

Whither August Monday?

A Reflection on Our British Heritage, Pan Africanism & Development

By

Gabriel J. Christian

As the summer of 2007 advances another August Monday¹ - Emancipation Day - beckons. Regrettably, very little effort is made nowadays to appreciate the roots of the holiday. Instead, more time is given to picnics, drinking and dancing over any attention to Pan Africanism, emancipation of Africans or the role of our British heritage in our forward march. Such reflection was inspired by a portrait of Marcus Garvey in full regalia which I pored over recently.

When one looks at the sepia tinted photos of a uniformed Marcus Garvey², the pre-eminent Pan Africanist of the modern era, one is struck by the stark resemblance to the British governors he would have seen, or read of, during his Jamaican childhood. With his plumed and cocked beaver hat, ivory handled sword, medals, and Sam Brown belt; he wore the accoutrement of a British Empire from whose bosom his formative ideas were derived. A dignified man, proud of his African ancestry, Garvey nonetheless adopted a discourse grounded in the hierarchy he would have been taught as a child; that of "nobility" - knights of the Nile, dukes of the Niger and Uganda; knights of Ethiopia, duchesses, etc. In essence, Garvey's philosophical template owed more to his British heritage, as any memory of Africa and African organization, philosophy, hierarchy and

¹ **Emancipation Day** is widely celebrated as a national holiday throughout the English-speaking Caribbean or British West Indies on the first Monday in August. It celebrates the Emancipation of slaves in the British Empire on August 1, 1834. Britain was the first major Western power to abolish slavery. For a period during the 1789 French revolution – inspired by its motto *Liberte Egalite Fraternite* - slavery was abolished in its Caribbean possessions. However, France returned to the slave system once Napoleon Bonapart became Emperor. Denmark – a minor European power - abolished slavery in 1792.

² **Marcus Mosiah Garvey** (1887-1940) was the founder and leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). He became the first African-American leader in American history to organize masses of people in a Pan African political movement.

heritage would have been lost in the cruel Middle Passage³ and the hundreds of years of colonialism and slavery visited on those in the Americas of African descent.

It must be noted that British nationalism rose to its apex during the Victorian era. Many non-Europeans were affected and/or inspired by it; some in ways unexpected. It was during that era that many of the early Pan Africanists were born. Men like Henry Sylvester Williams⁴, the Trinidadian barrister who organized the first Pan African Congress in London in 1900, was born in 1869. Noted Trinidadian Pan Africanist George Padmore was born in 1902; Garvey was born in 1887; Dr. W.E.B. Dubois, himself of Caribbean heritage (his father was Haitian) was born in 1868. The late 1890s was a time of rising nationalism, and black resentment at the degradation of Africa and its carving-up by European powers during the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Dominican nationalists such as J.B. Charles, George James Christian⁵, C.A. Rawle and J.R. Ralph Casimir were all born during the Victorian era, or warmed by its embers, sufficient to have been

³ **The "Middle Passage"** was the journey of slave trading ships from the west coast of Africa, where the slaves were obtained, across the Atlantic, where they were sold or, in some cases, traded for goods such as molasses, which was used in the making of rum. However, this voyage has come to be remembered for much more than simply the transport and sale of slaves. The Middle Passage was the longest, hardest, most dangerous, and also most horrific part of the journey of the slave ships to the Western colonies in the New World.

⁴ **Henry Sylvester Williams** (1869-1911) was a prominent Trinidadian barrister in the late 19th and early 20th century. Most notably, Mr. Sylvester Williams was known for his involvement in the Pan African Movement. Arriving in Britain in 1896, Trinidadian Henry Sylvester Williams formed the African Association which was to challenge paternalism, racism and imperialism. Sylvester Williams stated that "the time has come when the voice of Blackmen should be heard independently in their own affairs." He studied for the bar at Grays Inn and together with Dr. W.E.B Dubois, Dominican attorney George James Christian and others organized the first Pan African Conference in London from July 23-25, 1900.

⁵ **George James Christian** (1869-1940) was born in the village of Delices, Dominica on February 23, 1869, to an Antiguan solicitor. Christian received his early schooling in Dominica and at the Mico Teacher's Training College. He spent his early professional life in Dominica as a school teacher before being admitted to Gray's Inn London in 1899 to pursue a law degree. While at Gray's Inn, he participated in the 1900 Pan African Conference – the first of its kind - organized by Trinidadian barrister Henry Sylvester Williams of the Africa Association. During the conference he led a discussion on the theme "Organized Plunder and Human Progress Have Made Our Race Their Battlefield", where he exhibited a depth of knowledge and understanding on the issues of slavery and the continuing domination and exploitation of African States by the colonization process. Having graduated from Gray's Inn and called to the bar on June 11, 1902, He became Liberian Consul to Ghana and a member of the Gold Coast legislature. He died in the Gold Coast in 1940. See *George James Christian: Pioneer in Africa* by Dr. Thomson Fontaine of www.thedominican.net.

inspired to claim a sense of equality and humanity, which racial prejudice had denied them. These early Pan Africanist provided a base for the likes of Dr. Edward Scobie⁶, Dr. Walter Rodney, Prime Minister Roosevelt “Rosie” Douglas and others who came later.

