**Caribbean Black Power: From Slogan to Practical Politics**

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# CARIBBEAN BLACK POWER
## From Slogan to Practical Politics

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**This article assesses the evolution** of Caribbean Black Power from its crudest form of sloganeering to its transformation as a weapon in the political process. The analysis begins with a brief assessment of New Worldism (Emanuel, 1983) through Black Power to the participation of former Black Power advocates in the very politics that they once debunked. First, it will be shown that the advocates of the 1960s were the successors to the legacies of Marcus Garvey, C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, Jose Marti, Juan Bosch, Munoz Marin, and Aime Cesaire, who, a few decades earlier, had made a similar call for Caribbean empowerment. Second, the peculiar configuration of the Caribbean dictated a compelling search for an appropriate ideology to properly articulate the demands of the multiracial society.

Caribbean Black Power of the 1960s was influenced by the civil rights movement in the U.S. Accepting that connection created peculiar problems. Newspapers, politicians, and business elements were vociferous in their condemnation of advocates as agents of international communism and as fraudulent mimic men (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 1968). Additionally, the establishment argued that if Black Power meant Caribbeanizing the institutions that support the state, the advocates had no case since locals had since replaced the expatriates in all key positions. And further, since political independence had been won, the society was well on its way to making the average citizen participate fully in the decision-making process. Criticisms aside, how did Black Power influence the societal arrangement? What was its impact on the political system? And since

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Black Power did not just happen, it is important to explain the conditions that made for its emergence.

## NEW WORLD GROUP AND NEW WORLDISM

It is not farfetched to trace the roots of Black Power to the revolutionary deeds of the slaves who came to the Caribbean in an earlier period to help the Caribbean build Europe. The heroic acts and pronouncements of Jose Marti, Juan Bosch, Munoz Marin, Nicolas Guillen, Aime Cesaire, Marcus Garvey, C.L.R. James, and even Toussiant L'Ouverture and Paul Bogle are relevant. Space does not permit a thorough analysis; suffice it to state that they all influenced the Black Power movement of the 1960s.

An intensive nationalism, sometimes racially based, came from Garvey, Bogle, L'Ouverture, and even Cesaire. James (1934), Fanon (1963), and others gave a new historiography that set as its task the need to interpret Caribbean developments/events from a Caribbean perspective, particularly because it was generally accepted that the Caribbean should treasure its "special" relationship with the Metropole. That relation, Williams (1981) argued, prevented Caribbeans from negotiating with several countries to capture the best price for Caribbean products. The New World group picked up where Williams, Marin, and James left off.

At the newly created University of Guyana and at other regional universities, New World groups (Caribbean intellectuals) assessed the role of the Caribbean in the building of empires to explain why the present generation was obligated to ensure meaningful independence. They were also disturbed by persistent meddling in the affairs of regional governments by those who believed that these governments did not live up to the expectations of the former colonial authorities.

New Worldism was intended to chart a clear vision of a society that would leave "the paternal shelter [of Europe and America], to articulate and define the nature of Caribbean societies and to find specific solutions for social and economic reconstruction (Thomas, 1967, p. 44). Its immediate task was "to build a society appropriate

to [Caribbean people's] collective needs" (Brewster, 1969, p. 55). Aware that past attempts, initially mass organized, quickly degenerated into personal fiefdoms for a select urban few, New Worldism refused to consider itself or be considered as a "political organization in the sense of being committed to or contemplating any direct political action" (Girvan, 1969, p.4). Instead, it preferred to be viewed as the conscience of the region, an instrument to press the political directorate into action (Girvan, 1969). Inadvertently, New Worldism produced the initial breaking down of "the intellectual fragmentation of the different linguistic groupings of the region" (Lewis, 1985, p. 31). A candid editorial (Girvan, 1969) in the *New World Quarterly* vividly told the story:

> We still lack a sense of historical process which is based on a knowledge of the many attempts to change the system, the achievements and limitations of each attempt. We have little appreciation of the experience of Spanish, French, and Dutch Caribbean; and most of us are ignorant of the experience of the Aboriginal Indians, the East Indians and the Chinese who were, like the Africans either decimated or uprooted in the service of the plantation system. For that matter, we have made little attempt to get to know the societies of West Africa, India, China or Java which were the mother cultures of our complex matrix. (p. 6)

New Worldism sought to improve on this situation, and in the process, expose the subjugation of the Caribbean. Economists Lloyd Best, George Beckford, and Clive Thomas critically looked at the economies. Political scientists James Millette, Trevor Monroe, and A. W. Singham evaluated the political institutions and processes.

