EMERGENCY

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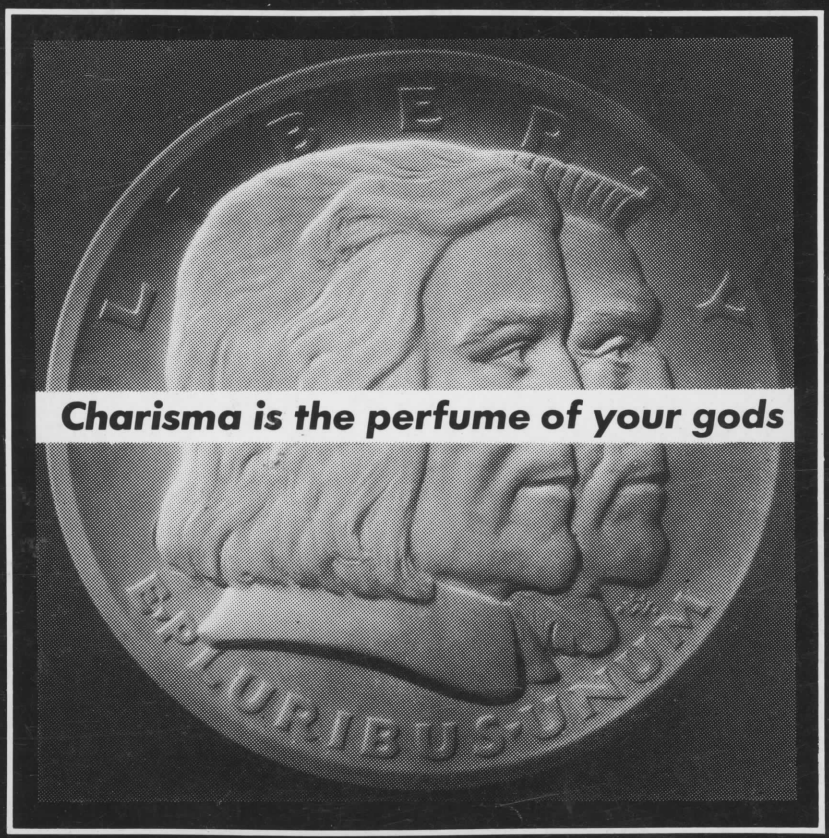


Kathy Acker
Paul Gilroy
Barbara Kruger
Cedric Robinson
and more

". . . Engrossing reading . . ."

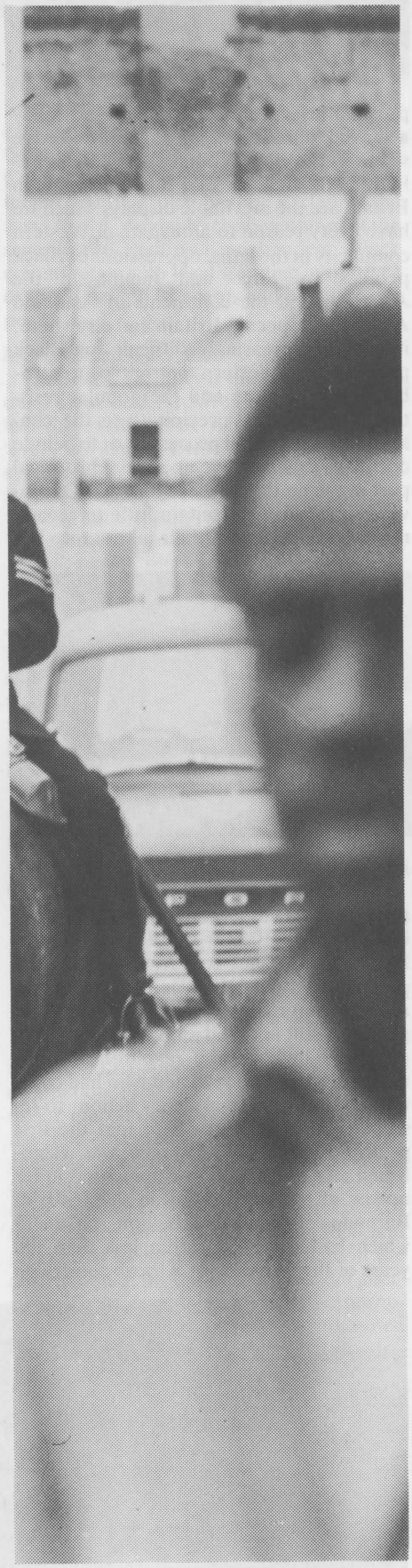
NME

AN INVENTORY OF
contemporary black politics

This paper is dedicated to Mr Peter Blackman . . . with whom I have talked.

For more than a century, European radical theorists have approached the workings of social and political movements via a methodology which might be termed the dialectic of eschatology. Literally, this would suggest the negation of extremes: a paradigm based on the presumption that historical movement is the consequence of processes which mature by producing contradictory fruits. In this tradition which has dominated radical analyses, the logic of political movements has been thought to be discoverable through retracing the processes of victimisation to the apparatus of oppression. The ultimate measure of social resistance is presumed to be the character and the historical development of the offending structure itself. The logic of resistance suggests that dictatorships produce liberalism; colonialism generated national liberation; imperialism would inevitably be confronted with anti-imperialism; capitalism could only be defeated by an aroused proletariat. Such was the costume assumed by the metaphysics of Hegel as it became the foundations of critical thought and praxis in the previous and present centuries. The social arrogances of a largely petit-bourgeois but rebellious intelligentsia; the fascination with the most advanced engines of power; the mediations of the ruling classes' hegemonic cultures, were reproduced in a theory of history which argued that the agents of change were most genuinely identified in residual terms. In brief, those social masses which mobilise in order to transform their lives are best understood by understanding whatever it is that has mobilised them. Here this passes for a radical methodology.

Engels led the way in his treatment of the English working classes of the early nineteenth century. Marx walked down the same road with his treatment of Prussian Jewry and, later, when he presented his study of classes what he took to be the stages of history which preceded capitalism, and in his treatment of the proletariat in general. With as much consistency as can be found in their work, they seemed determined to afford history no more attention or respect than did the bourgeoisie of whose destructive force they sometimes wrote in awe. In this fashion, human history was reduced to labour and the relations of production, human life to abstracted, aggregated labour, and historical cultures to mirrors of production. History, they believed (and we are still told), is systematic because it has always been compelled and bounded by modes of production. For our own time, the system of history was constituted by capitalism and its contradictions and finally its negation: the proletarian revolution.



