

C.L.R. JAMES

**NKRUMAH AND
THE GHANA
REVOLUTION**



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THE GHANA REVOLUTION**

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NKRUMAH AND THE GHANA REVOLUTION

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C. L. R. JAMES

Introduction by Leslie James

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Cover photograph: Government officials carry Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah following Ghana's independence from Great Britain, April 14, 1957. Courtesy of Bettmann/Getty Images.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The 1977 edition of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* is reprinted here in its original form with only minor insertions or deletions to clarify typos or supply dropped words.

All spellings and capitalization, along with most punctuation, remain as they appeared in the first edition despite any changes in common usage since 1977. For example, “Marxism” has been retained as “marxism.”

Readers may also note the spelling of “Nkrumaism.” The second commonly used spelling retains the “h” in Nkrumah’s name. Although both spellings have existed since the 1960s, the spelling “Nkrumaism,” used by C. L. R. James, was most common at the time (including in the Ghanaian press) while “Nkrumahism” has become more common in recent years.

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Finally, I want to thank the wonderful archivists at The University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, as well as at Howard University's Moorland Spingarn Research Center. My multiple trips to both archives over the past decade proves the invaluable and brilliant support they consistently provide.

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By the time C. L. R. James published *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* in 1977, it seemed as if James's book had been eclipsed. Originally drafted in 1958, by 1977 the transformative social and political revolution of Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) that James analyzed was well and truly over. A coup in 1966 deposed Kwame Nkrumah and overturned the government of the CPP. James himself publicly broke with Nkrumah in 1964 after Nkrumah deposed a sitting chief justice in order to impose his will on the courts. Yet James's book was never intended as a simple commentary or celebration of the transition of one state from colonial to sovereign status; it was an explanation of Africa's contribution to revolutionary theory. Determined to see his work gain life as a public document, James added a series of letters and speeches created after 1960 and published his analysis in two parts nearly two decades after he first sat down to write it. Today its context, its meanings, and indeed its very content hold such an array of possibilities for readers because it is not, and never has been, one work.

First, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* is a work that displays James's intellectual practice. It demonstrates his utter conviction in his arguments and gift for determined polemic, alongside a purposeful commitment to adjusting analysis and strategy to current conditions. Consider James's introduction to the book in 1977: by this time not only had James broken with Nkrumah but Nkrumah had survived numerous assassination attempts (the closest were in 1962 and 1964), along with the coup that deposed him, forcing him to live in exile until his death in 1972 in Conakry, Guinea. Despite all these changes, James remained firm in his analysis: "Events since 1958 give me no reason to modify and bring up to date what I wrote in 1958" (6). We see the same confidence in the preface to the 1963 revised second edition of James's masterpiece, *The Black Jacobins*, which we know he was working on at the same

time as he wrote the manuscript on Ghana (see appendix 1). “This book was written in 1938,” he writes. “Today, I have little to add to or subtract from the fundamental ideas which governed its conception.”¹ In the basic ideas and arguments of both texts, James was sure. Yet he leaves an opening. In 1963 James added an appendix to the *Black Jacobins* titled “From Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro,” which he wrote for “West Indians, a people of the *middle* of our disturbed century, concerned with the *discovery* of themselves.”² In 1977 James explained *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* as a record of “a *sequence of political responses* to an extreme political situation, the African situation, as it has developed” (18). Together, both texts are not an end point. Rather, they are situated in the midst of history and among a people in development; they are made as a tool for learning and growing.