Thomas (1967) concluded that the economic model that purported to engineer economic transformation did not teach Caribbeans how to satisfy their economic needs, to remove them from that perennial dependence. Addressing specific sectors of the economy, Girvan (1971) wrote that "The bauxite industry's contribution to economic development was much too low" (p. 4). He urged that the "transnational involved in the industry must be prevented from continuing that systematic divorce of bauxite resources . . . from the needs and objectives of national development of the Caribbean

People" (Girvan, 1969, p. 11). He advised the politicians to nationalize both the bauxite and oil industries.

A. W. Singham (1965) condemned the inherited political institutions for their overreliance on law/procedure rather than weighing substantive issues when they engage in policy making. In his analysis of political practice in Guyana, Grenada, and elsewhere, he concluded that "Advanced constitutions had actually been dysfunctional; in that, after independence, the elites who assumed political power found themselves incapable of exercising real political power" (p. 23) because they never had control over the economic resources, with which they could have made substantive changes for the population. Consequently, they were always forced to use their foreign connections and the coercive powers of the state to maintain their legitimacy and control over the society. Inevitably, such a society perennially engages in the management of conflict while it should have been more concerned with developmental issues.

The above is but a small sample of the ideas of New Worldism. As political independence came and the Third World began to review its status alongside the development world, Caribbean academics within New World rediscovered the debate about the status of the Caribbean in world affairs. New World practicalized the debate, bringing all segments of the population into the discussion. The critics before them had lectured; the new style was to speak in small groups with the people. That charged environment of the 1960s ushered in a new direction, one that called for immediate Caribbean empowerment. That call was translated to mean Black Power, because the one visible victim of economic deprivation were the Blacks, despite their long-standing commitment to the region.

## EXPLAINING BLACK POWER

New World was Black Power to the core. Walter Rodney, the father of Caribbean Black Power of the 1960s, was part of New Worldism. In 1968 Rodney wrote that there were three related

aspects to Black Power. First, the Caribbean had to break ranks with imperialism, which historically was racist. Second, the people should assume power. And third, the region's culture should be reconstituted in the image of Blacks and other ethnic groups who inherited those societies. On the meaning of Black in Black Power, Rodney (1968) wrote:

> I maintain that it is the white world which has defined who are blacks—if you are not white then you are black. However, it is obvious that the West Indian's situation is complicated by factors such as the variety of racial types and racial mixtures and the process of class formation. We have, therefore, to note not simply what the white world says but also how individuals perceive each other. Nevertheless, we can talk of the mass of the West Indian population as being black - either African or Indian, Portuguese or Chinese. (p. 6)

Rodney further explained the Black Power should not be taken literally to mean that only Blacks can assume power. Black Power was meant to include everyone. But it was "not for Black Power movement to determine the position of the browns, the reds and so-called West Indian Whites—the movement can only keep the door open and leave it to those groups to make their choice" (p. 10).

He was succinct on the meaning of power. Blacks were in the majority; as such, they should exercise control commensurate with their numbers and commitment to the society.

As ideology, Black Power was different from earlier mass movements not only in strategy and tactics, but also in its rudimentary objectives. Earlier movements like the Jamaica Labor Party were conceived in reformist trade union politics. This reformism first sought remedial economic improvements and the eventual capturing of the state through a process conceived, nurtured, and facilitated by the domineering colonizer. The leaders of the reformist movements scarcely gave serious thought to the possibility of meaningful economic independence (Ryan, 1972). Instead, they embraced *selected* parts of the Arthur Lewis plan, which invited businesses to the region on the assumption that relocation would provide the much needed additional jobs that the agricultural sector was unable to deliver. Both traditional politicians and advocates

had a commitment to freedom, justice, and equality. But their understanding of the kinds of human interrelations that these concepts engender were importantly different. The traditionals firmly believed that social conditions would improve because the precondition for such realization—political independence—was already secured. In contrast, the advocates demanded immediate respect of Caribbean people and their culture and insisted that the people's representatives be allowed to take control of the region's economic resources.