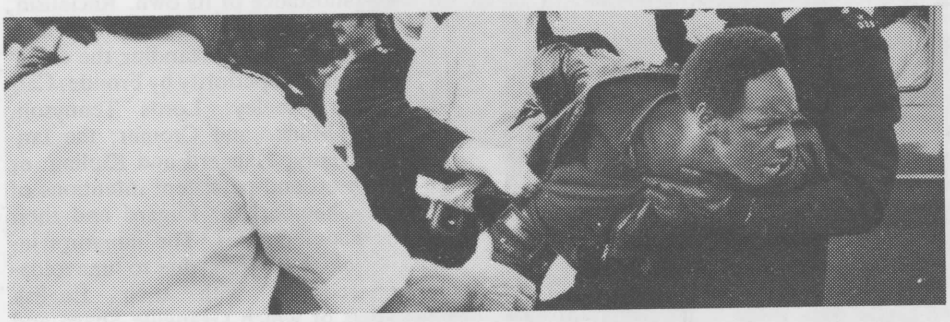
Presumptions such as these have made an understanding of the modern world difficult for many radicals. Their ensuing methodologies have done much to typify some of the aspects of world capitalism but the patterns and rhythms of popular struggle, even the structures of political terror and oppression have too frequently sifted through their conceptual nets and beyond.

When we come to imperialism, one of the 'background' phenomena which should immediately concern us, traditional Western radical thought is dismissive. The racial impulses which served as motive forces to English imperialism and colonisation are substantially under-valued. Racialism, which has codified Anglo-Saxon historical experience from its beginnings, has been facilely subsumed by economics.[1] It has been neatly sequestered beneath the capitalist mode of production and the instrumentation of the English bourgeoisie. As a dependent variable, it has no history, no social substance of its own. Racialism, we are instructed, was not the *motivation* for imperialism notwithstanding the declarations of racial superiority by Froude, Carlyle, Dilke, Seeley, Lords Tennyson, Rosebery, Milner and Cromer; the fantasies of Henty, Haggard and Kipling; or the expressed and persistent intentions of Rhodes, Chamberlain, Lugard and their numerous confederates.[2] The 'unnatural increase of *black* subjects' due to 'unavoidable intercourse' with their English neighbours of which Granville Sharp and his antagonist Edward Long warned in the late eighteenth century; the 'stain and contamination' of the race of Britons by Black immigrants which so preoccupied Samuel Estwick;[3] Macaulay's prescription for human colonial government which consisted of the killing of one hundred thousand Irishmen;[4] the campaigns of extermination in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, in India capped by the Mutiny and its aftermath, in Tasmania, and in Africa; the creation and realisation of Anthropology as first the science of racial superiority and subsequently the science of 'native administration'; the ape-like figures of Blacks and Irishmen which inhabited the visual menageries of Hogarth, the penny press and the popular media (to the present day); the celebrations of Black lynchings and mutilations which accompanied the settlements all over the world of English-speaking (and other Europeans: the Spanish, the Dutch, the French and the Germans) peoples—these were merely the mantle of capitalism and the instruments of domination embedded in bourgeois culture and the imperial State. Racialism was the epiphenomenon of capitalist domination.

Such an approach contains little to recommend it and much for which it must be

held accountable. It can be afforded no more authority than Lord Scarman's famous declaration that '"Institutional racism" does not exist in Britain' and that 'unwitting' discrimination against Black people is at the heart of the matter.[5] It is impossible I believe to square either conclusion with the history of Black peoples and Western civilsation or with our daily existences in Brixton or Toxteth or Southall, Miami, Los Angeles, New York or Jacksonville, Kingston or Georgetown, Soweto, Dakar or Kinshasha, Calcutta, Madras or Karachi. The notion that racism is a social distemper promulgated for screening the interests of property and the notion that racism is an aberration which has appeared which has appeared among a fair-minded citizenry share confused and phantom phenomenologies: reversals of cause and effect. They both prepare us, Black and non-Black alike, to be nothing more than well-intentioned witnesses to the orders of the vast destructions of human life and human aspiration which mock each day's beginnings.

These failings are merely indications of the general inadequacies of Western comprehension of Third World peoples. At their root, of course, are the capacities of Western ideologues for the misperception



of themselves and their societies. We serve no purpose for ourselves or for them by succumbing to the seductions of their errors. We cite them so as to inform our interrogation of history for our own instruction. We can do no more here until we have achieved a purposive self-consciousness.

Collective resistance

One of the presumptions of our inquiry is that within the histories of Black peoples there exist moments of collective resistance which together constitute an inventory of possibilities for the present and future generations of Blacks in Britain. This inventory, however, will not include every option which the Black presence in Britain might suggest. Social behaviour is too capricious for any such arrogance. Moreover, some possibilities, for example those of passive forebearance and social assimilation, have been deliberately dismissed. The clear progression of organised and violent hostility towards Blacks which has been demonstrated among some elements of British society; the persistently acute and systematic material and spiritual deprivation of Black communities; the official indulgence of fascistic activity; the racist goading and glib rationalisations of some public figures, have already made those possibilities unlikely—have already achieved an arousal of the more active strata in the Black community. Just as delimiting for the future of Black response in Britain are the inevitable displays which we have every reason to anticipate of Western complicity in the lethal oppressions of Black peoples by force and famine in the Americas and the continents of Asia and Africa.[6] I suspect in Britain and elsewhere, it will be increasingly difficult for Black people in the Western metropoles to attribute those horrors and the popular resistances which they precipitate to the consequences of natural processes, or to delude ourselves that we have no special historical part in the ending of these horrors. Our inventory, then, will contain little to recommend it to the meek, their inheritance has already been revealed: it is the present.

For the ever-growing numbers of Blacks forced to come to terms with the deteriorating situation in Britain, however, the historical record of Black collective resistance to political and economic oppression is rich and suggestive. In it one finds at the very beginning a still untolled number of slave and peasant rebellions and revolutions—ordinary Black men and women who had come to the point of extraordinary action: to resist until death. It was here that the first principle of black resistance was established. As one historian commented in his review of the suppression in the 1640s of Barbados' first slave rebellion, an event which had occurred within less than ten years of the founding of African slavery on that island:

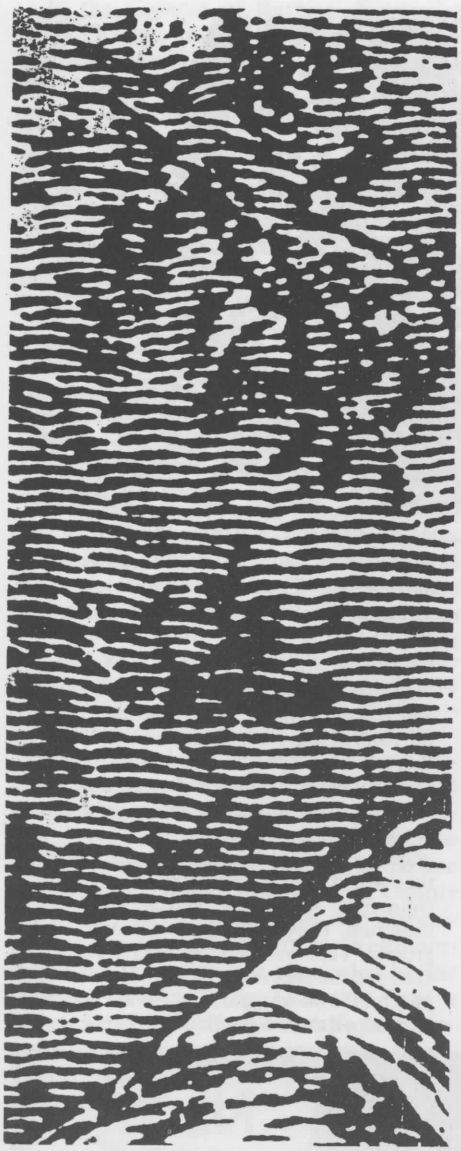
> . . . in the history of the West Indies there is one dominant fact and that is the desire, sometimes expressed, sometimes unexpressed, but always there, the desire for liberty; the ridding oneself of the particular burden which is the special inheritance of the black skin. *If you don't know that about West Indian people you know nothing about them.*
>
> . . . the leaders who are caught are incorrigible, they are absolutely determined not to give away in the slightest respect: they have to be executed, all of them, because that is the only way in which their masters could feel safe for the future. That is the history we ought to teach in our schools. That is *our* history, *West Indian* history.[7] [emphasis added]

Of course, this was the seventeenth century. It was long ago. But these were some of our foreparents: 'These are my ancestors, these are my people. They are yours too, if you want them', C L R James would write in 1966. This is our legacy whether we want it or not. It emanates from struggles whose social, historical and cultural bases were in many instances similar if not identical to those which produced the present populations of Blacks in the British isles. The political efforts of Africans and Asians and their descendants in Trinidad, Guyana, north America, South Africa and the Indian subcontinent forge this legacy from which it is possible to extract the organisational, ideological and political paramenters of a Black movement.

Archaeology of Struggle

Among our African ancestors, even the seventeenth century is not the place to begin our history of resistance to European domination. This is attested to by Nicolas de Ovando, governor of Hispaniola in 1502. He had arrived on the island with a retinue which included 'an unknown number of black and mulatto servitors.[8] They were called *ladinos*, that is they were Hispanicised Blacks. And within the year, Ovando was writing to his Queen to prevent all future arrivals of such people.

> He reported that those already on the island had been a source of scandal to the Indians, and some had fled their owners and established independent settlements in the moun-



tains. Concerned that the Indians might be led from the path of Christian righteousness, Isabella immediately barred the shipment of *ladinos*.[9]

The destruction of the aboriginal populations in the Spanish colonies of the New World and the failure to impress sufficient European labour made African slavery imperative. Almost a quarter of a million Black workers were brought to New Spain (Mexico) and Cartagena (Colombia) between 1519 and 1640 to replace an indigenous population which had been literally decimated.[10] At first, resistance among the enslaved Africans took the form of flight to native settlements. The archive of the Mexican city of Puebla de los Angeles, for example, is filled with official reaction to mid-16th-century 'runaways'. Fugitives drew the attention of Hernan Cortes as early as 1523, and the first general uprising in Mexico occurred in 1537.[11] Once freed by their own efforts, those Africans returned to plague the Spanish, appropriating food, clothes, arms, tools and even religious artefacts from the colonists' towns, their villages and ranch homes, and from travellers along the roads connecting the ports and settlements. Soon, the fugitives grew numerous enough to begin the formation of their own settlements, known as *palenques* in Mexico. The struggle against slavery was being transformed into the battle to preserve the collective identity of African peoples.

In 1608, treaties were signed with Black warriors to ensure the freedom of San Lorenzo de los Negros, a Black settlement.[12] In the 1630s, the palenques in the mountains near Vera Cruz successfully resisted Spanish armies. In 1635, San Lorenzo Cerralvo became their free settlement.[13] And in the mid-18th century, again near Veracruz, the Spanish authorities were forced to concede the free existence of African guerrillas at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Morenos de Amapa.[14] In Colombia and Venezuela during the sixteenth century our history exclaims the same truths. Again, by the beginnings of the seventeenth century, independent Black communities with legal standing in the eyes of the State and its agents had begun to appear.

Maroons and Guerrillas

In Brazil, the story is the same. The Colonial Historical Archives in Lisbon establish the existence of African fugutives in 'every corner' of Brazil.[15] Arthur Ramos, summarising his own studies of Blacks in Brazil, declared:

> From the beginnings of slavery, escapes were frequent. The escaped slaves, called locally *quilombolas*, often gathered together in organised groups, known in Brazil as *quilombos* . . .[16]

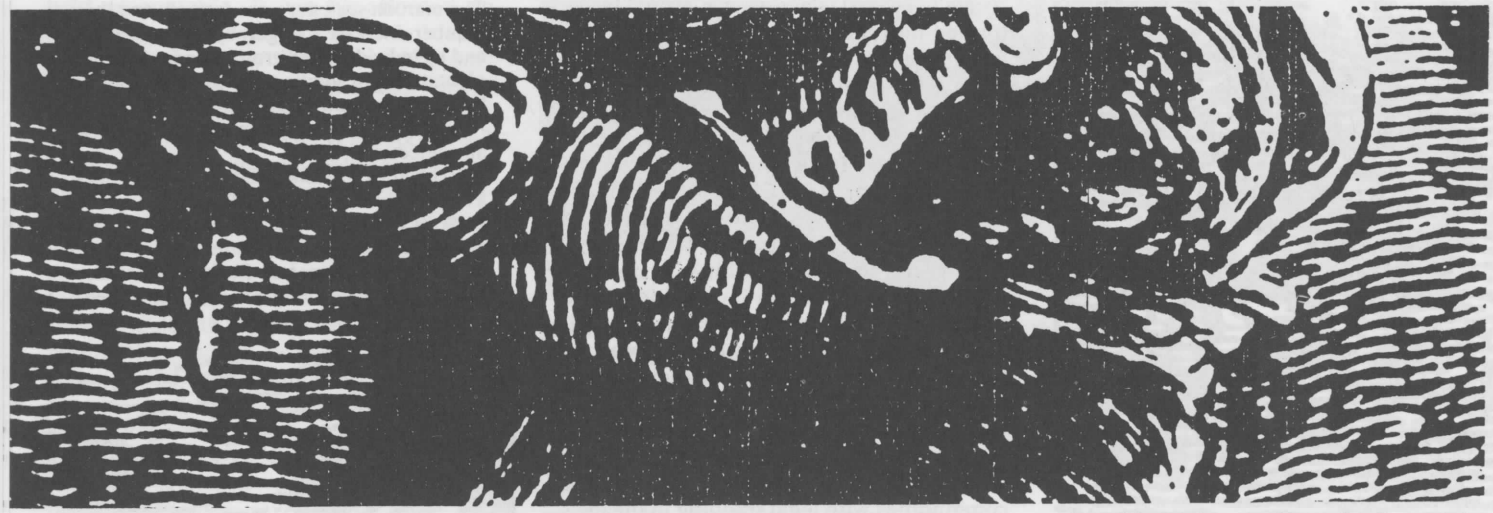
In the Pernambuco region, the greatest Black settlement of all, the extraordinary state of Palmares would endure from 1605 to 1695. In 1645 it consisted of several settlements—two major palmars of 5000 inhabitants, and several smaller units totalling 6000. At its height in the 1670s and 1680s, its population was estimated at between 15,000 and 20,000.[17] And one Portuguese expedition every fifteen months.[18] And when it finally fell, Governor Melo de Castro wrote,

