

# Rastafari as Pan Africanism in the Caribbean and Africa

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## Introduction

At the dawn of the twentieth century the celebrated Pan African Scholar, W.E.B. du Bois, had declared that "the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the colour line". This fact of race and racial identification had been part of the consciousness of mankind for a long period but took a specific form after the Atlantic Slave trade justified the trade in racial terms. 'Africa for the Africans' became the cry of the dispersed blacks using religious language in the 19th century and articulating this racial consciousness as Pan Africanism in the twentieth century. Garveyism was one brand of Pan Africanism which sought to root the ideas of African redemption in a concrete organisational form - in the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Thus far, however, the scholarship on Pan Africanism has tended to document the five major Pan African Congresses which were held between 1900 and 1945. This was easier than the study of the movement of Pan Africanism which took differing forms among Africans in the continent of Africa, in Europe, in North America and the Caribbean. Pan Africanism among the masses in Africa was given concrete organisational form in the period of decolonisation in the compromise of the Organisation of African Unity. (OAU).<sup>1</sup>

The end of colonialism in the Caribbean and in Africa ended the all class form of nationalist organisation and the masses in the new states sought avenues of self expression and independent organisation. The Rastafari movement in the Caribbean emerged as a popular mass movement, responding to the need for a mass based organisation among the people, free from state control. Reggae as a form of communication emerged specifically to meet the needs of a section of society searching for self expression and self organisation. Even with the hindrance of extending itself to an African monarch and African religious forms, the social questions in the society

which had given rise to Rasta and Reggae ensured that concrete social questions would come before the mysticism and metaphysical tendencies of the movement.

Inside the Caribbean the first response of state scholars was to view the movement as escapist and millenarian. A prominent sociologist, whose work on 'cultural pluralism' had gained influence in Western social 'science', obscured the interplay between race and class in the society which gave rise to the Rastafari. This was evident in the first *Report on the Rastafari Movement in Kingston*<sup>2</sup> where the tools which went into the analysis followed the requirements of social control. The Rastafari had rejected the ideas of 'development', 'growth', 'modernisation', 'the unlimited supplies of labour' and those concepts of social science which were current in the language of the politicians in the sixties.

That the Rastafari movement and reggae music developed and spread in all the Caribbean and in Europe posed new problems not only for the states but for the cultural leaders of the west who wanted to package music in a manner to pacify the youths in their societies. Walter Rodney the Pan African, Pan Caribbean scholar had perceived the potential of the Rastafari movement and sought to enrich their understanding of Africa in sessions that he called *The Groundings with my Brothers*.<sup>3</sup> Rodney sought to break with the idealism of the Pan Africanists of the 1930's, whose contribution to the study and understanding of Pan Africanism was to insist on the existence of African Kingdoms and civilisations prior to European colonialism.<sup>4</sup> This work among the Rastafari coincided with the emergence of forms of Jamaica music which sought to inspire the youths. The ensuing musical form, reggae, carried forward the project of Garvey to carry forth the work of the struggle for African liberation from the centre of the international Western societies. Reggae artists mastered the technology and sound of the electronics revolution to develop a message which went beyond the Rastafari constituency. Bob Marley emerged out of this thrust to become one of the most popular exponents of Pan African liberation. In the words of one Caribbean Pan Africanist, Eusi Kwayana, "the power of art that Bob Marley's music represented had done more to popularise the real issues of African liberation than several decades of backbreaking work by Pan Africanists and international revolutionaries.

Throughout the world youths listened to the music of reggae. This Pan African message challenged the religion of mass consumption and commodity fetishism. African youths in the urban areas with radio receivers and video recorders were particularly endeared to this internationalisation of African redemption. This section of the youth could not always differentiate between the work of Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff on the one hand and the work of Michael Jackson and Prince, on the other. There was also the addi-

tional contradiction of seeking to identify with the African roots of reggae while turning their backs on the vast resource of African culture in their villages and townships. Yet at the level of consciousness the appeal of the Rasta lay not only in the conceptions of liberations, but in the admonition that the youths should emancipate themselves from mental slavery.