Evidently, political independence in its present form was not acceptable to the advocates. But since the traditionals were so steeped in European legalism, which noted the importance of strict constructionism, change had to be evolutionary. The advocates demanded group rights and full liberation immediately.

The traditionals saw the need to maintain European connections, whereas the advocates dismissed such connections as serving to prevent Africans, East Indians, and others from establishing close links with their ancestral homes. Black Power called for the immediate destruction of all inherited institutions, to be replaced with genuinely Caribbean structures. Black Power was a "lower" class ideology.

Black Power as a lower class ideology meant that the values, culture, and aspirations of that class were to be articulated by an emergent new class. Just as Garvey, Butler, and even Castro had found a niche among the locked out a few generations earlier, the advocates announced the arrival of a new group of dedicated workers. These were determined to remain aloof from the corruptive and incorrigible system, as epitomized by the political parties. As far as they were concerned, all institutions, including the state itself, were essentially corrupt and had to be destroyed. For all intents and purposes, Black became an instrument for action and quick fixes. Committed individuals, it was felt, could not exist creatively or purposefully isolated from the people, on whose behalf they spoke. It was incumbent on those who understood how a minority sustained a system to demobilize a majority, to work to interdict and destroy that arrangement. Nothing was too menial for a leader to do; all had to participate to the fullest extent.

Needless to say, the traditionals rejected the above analysis. They knew the Caribbean mind quite well; a mind, shaped by colonialism and sustained by the ensuring system wanted leaders to behave as leaders and not workers. Mundane chores were to be performed by the followers and not by the leaders. The traditionals also rejected the oppression thesis of Black Power and even insisted that there were more serious issues, such as securing foreign aid, than wasting valuable time to talk about the achievements of Africa and India. Therefore, many politicians attempted to close down the social science faculty at regional universities because these were viewed as incubating nests for communists and troublemakers. And advocates who happen to be residents in territories other than their birthplaces were routinely arrested and deported, without being afforded even the basic right of due process. More significantly, detractors made it their duty to make Black Power appear to be anti-non-Black or even racist. The advocates knew then that the "Black" in Black Power had outlived its usefulness.

## THE LIMITATION OF "BLACK" IN BLACK POWER

From the beginning, the advocates knew that the multiracial makeup of the Caribbean placed severe restrictions on the concept as a guide for action. When Rodney was expelled from Jamaica in 1968 by a Black prime minister, he saw no contradiction in a Black deporting a Black because of his views. Rodney was aware that the Black prime minister was representing his class interest; as such, the Black prime minister fulfilled his class function by deporting Rodney. It is also worth noting that Rodney (1969) had recognized the limitation of color analysis in the Caribbean milieu and advised that it was not for Caribbean Blacks to determine the position of other ethnic groups but that the door must remain open to anyone willing to join.

The search was for a concept that readily encompassed the yearnings of the disaffected people. Indeed, Blacks did not have a monopoly on poverty; there were the Indians, Browns, Chinese, and even the Whites. But the traditionals used their monopoly over the media to convince people that Black Power meant subjugation

of all non-Black elements in the society. It was at that point that the search for an appropriate ideology began in earnest. The Cuban experiment and the persuasive dependency school of thought coming out of Africa and Latin America influenced members of the movement.

By the late 1960s, Cuba was well known among the leaders of the movement. This was facilitated somewhat by many prominent enemies of Black Power, who, as early as 1964, refused to follow the lead of the United States and treat Cuba as a pariah nation. When Rodney left Jamaica, he spent some time in Cuba, as did many of the advocates. The Cuban experiment helped the movement find a more appropriate ideology in Marxism/Leninism/socialism to assess the Caribbean condition. The Jamaican group moved from New Worldism to Abeng (no ideology) to "Black Power" through the League of Socialist Workers Party to the Communist Party of Jamaica; its final form is the Workers Party of Jamaica. The latter had the obligatory support group, the blanket trade union. Trinidad traveled from the Black Panther Party, through Tapia House to National Joint Action Committee (NJAC); one might legitimately add the National Labor Front as the ultimate culmination of the initial Black Power movement. NJAC once advocated the complete destruction of the state but now has formed a government in waiting to assume power when elected. St. Lucia had Forum, and so did St. Vincent. Forum became Slam and then Union of Socialist Workers, which finally joined in an alliance with the St. Lucia Labor Party. The latter captured the state in democratic elections with the help of the union movement in 1979. From Black Power, Dominica came up with Dominicans in Support of Progress to Movement for a New Dominica to League of Socialist Workers and finally Alliance of Progressive Parties. Dominica, like Jamaica, had supporting unions, organizations previously discredited by these same advocates. Those transitions from slogan to an excursion into practical politics had several features.