> This happy victory was regarded as no less important than the expulsion of the Dutch. It was, accordingly, celebrated by the whole population with displays of lights for six days and many other demonstrations of joy, without any command being given to them. . .[19]

In Jamaica, African *cimmarones* (armed fugitives) first appeared during the Spanish occupation (1509–1655).[20] At least three major maroon camps were in existence in the mid-seventeenth century to aid the guerrilla campaign of Christobal de Yassi against the British invaders.[21] One maroon chief, however, Juan de Bola (or Lubolo) made peace with the English in 1660 and proceeded to collaborate with them in the destruction of his fellow maroons and guerrillas. Three years later, he met his appropriate fate. An English contemporary noted in his diary: 'On the first day of November the outlying Negroes met with Juan de Bola and cut him to pieces; else all things were quiet in the country.[22] The better known Jamaican maroon communities—the Windward and Leeward Maroons—came into existence in the latter part of the 17th century. In 1673 and then again in 1690, the first major rebellions of the English period occurred.

The maroon societies were formed, and their numbers increased, largely by slave rebellions and by individual and group escapes from the plantations. In addition, slaves were captured by maroons during raids, and slave or free Negroes, sent to fight the maroons, occasionally defected.

Rebellions furnished the largest numbers, as many as several hundred at a time, but rebellions were only one of a number of occasions for escape . . . There was a steady trickle of runaways, and the trickle became a stream whenever English punitive expeditions failed of their purpose.[23]



Marronage continued in Jamaica into e eighteenth century.

In the British and French Guianas and in itch Suriname, the most extraordinary in- nces of marronage occurred, the forma- n of what is referred to as the 'Bush gro tribes'. These people—the ramaka, Matawai, Kwinti, and the uka, Aluku and Paramaka—constitute e most enduring and oldest examples of ntinuous marronage.[24] Their histories, o, begin in the seventeenth century, mewhere near its second quarter. In riname, the most lethal colony in the w World, where, in the eighteenth cen- y, the ratio of Blacks to whites got to be high as 25:1, whose population main- ned fewer than 10% creoles for the first century, and where labour was concentrated on large sugar, coffee, cacao and cotton plantations, Africans whose origins could be traced to the Windward, Gold and Slave Coasts and to Loango/Angola, came together:

> We can assert with some confidence, then, that within the earliest decades of the African presence in Suriname, the core of a new language and a new religion had been developed; and the subsequent century of massive new importations from Africa apparently had the effect merely of leading to secondary elaborations.[25]

It was not long before the rain forests which boldly defined the limits of cultivable land became the bounds for a resistance movement. And at the end of the eighteenth century, after more than five decades of intensive warfare, the first of the Bush Negroes, the Saramaka, achieved a formal peace. Those days of celebration have been preserved from the oral tradition:

> When they got back safely to their villages, they fired many salutes for the people who had waited at home. These people came to the bank of the river singing, to escort them to shore. They played drums, danced, blew African trumpets, and sang, danced and celebrated the whole afternoon until night time and the whole night until morning . . .And they played drums so! When they were finished, they would bring a bush drink that they made from sugar cane juice, and which is called bush rum. They would pour a libation on the ground. That was in order to give thanks to God and the ancestors. After that they would play for the *obeahs* and for the other gods who had helped them fight.[26]

In the Guianas of Berbice, Essequibo and Demerara in the 1730s and 1760s; in Jamaica again in the 1780s; in Cuba in the 1780s; in Venezuela in the 1730s and 1780s, the litany of rebellions and marronage continued.

As had been the case in Suriname and the Guianas in North America, African resistance produced a new people: the Seminoles. Here, unlike the Guianas, the aboriginal element was strong.

> The efforts of the Carolinians to enslave the Indians, brought with them the natural and appropriate penalties. The Indians soon began to make their escape from service to the Indian country. This example was soon followed by the African slaves, who also fled to the Indian country, and, in order to secure themselves from pursuit, continued their journey into Florida.
>
> We are unable to fix the precise time when the persons thus exiled constituted a separate community. Their numbers had become so great in 1736, that they were formed into companies, and relied on by the Floridians as allies to aid in the defense of that territory. They were also permitted to occupy lands upon the same terms that were granted to the citizens of Spain; indeed, they in all respects became free subjects of the Spanish crown.[27]

The Seminoles would be at war with colonial and later American expeditions until the mid-nineteenth century. In colonial Virginia, trials of 'Negro rebels' had begun to dot the counties' records as early as the late seventeenth century. In James City County on 30 May 1688, for example, the disposition of a case remanded from Westmoreland County earlier was concluded by the General Court: 'It appeard that Sam a Negro Servt to Richard Metcalfe hath several times endeavoured to promote a Negro Insurreccon in this Colony'. Sam was ordered whipped around the town and fitted with an iron collar with four spriggs which he was to wear until his death. It was hoped that this would 'deter him & others from the like evil practice for time to come.[28] It had no such impact.

> A few Africans formed communities in the wilderness in the 1720s, when Black immigration was high and the frontier close to tidewater . . .
>
> At least two outlying runaway communities were established during the 1720s. Fifteen slaves began a settlement in 1729 on the frontier near present-day Lexington, Virginia. They ran from 'a new Plantation on the head of the James River, taking tools, arms, clothing and food with them. When captured, they had already begun to clear the ground'. Another small community evidently developed on the Maryland frontier in 1729 and 1730. Harry, one of the runaways, returned to southern Prince George's County to report on the place to his former shipmates. He told them that 'there were many Negroes among the Indians at Monocosy' and tried to entice them to join the group by claiming that Indians were soon going to attack the whites.[29]

In 1727, another Black informant, on this occasion a collaborator, had led a colonial expedition to a maroon community of Blacks and Indians which its inhabitants had named Natanapalle.[30]

Slave armies

The eighteenth century ended with a movement of slaves to match the drama of

Brazil's Palmares and the significance of the maroon settlements in Jamaica, Suriname and North America. In Haiti, between 1791 and 1804, slave armies managed the defeats of French, Spanish and English militaries—the most sophisticated armies of the day.

