p. 20.
 1072. *Rastafari Speaks* 11 (1983), p. 20.
 1073. Velma Pollard, "Word sounds: the language of Rastafari in Barbados and St. Lucia." *Jamaica Journal* 17, 1 (1984): 57-62, p. 57.
 1074. Reference here is, of course, to the official language and not the patois spoken in these areas.
 1075. There is quite a lot of traveling between the various English-speaking countries in the region. Jamaican "higglers" travel all over the Caribbean to obtain profitable merchandise. Students of seventeen different countries study at one of the three campuses of the University of the West Indies. The volume of intra-Caribbean travel, however, is probably much smaller than the volume of travel from the region to Britain and, more especially, to the United States. Thousands of Caribbean people have settled there permanently and tens of thousands travel to Britain and the United States to study, seek temporary work or to visit family or friends.
 1076. A critical reader has remarked that Jamaica maintained rather close links with Cuba during the 1970s. While this is no doubt correct, it may be argued that this was largely restricted to political contacts, and for the rest involved relatively small numbers of Cuban doctors and teachers coming to Jamaica and Jamaican *brigadistas* being trained in Cuba. Furthermore, these contacts lasted for only six years (1974-1980).
 1077. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, p. 171.
 1078. It is also somewhat surprising that precisely on the island where Black Power had such a tremendous impact during the early 1970s, the Rastafarian movement is "steeped in religion." As has already been noted, Horace

Campbell's statements need to be treated with care, since their factual basis and his sources are not always clear.

1079. George W. Roberts, "Growth of the population." In: George W. Roberts (ed.), *Recent population movements in Jamaica* (Paris, CICRED, 1974), pp. 2-5.
1080. Anthony P. Maingot, "Introduction: the policy change." In: Robert A. Pastor (ed.), *Migration and development in the Caribbean: the unexplored connection* (London, Westview Press, 1985), pp. 1-39, and "Political implications of migration in a socio-cultural area," pp. 63-90. Between 1984 and 1989 another 118,000 Jamaicans migrated to the United States and another 23,000 to Canada (*Economic and Social Survey Jamaica*, 1989 (Kingston, Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 1990).
1081. See, for instance, *Time: the Literary Digest*, 76, 1 (4 July 1960), p. 27.
1082. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 August 1971, p. 2.
1083. Leonard E. Barrett, *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977), pp. 198-200.
1084. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 199.
1085. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 June 1976, p. 14.
1086. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 June 1976, pp. 1-2.
1087. New York City Police Department, "Rasta crime: a confidential report." *Caribbean Review* 14, 1 (1985): 12-15 and 39-40. The report appears to have circulated widely among police departments outside New York City. Linden F. Lewis noted that in November 1982 the Houston Homicide Division wrote a memo in which it warned all police departments about the presence of Rastafarians in the area. They could be identified, the memo read, "by the way they wear their hair." ("Living in the heart of Babylon: Rastafari in the USA." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* 15, 1 (1989): 20-29).
1088. New York City Police Department, "Rasta crime," pp. 15, 39-40.
1089. New York City Police Department, "Rasta crime," p. 15.
1090. New York City Police Department, "Rasta crime," p. 40.
1091. Surprisingly, special attention was paid to the Twelve Tribes of Israel. According to the report, the Twelve Tribes had adopted a sophisticated system involving color-coded cards "to facilitate their sale of drugs." This system was said to work as follows. Cards were printed in red, yellow and green, all with a different number. Every day the color changed and the numbers were registered. On day X drugs could only be bought with a red card and a number not previously used, etc. The system was designed to minimize the risk of arrest and police infiltration. Undercover detectives, the report added, would be in a "severe risk situation" if they used the wrong colors or numbers.
1092. *The Star*, 19 October 1982.
1093. *The Miami Herald*, 20 March 1984 (reprinted in *The Star*, 22 April 1984).
1094. Lewis, "Living in the heart of Babylon," p. 26.
1095. Lewis, "Living in the heart of Babylon," pp. 26-27.
1096. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 November 1990, p. 3 (advertisement of The Palace Amusement Company).
1097. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 November 1990, p. 8 and *Jamaica Record*, 4 November 1990, p. 14.
1098. The X-rated movie was shown in five theaters in Jamaica, but lasted only a few weeks. Part of it had been shot on the island and reggae star Jimmy Cliff featured in a song. Minister of Tourism Frank Pringle said that the government's promotional agency JAMPRO had advised the directors on the Rastafarian life-style, "which caused them to change certain aspects of the movie." (*The Daily Gleaner*, 3 November 1990, p. 1).
1099. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 November 1990, p. 3.
1100. *The Daily Gleaner*, 13 November 1986, p. 1.
1101. Ironically, dreadlocks (or what was to look like dreadlocks) became fashionable among white youth, especially in the surf- and skateboard scene in California, during the early 1980s, probably as a result of the growing popularity of reggae in the region (*Jamaica Record*, 20 April 1990, p. 7).
1102. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, p. 179.
1103. See Waters, *Race, class and political symbols: Rastafari and reggae in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1985), p. 16.
1104. Lewis, "Living in the heart of Babylon," p. 29.
1105. There is a large gap in the research on Rasta in Canada. Campbell devotes half a page to "the Canadian dimension" and there is only one, hardly informative, article on Rasta in Canada written by Jackie Wilson ("Come, let us reason together." In: Vincent D'Oyley (ed.), *Black presence in multi-ethnic Canada* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 1979, pp. 167-188).
1106. Anthony P. Maingot, "Introduction: the policy change." and "Political implications of migration in a socio-cultural area."
1107. Cashmore, *Rastaman*, p. 2. Cashmore has been criticized for relying too much on police information, notably by Kenneth M. Bilby ("The half still untold: recent literature on reggae and Rastafari." *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 59, 3-4 (1985): 211-217).
1108. Campbell, *Rasta and resistance*, pp. 180-181.
1109. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 January 1980, n.p.
1110. Derek Bishton, *Blackheart Man: a journey into Rasta* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1986), pp. 2-41. Also see John Ryle, "Rastaman in the Promised Land." *New Society* 58, 24 (1981): 535-537.
1111. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 July 1968, p. 3. The fund was established in 1967.
1112. *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 January 1977, pp. 6-7.
1113. *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 January 1977, pp. 6-7.
1114. James Piper was a few years later killed during a robbery in New York City.

1115. It appears that the Twelve Tribes initially claimed to have received a new charter for a second land grant in Ethiopia, made in 1967 by Emperor Haile Selassie to the Chicago branch of the Ethiopian World Federation, which had broken with the New York headquarters (see: Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 312 and Owens, *Dread*, pp. 241-242). Owens records that the Twelve Tribes, then known as Local 15 of the EWF, sent two of its members to Chicago for discussions about this new land grant and, in September 1972, another member on a pioneer trip to the Promised Land. For one reason or another Local 15 shortly afterwards broke with the EWF and adopted the name Twelve Tribes of Israel. It also shifted its attention to the original Shashamane land grant. It is not known when exactly the first settlers arrived in Ethiopia, though it appears that it was not long after the fall of Haile Selassie. On 19 November 1975 over 500 members of the Tribes gathered at Kingston's airport to bid farewell to two of their representatives, Kenneth Chambers and Desmond Martin, who were to travel through Ethiopia for about a month (*The Daily Gleaner*, 21 November 1975, p. 21). On 8 December 1976 a larger group again left for Shashamane, including six who were to remain there. They were, however, joining several others, who had already settled there (*The Daily Gleaner*, 10 December 1976).
1116. I am not familiar with the details of these arrangements, but members of the Twelve Tribes have on several occasions assured me that they are the only Rastafarian group to have "no problems at all" with the authorities in Ethiopia, boasting that they can bring in as many members as they like. Asked for the reasons behind this, I was told that the Ethiopian regime is simply very pleased with "the good work" done there by the organization. To avoid misunderstanding, it should be added that the Twelve Tribes were, to put it mildly, not especially fond of Mengistu and his Marxist colleagues. They have, however, always "respected" the regime and its laws as part of the fulfillment of prophecy.
1117. Frank Jan van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rasta and the middle class." *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/ New West Indian Guide*, 62, 1-2 (1988): 1-26.
1118. See, for instance, *The Star*, 23 March 1984.
1119. *The Voice*, 15 October 1991.
1120. Incidentally, David "Ziggy" Marley and his siblings in the Melody Makers followed in their father's footsteps ten years later, performing as the major act at the Namibia independence celebrations.
1121. *Rasta Voice*, 89 (July 1982), n.p.
1122. This development was no doubt stimulated by a growing interest in African music in Europe and the United States, and by collaboration between Western popstars and African artists. A well-known example is that of Paul Simon and Ladysmith Black Mambazo of Soweto (South Africa) which resulted in the highly successful *Graceland* album (New York, Warner Bros. Records, 1986). Needless to say, several African musicians reached fame in the West without the help of European or American artists. Fela Kuti, King Sunny Ade or Youssou N'Dour are such examples.
1123. See: Jennifer Ryan, "Lucky Dube: South African soldier." *Reggae report* 8, 8 (1990): 24-25 and 30 and "Reggae inna Ghana with Felix Bell and SWAPO." *Reggae Report* 8, 8 (1990): 11 and 16; Terri Larsen, "Out of this world: Alpha Blondy and the solarsystem." *Reggae Report* 8, 8 (1990): 18-19 and 31.
1124. Thomas Mapfumo in an interview in *De ver van mijn bed show* on KRO Television (the Netherlands) on 10 April 1989.
1125. Mwatabu Okantah, "Yankee dread in Africa." *Reggae Report* 8, 8 (1990): 13.
1126. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 May 1983, p. 7. This group was visited by members of the Marley family in April 1983. The Dutch anthropologist Walter van Beek informed me that many of the members of this group support themselves by begging. They claim, however, that it is an honor to be allowed to give them some money.
1127. Okantah, "Yankee dread in Africa," p. 13. In 1986 I was informed that the prophet Gad of the Twelve Tribes had traveled to Nigeria in 1986 "to find new lands." Ghana was never mentioned and in 1986 its flag did not appear on an invitation card for one of their dances showing all the flags of the countries in which the Twelve Tribes had branches. From that I gather that the settlement described by Okantah is either of a recent date or not (yet) officially recognized, as is the case with a group calling itself the "Twaalf Stammen van Israel" (Twelve Tribes of Israel) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. According to informants, branches are never recognized before the prophet Gad has visited them personally.
1128. *Rasta Voice*, 95 (May 1986), p. 4.
1129. Toon van Meijl, a Dutch anthropologist attached to the Centre of Pacific Studies of the University of Nijmegen, who has done extensive research among the Maori in New Zealand, informed me that Rasta and reggae are extremely popular among youth gangs in the urban centers and that since the early 1980s large numbers have adopted the custom of wearing their hair in dreadlocks. According to Van Meijl the idea of being one of the lost tribes of Israel had taken hold among the Maoris at the time of the introduction of Christianity during the early nineteenth century.
1130. Gordon Campbell, "Rasta in Aotearoa." *New Zealand Listener*, 17 January 1981, pp. 18-19.
1131. Campbell, "Rasta in Aotearoa," p. 19.
1132. Campbell, "Rasta in Aotearoa", p. 18.
1133. Van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel," p. 23.
1134. There are a handful of publications on Rasta (and reggae) in other languages than English (and Dutch), but all of these deal with Rastafari in Jamaica, rather than Rastafari in the country of publication. For publications on Rastafari in German see, for instance, C.P. Dressler, "Gill Tucker und das Gewicht der Vergangenheit." *Ethnologische Absichten* 6 (1980): 36-39; Rainer Epp and Klaus Frederking, *Dub version: über Jamaikas Wirklichkeit* (Berlin, Rothbuch Verlag, 1982); Ulrich Hoppe, *Reggae: die Kings aus Kingstontown* (Munich, Heyne, 1981); Peter M. Michels, *Rastafari* (Munich, Trikont, 1980); Karl-Erich Weiss, *Die Rastafari-Bewegung auf Jamaika: Entwicklungsphasen und Ausdrucksformen einer Gegenkultur* (Münster, Philosophischen Fakultät, Westfälischen Wilhelmus Universität, 1981) M.A. thesis; Udo Vieth and Michael