Rastafari was a reference point to maintain some form of self worth in a world where the images of Africa were linked to inferiority. This was problematic in that the Rasta movement held defensively to the identification with Haile Selassie, the former Emperor of Ethiopia. However the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 and the resulting social changes on the continent led to a shift in the concern of the Rastafari to the struggle for liberation and equal rights in South Africa. This was evident in the historic performance of Bob Marley at the Zimbabwe independence celebrations in April 1980.

The concrete struggle for dignity in South Africa launched the struggle against apartheid on to the centre stage of the world. This problem in Southern Africa brought to the fore the class content of Pan Africanism especially in the context of liberation organisations bearing the Pan African name. Would the question of the twenty-first century be that of the colour line or would it be on the form of the organisation of society? This question was posed most sharply by the popular forces in South Africa who fought against the despotism of the factory and its manner of dividing communities and families. While the ideas of cultural pluralism were being reformulated to devise federal forms of state support to capital/labour relations which would conceal the racial division of labour, the youths inside the embattled townships were moving from making the system unworkable while laying the embryo for peoples power. Pan Africanism in South Africa called for the internationalism which liberated Africans from the pre-occupation with race. Partly for this reason the anti-apartheid struggle was of concern to leaders who wanted to reduce the revolutionary potential of the struggles in South Africa.

Inside the Caribbean, youths and Rastas were beginning to grapple with the question of the nature of organisations necessary for development after the reversals in Grenada of 1983. The subsequent piracy in the Caribbean Seas epitomised by the trade in cocaine and narcotics also forced the conscious youth to assess the kind of ideas which would guide their existence as human beings. In the process, the question of the meaning of work, the purpose of work and the need to humanise the environment became a crucial question in the period of the third technological revolution. The economic crisis, the Orwellian efforts at thought control and the crude materialism of present day Hollywood in the midst of the AIDS epidemic called for ideas and social movements which transcend the nationalist requirements of an

earlier period. To be able to shift attention of studies which are needed for state control to studies which are needed to strengthen the producers in the process of recovering their history,<sup>5</sup> Amílcar Cabral's concept of cultural liberation is an important tool in our analysis of this period of Pan Africanism.

## Rastafarianism and Pan Africanism

Rastafari culture in all its manifestations has been popularised by the musical form of reggae throughout the world in the past twenty years. The Rastafari movement as a social movement evolved in the conditions of the Caribbean, specifically in Jamaica in the context of the resistance to colonialism. The deification of an African monarch (Haile Selassie) was the response to the dominance of the British crown in the culture of Jamaica, and in a society where religion settled all social questions, the identification with the Ethiopian monarch could be further justified on Biblical grounds. "Princes come out of Egypt, Ethiopia stretches forth her hands unto God".<sup>6</sup> Religious expression, especially popular religious forms, took on political overtones in the colonial society where popular participation and expression were not possible. Moreover, because the colonial state blocked the development of popular organs, the people found their own method of asserting their place in society. Rastafarianism as a cultural form of protest embraced the political, the historical, the racial and the religious aspects of the Jamaican mass movement in the period prior to independence. However it was the religious form which has been widely documented by scholars.

Alternative interpretations of the Rastafari phenomena have been developing with the work of scholars who are attempting to understand the Rastafari as a specific form of consciousness and protest in Jamaica.<sup>8</sup> Our own study of *Rasta and Resistance* attempted to shift attention from an abstract search for millenarianism to a concrete expression of Pan African social protest. The study, encrusted as it were between two differing conceptualisations of Pan Africanism from Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney, sought to explore why resistance and consciousness took the specific forms they did in post-colonial Caribbean society. Surveying the Rasta movement from its inception in the Caribbean to its particular forms in the streets of Britain, to the repatriated settlement in Shashamane, Ethiopia, showed the concrete Pan African form of the Rastafari phenomenon.<sup>9</sup>