> Up to 1791 they had been slaves. All this was done within twelve years. They defeated a Spanish army of some 50,000 soldiers, a British army of 60,000 soldiers, and another 60,000 Frenchmen sent by Bonaparte to re-establish slavery. They fought Bonaparte's great army and drove it off their land.
>
> . . .And finally General Leclerc wrote to his brother-in-law Napoleon Bonaparte:
>
> > We have in Europe a false idea of the country and the men whom we fight against.[31]

Haiti thus became the second New World colony to achieve political independence from its European master, and the first slave society to achieve the permanent destruction of a slave system. Whatever credit is due to figures like Toussaint L'Ouverture, Christophe or even Dessalines, we must never forget that the victory of the Haitian slaves was theirs and grounded in marronage. Long before Toussaint and his successors, there had been Boukman; and before him, Makandel. Before them there had been the tradition: 'During the year 1720 alone, over one thousand negroes took to the woods, while in 1751 a high official estimated the refugees in the mountains of the Spanish border at over three thousand.[32] And long before C L R James rescued the Haitian Revolution from the 'venal race of scholars, profiteering panders to national vanity, [who] have conspired to obscure the truth,'[33] others had known it. It was not long in doubt in the slave societies of the other West Indies and the Americas of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

For its 13 years they were all—the masters fearfully, the slaves expectantly—witnesses to the struggles between slave armies and the forces of France, Britain, Spain and then France again. They heard some version or another of the gigantic Boukman, the *Papaloi*, whose plan for a massive revolt had been constructed in the early months of 1791 and revealed to the authorities by the abortive uprising of the slaves in Limbe in early August. They understood how the racial arrogance of the French colonists had deceived them into delay, deflecting their attention to the *petits-blancs* rabble of Le Cap François whose greed masked as revolutionary ideals had to be behind any slave insurrection of this reported scale. They were fascinated by the details of the night of 'lightening, wind and rain', when Boukman sent out the call to gather the slaves of the Turpin, Flaville, Clement, Tremes and Noe plantations on the northern plain, and they began the mass destruction of the objects of their oppression. They heard how quickly the rebellion had spread, how suddenly, it seemed, one hundred thousand angry Blacks in the North Province alone had swept the plain clean of slavery; how in the Western Province mulatto forces had joined the Revolution, betrayed it and then rejoined it again; and how by late September, Boukman was dead, and his comrades Gilles and John Baptiste as well.

By then the slaves were an army, an army marching into battle 'to African martial music and with unfurled banners inscribed with "death to all whites"'[34] They learned as witnesses the names of Toussaint when he became the commander of the Black revolution's armies; Dessalines, the slave whose military genius and hatred of the whites knit the movement back together again when Napoleon's treachery had destroyed Toussaint; and Henri Christophe,

the slave whose old intimacy with the capital would seduce him into becoming a self-proclaimed Emperor. They knew before James that, 'but for the revolution', these men and every other Black Haitian '. . . would have lived their lives as slaves, serving the commonplace creatures who owned them, standing barefooted and in rags to watch inflated little governors and mediocre officials from Europe pass by . . .'[35] Instead, the name Haiti burned the ears of the slave-owners of the New World. They whispered its name and futilely conspired to deny its legend and even its existence.

Dangerous elements

In Bahia, a city where wagons and carts were never used so that the slaves were forced to carry loads, and in other Brazilian cities where the wealthy were transported 'in sedan chairs, palanquins, or hammocks',[36] the slaves knew better. In the first third of the nineteenth century, they too shattered the myth of slave docility. By the mid-century, a modern Brazilian historian has observed, 'The Negroes came to be regarded as a dangerous element in the population, a menace to the lives and safety of their masters'.[37] Between 1808 and 1835, they struck again and again. '. . . quilombos were growing at an alarming rate all over the province [Reconcavo] by the turn of the nineteenth century. The fugitive slaves moreover were no longer avoiding even the towns, sometimes hiding within them and at other times 'descending to loot them'.[38] In December 1826, Zeferina, a Black woman led them at Urubu; in April of 1830, the Yorubas fought in Bahia; and then in 1835, the Muslim slaves, Hausa and Yoruba, tore to shreds the last hope of the Brazilian masters: slave disunity.

> The mightiest guarantee for the security of large Brazilian towns is the incompatibility of various African nations for if they ever overlook the enmity which naturally disunites them, those of Agomes will become brothers with the Nagos, the Geges with the Aussas, the Tapas with Sentys, and in this way the great and inevitable peril will darken and devastate Brazil.[39]

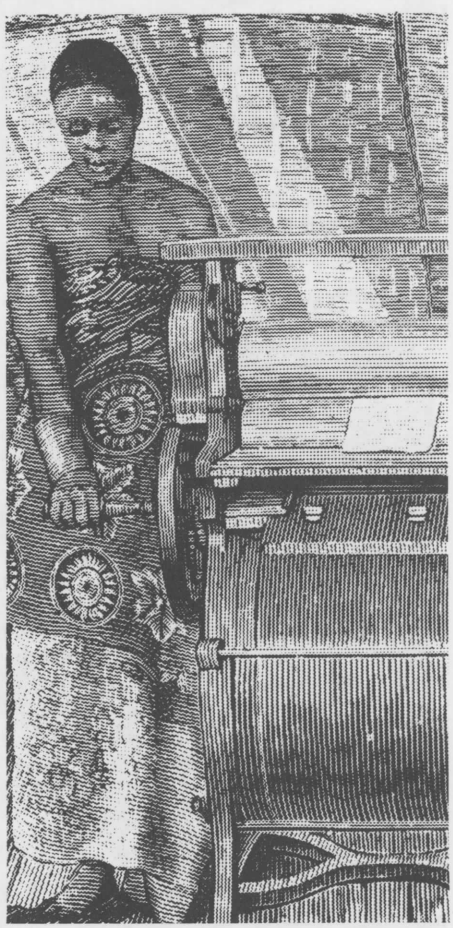
And what the masters of Bahia now understood would be taught all over the New World.

On Easter Sunday night, 14 April 1816, the African workers of Barbados gave their instruction; in British Guiana, August 1823 would be a time for teaching; and during the Christmas holidays of 1831, the Jamaican slaves baptised their masters.[40] In north America, the book of rebellion was reopened for the masters in 1800, 1822 and 1830 and during the American Civil War. The lesson 'took', and slavery, once the 'natural and inevitable' condition for Black peoples, became an 'anachronism' to be abolished. What remained was only to determine when its economic and moral degenerations converged, and that was a project best left in the hands of scholars. And in the late nineteenth century and the present one these were the terms in which the destruction of slavery were clothed in Western historiography. Black resistance, their historians wrote, was of little if any significance in the ending of slavery. That had been a European prerogative. And some of us even came to believe that, that the issue to be resolved was whether African slavery was destroyed by a moral (European) or commercial (European) impulse. But others have known better. Only a few weeks ago I sat near an ordinary Black woman at a meeting in Brixton. 'Slavery', she announced, 'was a good thing. We came out of it stronger.' And this is why the destruction of slavery belongs in our inventory.