- Zimmermann, *Reggae, Musiker, Rastas und Jamaika* (Frankfurt am Main, Fisher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981); Anno Wilms, *Rastafari* (Wuppertal, Jugenddienst Verlag, 1982) Photographs. In French see: Denis Constant, *Aux sources du reggae: musique, société et politique en Jamaïque* (Roquevaire, Editions Parentheses, 1982). In Italian see, for instance, Gianfilippo Pedote and Lele Pinaridi, *Reggae* (Milano, Gammalibri, 1980); Ernesto Assante, *Reggae: da Bob Marley ai Police, da Kingston a Londra: storia e protagonisti della rivoluzione musicale Giamaicana* (Milano, Savelli, 1980). In Norwegian: Syphilia Morgenstjerne, *Reggae: i fritt fall fra Babylon mot Jamaicas indre* (Oslo, Gyldendal, 1979). One of the most curious booklets about Rastafari I encountered is Jette Steensen's *Racism, reggae and Rastafari* (Gjellerup, Forlaget Systime, 1984), a Danish textbook, used as the "forord" states for "engelskundervisningen i gymnasiet" (English in High School). Apparently some Danish students are taught English with a book on Rastafari.
1135. Peter E.J. Buiks, *Surinaamse jongeren op de Kruiskade: overleven in een etnische randgroep* (Deventer, Van Loghum Slaterus, 1983), pp. 153-189. As in England, Rastafari has primarily been considered a youth- or subculture (see, for instance, Jones, *Black culture, white youth*; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*). In Britain Rastas have been compared with punks or skinheads; in the Netherlands the Rastafarians have been compared with disco-freaks and wakamans (hustlers).
1136. Buiks, *Surinaamse jongeren op de Kruiskade*, pp. 153-198.
1137. Hans Vermeulen, *Etnische groepen en grenzen: Surinamers, Chinezen en Turken* (Weesp, Het Wereldvenster, 1984), pp. 75-80. The research on which Vermeulen based this part of his book was probably carried out by his student Livio Sansone.
1138. See, for instance, *De Volkskrant* (18 May and 29 June 1985), *Haagse Post* (2 May 1981), *Nieuwe Revue* (6 June 1991), *Onze Wereld* (October 1984) or *Hervormd Nederland* (29 June 1985).
1139. Based on information kindly provided by Klaas Wilting, Police Information Officer in Amsterdam.
1140. *Rasta Voice*, 90 (1982), p. 8.
1141. *Interview* with Michael Anthony Lorne, Kingston, 16 November 1990,
1142. *Rasta Voice* 88 (1982), p. 11.
1143. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 August 1982, p. 2.
1144. *Jamaica Daily News*, n.d. (probably late July 1982).
1145. *Jamaica Daily News*, n.d. (probably late July 1982).
1146. For a summary of the report see *Rasta Voice*, 91 (early 1983), pp. 10-18.
1147. *Rasta Voice* 91 (early 1983), pp. 10-18.
1148. *Rasta Voice*, 91 (early 1983), p. 17.
1149. *Jamaica Daily News*, n.d. (probably late July 1982).
1150. *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (1983), p. 22.
1151. *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (1983), p. 22.
1152. *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (1983), p. 22.
1153. *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (1983), p. 22.
1154. Perhaps the most important resolution was the one in which the delegates stated that "Dawtas" ("Daughters" or Rastafarian women) should be given "greater freedom." It signalled the changing attitudes towards the role and position of women in the movement, even among the well-represented orthodox Rastafarians, which will be discussed in chapter 6.
1155. Inquiries about the third international convention in Trinidad were unproductive.
1156. John P. Homiak, "From yard to nation: Rastafari and the politics of eldership at home and abroad." In: Manfred Kremser (ed.), *Ay Bobo: Afro-Caribbean cults: resistance and identity* (Proceedings of the Second Interdisciplinary Congress of the Society for Caribbean Research). [forthcoming].
1157. Homiak, "From yard to nation," p. 18.
1158. Homiak, "From yard to nation," p. 15.
1159. Homiak noted that the Divine Order of the Nyabinghi formally recognized a branch in Washington, which soon began to organize Nyabinghi sessions and celebrations ("From yard to nation," p. 19).
1160. *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 December 1990, p. 30. The National Assembly organized in preparation for the Silver Jubilee of Haile Selassie's state visit, the Golden Jubilee of the Ethiopian victory over Italy and the Centenary celebrations of Haile Selassie's birthday. The Assembly was attended by Rastafarians from various groups, including the Nyabinghi Order, the Church Triumphant, the Ethiopian World Federation, the Rastafari International Theocracy Assembly and the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church. Details of the Centenary celebrations were unknown at the time of writing, but a group of Rastafarians seems to have traveled to Addis Ababa during 1992.

Notes Chapter 6. Breaking the tide of radicalism

1161. Real GDP in 1974 value of Jamaican dollars.
1162. Data from Anthony J. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica* (London, C. Hurst & Co., 1988); Omar Davies and Michael Witter, "The development of the Jamaican economy since independence" In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Jamaica in Independence: essays on the early years* (Kingston, Heinemann Publishers, 1989) and *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica*, volumes 1970-1981 (Kingston, Statistical Institute of Jamaica).
1163. Carlene J. Edie, "From Manley to Seaga: the persistence of clientelist politics in Jamaica." *Social and Economic Studies* 38, 1 (1989): 1-35.
1164. *Jamaica Daily News*, 16 June 1979, p. 7.
1165. See, for instance: Morris Cargill, *Jamaica farewell* (Secaucus, Cinnamon Books, 1978). Migration has always been an important escape mechanism for the Jamaican population. In 1977 some 60% of all Jamaicans said they would leave for the United States if given the opportunity, according to a poll by Carl Stone. During

- the 1970s more than 50% of all university graduates left Jamaica (Anthony P. Maingot, "Introduction: the policy challenge." In: Robert A. Pastor (ed.), *Migration and development in the Caribbean: the unexplored connection* (London, Westview Press, 1985), pp. 1-39). The exodus during the Manley years was considerable (over 190,000 Jamaicans left for the U.S., Canada or Britain between 1972 and 1980), but has been exaggerated. The number was not much higher than during the 1962-1972 (and fewer than during the 1981-1989) period of JLP government.
1166. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 February 1980, pp. 8 and 12.
1167. Information kindly provided by Barry Chevannes, Kingston, 2 May 1990.
1168. Interview with Trevor Munroe, Kingston, 3 December 1990.
1169. *Jamaica Daily News*, 15 March 1979, p. 7.
1170. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 February 1980, p. 6.
1171. *Jamaica Daily News*, 1 August 1979, p. 7.
1172. *Jamaica Daily News*, 3 June 1979, p. 8. Ras Historian (Eric Clement), the spokesman of the RMA, made a similar call in a speech at an art and crafts fair at Devon House on 21 April 1979.
1173. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 June 1979, p. 15.
1174. As so often, events outside Kingston do not receive much attention in Jamaica. None of my informants was able to provide information. Whether McDonald actually contested the elections is not certain. If he did, he was in any case not successful.
1175. The tam, a knitted cap, often in the colors of the Ethiopian flag and used to cover the dreadlocks, had become a popular headdress among Rastafarians during the 1970s.
1176. For an analysis of the use of Rastafarian symbolism during the 1980 election campaign see: Anita Waters, *Race, class and political symbols: Rastafari and reggae in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Books, 1985), pp. 199-247.
1177. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 June 1979, p. 16.
1178. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 July 1979, p. 6.
1179. Michael Manley, *Jamaica: struggle in the periphery* (London, Third World Media, 1982), pp. 194-195.
1180. Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, pp. 199.
1181. *Jamaica Daily News*, 28 November 1980, p. 7.
1182. Although the first Rastafarian preachers actually emerged in 1932-1933, the Rastafarians themselves generally trace the origin of their movement back to the coronation of Haile Selassie on 2 November 1930.
1183. *Jamaica Daily News*, 14 September 1980, p. 20.
1184. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 November 1980, pp. 18-24.
1185. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 November 1980, p. 28.
1186. *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 October 1980, p. 3 and 2 November 1980, p. 18. The telegram was sent on 17 October 1980. Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Secretary, also received a letter from the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church.
1187. *Jamaica Daily News*, 4 June 1977, p. 8.
1188. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 November 1980, p. 18 (Message from the Royal Ethiopian Judah-Coptic Church, Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government)
1189. *Jamaica Daily News*, 24 December 1980, p. 3.
1190. *Jamaica Daily News*, 10 January 1981, p. 3. and 12 January 1981, p. 3.
1191. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 January 1981, p. 2.
1192. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 January 1981, p. 2.
1193. *Jamaica Daily News*, 27 January 1981, p. 3.
1194. These Americans had been taken hostage in their own Embassy on 4 November 1979 by supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini who demanded the extradition of Shah Reza Pahlavi at the time in exile in the United States. After 444 days and a failed military operation to set them free, the hostages were released on 21 January 1981.
1195. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 February 1981, p. 3 and *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 February 1981, n.p.
1196. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 February 1981, p. 12.
1197. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 February 1981, p. 12.
1198. *Jamaica Daily News*, 9 February 1981, p. 7.
1199. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 February 1981, p. 6.
1200. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 March 1981, p. 2.
1201. *Jamaica Daily News*, 22 April 1981, pp. 1 and 17.
1202. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 May 1981, p. 2.
1203. *Jamaica Daily News*, 2 May 1981, p. 2.
1204. Bob Marley, *Zimbabwe* (Island Records, 1979).
1205. Stephen Davis, *Bob Marley: the biography* (London, Granada Publishing, 1983).
1206. Island Records released several other albums in between: *Rastaman Vibration* in 1976, *Exodus* in 1977, *Kaya* and *Babylon by Bus* in 1978.
1207. Booklet in *Bob Marley: songs of freedom: from 'Judge Not' to 'Redemption Song'* (Island Records, 1992), p. 54. CD-box.
1208. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 November 1984, pp. 2, 3 and 11.
1209. *The Daily Gleaner*, 31 January 1981, n.p.
1210. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 April 1981, p. 15.
1211. Bob Marley was the sixth Jamaican to receive the Order of Merit, the third highest award on the island. Before him the Order had gone to such persons as Edna Manley, wife of Norman Manley and an outstanding artist,

- the social scientist Professor Michael G. Smith and social scientist/dancer/choreographer Rex Nettleford. Some critics maintained that the JLP government only awarded the Order of Merit to Marley to distract attention from the fact that PNP Governor-General Florizel Glasspole had been knighted by Queen Elizabeth.
1212. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 April 1981, pp. 1 and 14; 20 April 1981, p. 6 and 23 April 1981, pp. 1 and 10.
1213. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 April 1981, pp. 1 and 14.
1214. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 April 1981, p. 6.
1215. From a Rastafarian perspective it was somewhat ironic that two days after Bob Marley died, Pope John Paul II was shot and seriously injured by Mehmet Ali Agca, a member of the Turkish Grey Wolves. Since many Rastas considered the death of Marley to be Babylonian plot, the attack on the Pope was perceived as a case of the chickens coming home to roost. A few months later, CBS Television did a feature on the Rastafarian movement, with guests like Arthur Kitchin and Rex Nettleford. Apparently Kitchin told the host that the chief aim of the Rastafarian movement was to “kill the Pope,” which drew a furious reaction from a *Gleaner* correspondent (6 September 1981, n.p.).
1216. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 May 1981, p. 1.
1217. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 May 1981, p. 1.
1218. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 May 1981, p. 17.
1219. *Jamaica Daily News*, 24 May 1981, n.p.
1220. *Jamaica Daily News*, 12 May 1981, pp. 1, 6 and 7; 20 May 1981, p. 1; 21 May 1981, pp. 1, 3 and 6; 22 May 1981, pp. 3 and 6; 23 May 1981, p. 7; 24 May 1981, p. 6; 29 May 1981, p. 12 and 31 May 1981, p. 6.
1221. Timothy White, *Catch a fire: the life of Bob Marley* (London, Corgi Books, 1984), pp. 331-333.
1222. *Jamaica Daily News*, 27 May 1981, p. 7.
1223. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 June 1982, p. 8.
1224. *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 May 1983, pp. 1 and 11; 13 May 1983, p. 1. Later the sculptor Alvin Marriot was commissioned to make another statue of Bob Marley. The new statue had the approval of the Marley family and the general public and was placed in Celebrity Park, where it still stands today.
1225. Rex Nettleford, *Identity, race and protest in Jamaica* (New York, William Morrow, 1972), p. 94.
1226. M.G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, *The Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1960), p. 28.
1227. See, for instance: Michael Manley, *The politics of change* (Kingston, Heinemann, 1990).
1228. Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, p. 106.
1229. There are, of course, many other reasons for not wearing locks. Pressure from family members is probably one of the most frequently used explanations. One of my Rasta acquaintances, a receptionist, had grown her locks when she left home. After she broke up with her partner, she wanted to return home to live with her mother, who would only allow her to come home if she trimmed.
1230. Another of my Rastafarian acquaintances, a highly trained and dreadlocked social worker, was employed at one of the public hospitals in Jamaica. She had applied for positions at various private hospitals, which generally provide better working conditions and higher salaries, but was turned down each time because of her locks.
1231. The tribes did not exactly correspond with the months of the Georgian/Julian calendar, but with the lunar Hebrew calendar in which the first month of the year, known as *Nisan* or *Abib*, falls in what we know as March-April. The exact dates of the periods varied, depending on the new moon. The Twelve Tribes thus used a lunar calendar to determine the correct tribe (Frank Jan van Dijk, “The Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rasta and the middle class” *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 62, 1-2 (1988): 1-26, pp. 4-7).
1232. Faristzaddi, Millard and Iyawata Farika Birhan *et al.*, *Itations of Jamaica and I Rastafari* (New York, Rogner & Bernhard, 1982), n.p..
1233. Even within the Twelve Tribes itself there were mixed feelings about white membership. Several members denounced those who had married white European girls and some openly spoke about their distrust of two white female members, who had achieved a position of some prominence.
1234. *JAHUG* 2 (London, C. Gayle and Y. Gayle for Repatriation Productions, 1992), p. 57.
1235. Van Dijk, “The Twelve Tribes of Israel.”
1236. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 April 1988, p. 5.
1237. See: Brother Miguel (Michael Anthony Lorne), *Rastaman chant* (Kingston, African Children Unlimited, 1983). I was informed that in late 1991 Lorne was accused of having received a car, “knowing or having reasonable cause to believe it was stolen.” (*The Weekly Gleaner*, 17 March 1992, p. 24). The accusation was said to have sent a shockwave of disbelief through the Rastafarian movement.
1238. Leahcim Semaj, “Rastafari: from religion to social theory.” *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 22-31; “Race and identity and the children of the African diaspora: contributions of Rastafari.” *Caribe* 4, 4 (1980): 14-18; “Inside Rasta: the future of a religious movement.” *Caribbean Review* 14, 1 (1985): 8-11 and 37-38.
1239. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 May 1981, p. 8.
1240. In the 1982 population census some 18% was female, 43% of whom were under fifteen years of age (see Appendix III).
1241. Sheila Kitzinger, “Protest and mysticism: the Rastafari cult of Jamaica.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8, 2 (1969): 240-262, pp. 252-253. The reference to the all-female Rastafarian camp could be a reference to Local 41 of the Ethiopian World Federation, established during the mid-1950s and the only known all-female group in Jamaica.
1242. Maureen Rowe, “The woman in Rastafari.” In: Rex Nettleford (ed), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1985), pp. 13-21.
1243. Rowe, “The woman in Rastafari,” pp. 18-21.