In reviewing the historical record one finds that many of the Pan Africanists, or leaders who inspired black empowerment in the Caribbean, had a relationship to British military heritage or were grounded in its most advanced scholarship. For instance, in 1918, the British West Indian Regiment (BWIR) soldiers who mutinied at Taranto, Italy over the racist treatment meted out to them by some of their officers, formed the Caribbean League to “struggle for Caribbean independence and the rights of the black man.”⁷ At the onset of World War I in 1914, the West Indian soldiers had enlisted to fight and die for “king and country” amidst much patriotic zeal. Their military bearing, aroused nationalist perspective, and method of organization owed much to the military British culture of which they believed they belonged. When they confronted racism, their

⁶**Dr. Edward Vivian Scobie** (1918-1996) was born in the Commonwealth of Dominica, a former British colony. As a working journalist in London, Scobie became a correspondent for the Chicago Defender and for Ebony and Jet magazines. He enlisted to serve the British cause during World War II, serving in the Royal Air Force as a pilot officer. After the war, he contributed to many London newspapers, magazines and the wire services, and became a frequent broadcaster and scriptwriter for radio and television. From 1961 to 1963 he edited Flamingo, a monthly magazine published in London for African people in Britain, Africa and the Caribbean. Scobie was twice the Mayor of Roseau, capital of Dominica, and vice-president of the Dominica Freedom Party. Edward Scobie was Professor Emeritus of History, Black Studies Department, City College of New York. Previously, Dr. Scobie taught at Princeton and Rutgers Universities. He authored *Black Britannia* and *The Global African Experience*.

⁷ **On December 6, 1918, the West India regiment at Taranto, Italy revolted.** Fully assimilated to British ways, they had marched into Taranto singing "Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves" only to be cut short by British soldiers that the song was not for such as them to sing. The West India regiment, scorned and humiliated, decided to take it no more. They "mutinously" refused to work. Shootings and bombings occurred. The Worcestershire Regiment had to be dispatched to restore order. But on December 17, some fifty or more West Indian sergeants met and formed an organization with an astonishingly simple name. It was called "The Caribbean League". The League, made up of sergeants from British Guiana in the South to the Bahamas in the North, demanded self-determination for the Caribbean. "The West Indies should have freedom and govern itself" they declared. The Caribbean League pledged to organize a general strike throughout the sub-region when they got back home. See *The Making of Caribbean Philosophy* by Leonard Tim Hector, the May 29, 1998 edition of **Fan the Flame**.

military training and organizational wherewithal sharpened their resistance.⁸ Later, many of the BWIR veterans became leaders in Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association; the most formidable international African organization, to date. In 1932, UNIA organizer J.R. Ralph Casimir was the secretary to the Caribbean Conference held in Dominica. That conference aimed at the same objectives sought by the Caribbean League formed by the BWIR soldiers at Taranto in 1918, to include universal adult suffrage and an end to Crown Colony rule. In a photo taken of the attendees who represented most of the Caribbean, a stern faced Captain Arthur Cipriani is shown in the front row at center. Cipriani, a white Trinidadian and a leader in the BWIR during World War I, had returned to Trinidad and formed the Trinidad Workingman's Association and the Trinidad Labour Party-a socialist group. Despite his class and racial origins, he had thrown himself into the struggles for racial justice and the uplift of the black working class in Trinidad. Legendary trade union leader, Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler⁹ was also a

⁸ Not only did the BWIR men flock to the UNIA in Dominica. The same could be said of their comrades in British Honduras, Trinidad and Jamaica who added their leadership and organizational skill to the UNIA. In 1936 the Jamaica Workers and Transport Union (JWTU) was formed with many of its members being BWIR men. The founders of this historic institution were Hugh Clifford Buchanan, a Marxist inclined mason by trade, who became the General Secretary of the union, and **A.G.S. Coombs**, who was born in St. Ann, Jamaica in 1901. (See Arnold Bertram's May 7, 2006 article in the Jamaica Gleaner). Coombs described himself as "a peasant of low birth, with very limited education and a very poor man." He served first in the Jamaica Constabulary Force and later in The West India Regiment where he rose to the rank of Lance Corporal before he left in 1927. Another Pan Africanist was the colourful **St. William Grant**, a militant Garveyite who attracted public attention as a street corner orator dressed in the full military regalia of the Universal Negro Improvement Association's African Legion. Grant had served in World War I with the BWIR then traveled to New York where he joined the UNIA. Grant was a leader of the 1938 workers uprising in Jamaica, alongside Alexander Bustamante.

⁹ Tubal Uriah 'Buzz' Butler, also called 'Supreme Chief Servant,' was a Grenadian. Born in Grenada, Bluggo Cottage, on 21 January 1897, Butler was raised during a time when the sugar industry was failing. His family moved when Butler was a small child to St. George's where his father set up in his trade at a blacksmith shop. Because his father was the sexton of St. George's Anglican Chapel, free tuition was given to Butler to attend St. George's Anglican School, an educational institution in Grenada with high reputation. After Butler had finished primary grades at age 13, the family had no funds for further schooling. Butler ran up against the unspoken rules of the Grenadian social structure in St. George's. He could find no work or means for further education. The First World War was looming on the horizon. At 17 years old, Butler told military officials he was 20 years old. He became a volunteer in the First Contingent of the British West India Regiment. Butler served in the British Army from 1914-1918, stationed in Egypt. He returned to Grenada in 1918 at the age of 21 whereupon he formed the Grenada Representative Government Movement [calling for universal adult franchise] and the Grenada Union of Returned Soldiers [seeking benefits and employment]. Returning soldiers were riled about the lack of jobs and their resulting difficulty to find means of subsistence. In 1920 the capital of St. George's was almost destroyed by fire. Some have attributed the arson to the wrath of the returning soldiers. Butler also became associated with Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Grenadian authorities blamed fires on the teachings of Garvey. From November 1927 until August 1940 there was a UNIA chapter in Grenada.