The 'Pan' concept is an exercise in self-definition by a people aimed at establishing a broader definition of themselves than that which had been permitted by those in power. Pan Africanism, as one example of the 'Pan' concept, was a manifestation of nationalist consciousness and this concept is in-

ternationalist in so far as it seeks the unity of people living in a large number of juridically independent states. As a brand of nationalism, to be able to grasp its impact 'one must penetrate its nationalist form to appreciate its class content'.<sup>10</sup> The appreciation of the form and content of Pan Africanism in the era of decolonisation has been made easier by the concrete lessons of many of the leading figures of the Pan Africa movement when they took over the reigns of political power in their respective countries. Political repression, militarism, one partyism and tribalism replaced the essential elements of Pan African solidarity which was at the core of the movement in the anti-colonial period.

One of the cardinal principles of Pan Africanism which emerged at the period of slavery and colonialism was that "the people of one part of Africa are responsible for the freedom of their brothers in other parts of Africa; and indeed black people everywhere were to accept this same responsibility." This ideal has been subverted in the OAU by the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states, thus leading to a conspiracy of silence among most states when African leaders carry out atrocities in their own societies. Many leaders such as Sekou Toure and Idi Amin carried out repression at home while verbally supporting the anti-colonial struggles in Southern Africa.

Secondly the leaders of the OAU flout the basic ideals of Pan Africanism by trying to enforce the stringent colonial boundaries that they inherited. Numerous examples exist of poor Africans seeking freedom of movement, because they believed that Africa was for the Africans. The most recent example was the mass expulsion of Non-Nigerian nationals from Nigeria between 1983 and 1985. The ruling class use their power against the defenceless citizens of other states instead of confronting the real exploiters, the transnational corporations.

As the crisis of capitalism deepened in the eighties the African leaders even gave up their attempt to direct the economies under the pressure of debt, drought, hunger and intensified western plunder of the resources. Space does not allow for an elaboration of the process of cash crop cultivation which led to soil exhaustion, drought, famine and hunger.

What is important is the way in which the international response to the crisis reinforced the conception of the childlike and helpless Africans. Media coverage of the famine which was geared to mobilise popular support in the West for famine victims at the same time supported the conception of Africans as incapable of solving their problem without help from Europe. This conception was fuelled by the alliance between the African ruling class and Western imperialism, now clothed as donor agencies. Underdevelopment in its forms stared the population in the face, not in the least in the areas of cultural reproduction.<sup>11</sup> Their cultural dependence led - in the

words of Fanon - to "underdeveloped countries which imprisoned national consciousness in sterile formalism." This sterility was most evident for urbanised youth who searched for areas of cultural liberation and inspiration beyond the cultural repression in their societies.

It was among this section of the African youth that the sounds of reggae found a fertile base. For thousands of African youths, the future seems to promise the same hardships and dependence on Europe which characterised the alienated petty bourgeoisie. Absence of independent and autonomous organisations among the youth deepened the search for an identity consistent with their dignity as human beings. The youth wing of parties became pacification centres to ensure social and ideological control over the young and energetic. It would not be incorrect to say that most of the youths - outside the arenas of armed struggles in the Sahara, Eritrea, and Southern Africa - were politically uninformed and demobilised. The potentialities of the mobilisation of these youths were immense and this was demonstrated by the guerilla movement of the National Resistance Movement (RNM) in Uganda.

The power of North American films and American communications media had hoped to use the cultural reservoir of Africans in America to further the cause of cultural imperialism. This was most evident in the way the USA attempted to sell the Pan African epic *Roots* by Alex Haley into a product of the American Dream. But as in all areas of culture - art, music and dance - the anti-capitalist and anti-racist component of black American music, theatre, film became a component of Pan Africanism in this period. It was within the context of this media complex that African youths were exposed to reggae music. The power of reggae music from the outset lay in its strident call for black liberation. Central to the lyrics of the reggae artists were comparisons between present day conditions and slavery. The obvious Pan African calls were for military preparedness, which were at the base of Bob Marley's music, endeared it to a generation of youths including the freedom fighters of Zimbabwe. Locked in states where the internationalism of Pan Africanism was being replaced by regressive forms of tribal solidarity, some of the urban youths even began to take on the physical appearance of the Rastafari movement. In some societies small cultural groups emerged which experimented with reggae music, while in one society a particular brand of African reggae was developing. This was the case of the Ivorian reggae singer Alpha Blondie.