1244. Rowe, "The woman in RastafarI," p. 19.
1245. JAHUG 1 (London, C. Gayle and Y. Gayle for Repatriation Productions, 1992), p. 30.
1246. DAWTAS, *Constitution of Dawtas United Working Towards Africa* (Kingston, n.d. [probably late 1970s]).
1247. Van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel," pp. 10-11.
1248. *Jamaica Daily News*, 23 March 1983, p. 5.
1249. *The Daily Gleaner*, 24 July 1986, p. 12.
1250. *The Daily Gleaner*, 7 March 1982, p. 7.
1251. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 March 1982, p. 10.
1252. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 July 1981, p. 10.
1253. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 August 1981, p. 8.
1254. *Jamaica Daily News*, 27 December 1981, p. 6.
1255. *Jamaica Daily News*, 27 December 1981, p. 6.
1256. George Beckford and Michael Witter, *Small garden ... bitter weed: the political economy of struggle and change in Jamaica* (Morant Bay, Maroon Publishers, 1980), p. 78.
1257. I. Jabulani Tafari, "The Rastafari: successors of Marcus Garvey." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 1-12.
1258. An account of these two spin-offs was previously published as: Frank Jan van Dijk, "From Ganja church to Rent-a-dread: spin-offs and the image of Rastafari." In: Geert Dewulf, Göran Kattenberg and Marianne de Laet (eds.), *Promotieonderzoek aan de Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen: constructie, interpretatie of causale verklaring?* (Utrecht, ISOR, 1992), pp. 161-178.
1259. Stevie Wonder and Bob Marley performed together at the National Arena in Kingston in October 1975. Wonder later dedicated his *Master Blaster* to the King of Reggae. Mick Jagger recorded the song (*You got to walk and don't look back* together with Peter Tosh).
1260. Although organized by private enterprise, Reggae Sunsplash is actively promoted by the Jamaica Tourist Board, which, in the face of increasing competition for the tourist dollar, is always eager to show that Jamaica is more than a beach.
1261. *The Star*, 23 November 1990, p. 33. The line is an adaptation from the original "Let's get together and feel alright."
1262. The film *Ten*, starring Bo Derek, was largely responsible for the introduction of a new sex symbol. Thin braids, with multi-colored pellets at the end, became the cultivated corollary of dreadlocks for women in the United States. In the markets of Jamaica's major tourist centers scores of women offer their braiding service for those with enough patience to remain seated for several hours while their coiffure was changed. Those without enough hair can acquire synthetic dreadlocks. The colors of the pellets used are, of course, red, gold and green.
1263. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 January 1988, p. 7.
1264. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 January 1988 and 20 January 1988, p. 7.
1265. *The Daily Gleaner*, 6 July 1981, n.p..
1266. Horace Campbell, *Rasta and resistance: from Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney* (London, Hansib, 1985), p. 115-117.
1267. One should not, of course, confuse the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church or Coptics with the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church or Judah Coptics or even Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert's Ethiopian Coptic Church. Both the "Ethiopian" and "Coptic" elements are misleading, since the EZCC had little or no room for either Ethiopianism or Coptic teachings.
1268. In 1969-1970 Rastafarians and hippies had a "hang-out" near Bethel Town in the parish of Westmoreland, where they were frequently subjected to police raids (*The Daily Gleaner*, 17 October 1969, p. 1). The *Gleaner* later complained about the negative impact of this kind of tourism. Though it seems not unlikely, it is a matter of speculation, whether any hippies were attracted to Jamaica because of Rastafari (25 January 1970, n.p.).
1269. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 April 1981, p. 8; 9 August 1981, p. 15 and 13 December 1981, n.p.. The structure of leadership in the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church was similar to that of many religious movements, for instance the Nation of Islam in the days when Elijah Muhammad, the actual leader, kept in the background, and Malcolm X, was the articulate spokesman always in the forefront.
1270. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 August 1981, p. 15.
1271. The incorporation of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church in April 1976 was rather ironic. The Rastafarians, represented by the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church and Haile Selassie I Theocracy Government, were refused incorporation in October 1987, because the Rastas used ganja in their worship. Two factors may have contributed to this strange situation. First of all, the EZCC most likely did not mention the use of ganja in its ritual. Secondly, the EZCC's involvement in ganja cultivation and trafficking was at that time not known, that is to say, at least not officially.
1272. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 April 1981, p. 8; 9 August 1981, p. 15 and 13 December 1981, n.p.
1273. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 August 1981, p. 15.
1274. Much later, an edited transcript of this program appeared in *The Daily Gleaner* (17 June 1981, p. 10). *Sixty Minutes*, broadcasted on 28 October 1979, gave a brief impression of the EZCC and its involvement in ganja trafficking. Brother Louv repeated his views on ganja and Zion Coptic religion, and an undercover agent of the Miami Beach police gave his views on the EZCC.
1275. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 May 1982, p. 1; 7 June 1982, p. 1 and 23 September 1982, p. 2.
1276. Some of my informants insisted that Nyah Gordon had died in Miami. Others, however, maintained that he was still alive and in Jamaica, illegally visiting the United States every now and then. Attempts to get into contact with the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church have been without success.
1277. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 August 1981, p. 1.
1278. *Jamaica Daily News*, 18 January 1980, p. 2.

1279. Praedial larceny (or theft of crops) in Jamaica is an age-old problem affecting farmers in Jamaica, the inability of the police to take effective measures is endemic and the frustration of farmers immense. Thieves caught in the act are usually killed on the spot.
1280. *Jamaica Daily News*, 19 January 1980, p. 2.
1281. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 February 1980, n.p.
1282. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 February 1981, p. 1. The use of a religious organization as a cover for illegal or dubious practices is, of course, neither new nor unique. In the late 1980s, for instance, the “Satanskerk” (Church of Satan) which ran a brothel, specializing in sadomasochistic sex with a religious (“black magic”) flavor, in the red-light district of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, made claims similar to those of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church. The Department of Finance had a hard time refuting their claims. One might equally refer to a number of modern American cults and sects, some less obscure than the above mentioned example.
1283. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 April 1981, p. 8 and 9.
1284. *The Daily Gleaner*, 30 May 1981, p. 1.
1285. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 June 1981, p. 6.
1286. To the best of my knowledge there have been three (former) Ministers in recent Jamaican history who have been found guilty of corruption. The most recent case that I am aware of is that of former JLP Minister J.A.G. Smith. In early 1990 he was sentenced to several years imprisonment for stealing thousands of dollars from the government. Evidence of corruption is scarce; (cocktail) talk about corruption abundant. Hardly a day goes by without one or more politicians being accused of corruption in the newspapers or on the popular radio “call-in” programmes. Many Jamaicans are convinced that many, if not all, politicians are corrupt.
1287. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 September 1986. When J.A.G. Smith was on trial and corruption was a hotly debated issue, several well-known attorneys in Jamaica insisted, during informal discussions, that former JLP Minister Pearnel Charles had acquired a suspiciously large and unaccounted for area of land in St. Thomas during his party’s reign. Some vowed to nail him down on the very first occasion. Since, as far as could be ascertained, nothing has happened so far, an accusation like this remains merely an example of the countless unsubstantiated rumors about political corruption.
1288. Dennis Forsythe, “West Indian culture through the prism of Rastafarianism.” *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 62-81, p. 71.
1289. It appears that the Coptics used rotating groups of Rastafarian workers to cultivate their crops. Information on the involvement of Rastas is, however, hard to come by because of the secretive nature of the Coptics’ business.
1290. *Jamaica Daily News*, 23 June 1976, p. 7.
1291. Catholic Commission for Racial Justice, *Rastafarians in Jamaica and England* (London, 1982).
1292. These *Notes and Reports* were published in October 1979, April 1980 and January 1983 respectively. In 1984, following some reorganizations, the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice was replaced by two other bodies, the Committee for Community Relations and the (independent and lay-led) Catholic Association for Racial Justice. *Letter* from Mrs. Nuala O’Hanrahan of the Committee for Community Relations of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales (17 July 1989). I am indebted to Mrs. O’Hanrahan for providing me with files and copies of newspaper clippings about the report of the CCRJ.
1293. Catholic Commission for Racial Justice, *Rastafarians in Jamaica and England*, p. 10.
1294. Catholic Commission for Racial Justice, *Rastafarians in Jamaica and England*, p. 11.
1295. Catholic Commission for Racial Justice, *Rastafarians in Jamaica and England*, p. 11.
1296. *Letter* from Richard Zipfel, 4 September 1989.
1297. *Interview* with Richard Zipfel, London, 4 October 1989.
1298. *Interview* with Richard Zipfel, London, 4 October 1989.
1299. *The Catholic Herald*, 22 January 1982. The report received wide publicity. It was extensively discussed in amongst others: *The Irish Times*, *The Morning Star*, *Daily Telegraph* (all 19 January 1982), *The Universe* (22 January 1982), *The Tablet* (23 and 30 January 1982), *West Indian World*, *Caribbean Times* and *The Times* (29 January 1982).
1300. It may be added that the report was written out of a firm belief in the ideal of a harmonious multiracial, multicultural society (*Interview* with Richard Zipfel, London, 4 October 1989). In such a view there was no place for supporting repatriation, even if that was the wish of many Rastafarians.
1301. *The Guardian*, 19 January 1982. However, according to the American newspaper *Bridgeport Post* (11 February 1982) the same Rastafari Universal Zion spokesman added: “The report is not too bad, actually. Rastafarians in Britain are being given a raw deal. But the report was only a brush-up of what we’ve been fighting for ages. It only realizes that Rasta is real. It could have been better.”
1302. *The Paddington Mercury*, 5 February 1982.
1303. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 February 1982, p. 1 (an article taken from *The Times*).
1304. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 February 1982, p. 2.
1305. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 February 1982, p. 8.
1306. *Jamaica Daily News*, 1 March 1982, p. 7.
1307. It should be noted that some 3,000 copies of the report were printed, most of which were distributed within the Roman Catholic Church in England. Although it was not widely available in Jamaica, the Rastafarian community had access to the report, for instance through contacts in England. Also, individual Jamaican Rastafarians obtained copies from the Commission’s office in London (*Interview* with Richard Zipfel, London, 4 October 1989). I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Zipfel for providing me with information about the report of the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice.
1308. Farika Birhan, “Iyaric glossary.” In: Millard Faristzaddi and Iyawata Farika Birhan *et al.*, *Itations of Jamaica and I Rastafari* (New York, Rogner & Bernhard, 1982), n.p. For a more detailed discussion of the Rastafarians’