British West Indian Regiment soldier and World War I veteran. Upon his return from the war he became an early protégé of Cipriani. Butler's early union activities built a solid backing among Trinidad's oil workers and made for many African descended Trinidadians to access a better quality of life. Cipriani and Butler's efforts are commonly seen as precursors to Trinidad's independence movement led by Dr. Eric Williams¹⁰ in the 1950s. In Jamaica, British Army World War I veteran Norman Washington Manley¹¹

'Man's rise to greatness,' a famous speech delivered by Marcus Garvey in 1937, at the Queen's Park Pavilion in St. George's, may have been heard by Butler. He launched his party 27 July 1936, called the British Empire Workers' [BEW] and Citizen's Home Rule Party. On 19 June 1937 the oil workers went on strike action at Fyzabad. Butler disappeared, thus the song "Where Was Butler?" by Calypsonian Atila The Hun told everyone about this 'mystery'. In a couple of days, the action expanded into an all-island workers strike. Butler was finally arrested on September 27, 1937, tried for sedition and sentenced for two years. He was released in May 1939 and again detained on 28 November 1939 for a 5-year term in prison as a security risk. Released in 1945, Butler led strikes in 1946 and ran for political office in 1950. According to writer Raffique Shah, "For Butler, race did not exist in his mind." In Shah's view: "What Butler did in 1948—give up his stomping ground in St. Patrick to his friend [Timothy] Roodal, and choosing instead to do battle against the powerful [Albert] Port of Spain—spoke volumes about the Chief Servant's view of the 'race' question." Butler lost the election to Gomes. Butler died in Trinidad on Carnival Sunday 20th February, 1977. (Source: The Grenada revolution Online).

¹⁰ **Dr. Eric Eustace Williams** (September 25, 1911 – March 29, 1981) was the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Williams was born the son of minor civil servant, but his mother was a descendant of the French Creole elite. He was educated at Queen's Royal College in Port of Spain, where he excelled at academics and football. He won an island scholarship in 1932 which allowed him to attend Oxford University where he received his doctorate in 1938. Williams was in part inspired by C.L.R. James and other Pan Africanists of the period who he met in London and Washington, D.C., and his doctoral thesis, titled *The Economic Aspect of the West Indian Slave Trade and Slavery*, owed much to the influence of James's *The Black Jacobins* (1938). His thesis formed the basis of his most notable book, now considered a classic in economic history, *Capitalism and Slavery*. He also authored from *Columbus to Castro*, among other works. Arguably, he is the most eminent scholar of modern Caribbean and Pan African nationalism in that his scholarship chipped away at the myth of white supremacy. Williams' achievements brought pride to West Indians and he brought African and East Indian Trinidadians to political power in Trinidad. However, he was a gradualist and not a political revolutionary. In the 1970s he was to come in for much criticism from Black Power movement advocates who believed he had not given due regard to black economic power and ownership of the means of production. They disregarded the need for balance which he engaged in a society where East Indians and Africans had to peacefully co-exist, or the enormous nationalist political and intellectual space he had created for non-European and African peoples when he stated defiantly, "Massa Day Done." He served as head of state from 1956 until his death in 1981.

¹¹ **Hon. Norman Washington Manley Q.C.** was born in Jamaica on July 4, 1893, at Roxborough in Manchester. He attended Beckford and Smith High School and later Jamaica College where he distinguished himself as a scholar and athlete. In 1914 he was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University. He interrupted his studies to serve as a soldier in the First World War and was decorated with the Military Medal for bravery in action. At Oxford University, he obtained the B.A. and B.C.L. degrees, the latter with First Class Honours. He obtained a Class 1 in the Bar Examinations and was awarded a Certificate of Honour. In the same year he was Prizeman at Gray's Inn. He was called to the Bar on April 21, 1921. One of the leading statesmen of his time, he was Chief Minister of Jamaica from January 1955 to July 1959, and was Premier of Jamaica from July 1959 to April 1962. He was one of the architects of the Caribbean Federation and the Jamaican Independence Constitution. He died on September 2, 1969.

who was awarded the Military Medal for bravery, used his skills as an attorney to represent striking dock and agricultural workers during the 1938 labour riots. He later founded the socialist Peoples National Party. While the purveyors of British nationalism may never have intended it, that projection of British martial bearing, pride of place and honor, was imbibed by the most visionary and noble descendants of Africa, who turned it to their own ends.

The linkages between those who sought our freedom and the intellectual and military structures of the British Empire are quite obvious and profound. It is not to say that - left to their own devices - African people would not have struggled for freedom. Indeed, Africans never submitted to the whip and were continuously smoldering and revolting against colonial tyranny in ways big and small. Rather, it is to admit that – for all its brutality - the very sinew of the British Empire was possessed of a degree of humanity and opportunity which sped change for the sons and daughters of Africa.¹² Changes in that empire in turn wrought changes in the French, Spanish and Portuguese empires, which benefited Africa and African descended people on a whole. It was for that reason that these apostles of racial pride and/or Afrocentricity had a distinct philosophical imprint born of British pride and heritage; and a belief in equality and “can do.” Therefore, we must make a conscious effort to revisit and credit that British heritage when Pan Africanism is studied.