The numbers of groups in Africa playing reggae are quite small and the actual numbers of youths taking on the physical appearance of Rasta are smaller still. But Bob Marley and reggae music appeal to a wide cross section of the urban African working people. For African musicians and artists who did not make their living singing songs of praise to the 'great leaders of

their societies', (these artists) they consciously sought to deepen the form of social commentary which was to be found in reggae. Whether in the cultural revolt in South Africa or in the cultural - assertion of Fela in Nigeria, the form and content of reggae was having an impact on urban music in Africa. To be able to strengthen the links between cultural artists in Africa and the Pan African groups of the West was one of the tasks of Rastafari. However, the tremendous prejudice against the Rastafari, which was fueled by Western scholarship, meant that cultural exchanges between Africans in the West and Africans in the continent had to be mediated through states which were not kindly disposed to Rastafari. For this reason some states even refer to Rastafarians as rogues.<sup>12</sup>

Was it coincidental that it was a racially divided independent African society that the Rastafari movement in Africa sought to rear its head? Moreover, was it not significant that the same leaders who mobilised the reservoir of resistance of the spirit mediums felt threatened by the appearance of Rastafari youths in their midsts.<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that those leaders who manifested hostility to those youths attracted to the Pan-African principles of Rastafari did not find the attraction of African youths to break dance and Michael Jackson as offensive. Pan- Africanism has been so clearly flouted by the present African ruling class that it has been left to those still locked in struggle in Southern Africa to hold high its banner, deepening this concept of liberation with a renewed spirit of internationalism.

## The Youths in South Africa

Even though the South African State had initially sought to proscribe reggae music, the lyrics of the song "Get up stand up for your rights" becomes part of the rallying cry for a generation of youths in South Africa, after the Soweto uprisings of 1976. Young blacks in their daily struggles to affirm their dignity as human beings ensured that the question which kept the OAU together was the question of liberation in South Africa. The South African struggles and the ensuing military destabilisation of the neighbouring states reinforced the Pan-African dictum of Kwame Nkrumah that "No African state is free as long as an inch of the African continent is under foreign yoke." The politicisation and mobilisation of the South African youth in the anti- apartheid struggles was the pivot for the re-politicisation of the oppressed youth of Africa. That the question of apartheid became the number one problem before humanity in the eighties was in no small measure, because of the spread of self organisation and self mobilisation among the youths, workers and community leaders.<sup>14</sup> The rise of grassroots forms of

governance, as the people moved from 'ungovernability to peoples power', claimed the attention of the world as the alliance of workers, students and community leaders seized the initiative in the debate on the future of Africa.

This struggle in South Africa sharpened the internationalist conceptions and exposed the limits of the 'nationalist' brand of Pan Africanism in Africa. Many African leaders openly called for the dismantling of apartheid but quivered at the potentialities which would develop if a social force in South Africa successfully carried forth this historical task.

It is precisely because of the social question of apartheid, the question of a decent wage, proper housing, relevant education and cheaper rents that the anti-apartheid struggle is part of the anti-capitalist struggle and not simply a problem of majority rule or independence. Because of this fact certain leaders in Africa seek solutions to the struggle which would take the initiative out of the hands of the oppressed masses themselves. In this regard the idea of a Pan African defence force is intriguing, when already most member states of the OAU do not pay their annual dues to the OAU Liberation Committee. Moreover, the most recent call for a Pan African force was made by France in 1978 to guard Western interests in Zaire. Also, this call casts doubt on the capacity of the Africans in South Africa and Namibia to effect their own liberation.