- view of the Catholic Church see, for instance, Joseph Owens, *Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (Kingston, Sangster, 1976). The basic idea is that it was the Romans who crucified Christ and the Italians who later made several attempts to conquer Ethiopia. In the relatively mild words of the CCRJ: the Roman Catholic Church is for the Rastas “the epitome of a colonising white Church.” In reality this abhorrence is much stronger. In certain sections of the Rastafarian movement anti-Catholic cartoon magazines published by fundamentalist protestant sects in the United States are rather popular. Most of these depict Catholic priests as (neo-)Nazi’s or fascists, members of Schutzstaffel or Ku Klux Klan-like organizations, perverted homosexuals or sexually deranged murders, genocidal Inquisitors or KGB-killers.
1309. *Jamaica Daily New*, 22 August 1982, pp. 6 and 27.
1310. *Interview* with Reverend Bevis Byfield, Kingston, 9 November 1990.
1311. *Interview* with Reverend Bevis Byfield, Kingston, 9 November 1990. Also see: Bevis B. Byfield, “Transformations and the Jamaican society.” *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* 5 (1983): 29-38.
1312. *Interview* with Reverend Ashley Smith, Kingston, 23 April 1990.
1313. *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 June 1989, n.p.
1314. *Rastafari Speaks*, 11 (Port of Spain, Rastafari Brethren Organization, 1983), p. 11.
1315. *The Compulsory Education Program* was intended to do something about the low attendance rates. The first phase was an experiment in the parishes of St. Thomas and Trelawny for children in primary institutions. Parents were obliged to send their children to school between the ages of six and twelve (*The Daily Gleaner*, 6 September 1982). In 1990 the program was effective in eight out of fourteen parishes.
1316. *Jamaica Daily News*, 15 September 1982, p. 3 and *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 September 1982, p. 6.
1317. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 September 1982, p. 6.
1318. Ministry of Education, *Guidelines for code of conduct and admission of all students in schools and students’ code of conduct* (Kingston, 1978) [circular 33/78; file no. G109/06]. In an interview (4 July 1990) with the present writer, a senior official of the Ministry of Education (the head of the Secondary Unit) admitted that the guidelines were “deliberately vague.” He explained that schools in Jamaica have a history of autonomy and that the power of the Ministry is therefore limited, even though *The Compulsory Education Program* was effective in eight of the fourteen parishes on the island at the time. As an example of the deliberate vagueness he pointed out that nowhere in the text was the word “combed” used, since Rastafarians do not comb their hair. However, the whole text is littered with the word “groomed.”
1319. Ministry of Education, *Guidelines for code of conduct and admission of all students in schools and students’ code of conduct* (Kingston, 1978) [circular 33/78; file no. G109/06], p. 3.
1320. Orel Buckley was admitted by the Principal of the school on condition that he wear a tam during school hours.
1321. *The Daily Gleaner*, 3 January 1983, p. 6.
1322. *The Daily Gleaner*, 9 October 1984, p. 19.
1323. Quoted in *The Daily Gleaner*, 12 October 1984, p. 1. It is unclear whether the Full Court later made a ruling on this. At Camperdown High School I was told that no decision had been made, but Michael Lorne told me that the matter was closed and that a definite ruling had been made forbidding schools to bar Rastafarian students.
1324. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 October 1984, p. 3.
1325. The survey, carried out by this writer, during October and November 1990 included public and private, primary and secondary schools, in Kingston and in the rural areas. All well-known institutions were included.
1326. Both Tivoli Gardens Comprehensive High School, which had accepted a dreadlocked student in 1982 after the intervention of Prime Minister Seaga, and Jamaica House Basic School, which did the same in 1975 after the intervention of Beverly Manley, said they did not allow dreadlocks. Camperdown also refuses to accept dreadlocked students, although Kirk Johnson was still attending. Among the schools refusing dreadlocked students were all the private institutions included in the survey, and a number of government-aided schools.
1327. Some schools required that the students (and parents) should be “genuine Rastafarians.” Several principals specifically demanded that the hair should be kept clean. Others stated they could only accept dreadlocked students who had obtained a place through the Common Entrance Examinations. Dreadlocked students transferring from other High Schools or students who start to grow their hair while already at school are treated differently. Only three principals said that their acceptance of dreadlocked students was unconditional and that wearing locks could never be a reason to deny a child his right to education. All schools allowing dreadlocks were government-run or government-aided schools. Not all of them, however, had dreadlocked students enrolled at the time of the survey.
1328. Rasta Movement Association, *Rasta Voice Magazine* 91 (Kingston, Spring 1983), p. 15. The Rasta Movement Association is one of the Rastafarian organizations which has continuously stressed the importance of education and has developed a *Readings in history and culture of Rastafari* (Kingston, 1978) to be used in secondary schools.
1329. Cypress, “Conversations with three Jamaican women,” *Sage: a scholarly journal on black women* 5, 1 (1988): 57-65, p. 64.
1330. Information provided by Michael Anthony Lorne.
1331. *The Weekly Gleaner*, 30 April 1991, p. 22.
1332. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church also has a small school, which is of course not Rastafarian but may have quite a few Rasta students. And in their Bull Bay commune the Bobo Dreads of Prince Emmanuel also run a small school, where teaching is said to be done on the basis of questions asked by the children. In December 1990 Rita Marley, the widow of the King of Reggae, and several elders of the movement had a meeting with the Mayor of Kingston, Marie Atkins, about their plans to establish a Rastafarian school. The delegation had already identified a piece of land, next to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on Maxfield Avenue. Apart from a school, “for Rasta children or any other children who cannot afford a \$1,000 fee at the Prep schools,” the group

- also planned to build administrative offices “as a meeting point for Rastafari Internationally.” (*Boulevard News*, 10-19 December 1990, p. 1). It is unknown, however, whether these plans have been realized as yet.
1333. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 July 1983, p. 16
1334. *Rastafari Speaks*, p. 22.
1335. Carolyn Cooper, “Erotic play in the dancehall: Slackness hiding from culture.” *Jamaica Journal* 22, 4 (1990): 12-20.
1336. Cooper, “Erotic play in the dancehall,” p. 14.
1337. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 December 1990, p. 1.
1338. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 January 1991, p. 7.
1339. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 December 1990, p. 6.
1340. One might argue that there was an almost world-wide change in the social and cultural climate during the 1980s, perhaps partly due to the global economic recession. In quite a few countries, socialist or social democratic experiments had failed and progressive governments were ousted by more conservative parties. The United States and Britain, the two Western countries with which Jamaica maintained the closest links, were led respectively by the Republican Ronald Reagan and the Conservatives Margaret Thatcher administrations.
1341. *The Daily Gleaner*, 28 October 1984, p. 37.
1342. Anthony Payne, *Politics in Jamaica* (London, Hurst and Co., 1988), p. 87. In April 1982 Ronald Reagan visited Jamaica. The Nyabinghi Order organized a grounation at Ras Daniel’s headquarters in Trelawny. “The Nyabinghi was set as a Death Trap for Raygun,” whom the Rastafarians considered to be a puppet of Babylon. While, “the U.S., itself a former colony of Great Britain, has superseded England as the economic and military leader of the West,” the Rastafarians maintained that “the President pays obeisance to the Queen as his spiritual mother.” (*JAHUG* 2 (London, C. Gayle and Y. Gayle for Repatriation Productions, 1992), p. 13.
1343. Official unemployment rates were nevertheless to fall from 26.8% in 1980 to 18% in 1989, and there was a marginal growth of the Gross Domestic Product, which in 1986 was to reach the level of 1969 again.
1344. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*, pp. 83-102; Carl Stone, “Seaga is in trouble: polling the Jamaican polity in mid-term. *Caribbean Review*, 11, 4 (1982): 5-7 and 28-29.
1345. Waters, *Race, class and political symbols*, pp. 248-289; Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*, pp. 83-102.
1346. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 December 1987, n.p.
1347. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 December 1987, p. 7.
1348. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 December 1987, p. 7.
1349. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 January 1988, p. 7.
1350. Interview with Michael Anthony Lorne, Kingston, 16 November 1990.
1351. The retreat of Rastafarians to the rural areas had been going on for a long time. Many not only preferred life as independent and self-sufficient farmers, but also hoped to avoid the continuous persecution by the police in Kingston and other urban centers. Several informants noted that this development had gained momentum during the 1980s.
1352. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 April 1983.
1353. *The Daily Gleaner*, 22 August 1987, p. 9.
1354. The survey was carried out in November 1990 and included large and well-known Jamaican companies, most of them located in Kingston, including several banks and financial institutions, food factories, breweries, hotels, manufacturers, supermarkets, along with a (partly) government-owned airline and telephone company. Attempts to get similar information from government institutions (including several Ministries, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (police) and the Jamaica Defence Force (army)) were completely without result. All information officers declined to provide information.
1355. Interview with Michael Anthony Lorne, Kingston, 16 November 1990.
1356. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 November 1982, p. 8.
1357. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 May 1987, p. 9. Of course, Lee repeated the IEWF’s position that all Rastas “should now assimilate under one heading, the Imperial Ethiopian World Federation Inc.” It was precisely these claims of exclusive leadership that the Rastafarians resented.
1358. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 August 1987, p. 7. The idea that repatriation will occur around the year 2000 has gained currency among Rastafarians; as no doubt many other religious groups are also expecting deliverance then. The idea is based on the interpretation that it will be 2,000 years since Christ, 4,000 since Abraham and 6,000 since Adam. In 2 Peter 3: 8 it is written that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” After 6,000 years the world will enter a sabbath of a thousand years, in other words the millennium.
1359. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 June 1987, n.p.
1360. *The Daily Gleaner*, 14 December 1986, p. 8.
1361. *The Daily Gleaner*, 20 September 1986, p. 1.
1362. *The Daily Gleaner*, 11 March 1987, pp. 2-3.
1363. *The Daily Gleaner*, 17 December 1987, p. 7.
1364. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 October 1987, p. 1.
1365. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 October 1987, p. 1.
1366. *The Daily Gleaner*, 4 November 1987, n.p.
1367. What was even more paradoxical, but had probably been forgotten, was that about ten years earlier, Parliament had incorporated the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church, whose leadership was later convicted of smuggling shiploads of ganja to the United States.
1368. *The Daily Gleaner*, 10 November 1987, p. 6. The African President in question was Dr. Quett Masire of