It was not by accident that the first Pan African Conference took place in London either. For while Britain had been a leader in colonial expansion and slavery, the Anglo Saxon

¹² The first organized white abolitionists of the modern era to denounce slavery were Anglo Saxon Quakers who believed that all human beings were children of one God. The French philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment were mostly anti-slavery and were the most vocal of continental Europeans who disparaged the trade in Africans. In France, **Jacques Pierre Brissot**, a supporter of the French Revolution, established the *Société des Amis des Noirs* (Society of the Friends of Blacks) in 1788, but this group failed in its effort against the slave trade. Despite its complete lack of success, the French antislavery effort was the strongest in continental Europe. However, their cause saw some success when slavery was abolished during the French revolution. Sadly, that was short lived, as Napoleon Bonaparte – upon his rise to power - re-imposed slavery in the Caribbean. Earlier, though the Spanish priest **Bartolome Las Casas** (1484-1566) wrote against colonial brutality, his work did not spur a movement of any significance. While Las Casas has been called the Father of anti-imperialism and anti-racism, others take a more guarded or modest view of his achievements. What there is little or no dispute about is that Las Casas was an early and energetic advocate and activist for the rights of native peoples.

culture was itself possessed of a radical democratic strand as far back as Wat Tyler¹³ and the Levellers movement. It was that spirit which favored the existence of white abolitionists such as William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Zachary Macaulay, Thomas Fowell Buxton, all of whom agitated for an end to the slave trade and slavery. Their efforts even penetrated popular culture of the day and inspired the abolitionists to craft the Wedgwood Cameo;¹⁴ said to be the first logo in history used to publicize a campaign. History records no other anti-slavery campaign in any other country which took on so many forms in literature, poetry, popular crafts; protest rallies and parliamentary meetings and mass action. Often, in the heat of the independence and Pan African movement, many have sought to discard and or deny any role for our British heritage and how it has shaped our sense of humanity or national liberation ethic. However, an honest re-appraisal of that British heritage evinces that while it often condoned, and was propelled by ideas of racial supremacy, there were those indigenous to Britain or the Anglo Saxon tradition who opposed such a philosophy. In such opposition, they were of transcendental service to all mankind and expanded the humanistic reach inherent to those who favor freedom over tyranny. Many, like John Brown of Harpers Ferry¹⁵, were willing to commit their whole lives to the equality of all

¹³ **Walter Tyler**, commonly known as **Wat Tyler** (died June 15, 1381) was the leader of the English Peasants' Revolt of 1381. An egalitarian who rebelled against domination by feudal lords and onerous taxes, his philosophy is said to have guided the Levellers and those who ultimately founded the British Labour Party. The Levellers (as in to treat everyone on the basis of equality—as in a level playing field) were a group of egalitarian English reformers mainly active during the period from 1645 through 1649, who originated many of the ideas that eventually became provisions of the U.S. Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights.

¹⁴ **Josiah Wedgwood**, an innovative designer and pottery manufacturer whose brand and company exists to this day, reproduced the [Abolitionist] Society's seal, depicting a slave in chains with the words "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?", as a design on a cameo (hence the term "Wedgwood Cameo) and gave hundreds of these to the Society for distribution. These cameos became a popular fashion accessory and wealthy ladies wore them on bracelets and in their hair, helping to advertise the Abolitionist Society's campaign to end the slave trade. Some abolitionists were MPs and they tried to persuade their fellow MPs to end 'this horrid trade'.

¹⁵ **John Brown** (May 9, 1800 – December 2, 1859) was the first white American abolitionist to advocate and practice insurrection as a means to the abolition of slavery. Brown has been called "the most controversial of all 19th-century Americans. His attempt in 1859 to start a liberation movement among enslaved blacks in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, electrified the nation, even though not a single slave answered his call. He was tried for treason against the state of Virginia and hanged, but his behavior at the trial seemed heroic to millions of Americans. His death is widely considered to have triggered the American Civil War (1861-1865) during which President Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery in the US (1863).

mankind. In that vein, many may not know that the US national hymn, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, owes its melody to John Brown of Harpers Ferry.¹⁶

Therefore there is no sense in creating fairy tales beyond the rightful glory of the Ashanti Kingdom or Timbuktu. Indeed that Timbuktu (so often derided in Western popular culture as some “dark faraway place”) was shining beacon of learning when much of Europe did not share its advances, needs be known.¹⁷ However, what is more important is that we study, appreciate and emulate whatever were the noble tools, methodologies and institutions which made Britain great and took the West beyond those civilizations they met and vanquished in Africa and other places. And that we do so, without treating or making peace with the barbarism which was visited on our own kind. In so doing we

Indeed anti-slavery Union soldiers marched into battle singing *John Brown's Body lies a mouldering in the grave, but his soul keeps marching on.*

¹⁶ The words to the **Battle Hymn of the Republic** were penned by Julia W. Howe in 1861. This hymn was born during the American civil war, when Howe visited a Union Army camp on the Potomac River near Washington, D. C. She heard the soldiers singing the song “John Brown’s Body,” and was taken with the strong marching beat. To Union soldiers “John Brown’s Body” was a favorite marching song as they went into battle against the southern Confederated states which stood for slavery. She wrote the words the next day. Many believe that the Battle Hymn more correctly captures the liberty-loving ethic of the American civilization than the US National Anthem. The last two stanzas of the Battle Hymn read:

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free;*
[originally ...let us die to make men free]
While God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! While God is marching on.

He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave,
He is wisdom to the mighty, He is honor to the brave;
So the world shall be His footstool, and the soul of wrong His slave,*
Our God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Our God is marching on.

* Author’s emphasis.