These contradictions of the concept of Pan Africanism in the eighties simmer as part of the contradictions between the oppressed of Africa and imperialism on one hand, and between the producers in Africa and the African petty bourgeoisie on the other. The South African process of establishing the dignity and self worth of the black person went through the motions of black consciousness and developed as part of the consciousness of a non-racial socialist order. The nature of this struggle meant that there were only a few youth in South Africa who carried around the symbols of Rastafari. Interestingly the development of a non-racist culture meant that even where the embryonic rasta formations were found there were whites who could be found in the ranks of the young Rastafari.<sup>15</sup> The existence of an organised political movement and the massive struggles in the society meant that the alienation which multiplied the Rasta in independent Caribbean countries could not become the dominant force among the youths of South Africa. At the same time the struggles in South Africa become the central external reference point for Pan Africanists in the Caribbean and in the Americas.

## **Rasta and Pan Africanism in the Caribbean**

The Rasta movement in the Caribbean like most popular movements suffered a severe blow by the reversals in Grenada in 1983. This blow was sig-



nificant in that it was in Grenada that the New Jewel Movement sought to end the forty year old state persecution of Rastafari. Rastafari found their place in the ranks of the Grenadian revolution for a section of the leadership refused to accept the standard Marxist version of the Rasta movement, i.e., that it was a symbol of Western decadence. The change in the direction of the Grenadian society after 1979 offered new possibilities for the Rastafari movement. That the Rastafari could be organised for collective and alternative forms of power intensified the pressures on Grenada, for, if the other island states in the region could harness the energies of the Rastafari, the Caribbean could be transformed.

It was this reality which led to efforts to isolate the Rastafari from progressive ideas. One of the ways to do this was for transnational capital to tie down young Rastas in the trade of cannabis (marijuana), thus diverting their energies. And in the specific case of Grenada, before the invasion, external elements had attempted to use the question of cannabis production to destabilise the Grenadian revolution.<sup>16</sup>

Faced with the concrete impact of the potential to mobilise Rastafari and unemployed youths, there was a conscious attempt in the eighties to promote the anti-social and negative features of the Rastafari movement, especially resulting from the position of lumpens who took the physical appearance of Rastafari. This becomes most evident in the violence, guns, cannabis export and cocaine trade which was becoming the foundation of the island economies.

That the Rastafari used cannabis (ganja) had been adequately documented by social scientists, who studied the symbols of Rasta instead of the social conditions which produced Rasta. One of the contradictions of the Caribbean since the period of slavery has been the inability of the states to organise productive work or meaningful leisure for the vast majority of the people. Unemployment acted as a social sanction against the poor by depressing wages, but also ensuring that there was a pool of lumpens to act as enforcers or strike-breakers. In this period of the 1970's, lumpen elements found an alliance with capitalists in the USA to export cannabis to the US mainland. By the end of the seventies the export of ganja to the USA became the number one cash crop and the big agents made vast profits from this trade.<sup>17</sup>

## Cocaine in the Caribbean

The fetishisation of the smoking of the herb, marijuana, by young Rastafari was an aspect of popularism of the movement. The small trade to provide for urban dwellers in the Caribbean could be distinguished from the multimil-

lion dollar trade which now exists across the Caribbean Sea. The chillum pipe and ganja, which were incorporated as part of the culture, had been superseded by the introduction of cocaine in the Caribbean. Cocaine, unlike marijuana, is a manufactured product from coca leaves which has been grown in South America for centuries. Coca paste pressing facilities have been scattered all over South America - Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Colombia. Cocaine is manufactured from cocaine paste and exported to the United States of America, the principal market for cocaine in the Western hemisphere. The cocaine trade in the United States grosses over \$80 billion dollars per year for the US economy and now ranks ahead of the machine tool industry in the process of capital accumulation. Numerous Congressional reports from the US Houses of Congress and scientific studies attest to the destructive social effects of cocaine and its new derivative 'rock' or crack which is cheaper and stronger. This social crisis is dealt with through moral exhortation rather than taxing and arresting the big capitalists who earn massive profits from the cocaine trade.