Initially, the advocates emphasized the external manifestations of empowerment and the need to destroy the state together with all institutions, electoral processes, bureaucracy, the private sector, and so on. It was important that Black Power disassociated itself from

Europe and European ideas. One's hairstyle was significant; the natural, unkempt hair style was the norm. The burning of foreign flags, attending rallies, and even sitting in White-dominated churches were symbols of one's commitment. The committed was the darker person, the wearer of the dashiki as opposed to shirt and tie; the one who could vilify Whites and White culture was the savior and chosen.

This type of commitment precluded any participation in traditional politics. The political party was the antithesis to mass participation because it was said to demobilize people. Therefore, the only solution at that stage of the struggle was to destroy the present to build a new, pure society. But failing to convince the people that destruction was the best route, the advocates eventually embraced the state, formed political parties like the other fractions of the society, and even had supportive unions. They did not capture the state as quickly as they had hoped; therefore, some entered into coalitions with the same parties and functionaries they had so adamantly denounced a few years earlier. With the possible exception of Grenada and to some extent, Dominica, that coalition has not produced the desired results, prompting some to postpone the quest, but the pundits readily admit that such coalitions did become the conscience of the region. Nowhere, however, was that search for an appropriate ideology more urgent than in Guyana. For that reason, the Guyanese experience is recounted here to show how Black Power moved from a racial to a more realistic assessment of the Guyanese, Caribbean situation.

## TRANSITION IN GUYANA

The transition in Guyana was very clear and methodical. One may be understating the issue when it is said that race relations in Guyana have never been the best. And although there was no open call for Black Power in Guyana in the 1960s, non-Blacks were certainly alarmed when Stokely Carmichael was welcomed in Georgetown, while sister territories refused to let him in on his historic visit to the region. The fact is that both Blacks and East Indians have a deep resentment for each other. Therefore, during

Cheddi Jagan's tenure as Head of State between 1953-1964, Blacks reacted by organizing the Association for the Establishment of Cultural Relations with Independent Nations of Africa (ASCRIA).

ASCRIA was not a Black Power organization but its actions were intended to counter the East Indian influence. And as expected, the East Indians responded in kind and created their own cultural organizations to maintain links with India. To be sure, the precedent was well set much earlier, when the two dominant political parties, the People's National Congress (PNC) and the People's Progressive Party (PPP), were organized along racial lines: PNC, Black and PPP, East Indian. But while racial confrontation became the norm, the basic populist orientation of Guyanese society served to somewhat reduce tensions.

Regardless of that so-called socialist disposition, the Working People's Alliance (WPA) of Guyana, the successor to Black Power, knew that it could have been appropriate to demand Black Power in Guyana if that call could be made to include all dispossessed elements. That call had to be antiimperialist and democratic, to include all ethnic groups. The immediate enemy of Black Power would not have been non-Blacks, but the Blacks who had been helped to capture the state in the early 1960s. Being Black did not necessarily qualify one to work to dislodge a system that surely demobilized the population. The WPA never embraced the dangerous racial approach; in fact, it sought to attack Burnhamism from three related angles.

First, the WPA had to show that Burnham's blackness did not necessarily prevent him from using symbols, a chronic Caribbean practice, to distract people from the real liabilities of independence. The alliance attempted to demonstrate that the fact that everyone addressed each other by the equalizing title of "Comrade," and that all government buildings had been reclaimed in the name of the people, did not make the "little man a real man," as the Burnhamites routinely claimed.

Second, the WPA pointed out that although the political directorate asserted that the state had been taken over on behalf of the people, it asked rhetorically, did the material life style of the Guyanese improve? If not, it stands to reason then that all Guya-

nese, including Blacks, suffered at the hands of that new class who had taken over the state. To be sure, nationalization offered great psychological satisfaction to the leader and the led; the people now owned the resources of their country. In fact, these resources were controlled by a newly created middle class, in cooperation with the departing expatriates. But the cost of such transfer had been so high that a one-time asset, the nation's resources, had become a national scandal and liability. That nationalization simply meant more corruption and stricter control of the State by a Black minority was the message of WPA.