¹⁷ **Timbuktu** is a city in Tombouctou Region, Mali. It is home to the prestigious Qur’anic Sankore University and other madrasas, and was an intellectual and spiritual capital and centre for the propagation of Islam throughout Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries. It fell to Western conquest in the 18th century.

should never be so ethnocentric or colored by prejudice to deny British commercial prowess, administrative efficiency, scientific depth, rule of law principles, institution building and superior military organization, tactics and strategy. Or, indeed, British humanity. In so doing, we emulate and honor the best in our British heritage, wisely dispensing with those discredited facets which sought to deny the humanity of our African origins.

As descendants of Africans or formerly colonized peoples, we must accept that when Western colonialists came we were not equipped to resist—though fiercely resist we did. We were mostly disunited by tribe and clan, where our science and military capacity did not match that of the cannon and musketry arrayed against our ancestors. Our nation-state formation was mostly non-existent and so unified effort was lacking. As stated by historian Daniel R. Headrick:

Each stage of imperialism involved certain key technologies: Thus the gunboat, created for the East India Company, assured the British victory in the Opium War; quinine prophylaxis enable Europeans to survive in tropical Africa; and sophisticated weapons gave Europeans an overwhelming advantage over Africans. Later, improved transportation and communication systems-e.g. steamship lines, submarine cables, and colonial railroads-consolidated economic exploitation of the colonies.¹⁸

It was for that reason that Ethiopian Emperor Menelik of Showa focused on acquiring the tools of European military superiority and learning. His march 1, 1896 defeat of the Italians at the battle of Adowa proved that acquisition of European weapons and organizational systems had to be a priority where independence and progress was sought and/or to be strengthened.¹⁹ Indeed Emperor Selassie, a founder of the Organization of

¹⁸ See generally *The Tools of Empire – Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* by Daniel R. Headrick (Oxford University Press, 1981).

¹⁹ The confrontation between Italy and Ethiopia at Adowa was a fundamental turning point in Ethiopian history. At Adowa **Emperor Menelik** made good use of European rifles, cannon and tactics which he had acquired through skillful alliance building and treaties. He actively courted Europeans who could instruct on and supply advanced weaponry. Major colonial powers (Menelik is said to have had French map makers, tacticians and others teach his own) competed to use Menelik as a client to widen their spheres into the richer and historically impenetrable prize of the hinterland of northeast Africa. Menelik, aware of the inter-imperial rivalry, feigned special friendship with each one to acquire such massive modern European weaponry that by the mid 1880s he had transformed his army into one of the largest and strongest in the region. Ethiopia's victory is often compared to Japan's naval triumph over Russia at Tsushima in 1905.

African Unity which was headquartered in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, sought out British know how in bettering education and administration to the benefit of his people. He continued such modernization, to include the establishment of Air Ethiopia and the Ethiopian pilot school in 1945 in partnership with the U.S. airline, Transworld Airlines (TWA). Today Air Ethiopia is considered one of the best airlines in the world and its training school educates most African pilots. Emperor Selassie also unified warring tribes and religious sects, established one of the most modern universities in black Africa, introduced a mint and national currency, and developed Ethiopia's army into subsaharan Africa's most powerful for a considerable period. All the while sending his best students to mainly Western universities so as to have them return to develop Ethiopia.

Sadly, some in the Rastafarian movement, who espouse Pan Africanism, took a detour away from such an embrace of science and universal success principles, when they resorted to grass skirts and coconut shell knives in 1970s Dominica. In other places some who wear dreadlocks - as if they are Rastafarians - have become associated with a criminal dope peddling underclass which work a disservice to the noble principles true admirers of Emperor Selassie espouse. Their understandable indignation at the evils of colonialism and slavery caused them to reject modernization and learning, while indulging in the mind-numbing abuse of marijuana; a practice never promoted by Emperor Selassie himself. Today the land grant given by Emperor Selassie I to Africans in the West at Shashamane²⁰ Ethiopia is under threat of reclamation by the Ethiopian government. While there are some farms, guest houses and schools at Shashamane, the

Though apparent to very few historians at the time, these defeats were the beginning of the decline of Europe as the center of world politics. This defeat of a colonial power and the ensuing recognition of African sovereignty became rallying points for later African nationalists during their struggle for decolonization.

²⁰ The 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia did more to ignite Pan-African sentiment than any other event in modern times. In the folklore of Africans in and outside of Africa, Ethiopia was the bastion and symbol of African freedom and independence. In the Bible, Blacks read that Ethiopia was the land of Queen of Sheba and its Monarch represented a direct genealogical link to the Solomonic and Davidic Throne. Ethiopia was the sacred land that the Greek historian Homer wrote about as the "land where the gods loved to be." The invasion and occupation of Ethiopia and exile of its sovereign sparked a tremendous mass movement of international demonstration and support by Blacks for Ethiopia and its Emperor in the war of resistance. In 1941, in gratitude for the support Africans in the West, Emperor Selassie donated 500 acres land to the African Diaspora. However, the vast majority of persons who relocated to Shashamane were Rastafarians from Jamaica. See www.shashamane.org.

level of industry and advanced productivity desired by the originators of the idea, has not materialized. The grave concerns of the sustainability of the Shashamane project, the only community of significance of repatriated Africans from the West in Africa, can be gleaned from this internet posting by a Rastafarian. Titled “Shashamane Land Grant Report” There is no date or author given for this piece from the www.rastaites.com website, which I quote in pertinent part:

“The key to the attainment of any Goal lies in Ones ability to learn to direct One’s objectives towards clearly defined ends and to pursue them in an orderly, rationale and co-ordinated fashion.”