The cocaine problem of the USA was one of the signposts of the social and cultural crisis in that society.<sup>18</sup> Instead of dealing with the root causes of the crisis which generated the trade and consumption of cocaine the USA has used the trade across the Caribbean Seas to intensify its military presence in the Caribbean and Latin America. Recent military manoeuvres by US helicopter gunships in Bolivia was only the tip of the massive police, military, naval, and coast guard operations in the Caribbean in the era of revolution and democratic openings. The Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) of the US administration took the issue of narcotics transshipment in the Caribbean to carry out large scale 'interdiction' exercises, which were in fact US military intelligence operations. The DEA was integrated with the Central Intelligence Agency, the Interpol, the El Paso Intelligence Agency, the US Coast Guard, the US Navy and the Federal Aviation Administration. In the context of the interdiction of the cocaine traffic, the US Naval and military presence increased the militarisation of the Caribbean.<sup>19</sup> The extensive operations of narcotic agents, drug traffickers and US naval operations brought the Caribbean Sea back to the era of piracy in the region. Similar to the era of primitive accumulation when the island societies were backyards for the illicit operations of the international capitalist system, now the mini-states are littered with off-shore banks where normal banking regulatory practices are not present. It is through these banks that the profits from cocaine are laundered. At the same time all sectors of the Caribbean society have been affected by the cocaine trade. It is not uncommon to hear of Prime Ministers being arrested in Miami on charges of trafficking in cocaine. And the same politicians and police officers harass the young Rastafari for the possession of marijuana.

The lack of progress of international efforts at de-criminalising the possession of marijuana strengthen the anti-democratic forces in North America and the Caribbean. Imperialism found that it was in its interest to support the present UN statutes on marijuana even though in many states of the USA the production of marijuana is now a major activity for small farmers. The struggles in the USA over the de-criminalisation of marijuana will have important consequences for the Caribbean. But the administration opposes a proper scientific and legal framework for the possession and use of marijuana so that the US can continue the myth that they are fighting drugs and crime. In the Caribbean, the US military presence is necessary to reinforce, and if possible, maintain the old relations of production. This is best epitomised by the invasion of Grenada and the destructive war against the popular experiment in Nicaragua.

In the midst of this crisis and seeming reversals, small gains have been registered. The Rastafari as one section of the Caribbean have learned important lessons on the political requirements for transformation. The Grenada interlude had registered tremendous cultural achievements and yet these steps were not sufficient to override those aspects of the old political culture which generate leaderism and competition. Now, many groups, including the most advanced elements are assessing the lessons of Grenada. One political group, the Working Peoples Alliance of Guyana noted:

*"The explosion of the Grenadian revolution on to the streets in October 1983, its self exposure, its unconscious injustices, its over-rating, its beautiful and attractive advocacy of internationalism and its rejection of internationalism in crucial areas, the high-minded principles it defended and abused at the same time, its making the majority within the vanguard a fetish and ignoring the majority among the masses: this is an act of de-politicisation of the peoples of the region which cradled it. Disenchantment is the chief resulting emotion."*<sup>20</sup>

Such a self-critical evaluation of the social process in the Caribbean was an import element of the present Pan African, and Pan Caribbean movement. The de-politicisation of the region can be seen among all strata of the working poor including the Rastafari. And this could be seen in the content of the social commentary of reggae in the eighties; manifest in the lyrics of 'Yellowman'.