The control of the State was facilitated by the constant warning that Guyana may be invaded either by Brazil or Venezuela. And, by controlling the economy, a minority decided who worked and who did not. The control over the media permitted a campaign that portrayed the rulers as doing the best they could. The opposition press was easily stifled by imposing costly licenses as a price for having the privilege to publish.

The WPA viewed the situation as a cancer to be removed. Toward that end, it suggested the creation of a broad-based front of all groups and classes. It further argued that the situation was ripe for the emergence of such a group because the government was forced to tolerate some opposition to show that Guyana was a democratic society. The WPA was born in that context.

The WPA was a political party representing all ethnic groups in Guyana. It used Marxism/Leninism (Rodney, 1979) as its ideological guide but rejected the Leninist idea of a vanguard party that engages in conspiracy, sabotage, and adventuristic disruptive behavior. The WPA insisted on being exemplary, open and candid. It could not remain credible if it operated on the principle of elitism and racial exclusivity. It showed the polity that all were negatively affected by that degenerative disruptive system of Burnham. The solution then was grounded in a better understanding of the class interests of the various factions in Guyana. Indeed, Guyanese politics had gone full circle, from a coalition of all the racial groupings in the 1950s through racial/ethnic based politics to yet another well-organized coalition that used a class approach to the

practice of politics. That new approach remains strong but probably ineffective.

## THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF BLACK POWER: POLITICAL ACTIVITY

In search of appropriate ideology, Caribbean Black Power had gone through a metamorphosis. In some territories, the change was swift, while in others it was painfully long. Advocates knew that their racial analysis, however honorable their intentions, was making no headway toward destroying the state to create a new society. The advocates were not trusted. The traditionals continued to dominate the societies, not because they were trusted, but because they were supported by external forces and had better organized cliques at their command. The advocates eventually entered into coalitions with selected groupings.

In Dominica, the Alliance had a prime minister announcing his claim to being the first Black Power advocate of his era because he consistently referred to the White church as the bloodsucker of the people. Six years later, that same Alliance was the major force, together with the unions and the Freedom Party, to remove the Dominica Labor party from office in May 1979.

The advocates even had the human-rights-conscious Jimmy Carter administration taking a new direction in foreign policy in 1979. After noting the volatility of the Eastern Caribbean situation, Cyrus Vance, U.S. Secretary of State, announced that the U.S. would first initiate a dialogue with the opposition elements, including the socialist advocates. Second, the U.S. would tolerate ideological pluralism, as long as no group attempted to compromise the democratic process.

Although no great friend of organized religion, Black Power even influenced the various denominations. The churches were condemned for their collusion with capitalism, which presumably kept the Caribbean subservient. Black Power demanded that the churches use both their connections and their wealth to improve the socioeconomic status of the Caribbean people. The churches responded by making their liturgy more relevant to the objective

Caribbean condition. Locals were elevated to positions of authority within the church, and a consortium of religious faiths created an economic organization to make funds available for development. A regional paper, *Caribbean Contact*, was also launched. The paper's role was to provide an alternative to the government-owned and dominated media. Indeed, the Movement had raised the level of consciousness among the people but lacked the capability to follow through to capture the state. As a group, advocates went through the growing-up process and matured, but for the most part, remained on the fringes of power. Marginals, they were, but not inconsequential; they had an impact. The astute politicians took advantage of a situation that the advocates had a huge part in creating. The Jamaican example tells the story.

**Impact in Jamaica**

Walter Rodney brought Black Power to Jamaica when he associated with the Rastafari elements and the unemployed.

The Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) was defeated in 1972 after massive demonstrations broke out in 1968. Manley introduced democratic socialism as the guiding principle of his new government. That new ideology was not totally dissimilar to the Marxism of Trevor Monroe's Workers Party of Jamaica (1976). Ironically, Worker's Party of Jamaica (WPJ) behaves like any other party in Jamaica: It has a strongman in Dr. Trevor Monroe and a supportive trade union, the University Allied Workers Union.