There is, however, something more to be claimed for us from the nineteenth century, something from which it is tempting to recoil. Through the asphyxiating ideological and literary mists laid down by Kipling and his fellow imperialist lunatics, we must indeed fight to glimpse it. It is a lesson extracted from the Great Mutiny of 1857, a lesson which would be reiterated in the repressions of the 'heathen barbarians' of the Sudan, the 'savage kaffirs' of Southern Africa, and the peasant armies of Abyssinia. There the truer dimensions of the White Man's Burden were recorded. For if, as Merleau-Ponty once maintained, beneath Liberal society one finds violence, then it is also true that beneath the civilising mission of imperialism lurked race death. We recognise it in the campaigns of the French imperial armies which exercised that option in Algeria in the 1840s and in Madagascar and Algeria again one hundred years later. It haunts Leopold's administration in 'his' Congo in the nineteenth century as well as the Portuguese in Mozambique and the Germans in Southwest Africa in the present century. Long before National Socialism would unleash it as a concomitant to the colonisation of Europe by Germany, Black peoples had paid dearly to learn it. It, too, must take its place in our inventory because it remains in the instrumentalities of racist, renegade States. Some confront us with it today, others may come for us in the morning.

Finally, in our own time, our peoples have achieved structures and constructions to which we must direct attention. Some, like those which accompanied the destruction of slavery, are universal to the human community, others are entirely unique. Each, however, attests to our further historical development, to our preparation for what we must soon do. And since they are within our collective memory I shall only indicate them.

From the nineteenth century on, it has become imperative that we produce from among ourselves a new historical identity, one with which in sheer mass, ideological clarity and global presence we can materially off-set the domination by the technical superiority of destructive forces with which developed and necessarily exploitative societies confront us. We must create the cultural substratum within which, as Amilcar Cabral wrote, 'the seed of opposition' will be continuously found.[41] In slavery, as we have seen, our peoples forged many such local structures from the racial and cultural materials which were immediately available: in the Guianas the Bush Negro was that structure, in Florida it was the Seminoles. And long before the mid-nineteenth century when Betances, the Puertorriqueño radical exiled in Paris, could conceptualise a West Indian nation



(the Antilleans), the maroons in these islands, composed of elements from Africa and the Americas, were a fact in existence. Later, even while Asian and African nationalists were meeting in Brussels in 1927, at the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities, the ideological stage was being prepared in Trinidad for 'Buzz' Butler's attempt to lead a coalition of African and 'East Indian' oil and sugar workers in the 1930s.[42] We can be very certain that the frustration of Butler's movement was a part of the historical and political make-up of Cheddi Jagan when he returned to nearby Guyana after World War II. There, the impulse has continued to develop, forming a substantial ethos for the social and ideological bases of the Working Peoples' Alliance for which Walter Rodney was assassinated in 1980.

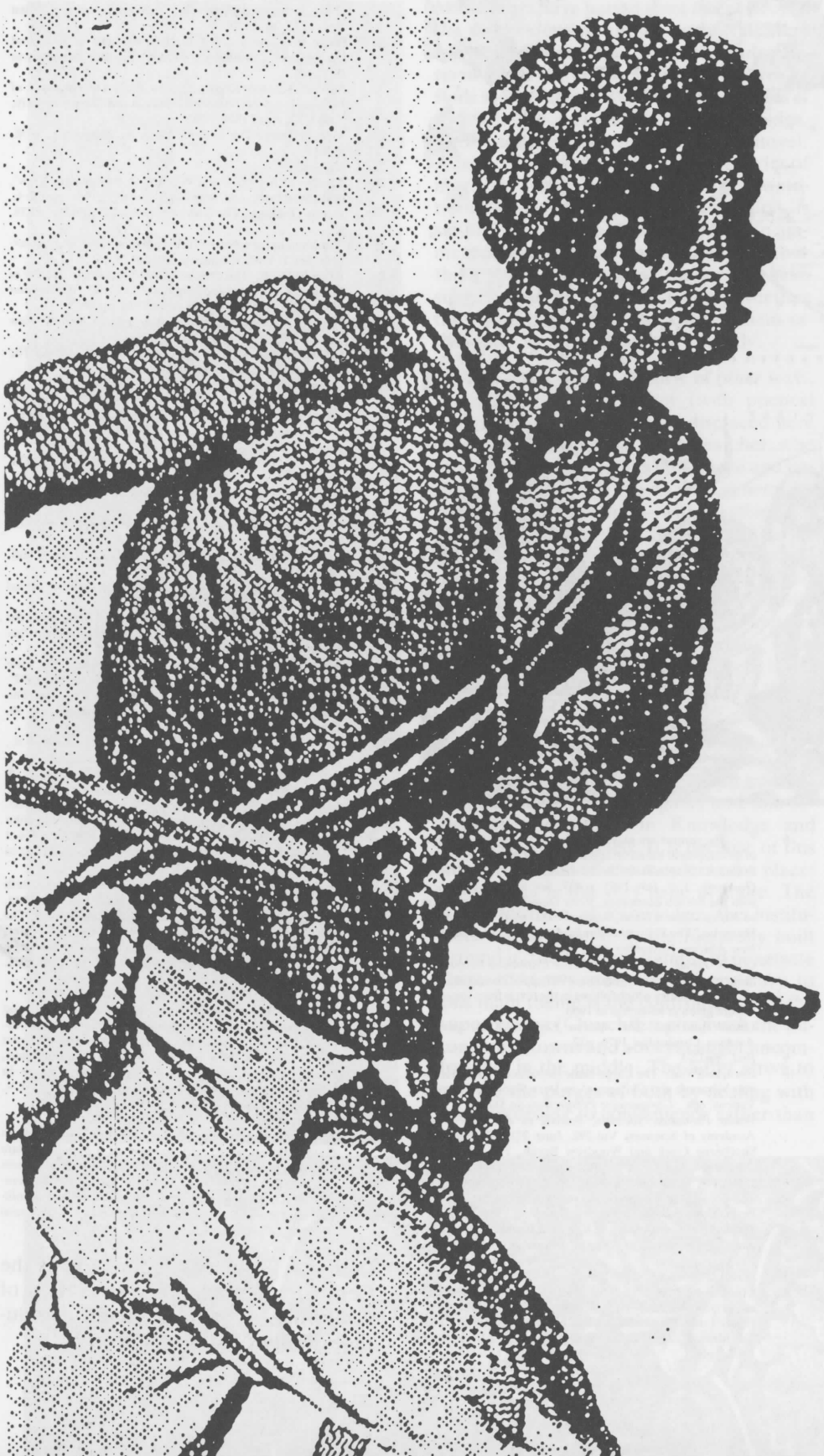
In South Africa a similar force is emerging. As in Trinidad and Guyana, the solidarity of the Indian and African peoples has continued to form despite tragic misunderstandings in the past. Barely three years after the Durban riots of 13–14 January 1949, when to the amusement of many Europeans, Asians and Africans tore at each other physically and spiritually, the Defiance Campaign was begun (17 December 1951).[43] In it the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress with elements from the trade unionists and European Left launched their combined struggle for liberation. It may very well be that the ingenuity they required for finding laws they might break together was a part of their spirit. But they succeeded:

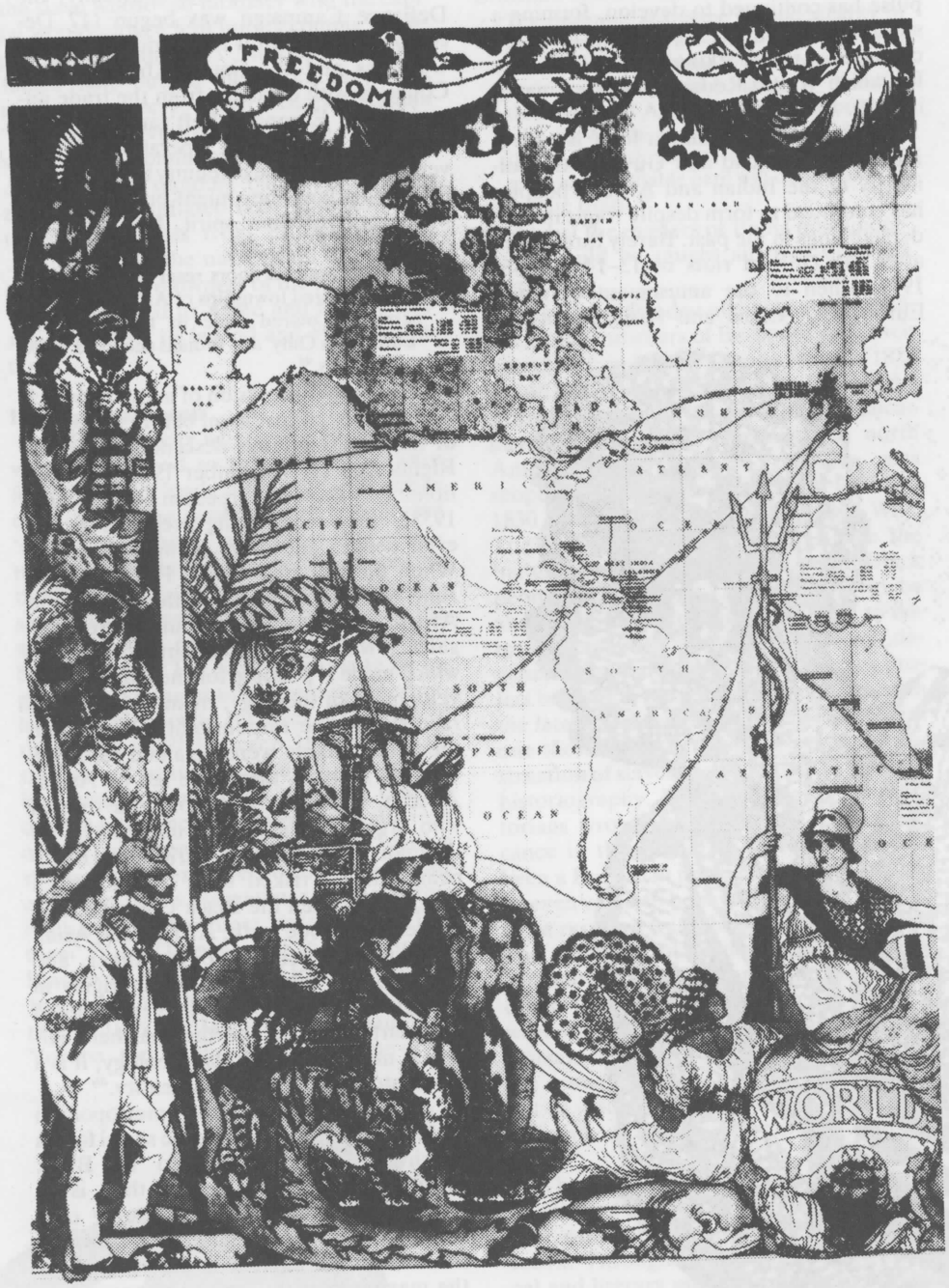
> Africans entered doors reserved for whites, whites entered townships of Africans without permits, Colored rode in trains marked 'Europeans Only' and Indians occupied white group areas.[44]

And in the succession of activities which occupied their movement before the ordeal of the Treason Trials descended—Human Rights Day (10 December 1952), the National Day Protests, Freedom Day (26 June 1955)—they were being prepared for an even deeper and more demanding unity. When the Congress of the People met in June of 1955, with almost three thousand African, Asian, Coloured and white delegates, it was the practical matter of logistics which made it possible for their further development of ideology, members of every race shared the responsibility. And when the 156 militants were detained for High Treason in 1956, they were fed by Asian, African, European and Coloured women who organised themselves into rotas.[45] In the underground, Asian, African and European activists risked their lives for each other. And when the Black Consciousness Movement strode forth, African and Asian youth fought alongside one another, and their leaders submerged racial origins in struggle. The negation which is emerging of the apartheid State and the apartheid culture is more than a secular ideology, it is a new historical and political identity.[46]

At the core, in the metropolitan societies, we must replicate the social forces which are being assembled by Black peoples elsewhere. Inded, this is a minimum political initiative. Every conscious effort must be made to construct a Black liberation movement which marshalls the maximum of the human resource contained in our communities. This means a cultural movement which transcends mere political objectives. We will be Black not because we are not white, but because of our history and the achievements of our struggle.[47] Our ideologues and intellectuals must follow us into this new universe of work and thought. They must be disciplined in new ways so that they may strengthen our articulation in the political struggle against racist States and the systemic discriminations we oppose in our jobs, in housing our communities and in educating our children. We must forge our organisations into political steel with the capacities for breaching national boundaries and forming alliances with international organisations and multinational volunteer agencies alike. We must not fail. We cannot concede. We must succeed for ourselves and for all those others who are threatened.

Cedric J Robinson





NOTES

1 Cedric Robinson, 'The Emergence and Limitation of European Radicalism', *Race & Class*, XXI, 2, 1979, pp145-70.

2 For the literature of British imperialism, see Jonah Raskin, *The Mythology of Imperialism*, New York, 1971; Brian Street, *The Savage in Literature*, London, 1975; V.G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Humankind*, London, 1969; and Michael Howard, 'Empire, Race and War in Pre-1914 Britain', *History Today*, 31, December 1981, pp4-11.

3 Douglas Lorimer, 'Black Slaves and English Liberty: A Re-Examination of Racial Slavery in England', paper presented at the International Conference on the History of Blacks in Britain, 28-30 September 1981.

4 "Those fearful phenomena which have almost invariably attended the planting of civilised colonies in uncivilised countries, and which had been known to the nations of Europe only by distant and questionable rumour, were now publicly exhibited in their sight. The words, 'extirpation', 'eradication', were often in the mouths of the English back-settlers of Leinster and Munster, cruel words, yet, in their cruelty, containing more mercy than much softer expressions which have since been sanctioned by universities and cheered by Parliaments. For it is in truth more merciful to extirpate a hundred thousand human beings at once, and to fill the void with a well-governed population, than to misgovern millions through a long succession of generations. We can much more easily pardon tremendous severities inflicted for a great object, than an endless series of paltry vexations and oppressions inflicted for no rational object at all." *Lord Macaulay's Essays*, London, 1906, p.429. Citation thanks to Peter Blackman.