I and I cannot complain, there are limited opportunities in Shashamane, but there is still scope for development. I and I need to build a University College, that would incorporate the highest levels of intellectual pursuit and research. There is immediate need for a high school and Technical College . A Herbal Research Centre, Oil Processing factories, for edible oils, and Essential Oils. I and I need to build a clothes Manufacturing factories, both in knitwear and textile. I and I need to get involved in ceramics, similarly full fledged food processing plants will also have to be set up....The Clinic that has been started must be completed. These are the objective Realities that can sustain economic stability and ensure employment for I and I people .. The highest levels of diplomatic ability has to be activated to negotiate I and I Selves through the corridors of the System, I and I cannot be dumb or lacking, the TALKING must be over. (sic).²¹

The poignant call by “I and I” speaks great truths about the need for industry and the imperative of going beyond “talking.” However, he does not honestly state why the returnees have not fared well. While the natives and government in the Shashamane area may be less welcoming in the post-Selassie era, what have the Rastafarians of the Shashamane settlement done? Have they allied with historically black colleges in the United States, or elsewhere, or other non-Rastafarian Africans in the Diaspora to make Shashamane a beacon for progress? The institutions sought above can be built in any Rastafarian or African community in the West; one need not wait for repatriation to do so. There is no need for delay. Indeed, to start wherever one resides is a good practice in which to engage, before the journey to Africa commences. The Irish, Jewish, Korean and

²¹ Online research reveals that missive may have been report by **Desmond “Ras Kabinda” Trotter**, the well known Dominican black power activist of the 1970s.

Chinese Diaspora communities worldwide have often been the source of much nationalist agitation, economic vitality and drive. The Jews, whatever one may think of the Israel-Palestinian conflict today, established the kibbutz²² system for cooperative industry which sustained their pre-independence communities in Palestine during the 1930s and 1940s with advanced techniques. The kibbutz system became famous as it served to enhance the fortunes of their people and made for the survival of Israel in its 1947-1948 independence struggle. We are well advised to take heed of the institution building experiences of those other cultures which were able to overcome the ravages of racism and colonial occupation. Let us then keenly observe, learn, and then execute on that which will assist our rise.

Wisely, in some Rastafarian communities, that building has already begun. Apart from such delay, however, there is another factor inhibiting progress. It is obvious from any cursory observation of communities associated with the tenets of Rastafarianism, that the use of marijuana may well be the reason why objectives are not pursued in an “orderly, rational and coordinated fashion.” While receiving an award on behalf of my law firm from the Rastafarian based Habesha Community “Black to Your Roots” program in 2006, I took pains to remind the assembly of the noble cause of Pan Africanism espoused by the Emperor. However, with some concern at the reception I would receive, I stated: Unless the community does not disassociate itself from the use and/or abuse of mind altering substances, then they will continue to under-perform. The pursuit of the noble objectives of building schools and factories cited by the writer can be successful. But there must be clear-headed focus on learning, acquisition of technology and the building of alliances. The use of banned and/or mind altering substances which dull initiative and negatively impact ones health, is a drag on the Rastafarian community²³ and will continue to inhibit

²² **Kibbutz**: Israeli communal settlement in which all wealth is held in common and profits are reinvested in the settlement. The first kibbutz was founded in Palestine in 1909; most have since been agricultural. Adults live in private quarters; children are generally housed and cared for as a group. Meals are prepared and eaten communally. Members have regular meetings to discuss business and to take votes on matters requiring decisions. Jobs may be assigned by rotation, by choice, or by skill. The kibbutz movement declined dramatically in the late 20th century. But kibbutzim continued to play an important role in the tourism industry in Israel, attracting students and other short-term residents, mostly Jews from overseas seeking a link with the past. www.answers.com

²³ **Glennis “Blows” Bellot** the legendary Dominican Rastafarian leader and Pan Africanist sympathizer who founded **Blows Agro Products Ltd**, along with **Bernard “Imani” Shaw**, died of lung disease. It is

its development mission such as noted above. Alliances are necessary in any kind of progress, but which community desires an alliance with another perceived as unproductive?²⁴ The writer wrote of the same vision favored by Emperor Selassie. Sadly communities of color everywhere, like those at Shashamane, will meet with the same setbacks continually suffered by those who have internalized and manifest a defeatist outlook-even where their words speak of pride and glory. Such an outlook finds solace in behavioral patterns which favor the abuse of drugs and/or alcohol, an unwillingness to effect good study habits, an unwillingness to commit to institution building, a disdain for success among our own kind, and a lack of commitment to building business networks. We disregard our history of successful struggle, where many fail to engage in worthy enterprise or graduate from schools and universities. What homage do we pay to our heroes, alive or dead, where they opened doors to greater opportunities? What salute do we offer to honor the efforts of legendary leaders such as Dr. Eric Williams, Edward Oliver LeBlanc, Norman Washington Manley, Booker-T Washington, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Jr. - or Haile Selassie for that matter? Not much tribute is realized, where we fail to work unceasingly to perpetuate their noble legacy.

The settlers at Shashamane are yet to make their project a beacon of productivity and learning as the Emperor would have desired. Had they done so, the Ethiopian and other African governments would be actively courting Rastafarians to invest in Africa. However, such is not the case. I trust there is still time for a change of approach. For such a change to occur, all involved must make a frank assessment of “objective reality.” As shown by cultural icons such as Bob Marley, Nasio Fontaine and Delmance “Rasmo” Moses who have been cheerleaders for progress, justice and human rights, Pan

commonly thought that his lung disease was a direct result of marijuana use. The negative effect of all kinds of smoking is well documented in the scientific literature. Neither Bellot nor Shaw were educated at business school or equipped with the best tools of modern commerce, though social change had made such opportunities available to them by the time they founded the company in the 1980s. Even today the firm has no website, though basic information can be found online. One can only surmise that the **Blows Agro Products Ltd** could have done much better where good health, better business practices and better alliance building by the founders could have expanded its reach and success.