The WPJ had always been critical of the economic arrangements in Jamaica. On the very top were the managers from Tate and Lyle (sugar), Elders and Fyffes (bananas), the Directors at Allpart (bauxite), the Directors of Tourism, and the financiers of Barclays, Nova Scotia, and Royal. On the intermediary tier were the few locals, White and Black, creating a buffer between the very top and the rest of the Jamaican population. The People's National Party (PNP) was quick to join in the criticism and vowed to upset that arrangement as soon as it took control of the state. The PNP was encouraged. Middle class Jamaicans did not rush to embrace the Marxism of WPJ; they were made aware of those inequalities by WPJ.

The PNP was the beneficiary of WPJ's work and was also at an advantage. First, it had a respected leader in Michael Manley. Second, it had a long history of accomplishments, a claim WPJ could not make because it was recently established. Third, the unadulterated Marxism of WPJ may have frightened those who otherwise could have been supportive of WPJ's goals and programs; the PNP was the next best organization.

WPJ at least had prepared urban Jamaica for radical change. And in an effort to recognize the contributions of WPJ activists, the PNP sometimes included WPJ within its ranks. Carl Stone (1980) wrote that once the PNP had formed the government, the dominant leftist elements of the PNP informally included the Marxist WPJ elements, embracing in the process the Marxism/Leninism of the latter. The two groups then carefully placed the more radical elements in the key areas of media, bureaucracy, planning, commissions, teaching, and even the private sector. It is not surprising that, on assuming power in 1972 the PNP announced the following principles of its rule (People's National Party, 1972):

1. Broadening the base of ownership of capital and promoting greater worker participation and influence over the production process
2. Establishing greater internal democracy in internal party machinery
3. Deepening and broadening political awareness by programs of mass political education and politicization using the ideology of democratic socialism as the basis for this mobilization
4. Democratizing the political process at the local level by expanding local government autonomy and creating new institutional forms such as grass roots community councils as the vehicle through which to articulate social democracy
5. Democratizing the educational system by bringing students and workers into the joint management of these institutions
6. Bringing citizens into the machinery of law enforcement through Home Guards that would work alongside the police in fighting crime on the local community level
7. Promoting popular participation in the process of planning economic decision-making
8. Promoting forms of community and popular ownership of land and agricultural production

9. Promoting social legislation designed to raise the level of equality realized by disadvantaged groups
10. Establishing popular control over the mass media using state ownership as a mechanism through which to move to more broadly based ownership
11. Removing the restrictions on literature of a political character imposed by the earlier JLP government
12. Engineering basic constitutional changes designed to make the fundamental laws of the land more in tune with popular control of the political system
13. Isolating the privileged bourgeois interests as enemies of the people and harassing these class and minority racial interests as obstacles to progress and exploiters of the masses
14. Extending government control over the economy and especially its commanding heights to further the cause of the people's interests
15. Bringing the party machinery and party activists into direct involvement with the implementation of sensitive areas of public policy

Evidently, WPJ influenced PNP's great interest in the democratization of society. Populism was a logical next step, once a popular program had been put in place. PNP had captured the state on behalf of the dispossessed and forced the elite economic class into submission. The state, the elite's traditional ally, could not help because the locked-out were now in control. The PNP leadership used state power then to apply radical solutions to the extensive unemployment situation. Manley wanted to destroy the old order immediately; in the process, he raised the level of expectations to usher in the fair and just society that independence had promised but failed to deliver.

The level of mass participation reached monumental proportions. There was greater democratization within the PNP itself. Issues that were once routinely decided by the elites of the party were now presented to the rank and file for decision. There was greater accountability within the PNP and the bureaucracy. Legislation was enacted to address specific issues of importance to the polity.

Maternity leave was declared a right for every woman. A minimum wage rate was negotiated between the government and the private sector. Tenants rights were recognized, and the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children was abolished (Stone, 1981).

Urban and rural policy was enunciated. Manley used the existing Urban Development Corporation (UDC) to provide affordable housing and infrastructural amenities for the people. Before Manley, UDC was an instrument that made development happen for the elite economic class. Through Project Land Lease, the rural population was organized into cooperatives to produce much needed food to satisfy some of the needs of the industrializing urban sector.

The PNP also regained the title to the bauxite properties, and in addition to increasing the government's share of the bauxite revenues, the PNP diversified the export markets. It is generally agreed that the relative ease with which Manley was able to negotiate with the bauxite concerns was a direct result of WPJ's concerted criticisms of the same.