- Botswana.
1369. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 November 1987, p. 9.
1370. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 November 1987.
1371. *The Daily Gleaner*, 31 January 1988, n.p.
1372. *The Daily Gleaner*, 27 November 1987, p. 8.
1373. *De Volkskrant*, 14 September 1987, p. 7. See White, *Catch a fire* (1989), pp. 357-365. Tosh' murderer, Dennis Loban, was later caught and sentenced to death. In April another former Wailer, drummer Carlton Barrett, was also shot and killed in Kingston.
1374. *The Daily Gleaner*, 2 March 1990, p. 2. Others were more fortunate. A Rastafarian driving through Kingston on 29 March 1990 was stopped by two teenagers, who asked for a ride. Once in the car, one of them drew a gun, put it to the Rasta's head and demanded money. The Rastafarian immediately told them to take his money and the car as well, but before he could take out his money, the teenager pulled the trigger. The bullet entered the left cheek and exited through the right eye. The Rasta somehow managed to reach the police station, where the policemen thought it necessary to interrogate him before he was finally taken to the hospital. Against all odds, he survived (*The Daily Gleaner*, 8 April 1990, p. 2).
1375. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 February 1990, p. 14. As usual, the police officer claimed that he had been attacked by the accused with a machete. The Rasta admitted that he had a machete, but denied to have assaulted the policemen.
1376. Flo O'Connor, director of the Jamaica Council for Human Rights, claimed that she still heard of cases in which Rastafarians were forcibly trimmed. However, she had no reason to assume that during the late 1980s Rastas were more often subject to police brutality than other groups in the slum areas of Kingston, though she also noted that it was something that was difficult to quantify. Rastafarians came to the offices of the JCHR and related incidents of brutality, but hardly ever wanted to press charges (*Interview* with Flo O'Connor, Kingston, 30 May 1990). Confronted with O'Connor's opinion, Michael Anthony Lorne, whose offices are a stone's throw from the JCHR, claimed that the reason the Council did not hear about police brutality against Rastas was simply that the victims did not go there (*Interview* with Michael Anthony Lorne, Kingston, 16 November 1990).
1377. Lieutenant Stitchie, *Natty Dread* (Kingston, Stereo One/Sonic Sound, 1987).
1378. *The Daily Gleaner*, 1 February 1988, p. 6.
1379. *The Daily Gleaner*, 18 May 1988. A student from the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST) defended "the controversial Natty Dread," which in his opinion had clearly distinguished between a Natty Dread and a Rastaman, and expressed his amazement that it was the Rastafarians and not the police who had protested (*The Daily Gleaner*, 9 February 1988, p. 7).
1380. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 June 1988, p. 2.
1381. Jah Ras Tafari Royal Ethiopian Judah-Coptic Church and Haila Sillase I Theocracy Government, *Rastafari Manifesto: The Ethiopian-African Theocracy Union Policy (EATUP) and True Genuine Authentic Fundamental Indigenous Original Comprehensive Alternative Policy (FIOCAP)* (Kingston, n.d. [probably 1986]). Hereafter to be referred to as *Rastafari Manifesto*. Although I doubt whether *Rastafari Manifesto* was widely available, I obtained a copy at Sangster's Bookstore at Liguanea in the latter part of 1986, and also came across copies at a Sangster's branch downtown.
1382. *Rastafari Manifesto*, n.p.
1383. The proposed system of electoral representation was a rather complex one. For those interested in the details, it would be - if this writer has understood and distilled it all correctly - as follows: Each of the fourteen parishes would be divided into five constituencies, resulting in a total of 70 constituencies. At the local (constituency) level the people would nominate and ratify one Council for the Regional Executive Constituency (REC). Five REC Councils from one parish would make up one of the fourteen Parliamentary Regional Executive Parish Councils (PREP). Together these 70 PREP Councils from fourteen parishes would form the National Ombudsman Parliamentary Opposition (NOPO). To make the matter even more complicated: the heads of the fourteen PREP's would form the Parliamentary Regional Constituency Cabinet (PRCC), which would act as something like an executive board of the NOPO. These fourteen PRCC Councils, however, would, somewhat paradoxically, also automatically be members of the Elected House of Representatives (EHR), which would have 70 members. The 56 remaining seats in the EHR would be divided by "electoral ratification." These 56 elected members of the EHR would appoint a Head of State, who would nominate a Ministerial Cabinet of eighteen members (including the Head of State itself). No more than seven of the Cabinet members (i.e. Ministers) could be "directed" by the EHR and no more than four Ministers could be "directed" by the fourteen members of the PRCC, also members of the EHR. Finally, next to the EHR there would be a Nominated House of Representatives (NHR) of 21 members. Fourteen of them would be appointed by the Head of State in consultation with the 56 elected members of the EHR and seven of them would be appointed by the fourteen members of the PRCC, also members of the EHR, in consultation with the NOPO.
1384. *Rastafari Manifesto* proposed to establish the following National Ministries: Agriculture; Construction; Education; Finance and Planning; Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade; Health; Industry and Commerce; Labour, Human Resources and National Skill Bank; Local Government and Regional Affairs; Mining and Energy; Security and Justice; Public Service; Public Utilities and Transport; Social Security; Tourism; Youth and Community Development; and, finally, the Office of the (Executive) Head of State.
1385. *Jamaica Record*, 18 February 1990, p. 3.
1386. *The Weekly Gleaner*, 12 July 1988.
1387. Davies and Witter, "The development of the Jamaican economy," p. 96.
1388. Payne, *Politics in Jamaica*, pp. 83-130.

1389. *The Daily Gleaner*, 29 June 1988, p. 2.
1390. Clarence G. Stone (Campaign Manager of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church), *Letter to Noel Lee, Director of the Electoral Office* (Kingston, 28 March 1988). I am grateful to Mr. Lee for providing me with copies from the relevant files.
1391. Noel Lee (Director of the Electoral Office), *Letter to Clarence G. Stone, Campaign Manager of the Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church* (Kingston, 6 April 1988).
1392. *Interview* with Noel Lee, Kingston, 7 June 1990.
1393. The regulations concerning nomination for elections in Jamaica are that anyone eligible to vote and enumerated can contest a seat in the House of Representatives. The Electoral Office announces nomination day and the regulations, including the addresses of the nomination centers, a few days before through advertisements in the newspapers, on radio and television and on posters at the post offices. Between the announcement and nomination day candidates are required to make a written application for use of one of the twelve election symbols.
1394. Electoral Office, *Nomination Paper* (Form 4 as described in *The Representation of the People Act* section 23(2)) (Kingston, n.d.).
1395. *Jamaica Record*, 28 January 1989, p. 4.
1396. In the newspaper reports on the nomination of Abuna Whyte no mention is made of the ACP (*The Daily Gleaner*, 17 February 1990, p. 1 and *Jamaica Record*, 18 February 1990, p. 3.)
1397. There were conflicting statements about the number of persons who had declared their support for the nomination of Whyte. *The Daily Gleaner* (16 February 1990, p. 1), relating the Returning Officer's story, claimed that of the ten persons on Whyte's list, two were not on the voters' list. *Jamaica Record* (18 February 1990, p. 3), relating Whyte's side of the incident, stated that two of the six on the voters' list could not be found.
1398. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 February 1990, p. 1.
1399. *Jamaica Record*, 18 February 1990, p. 3.
1400. For the most extensive description of the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress Church of Salvation see the M.A. thesis of Harold van de Laar, *Echo's uit Babylon een Rasta kerk in Jamaica* (Tilburg, Theologische Faculteit, Universiteit van Brabant, 1988), unfortunately only available in Dutch. For a less comprehensive and somewhat outdated account see Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, pp. 181-185. Whether or not the rumor about ex-convicts has any substance is unknown, but when this writer visited the camp in 1987 there were virtually no older members, which at least indicated a high turn-over rate, if we may assume that it is not only the young who live in the camp.
1401. Van de Laar, *Echo's uit Babylon*.
1402. The fact that Prince, by then almost 80 years old, did not appear in public gave rise to rumors that he was either seriously ill, senile or even dead. Yet, in the Bobo camp all decisions seemed to be made by Prince. Whenever priests or prophets were to decide about something, even of seemingly minor importance, they retreated "to ask Prince." It may be assumed that the Bobo Dreads would not be able to keep his death secret for long, since the Congress Church has a lot of defectors and quite a few members living outside the camp.
1403. The Bobo Dreads regard the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin Dada to be the reincarnation of Marcus Garvey. Both were stocky and had a chubby face, in which, with a little goodwill, certain similarities can be detected.
1404. *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 July 1988, p. 3.
1405. *The Weekly Gleaner*, 12 September 1989, p. 1.
1406. *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 September 1988, p. 9.
1407. *Jamaica Record*, 4 October 1988, p. 4 and 6 October 1988, p. 2.
1408. *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 December 1989.
1409. *The Weekly Gleaner*, 19 February 1991, p. 14.
1410. *Interview* with Trevor Munroe, Kingston, 3 December 1990.
1411. Van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel."
1412. *The Daily Gleaner*, 25 June 1989, p. 6 (article by Corienne Barnes).
1413. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 January 1988, p. 16.
1414. The only thing the Abuna has not done, I was told, is to give the main address at a meeting of the Jamaica Council of Churches, but this is probably only because his English is not sufficiently fluent to do so. Other officials of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are said to have not yet reached the level where they could be expected to give the address. Members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church participated in all the ecumenical activities of the collective churches, while some of its members were registered as students at Kingston's United Theological College.
1415. Together with the damage at the other branches on the island, the costs were estimated at over J\$ 400,000. (*The Daily Gleaner*, 17 October 1988).
1416. If official Jamaican statistics have to be treated with care, Jamaican church statistics are to be treated with utmost care. The various churches and denominations have different ways of counting their membership. Some include all baptized members, whether actively involved in the church or not. Others only include their active membership. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, according to Reverend Ashley Smith, former President of the Jamaica Council of Churches, falls within the first category (*Interview* with Ashley Smith, Kingston, 23 April 1990).
1417. *Interview* with Michael Anthony Lorne, Kingston, 16 november 1990.
1418. In August 1987, the centennial of Marcus Garvey's birth, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church announced that from then on Garvey's name would be mentioned in every one of its services throughout the western hemisphere (*The Daily Gleaner*, 18 August 1987).
1419. *Boulevard News*, 15-28 November 1990, p. 1. In England Rastafarian inmates have been allowed to keep

- their locks since 1981. In 1988 or 1989 the British courts made another important decision in favor of the Rastafarians. Trevor Dawkins, a Rastafarian from London, whose application for a job as driver with the government had been turned down because of his dreadlocks, had successfully brought his case before the British Industrial Tribunal. After ten weeks of deliberations, the Tribunal decided that Rastafarians should be acknowledged as a “protected ethnic group” under *The Race Relations Act 1976*. Ernest Cashmore, author of *Rastaman*, gave evidence of the religious significance of dreadlocks. Following the ruling, Rastafarians had achieved a constitutional status comparable with, for instance, Sikhs and could no longer be barred or fired from any kind job because of their hairstyle (Undated newspaper report from unknown source, obtained from a private collection of clippings).
1420. *Jamaica Record*, 26 July 1989, p. 7; 29 July 1989, p. 7; 2 August 1989, p. 7; 5 August 1989, p. 7; 9 August 1989, p. 7; 12 August 1989, p. 7; 2 September 1989, p. 7. For the reply of Leahcim Semaj see: *Jamaica Record*, 4 August 1989.
1421. Clinton Chisholm, *Emperor Haile Selassie, God or Godfearer? Rastafarianism evaluated* (Spanish Town, 1990) Tape recording. The cassette “provides information that refutes the notions that Selassie had links with Solomon and unique names and titles that certify that he is God. Ethiopia is also put in historical perspective.” The author has written his articles and produced his cassette because “nobody stopped to question [Rastafarian claims for Haile Selassie’s divinity]. It was just the thing that you ought to believe. It is fact that we need to know the truth, if it isn’t we need to know the truth as well.” (*Interview* with Clinton Chisholm, Spanish Town, 22 May 1990).
1422. *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 February 1990, p. 7; 28 February 1990, p. 7; 7 April 1990, p. 7 and 14 May 1990, p. 7.
1423. *The Daily Gleaner*, 16 April 1988, p. 1; 18 April 1988, pp. 1-2. Somewhat disappointed the reporter had to admit that “up to press time last night, her relationship to Queen Elizabeth II could not be authenticated.” Nevertheless, the reporter was able to state that “it is unbelievable to many that a Jamaican commoner and a cousin of The Queen, or to some, Royalty and Rastafarian, could ever unite in solemn matrimony.” It seems that the family ties between the British (and Jamaican) Head of State and the happy bride were not very close. In any case, when a detailed report of the fairy tale, including five large photographs of the bride and groom, found its way into *The Daily Gleaner* two days later, there was no further explanation of the royal genealogy. However, in an effort to compensate for the lack of drama, the *Gleaner* reporter wrote: “The hour late arrival of the bride fuelled speculations that her relatives had succeeded in canceling the event ...” A brother of the bride assured the reporter that no attempts to bribe the groom had been made and, despite the delay, the wedding was completed.
1424. *The Daily Gleaner*, 21 May 1990, p. 6.
1425. *The Weekly Gleaner*, 8 August 1989, p. 13.

Notes Chapter 7. Wait I and I must

1426. Carole Yawney, *Lions in Babylon: the Rastafarians of Jamaica as a visionary movement* (Montreal, Department of Anthropology, McGill University, 1978), p. 1.
1427. Barry Chevannes, “Rastafari: towards a new approach.” *Nieuwe West Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 64, 3-4 (1990): 127-148. Another case for Rastafari’s “African connection” has been made by Maureen Warner-Lewis in an, at the time of writing, unpublished article.
1428. Anthony F.C. Wallace, “Revitalization movements,” *American Anthropologist* 58, 1 (1956): 264-281, pp. 268-275.
1429. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, *Reader in comparative religion: an anthropological approach* (New York, Harper and Row, 1979), p. 414..
1430. Monica Schuler, *Alas, alas, Kongo: a social history of indentured African immigration into Jamaica, 1841-1865* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 94.
1431. It is interesting to note that, according to Schuler (*Alas, alas, Kongo*), the presence of these indentured laborers was strongest in St. Thomas, the parish where Rastafari in its initial stages was best represented and most influential.
1432. It may be recalled that Leonard Howell did not arrive back in Jamaica not until November 1932 and began to preach the advent of the Ethiopian Messiah immediately, while Robert Hinds apparently heard about Haile Selassie from a man from Cuba. As William Scott related, in Harlem, New York City, quite a number of “ardent nationalists and strict fundamentalists ... saw in Haile Selassie a singularly powerful black man who possessed the capacity of restoring to the black race its lost rights and dignity. ... [I]n the early years of the depression Emperor Haile Selassie was looked upon by an increasing number of Afro-Americans as the “Black Messiah.” Nevertheless, it was only in Jamaica that this idea gained a foothold and manifested itself in a coherent system of beliefs. (*Going to the Promised Land: Afro-American immigrants in Ethiopia, 1930-1935* (Denver, 1971). Paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association.
1433. George Shepperson “Ethiopianism: past and present” In: C.G. Baëta (ed), *Christianity in tropical Africa* (London, Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 149-264. It should immediately be added that there is only limited knowledge about the currency of these ideas in other parts of the New World and Africa.
1434. André Köbben, *Van primitieven tot medeburgers* (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1971), pp. 94-154, pp. 101-102.
1435. “Coincidental” here is perhaps a little unfortunate, since the social recognition of “prophetic gifts” is itself, of course, born out of and conditioned by cultural factors.
1436. See: Chevannes, “Rastafari: towards a new approach.”
1437. See: George E. Simpson, *Religious cults in the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica and Haiti* (Rio Piedras, Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico, 1970); *Black religions in the New World* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1978); Mervyn Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture* (London, Pluto Press, 1988).