²⁴ On the cultural and artistic scene many who espouse an affinity to Rastafarianism have succeeded and gained popular acclaim and wealth. However, few have translated such personal acclaim and wealth into group success by the building of durable institutions.

Africanism must have a positive purpose in deed not merely words. Both Marley, Fontaine and Moses have pursued learning and were/are prolific artists. Marley's first objective, once he earned sufficient income, was to purchase his own record press "Tuff Gong"²⁵ and so avoid exploitation. Many who espouse Rastafarianism now avoid marijuana, are diligent about education, make a living in the arts and craft industry or professions, while pursuing a healthy vegetarian lifestyle. They need to be emulated. Pan Africanism then is pointless without an absolute focus on entrepreneurship, productivity, discipline and learning.

It must be stressed that there is no betrayal or error where one embraces universal success principles such as: unified effort, institution building, rule of law and the equitable and efficient administration of justice, archiving of ones history, integrity and transparency in all dealings, and the pursuit of technology and learning. And that one must be spiritually strong and self confident enough to wisely borrow such technique and technology from whatever source possible, without regard to creed or color. It was mindless rejection of that principle, and indulgence in xenophobia, which caused Idi Amin to deport the East Indian commercial class in Uganda in the 1970s, instead of having Ugandans emulate the principles which made for their prowess in commerce and the professions. His rule of Uganda was ruinous. In Asia, the Khmer Rouge pursued another road to ruin atop a train of xenophobia posing as Kamphuchean nationalism. They sought to erase the French and other foreign influences in Cambodia by destroying institutions of learning in some vain attempt to recapture the glory days of Cambodian civilization by going back to year zero—as if human progress is like a clock whose hands can be reversed. The result was misery on a scale which almost made Cambodians extinct. Such is the ignoble cul de sac arrived at when genuine disdain at the evils of colonialism is not tempered by common sense.

It is a historic truism that societies which grew up at the confluence of great ideas, and which do not shy away from the strength born of marrying different competences do

²⁵ **Tuff Gong**, with Jamaican and international offices, continues as an institution. The Company's goal is to carry on the legacy of the late Bob Marley O.M. by producing music that inspires and motivates people towards peace, justice and self-fulfillment.

better. Britain, while prejudice existed in its social structure, was the founding redoubt of the early Pan Africanists. They found the truth, literally, while buried amidst the stacks at British libraries and other institutions of higher learning. Will we then appreciate that every African country or community must see the proliferation of libraries and research centers as key to our progress? We deny the profound benefit of that British heritage and its focus on organized learning – not simply by griot or the oral tradition – to our peril. The point here is not to accept any notion of inferior or superior races. Rather, simply, we must embrace that which works for better.

Which takes me to Singapore's current progress and its consistent embrace of that British heritage, even where its legendary Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew²⁶ is so respectful of his²⁷ heritage as to be considered a Chinese nationalist. His leadership reflects that one can adopt the best principles in arts and science brought by the colonizer and have it serve the best interest of the once colonized. It is of note that Singapore has some of the most draconian anti-drug laws and that the Chinese revolutionaries, as one of their first acts, shut down the opium dens once they gained victory in 1949. Today Singapore boasts a racially and culturally diverse population numbering four million within a compact geography. With one person in four between the ages of 25 and 35 an expatriate, a diverse mix of experience, aspiration, and capability fuel creativity. That creativity and continued fusion has made for it to be one of the most productive and disciplined 21st Century societies. Nearer to Dominica, in the British Virgin Islands (Tortola, Virgin Gorda etc.) a wise management of local interest, British common law as a favored

²⁶ **Lee Kuan Yew**, former Prime Minister of Singapore built a country considered by most to be the most amazing post World War II development success story. That tiny Singapore was able to overcome the limitations of size, scant natural resources and ethnic divisions is credited to Lee Kuan Yew's firm and visionary leadership which focused on integrity, intelligence and drive. His book, **Singapore, From Third World to First World**, should be read by all those interested in national development.

²⁷ **Errol Walton Barrow P.C., Q.C. (1920-1987)**. Acclaimed as the Father of Barbados' Independence, Errol Walton Barrow was born in the parish of St. Lucy on January 21, 1920. Over the 15-year period of his Administration first as Premier and then as Prime Minister ending in 1976, he was particularly successful in securing many social changes for Barbados. In December, 1939, Errol won a scholarship in Classics to Codrington College but did not pursue those studies. Instead, he joined the Royal Air Force and served in World War II. He was personal navigation officer to the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army at the Rhine. After his stint in the RAF, Barrow studied law and was called to the Bar, Inns of Court in 1949.

instrument to resolve international disputes, and finessed crafting of financial and administrative offshore services have given that island what is claimed to be the highest per capita income in the world. Bermuda, Turks & Caicos, and the Cayman Islands are all comfortable with their relations with Britain for the most part. Their systems have evolved from the bad old days of the plantation economy and slavery. An independent nation, nearby Barbados is considered one of the better administered countries in the world. Having competent leaders of integrity, intelligence and drive early on, such as Errol Barrow and Sir Grantley Adams²⁸ made for much success by Barbados. Barbadians open affinity for their British heritage may be of significance in that regard. While not perfect, all Pan Africanists should note that leadership by blacks in those societies has not led to ruin – as is the critique of our detractors. That they are linked to Britain and comfortable with such British heritage as is professed, is relevant where they are beneficiary of due process of law principles, equality of opportunity and an enhanced quality of life. Today, people from all over the world invest in these islands and they so benefit.