Yet the concrete experience of day to day life ensured that the cultural change which had been pushed by the Rastafari remains a vibrant part of the anti-imperialist and internationalist traditions in the Caribbean. This is most evident in the way Rastafari youth in the Eastern Caribbean had to deal with their fellow youths of Asian descent - breaking some of the racial insecurity which had been exploited by Pan African leaders in Guyana. Secondly the

internationalism is developing in the support for areas of the Caribbean still fighting for political independence. The anti-colonial movements of the Cayenne, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Puerto Rico call for new support and draw from the experience of the social movements in the other Caribbean societies. This new internationalisation can now be seen in Guadeloupe, and Martinique where the influence of Rastafari has cut across the language barriers of the region. 20 On the other hand Pan African leaders in the Caribbean and Africa fear to raise the question of Puerto Rico and the French colonial territories in the UN Committee on Decolonisation. They can speak of Namibian independence but not of the independence of Puerto Rico.

## Conclusion

The discussion on the Rastafari and Pan Africanism pointed to forms of social organisation and social movements among oppressed Africans at home and abroad. The ideas of racial superiority circulated widely in the twentieth century had led to the wide-spread assertion by Africans that:

*"So long as there are people who deny our humanity as blacks then for so long must we proclaim our humanity as blacks."*<sup>21</sup>

Rastafari have chosen the reggae form as their method of proclaiming this humanity before the world. In the process the Rasta have cemented the internationalism which was always central to the concept of Pan Africanism. However Rastafari sought to battle the question of race on the ground rules established by those who made race central to social relations. Hence, the Rasta movement contained the dialectic of positive and negative tendencies.

In South Africa the deformities of racism have taken its extreme form in the barbarity of apartheid. Here the anti-racist struggle found that Pan African forms of consciousness were insufficient to mobilise humanity on the social project of dismantling apartheid. The South African discussion raised fundamental questions of the meaning of work, the conditions of the labour process and the forms of social organisation<sup>22</sup> adequate for human development. These questions came together at the historical moment when the all class notions of Pan-Africanism had turned into their opposites. This debility was demonstrated by the incapacity of the OAU to take a firm and clear stand of support for the liberation movements in South Africa and in independent states. It was ironical that youths and university students in Western Europe and North America were more mobilised around the debate on South Africa than the youths of Africa. Significantly the de-politicisation of African youths suited the needs of those in power.

This de-politicisation continues to affect the intellectual culture in Africa and the Caribbean. Without the masses being drawn into politics the studies on Rastafari and Pan Africanism are still dominated by the modernisation theories of which cultural pluralism was one variant. Because the African leaders and their Caribbean counterparts jealously guard and control the flow of information and cultural exchanges and partly because of the under-development of the intellectual culture with respect to autonomous social groups, the extent of the influence of Rastafari in contemporary Africa is not yet explored. Even the historical record on the Pan African links between forms of protest in the Caribbean and Africa has not yet been unearthed.<sup>24</sup> Future Pan African researchers will be able to illuminate the conditions which gave rise to Rastafari as well as the so-called syncretic movements of the Congo and Central Africa. Why did the anti-colonial struggle take the form of the Kimbango movement in the Congo and the John Chilembwe movement in Central Africa?

Pan Africanism and Rastafari became important reference points in the Twentieth Century centralising the du Bois postulate that it was the century of the colour line. It is now possible to study the impact of these movements in the consciousness of the oppressed in order to be able to grasp the strengths and weaknesses. Cabral's contribution and guide to the study of culture can be a useful starting point.

Reggae artists had embarked on a programme of cultural assertion which galvanised the youth internationally. It is now the task of committed scholars to grasp the positive aspects of this assertion and patiently outline the negative characteristics so that the re-politicisation of the youth can be part of a new process of African liberation and human emancipation.