1438. Leonard Barrett, *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977 (revised edition 1988), p. xxiii.
1439. Robert A. Hill, "Leonard P. Howell and millenarian visions in early Rastafari." *Jamaica Journal* 16, 1 (1983): 24-39, p. 38.
1440. Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach."
1441. Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach," pp. 139-142.
1442. Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach," pp. 36 and 43. What exactly is meant by Rastafari being the "fulfillment" of Revival, the author does not explain.
1443. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture*, p. 103.
1444. M.G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, *The Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1960).
1445. Barry Chevannes, *Social origins of the Rastafari movement* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies, 1978), p. 159. Although it has been almost generally assumed that the dreadlocks emerged during the 1950s, there is reason to believe that it was not until the 1960s that they actually became the norm among the younger and radical generation of Rastafarians. See: John P. Homiak, "Dub history: soundings on Rastafari livity and language." In: Barry Chevannes (ed.), *Rastafari and other African-Caribbean worldviews* (New York, MacMillan, 1993). [forthcoming].
1446. Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: inventing traditions." In: Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-14, p. 1.
1447. Joseph Owens, *Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (Kingston, Sangster, 1976), pp. 158-159.
1448. Owens, *Dread*, p. 167.
1449. See: Vera Rubin and Lambros Comitas (eds.), *Ganja in Jamaica: a medical anthropological study of chronic marihuana use* (The Hague, Mouton, 1975); Melanie Creagan Dreher, *Working men and ganja: marihuana use in rural Jamaica* (Philadelphia, Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982); Ajai Mansingh and Laxmi Mansingh, "Hindu influences on Rastafarianism." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari* (Kingston, Extra-Mural Department, University of the West Indies, 1985), pp. 96-115.
1450. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture*, p. 104; Kenneth M. Bilby, "The holy herb: notes on the background of cannabis in Jamaica." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari*. (Kingston, Extra-Mural Department, University of the West Indies, 1985), pp. 82-95, pp. 82 and 84
1451. Bilby, "The holy herb," p. 90
1452. I am, of course, aware that due to its colonial history evidence for the continuity of African religious traditions in Jamaica are extremely hard to document. I am also aware that the argument forwarded here may be easily dismissed as typical for a white European writer. It after all touches upon a sensitive point from a black Jamaican point of view. The central elements in Rastafari, however, can convincingly be linked to what has been called the Judaeo-Christian tradition of Ethiopianism. While Rastafari was in many different ways strongly influenced by Jamaican folk religion as well (and as such, like almost everything Caribbean, it may be said to be African), claims for direct continuities with African religious traditions have simply not been demonstrated as yet. Moreover, if such continuities can be demonstrated, it will most likely be for elements auxiliary to Rastafari.
1453. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican culture*, p. 103.
1454. Ajai and Laxmi Mansingh, "Hindu influences on Rastafarianism." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari* (Kingston, Extra-Mural Department, University of the West Indies, 1985), pp. 96-115.
1455. Chevannes on some points does essentially the same, as we shall see further on, by arguing that Rastafari is not a repatriation movement.
1456. Mansingh and Mansingh, "Hindu influences on Rastafarianism," p. 111 [emphasis mine].
1457. Garvey's attacks on the Emperor came at a time when the President of the UNIA lived in voluntary exile in London and were made mainly in articles in his periodical *The Black Man*. Barry Chevannes, "Garvey myths among the Jamaican people." In: Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (eds.), *Garvey: his work and impact* (Kingston, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1988), pp. 123-131.
1458. Mansingh and Mansingh, "Hindu influences on Rastafarianism," p. 111.
1459. Mansingh and Mansingh, "Hindu influences on Rastafarianism," p. 106.
1460. Though we may certainly not rule out the possibility of Hibbert, known for his occult interests, having been inspired by Hindu religious ideas, one may wonder where this leaves his preoccupation with the Ethiopian orthodox (or Coptic) teachings in particular and the Rastafarians' preoccupation with the Bible in general.
1461. Wallace, "Revitalization movements," p. 266.
1462. Wallace, "Revitalization movements," p. 270.
1463. Hibbert's attitude towards Abba Mandefro of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as described in chapter 4, seems to confirm this. Hibbert claimed that Selassie had sent him a priest to work under his guidance and directions.
1464. As noted before, an analytical distinction should be made between the role of the prophet, as the mediator between the human and the divine, and the messiah, as (the manifestation of) the divine savior.
1465. Worsley, *The trumpet shall sound*, p. 241.
1466. Although detailed information is not available, the very establishment of the Twelve Tribes may have been a result of tensions between lower-class and middle-class Rastafarians. The Twelve Tribes, by the way, also provide an example of the way in which a "fondness of ranks and offices," in the form of membership of the executive board, may have contributed to tensions. As described in chapter 6, the Twelve Tribes' activities during the late 1980s were almost completely paralyzed because of internal conflicts between senior members of the board and younger adherents, who felt that they, too, should have the right to occupy seats on the

- executive board. Several decades earlier, the many different Locals of the Ethiopian World Federation provided another example. Hibbert and Dunkley, for instance, withdrew from Local 17 when it became clear that their ranks in the organization would be no higher than one of the several Vice-Presidents.
1467. With personal leadership here is meant a form of leadership which is strongly dependent on (the social recognition of) personal qualities, virtues or characteristics, which are regarded as intrinsic capacities and not believed to stem from a special relation with the divine. As noted before, our information does not enable us to determine the precise character of leadership in some of the early groups.
1468. Wallace, "Revitalization movements," p. 274.
1469. Rastafarians often refer to the "betrayal" of the Maroons by their leader Cudjoe, who signed a peace treaty with the British in 1738.
1470. Stephen Glazier, "Prophecy and ecstasy: religion and politics in the Caribbean." In: Jeffrey K. Hadden and Anson Schupe (eds.), *Prophetic religions and politics: religion and the political order* (New York, Paragon House, 1986), pp. 430-447.
1471. Laënnec Hurbon, "New religious movements in the Caribbean." In: James A. Beckford (ed.), *New religious movements and rapid social change* (Paris, Sage Publications, 1986), pp. 146-176, p. 162; Asmarom Legesse, "Prophetism and social change" In: Walter E.A. van Beek *et al.* (ed.), *African religions: experience and expression* (Michigan, Curry and Heinemann [forthcoming]), p. 337. [emphasis mine].
1472. Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the people without history* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982), p. 4.
1473. Between 1979 and 1984 alone the Jamaican police was responsible for a registered 1,309 deaths of civilians, an average of 213 per year. During the same period there were 117 recorded cases of policemen wounding civilians, which indicates a preference for shoot-to-kill. The allegations for the 322 cases of fatal shootings by the police in 1981 were: victim engaged police in a shootout (156); no allegation (48); victim attacked police with a machete, knife, etc. (47); victim was engaged in a robbery (25); accidental shooting (20); victim was in possession of a firearm (7); victim was an escaped prisoner or wanted by the police (6); other allegations (6) and victim tried to disarm a policeman (4). These were only the recorded cases. *The Daily Gleaner* once estimated that about 10% of such incidents remain unknown (Data from *JCHR Speaks*, January 1982). The number of cases of molestation, arbitrary arrest and detention, harassment and other violations of civil and human rights are unknown, but likely to be a matter of thousands rather than hundreds each year.
1474. Wallace, "Revitalization movements," p. 279.
1475. Colin Prescod, "The people's cause in the Caribbean." *Race and Class* 17, 1 (1975): 71-75, p. 72.
1476. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 19.
1477. Kenneth Blackburne (Governor of Jamaica), *Confidential despatch 637 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lemox-Boyd* (Kingston, 10 June 1959, Public Record Office CO 1031/2768).
1478. Anita M. Waters, *Race, class and political symbols: Rastafari and reggae in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Books, 1985), p. 106.
1479. Timothy White, *Catch a fire: the life of Bob Marley* (New York, Henry Holt, 1989), p. 318.
1480. Failures of prophecy may also lead to reaffirmation in the faith and increased proselyting, as Festinger *et al.* have shown (See: Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken and Stanley Schachter, *When prophecy fails: a social and psychological study of a modern group that predicted the destruction of the world* (New York, Harper & Row, 1964). Also see: Joseph F. Zygmunt, "When prophecies fail: a theoretical perspective on the comparative evidence." *American Behavioral Scientist* 16, 2 (1972): 245-268.
1481. Yonina Talmon, "Millenarian movements." *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 7, 2 (1966): 159-200.
1482. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 1.
1483. Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach."
1484. Ken Post, *Arise ye starvelings: the Jamaican labour rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), pp. 165.
1485. I hope to elaborate on this debate elsewhere.
1486. Chevannes apparently views a millenarian and a political movement as essentially the same, and as opposed to a cultural or world-view movement. As already outlined, there is, however, a fundamental difference between the two extremes of a "purely" millenarian and "purely" political movement, which basically results from the degree to which the adherents rely on their own action or the intervention of the divine in making "the revolution."
1487. Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach," p. 136.
1488. Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach," p. 143.
1489. Wallace, "Revitalization movements," p. 277.
1490. Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels; Worsley, The trumpet shall sound.*
1491. Owens, *Dread*, pp. 238-239.
1492. Ernst Troeltsch, *The social teaching of the Christian church* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1931). Such tendencies may be observed in other Rastafarian groups as well, for instance, the Twelve Tribes (see: Frank Jan van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rasta and the middle class." *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West Indische Gids* 62, 1-2 (1988): 1-26.
1493. The difference between the Twelve Tribes and the Bobo Dreads has remained that the former expect nothing at all of the Jamaican government, the British Crown or the United Nations, while Prince has continuously bombarded these "institutions" with petitions for a free return. The difference between the Judah Coptics and the Bobo Dreads, on the other hand, has been that while the former have also attempted to move the government, Crown and UN to action, they eventually seem to have reached the conclusion that the only way to repatriation lies in attaining political power in Jamaica.
1494. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 224.

1495. Worsley, *The trumpet shall sound*, p. 255.
1496. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, pp. 18-19.
1497. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, p. 19.
1498. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon*, pp. 21-22.
1499. The FBI is known to have infiltrated several religious movements in the United States. The Nation of Islam during the early 1960s and, recently, David Koresh' Branch Davidians are two well-known examples.
1500. Timothy White, *Catch a fire: the life of Bob Marley* (London, Corgi Books, 1983), n.p. As we have seen, the New York City Police Department was one of those government agencies which also closely surveyed the Rastas.
1501. Manley views "the psychology of dependence" as "the most insidious, elusive and intractable" of the problems Jamaican society inherited from colonial domination (*The politics of change* (Kingston, Heinemann, 1990), p. 21. It may be argued that this syndrome is to a certain degree reflected in the initial Rastafarian reliance upon divine intervention and its feeling of dependency towards the Jamaican government, the British Crown or the United Nations.