5 Lord Scarman, *The Brixton Disorders, 10-12 April 1981*, London, November 1981, pp.135 and 64-5.

6 ". . . the centres are playing their cards in favour of a type of development based on appalling social inequality." Raul Prebisch, 'Capitalism: the Second Crisis', *Third World Quarterly*, 3, 3, July 1981, p.437. See also the interview with the French economist, Rene Dumont, 'Strangulation of Africa', *New African*, August, 1981, pp42-4; and Alem Mezgebe, 'The Politics of Hunger Brings Death to Africa', *New African*, November 1981, pp10-13.

7 C.L.R. James, 'The Making of the Caribbean People', in *Spheres of Existence*, London, 1980, pp177 and 178. The quote from James which follows in the text is from the same lecture given at Montreal in 1966.

8 Leslie Rout Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America*, Cambridge, 1976, p22.

9 *Ibid.*, pp22-3

10 Enriqueta Vila, 'The Large-Scale Introduction of Africans into Veracruz and Cartagena', in Vera Rubin and Arthur Tudens, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies*, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol.292, June 27, 1977, pp270ff; Sherburne Cook and Woodrow Borah, *The Aboriginal Population of Central Mexico on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest*, Berkeley, 1963, pp72-88; and Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, Westport, 1977, p36.

11 Peter Boyd-Bowman, 'Negro Slaves in Early Colonial Mexico', *The Americans*, XXVI, 2, October 1969, p134; and C.H. Haring, *The Spanish Empire in America*, New York, 1963, p206.

12 David Davidson, 'Negro Slave Control and Resistance in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1650', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XLVI, 3, August 1966, pp249-50.

13 Edgar Love, 'Negro Resistance to Spanish Rule in Colonial Mexico', *The Journal of Negro History*, LII, 2, April 1967, pp98ff.

14 William Taylor, 'The Foundation of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe de los Morenos de Amapa', *The Americas*, XXVI, 4, April 1970, pp439-46.

15 Ernesto Ennes, 'The Palmares 'Republic' of Pernambuco: Its Final Destruction, 1697', *The Americas*, V, 2, October 1948, pp200-1.

16 Arthur Ramos, *The Negro in Brazil*, Washington D.C., 1951, pp39-40.

17 See Irene Diggs, 'Zumbi and the Republic of Os Palmares', *Phylon*, XIV, 1, 1953.

18 R.K. Kent, 'Palmares: An African State in Brazil', *Journal of African History*, VI, 2, 1965, pp167-9.

19 Ennes, *op. cit.*, pp209-10.

20 Irene Wright, 'The Spanish Resistance to the English Occupation of Jamaica, 1655-1660', *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 4th Ser., XII, 1930, pp117-47.

21 See H. Orlando Patterson, 'Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Socio-historical Analysis of the First Maroon War, 1665-1740', in Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies*, Garden City, 1973, pp253-55.

22 David Buisseret and S.A.G. Taylor, 'Juan de Bolas and His Pelinco', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 24, 1&2, March/June 1978, p5.

23 Barbara Klamon Kopytoff, 'The Early Development of Jamaican Maroon Societies', *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXXV, 2, April 1978, p293.

24 Richard Price, *The Guiana Maroons*, Baltimore, 1976, pp3-4.

25 *Ibid.*, p21.

26 Johannes King, 'Guerilla Warfare: A Bush Negro View', in Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies*, *op. cit.*, pp302-4.

27 Joshua Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida*, Columbus, 1858, p2.

28 'Punishment for a Negro Rebel', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Ser.1, v.10, 3, January 1902, p178.

29 Allan Kulikoff, 'The Origins of Afro-American Society in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, 1700-1790', *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXXV, 2, April 1978, pp238-9.

30 Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, New York, 1964, p179.

31 C.L.R. James, *op. cit.*, pp184 and 187; see also his *The Black Jacobins*, London, 1980.

32 Lothrop Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo*, Boston, 1914, pp62-3; see also Gabriel Debien, 'Marronage in the French Caribbean', in Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies*, *op. cit.*, pp107-34.

33 James, *Black Jacobins*, *op. cit.*, p51.

34 See T.O. Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, Knoxville, 1973, pp47ff.

35 James, 'The Making of the Caribbean People', *loc. cit.*, p184.

36 Robert Conrad, *The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery*, Berkeley, 1972, p7.

37 Joao Pandia Calogeras, *A History of Brazil*, Chapel Hill, 1959, p156.

38 R.K. Kent, 'African Revolt in Bahia', *Journal of Social History*, 3, 4, Summer 1970, p343.

39 See Ramos, *op. cit.*, p.47 for Zeferina; and Kent, *ibid.*, for the statement of the Count of Arcos, governor of Bahia between 1810 and 1818.

40 See Michael Craton, 'Proto-Peasant Revolts?: The Late Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies, 1816-1832', *Past and Present*, 85, November 1979; Mary Reckord, 'The Jamaican Slave Rebellion of 1831', *Past and Present*, 40, July 1968.

41 Amilcar Cabral, *Return to the Source*, New York, n.d., p43.

42 See Gail Pool, 'Migration and Modes of Production: A Comparison of Jamaica and Trinidad', *Labour, Capital & Society*, 14, 1, April 1981, pp69-70; and Brinsky Samaroo, 'Politics and Afro-Indian Relations in Trinidad', in John LaGuerre, ed., *Calcutta to Caroni*, Port of Spain, 1974. I am grateful to C.L.R. James for pointing this event out to me.

43 For the Durban tragedy, see Maurice Webb and Kenneth Kirkwood, *The Durban Riots and After*, Johannesburg, 1949; for the Defiance Campaign, see Brian Bunting, *The South African Reich*, London, 1969; and Eddie Webster, "Stay-Aways' and the Black Working Class: Evaluating a Strategy', *Labour, Capital & Society*, 14, 1, April 1981, pp10-38.

44 Eli Weinberg, *Portrait of a People*, London, 1981, p89.

45 Interview, Dr. Frene Ginwala, 30 November 1981; and Harry Nengwekhulu, 'The Meaning of Black Consciousness', United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, *Notes and Documents*, 1978; and Joel Samoff, 'Transnationals, Industrialisation, and Black Consciousness: Change in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, III, 4, October 1978, pp489-520.

46 Nengwekhulu, *ibid.*

47 Among the objectives of the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau were: "*development of a popular culture* and of all positive indigenous cultural values; development of a national culture based upon the history and achievements of the struggle itself; constant promotion of the *political and moral awareness* of the people (of all social groups). . ." Amilcar Cabral, *op. cit.*, p55.

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