# Footnotes:

1. V.B. Thompson, *Africa and Unity: the Evolution of Pan Africanism*, Longmans, London 1969.
2. "Report of the Rastafari Movement in Kingston." See the version reproduced in *Caribbean Quarterly* Sept. 1967; See M.G. Smith, *Plural Society in the British West Indies*, Berkley 1965.
3. Walter Rodney, *The Grounding With my Brothers*, Bogle L'Overture - London 1969.
4. W.E.B. du Bois, *On the Importance of Africa in World History* reprinted by Black Liberation Press New York, 1978; See also *The World and Africa*, International Publishers, N.Y. 1965. For a useful analysis of Du Bois' work on Africa see Earl Smith, "Du Bois and Africa" *Ufahamu* Vol. VIII No.3 1978.
5. History in this sense is used in the sense that Cabral used the notion of the recovery of the productive forces. See Amílcar Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea and Return to the Source*. Monthly Review Press, N.Y. 1967 and 1973.
6. That Ethiopia was an early reference point for Africans in the West and its religious significance has been documented by William Scott, "And Ethiopia shall

- stretch Forth her hands: The Origins of Ethiopianism in Afro-American thought 1767-1896" - *Umoja* Spring 1978.
7. J.V. Owens, "Literature on Rastafari" *New Community Journal* of the Commission of Racial Equality, London Vol. VI Nos.1 & 2 Winter 1977-1978. This review is a useful and sympathetic treatment of most of the literature on the Rastafari movement up to that date.
  8. Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings The Jamaica Labour Rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath*, Martinus Nijhoff The Hague 1978. See especially Chapter VI. "Ethiopia Stretches forth her hands."
  9. Horace Campbell, *Rasta and Resistance I*, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar es Salaam 1985.
  10. W. Rodney "Towards the Sixth Pan African Congress: Aspects of the International Class Struggle in Africa, the Caribbean and America, in *Pan Africanism* (ed.) Horace Campbell 1978.
  11. Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media are American Anglo American media in the World*, Constable Books, London 1977.
  12. This reference was made by the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in a Speech to University students in Zimbabwe, April 1986. See the *Zimbabwe Herald* 7/4/86.
  13. David Lan, *Guns and Rain, Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, ZPH, 1985.
  14. The levels of self organisation is documented in the publication *Work in Progress* No.41 April 1986. See "Beyond the Cannon of Mamelodi: Creating Mass Power". This article explored the popular organs of power in Mamelodi after the massacres of November 1985. See also the 1986 New Years Message of O.R. Tambo of the ANC, "From Ungovernability to Peoples Power" Jan. 1986.
  15. Communication from a Rastafari group in the Western Cape showed that there were whites in this group. The group was called the Universal Movement of Rastafari. This group had assigned itself the task of organising the Rastafari in South Africa.
  16. See H. Campbell - *Rasta and Resistance* - chapter on "The Rasta in the Eastern Caribbean"; See also Hugh O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada Revolution, Invasion and Aftermath*, Sphere Books London 1984. For the cultural impact of the Grenadian Revolution see Chris Searle, *Words Unchained Language and Revolution in Grenada*, Zed Press London 1984.
  17. A small island such as Jamaica provided as much as 10-15% of the needs of the American ganja market. See *US Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control* 98 Congress - 1984. Government Printers USA; See also Vera Rubin and Lambros Comitas, *Ganja in Jamaica*, Anchor Books 1976.
  18. A recent study at the University of Michigan showed that there were between 400,000 and one million heroin addicts and that over 40% of the 25 year old citizens used cocaine.
  19. Commander Robert E. Fenton, "Caribbean Coast Guard: A Regional Approach", *Naval War College Review* March-April 1985.
  20. WPA, *Grenada and the Caribbean*, Georgetown, March 13, 1984. The US Army on the other hand carried out a massive study on the lessons of Grenada. See "Operation Urgent Fury" *Military Intelligence* Jan-March 1985.
  21. The importance of Rasta and Reggae in France and the French Colonies can be seen from the interest of French Sociologists in the study of Reggae. See Denis Constant, *Aux Sources du Reggae*, Parentheses, France 1982.
  22. W. Rodney, *Groupings*.
  23. Che Guevara, 'A New attitude to Work', *Tricontinental Women, Race and Class*.
  24. An important exception has been the work done by E.B.U. Asante, *Pan African Protest West Africa and the Role-Ethiopian Crisis 1934-1941*, Longmans, London 1977.