Notes Appendices

1502. Frank Jan van Dijk, *Religie en politiek: de Rastafari beweging in Jamaica en de Nation of Islam in de Verenigde Staten* (Utrecht, Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1986) M.A. thesis.
1503. Frank Jan van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rasta and the middle class." *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West Indische Gids* 62, 1-2 (1988): 1-26.
1504. There are no separate references in the notes to *The Daily Gleaner* or *The Sunday Gleaner*, since the latter is little more than the regular Sunday edition of the first.
1505. The *Jamaica Record* has suffered the same fate as its predecessors and was discontinued during early 1992. In the meantime, another newspaper has been launched: *The Jamaica Herald*.
1506. Some of the references to newspaper articles and reports do not mention a page number. Most of these were obtained from the archives of the Gleaner Company. Its clipping collection only provides the date of publication.
1507. While this was a somewhat frustrating experience, particularly since the material in some cases provided nothing more than "spectacular" information and opinions, it was decided not to include it in this study.
1508. Two important interviews with prominent Jamaicans could, unfortunately, not be conducted. During my second and third visit to Jamaica and with the kind assistance of the Netherlands Chargé d'Affaires, I requested an interview both Prime Minister Michael Manley and former Prime Minister Edward Seaga. Both politicians had played a crucial role in Jamaican politics and thus in relations with the Rastafarian movement since the late 1960s. Seaga who was engaged in a leadership struggle within his Jamaica Labour Party, did not talk to anyone, not even his own party members, and bluntly refused. He directed me to one of his deputies, Senator Olivia "Babsy" Grange, the former Director of the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission. Countless promises, phone calls, visits to her offices and invitations to her discotheque failed to result in an interview. Michael Manley was more helpful. Through his aide, he promised to give an interview, but then had to undergo surgery in the United States. After a long period of recovery, his agenda was full of appointments of a higher priority. Still, Manley reconfirmed his promise to do the interview, but it took more time than I had and, in spite of a prolongation of my stay in Jamaica, the interview never materialized.
1509. Leonard Barrett, *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977), p. 2.
1510. Joseph Owens, *Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica* (London, Heinemann, 1976), pp. 21-22.
1511. In early 1987 I obtained the (then - and, as far as I am aware, still - unpublished) data from the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN). The data, for sex, five year age group and parish, were transcribed by hand by one of the employees. There is probably a slight transcription error in the data, the correction of which had no significant effects. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. David Barker of the Geography Department of the University of the West Indies, and to Mrs. Anderson of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) for their kind assistance in obtaining these data, which were processed together with Lau Schulpen.
1512. The total number of non-responses in the parishes of Kingston (11.95%) and St. Andrew (14.88%), where most of the Rastafarians are assumed to live, are above average.
1513. A more recent population census was taken in April 1991. More than preliminary and rough outcomes are, as far as could be ascertained, not available as yet.
1514. It is therefore assumed here that there are no significant differences in the responses and non-responses between either age groups, sex or parish of residence.
1515. George E. Simpson, "Political cultism in West Kingston, Jamaica." *Social and Economic Studies* 4, 2 (1955): 133-149, p. 133.
1516. George E. Simpson, "The Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica." *Social Forces* 34, 2 (1955): 167-170.
1517. M.G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, *Report on the Ras Tafari movement in Kingston, Jamaica* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1960), pp. 17.
1518. H. Orlando Patterson, "Ras Tafari: the cult of outcasts." *New Society* 4, 111 (1964): 15-17, p. 14.
1519. G. Llewellyn Watson, "Social structure and social movement: the Nation of Islam in the U.S.A. and the Rastafari movement in Jamaica." *British Journal of Sociology* 24, 12 (1973): 188-204, p. 189.
1520. There is, as described in chapter 6, no reason to assume that there was a remarkable decline in their numbers between the mid-1970s and early 1980s.
1521. Barrett, *The Rastafarians*, p. 2.
1522. Sheila Kitzinger, "The Rastafari brethren of Jamaica." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9, 1 (1966): 34-39; "Protest and mysticism: the Rastafari cult of Jamaica." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8, 2

- (1969): 240-262.
1523. Maureen Rowe, "The woman in Rastafari." *Caribbean Quarterly* 26, 4 (1980): 13-21.
1524. In the 1982 population census of Jamaica 87.10% of the combined parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew was classified as urban.
1525. Kitzinger "The Rastafari brethren of Jamaica," p. 583; "Protest and mysticism," pp. 252-253 and H. Orlando Patterson, *The children of Sisyphus* (Kingston, Bolivar Press, 1971).
1526. Van Dijk, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel."

Bibliography

In an effort to make the bibliography a little more useful than just a mere listing of works referred to in the previous chapters, it has been divided into three separate parts: a) published works (including theses and papers) on Rastafari, b) unpublished material on Rastafari and c) general references. The categories a) and b) thus include some titles not cited in the text. While this list is not exhaustive, it may provide some useful additions to previously published bibliographies, like the recently issued "sourcebook" by Rebekah Michele Mulvaney (*Rastafari and reggae: a dictionary and sourcebook* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1990)), which both Kenneth Bilby (*New West Indian Guide* 66, 1 & 2 (1992): 139-140) and the present writer (*Antropologische Verkenningen*, 12, 2 (1993): 78-79) have elsewhere noted of suffering from serious omissions.

Rastafari: published works, theses and papers

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- , "The future of the Rastafarian movement." *Caribbean Review* 8, 4 (1979): 22-25 and 44-46.
- , "Rastafarian and cultural identity in the Caribbean." *Revista Interamericana* 10, 2 (1980): 230-247.
- AUSTIN-BROOS, DIANE J., "Pentecostals and Rastafarians: cultural, political, and gender relations of two religious movements." *Social and Economic Studies* 36, 4 (1987): 1-39.
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- , *The Rastafarians: sounds of cultural dissonance* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1977 (revised edition 1988)).
- , "Rastafarianism as a life-style." In: Vincent D'Oyley (ed.), *Black presence in multi-ethnic Canada* (Vancouver, Center for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, 1979), pp. 149-165.
- BARRITEAU, EUDINE, "Recent developments on the Rastafari movement in Barbados." *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* 6, 4 (1980): 21-24.
- BAYER, MARCEL, "Jah Rastafari, de zwarte verlosser leeft." *Onze Wereld* 27, 10 (1984): 6-9.
- BENDER, WOLFGANG, "Liberation from Babylon: Rasta painters in Jamaica." In: Jürgen Martini (ed.), *Missile and Capsule* (Bremen, Universität Bremen, 1983), pp. 129-134.
- , *Rastafari-Kunst aus Jamaika* (Bremen/Berlin, CON Medien- und Vertriebsgesellschaft and Berliner Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 1992).
- BILBY, KENNETH M., "Black thoughts from the Caribbean: I-deology at home and abroad." *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West Indische Gids* 57, 3-4 (1983): 201-209.
- , "The half still untold: recent literature on reggae and Rastafari." *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West Indische Gids* 59, 3-4 (1985): 211-217.
- , "The holy herb: notes on the background of cannabis in Jamaica." In: Rex Nettleford (ed.), *Caribbean Quarterly Monograph: Rastafari*. (Kingston, Extra-Mural Department, University of the West Indies, 1985), pp. 82-95.
- , Bookreview of *Rastafari and reggae: a dictionary and sourcebook* by Rebekah Michele Mulvaney. *New West Indian Guide* 66, 1 & 2 (1992): 139-140.
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Dutch summary/samenvatting

Jahmaica: Rastafari and Jamaican society, 1930-1990 richt zich op het ontwikkelingsproces van de Rastafari-beweging en haar veranderende relatie met de Jamaicaanse samenleving. Het is een studie die primair gebaseerd is op analyse van archiefmateriaal, met name kranten, pamfletten en dossiers van het Britse Colonial Office, aangevuld met interviews.

In de 'Introduction' wordt betoogd dat er in de literatuur over de Rastafari-beweging een lacune bestaat ten aanzien van gedetailleerd historisch (bronnen)onderzoek. Tevens wordt gesteld dat er in de literatuur onvoldoende aandacht is besteed aan externe invloeden op het ontwikkelingsproces van de beweging. Zo er al aandacht is voor verandering, wordt die veelal verklaard uit een interne dynamiek. Dit heeft geleid tot een weergave van de Rastafari-beweging als een statisch en geïsoleerd verschijnsel. Theoretische en comparatieve publikaties over religieuze bewegingen worden eveneens bekritiseerd: zij zijn veelal gebaseerd op volstrekt onvoldoende of sterk verouderd empirisch materiaal en neigen er sterk toe het ontstaan van dergelijke bewegingen te verklaren uit (meervoudige en/of relatieve) deprivatie, zonder ze daarbij in het noodzakelijke historische perspectief te plaatsen. En ook in de theoretisch georiënteerde literatuur is er onvoldoende aandacht voor verandering en de invloed van externe factoren.

Een voorbeeld van dergelijke theorievorming is het revitalisatie schema van Wallace, dat ondanks het feit dat het in de jaren '50 werd geformuleerd nog steeds grote invloed geniet.¹ Een kritische beschouwing van Wallace's schema leidt echter tot de conclusie dat het gebaseerd is op een aantal aanvechtbare assumpties en een aantal algemene processen in de ontwikkeling van religieuze bewegingen suggereert die in ieder geval voor de Rastafari-beweging niet houdbaar zijn.

In hoofdstuk 1, 'Babylon and Zion', wordt de evolutie van de Jamaicaanse samenleving tot aan het begin van de twintigste eeuw besproken. Jamaica ontwikkelde zich van een florerende plantage-economie tot een verarmde kroonkolonie, een geschiedenis die onvermijdelijk gekenmerkt werd door blanke, Europese onderdrukking en zwart, Afrikaans verzet, waarbij religie vaak een cruciale rol speelde. De twee ideeën die later centraal zouden komen te staan in de Rastafari-beweging (het geloof in een uiteindelijke terugkeer naar Afrika en de aan Ethiopië toegeschreven rol in de verlossing van de zwarte bevolking) waren echter niet uniek Jamaicaans. Zij ontstonden in uiteenlopende vormen ook elders in de Nieuwe Wereld en in Afrika. Terug-naar-Afrika ideologieën en Ethiopianisme lijken echter vooral in de Verenigde Staten en Jamaica grote invloed te hebben gehad. In zekere zin was de Rastafari-beweging dan ook een schakel in een keten van bewegingen die zich baseerden op vergelijkbare ideeën en alle zochten naar bevrijding van onderdrukking in Babylon en verlossing in Sion. Maar tegelijkertijd werd de vorm die de beweging aannam zeer nadrukkelijk bepaald door de specifiek Jamaicaanse context en culturele tradities.

Het tweede hoofdstuk, 'The worst evil of all', beschrijft de vroege jaren van de Rastafari-beweging, van haar ontstaan in de jaren '30 tot aan het absolute dieptepunt in haar relatie met de Jamaicaanse samenleving in 1960. De eerste Rasta-predikers verkondigen de komst van de Messias (de Ethiopische keizer Haile Selassie I), de nabije verlossing van de onderdrukte zwarte Jamaicanen en hun aanstaande terugkeer naar het land van de voorvaders (Ethiopië). Met de kroning van 'de Leeuw van Juda', zo menen zij, hebben de Britse kroon en de koloniale regering van Jamaica hun zeggenschap over de zwarte bevolking verloren.

Gedurende de eerste drie decennia van haar bestaan valt de Rastafari-beweging ten prooi aan voortdurende vervolging. De koloniale regering, hoewel aanvankelijk aarzelend, beschuldigt de vroege predikers al snel van verraad of krankzinnigheid, en de meeste leiders brengen dan ook lange tijd door achter tralies of in het psychiatrisch ziekenhuis. Vervolging door de politie en herhaaldelijke confrontaties met andere 'lower-class' groepen dwingen de eerste Rastafari-organisaties tot de nodige terughoudendheid.

Een schokkende moord, de afnemende invloed van de vroege leiders, een bericht over de beschikbaarheid van land in Ethiopië, de strijd voor onafhankelijkheid in Afrika, de revolutie op Cuba en andere lokale en globale ontwikkelingen dragen in de jaren '50 allemaal bij tot een geleidelijk proces van radicalisering onder de Rastafari's. Hoewel er ook de eerste pogingen zijn om de beweging en haar geloof

1. Anthony F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization movements" *American Anthropologist* 58, 1 (1956): 264-281.

te ondermijnen, onder meer met behulp van de beweging voor Morele Herbewapening, blijft de koloniale overheid vasthouden aan een strategie van repressie. Dit draagt slechts bij tot meer spanningen, die tegen het einde van de jaren '50 culminerend in een aaneenschakeling van gewelddadige botsingen en uiteindelijk in wat wordt beschouwd als een ternauwernood verijdelde Rasta-coup. In de perceptie van het Jamaicaanse publiek is de 'kleine, maar irritante minderheid' van Rasta's plotseling een groep gevaarlijke revolutionairen geworden.

De gebeurtenissen en ontwikkelingen in de jaren '60 komen aan de orde in hoofdstuk 3, 'A problem of grave magnitude'. Op basis van aanbevelingen van de plaatselijke universiteit besluit de regering een afvaardiging van Rasta's op een rondreis door Afrika te sturen om ze zelf te laten ontdekken dat het niet alleen melk en honing is in het Beloofde Land. De Rastafari's slagen er niet in de tegenstellingen binnen de beweging te overbruggen, maar niettemin toert in 1961 een omstreden delegatie door Afrika, waar zij ook de Messias ontmoet.