Jamaican foreign policy also reflected WPJ's influence. Under Manley, Jamaica became a leader in the nonaligned movement and established relations with socialist countries, most notably Cuba. At one point, Cuba was probably the closest friend Jamaica had in the Caribbean. The Cuban ambassador to Jamaica routinely commented on domestic issues within Jamaica, to the point where on more than one occasion, the opposition demanded his recall to Cuba. One such call in 1980 prompted the PNP to stage a rally on behalf of the ambassador. By the time Manley left office in 1980, he had almost single-handedly returned Cuba to the Caribbean fold, against the expressed wishes of the U.S.

The negative side of the Black Power impact was equally extensive. Mass participation produced widespread indiscipline and insubordination. Blatant corruption, not necessarily the result of extensive democratization, was also very evident, as was incivility and a general breakdown of law and order, particularly at the terminal stage of PNP's rule. Setbacks aside, the fact remains that the leftists, together with the more radical elements within the PNP,

gave lower-class Jamaicans a sense of belonging, a feeling of dignity and hope. Under Manley, Jamaicans attempted to lend meaning to the concept of sovereignty. The successor of the Black Power movement, the Marxist WPJ, played a significant role in that effort.

## CONCLUSION

The Black Power of the 1960s was intended to rally the locked-out behind a dedicated leadership to alter the type of economic relations between the Caribbean and the Metropole. The movement relied on spontaneity, instead of organized action in the context of party politics. The past experience with organizations intended to take state power, they said, quickly lost its raison d'être, as these were prone to take on lives of their own and ignore the real reasons for which they were organized in the first place. The limitation of "Black" in Black Power was quickly realized, and the search for an appropriate ideology began. In that effort, both Cuba and the dependency school of thought in Africa and Latin America were useful. Cuba was so influential that even when those groups had finally decided to participate in electoral politics, they first sought and received the tacit approval of Cuba.

Cuba's experience influenced their class analysis of Caribbean society. They were helped in understanding that economic interests transcended race and national boundaries, and that the Black political leaders could be equally—if not more—oppressive than the White expatriates. In turn, they helped Cuba maintain its linkage with the Caribbean by their frequent visits to Cuba and by their challenging the traditional politicians to develop in their own countries a system that was better than Cuba's.

The dependency school taught them the futility and irrelevance of Caribbean state sovereignty. In the age of political independence, they learned that the transnational corporation formed the technological base that assured metropolitan domination of the periphery, the Caribbean (Singham, 1973).

Black Power groups were transformed into Marxist/Leninist organizations to demand complete control, both over the state and the economic systems. For fear of being contaminated, initially they neither formed nor joined political organizations. Ultimately, some formed parties of their own, while others entered constructive coalitions. Some have argued that the attempt at electoral politics was undertaken knowing fully well that their chances at success were slim. They engaged the system as a political party on tactical grounds because the euphoria of a campaign allowed them to raise the people's level of consciousness further.

In effect, they had made politics the business of the unemployed, the students, the outcasts. They irrevocably changed the pattern of politics, as they removed it from the preserve of the well-to-do, the professional, and the middle class. But by forcing the polity into action, they generated their own demise.

They did not have the organizational wherewithal to channel the people's spontaneous actions into electoral success. Dominica came close; Grenada was the exception. The established political groupings had the money and skills and took advantage of what the left had created. The PNP of Jamaica and the Freedom Party of Dominica were beneficiaries of the work of Black Power. Black Power lacked the sophistication, maturity, and discipline to capture state power on its own. The lack of interest in practical economic issues may have been an additional handicap.

They were very astute in their criticisms of current economic arrangements, but could not show by their actions that they could improve on the current situation. They neither had nor managed enterprises to substantiate their claim that they could manage the economy better than the incumbent managers. Many among them were visibly unemployed but continued to live well; this lent credibility to the charge that they were funded from abroad. And when employed, they did not have the time to devote to the demands of a serious political career. They learned that politics is a full-time job.

Shortcomings aside, Black Power and its successor, the Marxist/Leninist organizations, did influence Caribbean politics. As a group, they failed to capture the state, but individual members have since

been elected to the several territorial parliaments. Their participation in electoral politics is a new phase, they say, in the effort to influence the old order to usher in a new one, where the promises made at the terminal stage of colonialism can be realized. History will be the judge of their actions or inactions.

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