So too we must welcome such diversity to Dominica by a well crafted policy of **Learning by Partnering**. Located at that central point between Guadeloupe and Martinique, North and South America, Dominica can become a place for the confluence of ideas and insights from East and West, North and South. Dominica, can serve as a natural hub for global business. We can have an enhanced lifestyle where we develop a dedication to hard, serious work, making the country a preferred location for business and enterprise. If we can promote and evolve the island's physical and information-technology infrastructure, reliable connectivity, productive relations with our Diaspora

²⁸ **Sir Grantley Adams** (1898-1971), as he was popularly known, excelled and won a scholarship in 1918 which afforded him the opportunity to attend Oxford University in England pursuing studies in Classics and Jurisprudence. Grantley Adams was admitted to the Bar at Grey's Inn and functioned as a Counsel of Her Majesty, the Queen of England. He returned to Barbados in 1925 and led the struggle for workers rights, universal adult suffrage and independence. Sir Grantley Adams' political life became closely intertwined with his involvement in the labour movement. He fought on both fronts, as a politician and lawyer and as a trade unionist, to bring about social and political transformation in the Barbados society and to redress the injustices faced by the working class. His fervour in representing the masses against the established colonial regime was extended to his work as a trade unionist and as President of the Barbados Workers' Union for thirteen years from 1941-1954. After many years of striving for the introduction of an independent Federal System of Government in the West Indies, he gave up his Premiership of Barbados to assume the position of the first (and only) Premier of the West Indies Federation from 1958-1962.

and Africa, transparent commercial practices, and a strong trade network we can attract others to our shores. The convergence of global talent and multiculturalism stimulates colourful variations and creativity in the Dominican milieu. That requires that we be strong in national purpose and confident about our ability to succeed, while maintaining our dignity.

Pan Africanism, as with Carib pride, is to be cherished as they are testaments to our common humanity. However, these principles lose virtue where they become reservoirs for resentment, and yearning for some non-existent golden era in the dim past. Yes, Egypt and ancient African civilizations engaged in slavery and man's inhumanity to man, is not unique to any color, class or creed. Witness those who profess Islam today while committing genocide against their kinsmen in Sudan's Darfur region. The outrages they now perpetrate are on par with the outrages of so-called Christian civilizations which enslaved Africans in the colonial period.

Therefore, as we approach Emancipation Day 2007 – August Monday – let us dedicate ourselves to a more nuanced Pan Africanism or nationalism; one that respects and emulates the virtue of all the strands of humanity which comprise our national fabric. Let our celebration be more constructive and include our production of literature, the performance of community service, exalting those among us who are enterprising and/or deserving of the Golden Drum Award²⁹, while favoring exhibitions and forums which speak to our prowess in diverse areas.

Let us be conscious of the British strand whose imprint, more than any other, is reflected in our laws, language and history. Even where we strive to recapture the rich heritage of our Carib and African peoples, we do so using the tools common to British taught scholarship. Ethnocentrism should not foster any confusion or discomfort attendant to that reality. Now, more than ever, we must appreciate that knowledge, like justice or injustice, is not the unique preserve of any nation. And that our efforts to redeem Africa need not require diminution of any other nation's worth.

²⁹ The **Golden Drum** is the most prestigious award given by the Government of Dominica to those who have excelled in the arts. Ophelia Marie, Gordon Henderson and many other famous Dominicans have been awarded the Golden Drum Award.

Dominica is the sum total of all that which went into its founding. Conscious of that fact, we will benefit from the wise partnerships with and investments by, others where we do not see such investment as enslavement. In particular, we must seek such alliances which allow for us to develop the most efficient means to organize and make productive our human and natural resources. Disorganization is the heart and soul of colonialism, according to noted Caribbean nationalist theoretician Tim Hector and it was due to the advanced organization of others that Africa was vanquished. Once we so organize we will cease being haunted by our history. Our history must spur us on to progress, not be some psychic albatross around our necks. Let us not be fearful about encouraging others to partner with us in Dominica, or any Diaspora community. In so doing let us make our island, or our communities, hubs of creativity and innovation. Honest scholarship and leadership must acknowledge and embrace the virtues of our British heritage where it has assisted our development in organization and manner of approach. In so doing let us not forget that the British heritage from which we derive so much that is good and wholesome in our culture, acquired the best that was inherent to Africa, Asia and the Americas to build its strength.

Self reliance and self confidence are two essential prerequisites for self development and national development. Let us note that the acceptance of a heritage grounded in victory, not defeat, is the surest tool to self reliance and self confidence. Self confidence and self reliance builds trust in community and our ability to persevere. And let us not confuse opposition to racism with the absolute necessity of emulating superior performance. Where we have succeeded in the past is where we have avoided such confusion, and embraced excellence wherever we may find it. Now we must expand beyond that British heritage and partner, as necessary, with others from whom we can draw added strength and wisdom. The most progressive societies today, therefore, are those which have been able to seamlessly marry the universal success principles which gave Britain and the West the edge in prior years. As we played a noble part in that history, let us see it as ours too, and use it to benefit our forward march. Where we are possessed of such sentiment we shall imbue August Monday, and every conscious moment, with an energy focused on success.