Deze strategie van ondermijning blijft echter hand in hand gaan met repressie. Terwijl er zich opnieuw verschillende gewelddadige confrontaties voordoen, zoals gebruikelijk gevolgd door harde represaillemaatregelen, nodigt de regering Haile Selassie uit voor een staatsbezoek aan het eiland. Gehoopt wordt dat de Ethiopische monarch zijn vermeende goddelijkheid publiekelijk zal ontkennen. Een ontkenning blijft echter uit. Het staatsbezoek wordt een mijlpaal in de geschiedenis van de beweging en vergroot het aanzien van de Rastafari's. Maar nog geen drie maanden later laat de regering de sloppenwijk die bekend staat als het Rasta-Vaticaan met de grond gelijk maken.

Terwijl de beweging in toenemende mate invloed krijgt op de jeugd in de getto's van Kingston, vormen politiek georiënteerde Rastafari's in de late jaren '60 een losse coalitie met Black Power intellectuelen, waardoor bij sommige Rasta-groepen de overtuiging groeit dat de verlossing ook in Jamaica kan worden bewerkstelligd. Het Jamaicaanse 'establishment' wordt ondertussen heen en weer geslingerd tussen haar wens om de 'Rasta-plaag' uit te roeien en de noodzaak om het bestaan van de beweging te accepteren.

De turbulente ontwikkelingen in de jaren '70 vormen het onderwerp van het vierde hoofdstuk, 'A traditional hostility'. Met de volledige steun van de Jamaicaanse elite, vestigt de orthodox Ethiopische kerk zich op het eiland in de hoop de Rastafari's tot het christendom te kunnen bekeren. De jaren '70 worden echter gedomineerd door twee andere ontwikkelingen, die de relaties tussen de Rasta's en de Jamaicaanse samenleving sterk beïnvloeden. De verkiezingscampagne van de People's National Party luidt het begin in van de coöptatie van de beweging. In haar streven naar 'democratisch socialisme' probeert de nieuwe regering onder leiding van Michael Manley een progressief, pro-Afrikaans imago te projecteren, hetgeen een drastische verandering in het sociale klimaat tot gevolg heeft. De Rastafari's hebben hooggespannen verwachtingen voor fundamentele verandering, maar worden pijnlijk teleurgesteld.

Ongeveer tegelijkertijd verovert de nauw met de Rastafari-beweging geassocieerde reggae-muziek de internationale hitlijsten, waarmee een groot aantal Rasta-musici plotseling naam en faam maakt. Jongeren uit zowel de lagere als middenklasse nemen op grote schaal Rasta-ideeën en symbolen over, waardoor er een Rasta-reggae subcultuur ontstaat. Rasta raakt 'in', maar de vervolging en discriminatie gaan door. Temidden van escalerend geweld en politiek banditisme, beleeft de beweging haar hoogtijdagen, ondanks het 'verdwijnen' van de Messias en de opkomst van een Marxistische dictatuur in het Beloofde Land. Mede als gevolg van de dramatische ontwikkelingen in Babylon en Sion, begint het streven van de Rastafari's naar een fysieke terugkeer naar Afrika steeds meer plaats te maken voor een verlangen naar accommodatie met en integratie in de Jamaicaanse samenleving.

In de jaren '70 verspreidt reggae de beweging van 'Jah-people' over vrijwel de gehele wereld. Zoals beschreven in hoofdstuk 5, 'The obnoxious minority', had Rasta al in de jaren '50 voet aan de grond gekregen onder jonge Caraïbische migranten in Engeland. Maar als Bob Marley, Peter Tosh en vele andere Rasta-musici uitgroeien tot internationaal erkende supersterren, ontwikkelt Rasta zich snel tot één van de invloedrijkste zwarte protestbewegingen. Door Rastafari geïnspireerde groepen ontstaan ook in vrijwel het gehele Engelstalige Caraïbisch gebied, hoewel ze sterk verschillende vormen aannemen. Terwijl Rasta's in Grenada betrokken zijn bij de coup van Maurice Bishop's People's Revolutionary Army, blijven de Rastafari's in Trinidad een strikt religieuze en pacifistische groepering. De reacties van de lokale overheden verschillen al evenzeer: van bezorgdheid over de impact op het toerisme tot wetgeving die het doden van Rasta's legaliseert. Ondertussen wordt Rasta in de Verenigde Staten bestempeld als de meest meedogenloze vorm van georganiseerde criminaliteit. In verscheidene Afrikaanse, Latijns-Amerikaanse

en Europese landen, alsmede in Nieuw Zeeland en Australië, trekt de beweging in toenemende mate aanhangers. Gebeurtenissen in het buitenland hebben hun repercussies in Jamaica en de Rastafari's doen diverse, maar vergeefse pogingen de internationale groepen te verenigen.

Hoofdstuk 6, 'Breaking the tide of radicalism', keert terug naar Jamaica in 1980. Met het eiland op de rand van een bankroet en een burgeroorlog, viert de Rastafari-beweging haar gouden jubileum met concerten en een nieuw repatriëringsoffensief. Maar de hoogtijdagen zijn voorbij, althans in Jamaica. De progressieve regering van Manley wordt vervangen door een no-nonsense kabinet van de Jamaica Labour Party. De personificatie van Rasta, Bob Marley, overlijdt en de door Rastafari's gedomineerde 'roots reggae' gaat ten onder in het pretentieloze geweld van 'deejay dub' en 'dancehall'. Veel jonge Jamaicanen die zich in de jaren '70 met Rastafari hadden geïdentificeerd, keren de beweging de rug toe. Ondertussen ontstaan er nieuwe afsplitsingen die de scheidslijnen tussen de echte en pseudo-Rasta's verder doen vervagen. Terwijl onder meer 'Rent-a-dreads' voor het vertier van Amerikaanse toeristen zorgen, raakt de religieuze kern van de beweging gevangen in een dilemma van afzondering versus participatie in de Jamaicaanse samenleving. De jonge generatie Rastafari's en de Rasta's uit de middenklasse zijn al sterk geïntegreerd en uiteindelijk opteren ook de orthodoxe groepen voor politieke actie, met als doel: acceptatie van het geloof en de levensstijl ... in afwachting van repatriëring. Aan het eind van de jaren '80 zijn er dan ook formele verzoeken voor erkenning als een valide religie, rechtszaken en pogingen om deel te nemen aan de verkiezingen. Gecopteerd, ongeorganiseerd en ideologisch sterk verdeeld lijkt het revolutionaire potentieel van de Rastafari-beweging nagenoeg volledig verdwenen.

In het afsluitende hoofdstuk, 'Wait I and I must', wordt eerst nader ingegaan op de vraag naar de oorsprong en oorzaken van het ontstaan van de Rastafari-beweging, een discussie die door een recente publikatie van Chevannes opnieuw is aangezwengeld.² De auteur betoogt onder meer dat Rastafari moet worden gezien als een continuering van Afro-christelijke Revival religies en derhalve 'meer Afrikaans' is dan algemeen wordt aangenomen. Daaruit zou ook voortvloeien dat Rasta een 'world-view' is in plaats van een 'politieke' beweging. Hoewel er geen verschil in inzicht is omtrent de conclusie dat Rastafari op een aantal gebieden is beïnvloed door Revival, wordt deze visie grotendeels verworpen. De auteur negeert de evidente invloed van Terug-naar-Afrika ideologieën en Ethiopianisme, bagatelliseert het repatriëringsstreven in de Rastafari-beweging en voert weinig overtuigende data aan voor de continuïteit van Revival en Rasta-ideeën. Veel van de door Chevannes gesuggereerde continuïteiten lijken eerder in de door Hobsbawm en Ranger gelanceerde categorie van 'invented traditions' te vallen.³

Voor het verdere ontwikkelingsproces van de Rastafari-beweging is gebrek aan organisatie en centraal leiderschap van essentieel belang geweest. Onder anderen Worsley heeft reeds gewezen op de neiging tot organisatorische versnippering bij religieuze bewegingen, wat mede in verband is gebracht met het vertrouwen in bovennatuurlijke inspiratie, charismatisch leiderschap en 'protestantse ethiek'.⁴ De Rastafari-beweging is meer nog dan andere religieuze bewegingen aan desintegratie onderhevig. Erkenning van (charismatisch) leiderschap is eerder uitzondering dan regel. De overtuiging van de Rastafari's dat hun visioenen van gelijke autoriteit zijn, maakt de beweging tot een losse verzameling profeten, de meesten zonder volgelingen.

Zowel in Wallace's revitalisatie schema als in de literatuur over de Rastafari-beweging is zeer eenzijdig aandacht geschonken aan repressie als externe invloed op het ontwikkelingsproces van religieuze bewegingen. Betoogd wordt dat repressie, in tegenstelling tot hetgeen Wallace concludeert, vaak een averechts effect heeft en dergelijke bewegingen eerder sterkt dan verzwakt. Ondermijnings- en coöptatie-strategieën zijn weliswaar nagenoeg volledig genegeerd, maar blijken in de relatie tussen de Rastafari-beweging en de Jamaicaanse samenleving een cruciale rol te hebben gespeeld. Geconcludeerd wordt dat het uiteindelijk de daarmee gepaard gaande oppervlakkige erkenning en assimilatie van Rasta-ideeën en symbolen zijn geweest die de angel uit de beweging hebben genomen. Ondermijning en coöptatie hebben niet alleen geleid tot een vermindering van spanningen en een sterkere oriëntatie op Jamaica, maar ook tot meer interne verdeeldheid.

Tenslotte wordt geconcludeerd dat mede hierdoor de millenarische droom van de Rastafari's in een meer diffuse vorm weliswaar overeind is gebleven, maar in toenemende mate gepaard gaat met politieke

2. Barry Chevannes, "Rastafari: towards a new approach." *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West Indische Gids* 64, 3-4 (1990): 127-148.

3. Eric J. Hobsbawm en Terrence O. Ranger (red.), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

4. Peter Worsley, *The trumpet shall sound: a study of 'Cargo Cults' in Melanesia* (New York, Schocken Books, 1968).

actie. Hoewel Wallace, Worsley en Hobsbawm de overgang van millenarisme tot politieke actie als een 'natuurlijk' proces zien voor veel religieuze bewegingen, wordt gewezen op de vele obstakels die dat proces in de weg staan.⁵ Yawney's hypothese dat millenarische verwachtingen onder de Rastafari's doelbewust in stand worden gehouden, wordt echter verworpen.⁶

5. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1959).

6. Carole D. Yawney, *Lions in Babylon: the Rastafarians of Jamaica as a visionary movement* (Montreal, Department of Anthropology, McGill University, 1978).

Curriculum vitae

Frank Jan van Dijk was born on 12 August 1963 at Sint Annaparochie, the Netherlands. From 1975 to 1982 he attended Praedinius Gymnasium and Heymans College at Groningen, after which he studied Cultural Anthropology at Groningen and, later, Utrecht University. He graduated in 1988 and following a brief period working at the Ministry of Education and Science at Groningen, received a research grant from the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO). The research on which this study is based, was carried out between 1989 and 1993, while he was attached to the Department of Cultural Anthropology of Utrecht University.

Frank Jan van Dijk werd op 12 augustus 1963 geboren te Sint Annaparochie. Van 1975 tot 1982 bezocht hij het Praedinius Gymnasium en Heymans College te Groningen, waarna hij Culturele Antropologie studeerde aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen en - later - Utrecht, waar hij in 1988 afstudeerde. Na een korte periode werkzaam te zijn geweest bij het Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen te Groningen, ontving hij een onderzoekssubsidie van de Stichting voor het Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek van de Tropen (WOTRO). Het onderzoek waarop deze studie is gebaseerd, werd uitgevoerd tussen 1989 en 1993, gedurende welke periode hij was verbonden aan de vakgroep Culturele Antropologie van de Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht.

This book is a historical study of the Rastafarian movement and its changing relationship with the 'wider' Jamaican society. It is an account of a people's dream of salvation in Zion and their quest for recognition in Babylon, of repeated failures of prophecy and unshakable faith in the power of the Almighty, of unconcealed hatred and growing admiration, of ruthless persecution and shrewd political manipulation, an account of a movement's worldwide appeal and its inevitable decline in Jamaica.

For book reviews see:

- Chevannes, B. (1994). [Review of Jahmaica: Rastafari and Jamaican society, 1930-1990, by F.J. van Dijk]. *Social and Economic Studies*, 43 (3), 222–226. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27865982>.
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- Van Dijk, F.J. (1988). The Twelve Tribes of Israel: Rastafari and the middle class. *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids / New West Indian Guide*, 62 (1/2), 1–26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41849309>.
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- Van Dijk, F.J. (1998). Chanting down Babylon outernational: The rise of Rastafari in Europe, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. In: Murrell, N. S., Spencer, W.D., & McFarlane, A.A. (Eds.). *Chanting down Babylon: the Rastafari reader*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, pp. 178-198. <https://tupress.temple.edu/books/chanting-down-babylon>