Why was James so sure of what he wrote in 1958? The short answer is that he was not merely commenting on a sequence of events—he was adding new implements to revolutionary theory. James drafted part I of the book in the midst of coauthoring a book on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, *Facing Reality*. Indeed, as the letters in appendix 1 of this edition show, James set *Facing Reality* aside to prioritize his manuscript on Ghana. He completed the first draft just as he returned to his native Trinidad, where he became directly involved in Caribbean politics for the first time since he had departed for England in 1932. Crucial elements of part II of the book were written during his time in the Caribbean; others were written as James engaged with the rise of Black Power in the Caribbean, the United States, and Canada, as well as with a new set of African socialist leaders, particularly Julius Nyerere in Tanzania. This book was forged, then, both in and by the actions of peoples in Africa, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. What James was interested in, broadly, was theorizing how collective action took shape in specific classes and contexts and analyzing what particular historical moment and set of factors converged to move people toward internal creative action.³ *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* was James’s version of what he argued he saw in Caribbean people as a whole in the 1960s: “Passion not spent but turned inward.”⁴

What was James’s experience in the time between writing and publishing this piece? And what have we learnt in the decades since it was published in 1977? I want to attempt to answer these two questions before returning to how *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* extended several key themes in James’s lifelong enquiry into the nature and practice of social and political revolution, and why this work remains relevant to us today.

When James attended Ghana's independence ceremony in March 1957, where he says he first got the idea to write his book on Nkrumah and the CPP, he was no Caribbean outlier in Ghana, nor was he a rare African diaspora intellectual and activist to ally himself with Nkrumah's project. African diaspora commitment to Ghana was real and material. We know that many African Americans worked, traveled, and lived in Ghana in the years after independence.⁵ Indeed, African American presence in Ghana far exceeded the famous intellectuals like W. E. B. Du Bois and St. Clair Drake, artists and writers like Maya Angelou, and labor leaders like Vicki Garvin and George McCray.⁶ Ghana sought the aid of both Jamaican chief minister Norman Manley and Trinidadian chief minister Eric Williams to send legal experts to help the new state.⁷ Nkrumah also recruited two Caribbean-born, UK-based men to advise the new Ghanaian government in 1957: the illustrious Saint Lucian William Arthur Lewis became Ghana's first economic advisor, and the Trinidad-born George Padmore became Nkrumah's Advisor on African Affairs.

Padmore was a crucial anticolonial organizer who served as a connecting point for many colonial travelers who arrived in London from Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Padmore, a lifelong Marxist, turned his nom de guerre (he was born Malcolm Nurse) into a well-known name through his work for the Communist International in the early 1930s, when he also edited the globally circulated *Negro Worker*. This period of his life also facilitated the theoretical knowledge and organizational networks that he harnessed after he broke with the Communist Party and moved, by 1935, to London. James and Padmore, in fact, had known each other since their boyhood together in Trinidad. Once each of them separately made their way to London, they collaborated closely through an organization and paper they helped to found: the International African Service Bureau and *International African Opinion*. At the end of 1938 James left for the United States, and for the next decade and a half the two men worked from different poles. However, they remained in contact, and it was James who introduced Kwame Nkrumah to Padmore via a letter in 1945.

James first met Nkrumah in 1943 through his close political comrade, Raya Dunayevskaya, when she took James to Lincoln, Pennsylvania, where Nkrumah was a student.⁸ Throughout the rest of World War II the two men met to discuss political strategy, as James tutored Nkrumah in the skill of underground political work. And although James introduced Nkrumah to Padmore by stating, famously, that Nkrumah was "not very bright," James later claimed

that Padmore knew exactly what he meant by the statement: “The man is a born revolutionary, devoted completely,” but his intellect needed a deeper education in Marxist theory.⁹ Nkrumah’s contact with Padmore throughout the late 1940s and 1950s was frequent and detailed. Although Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast in late 1947, they maintained regular correspondence, a connection aided by Nkrumah’s secretary after 1952, Trinidadian Joyce Gittens.¹⁰ In 1954, Padmore also produced a book on developments in Ghana, *The Gold Coast Revolution*.

James remained in touch with Nkrumah in a more limited capacity after 1945. Grace Lee (Boggs), James’s political comrade, whom Nkrumah also befriended while he studied in the United States, facilitated their communication.¹¹ Indeed, Lee Boggs traveled from Detroit to London in 1957 to assist him in the preparation of the Ghana manuscript.¹² Lee Boggs, James, and Dunayevskaya collaborated closely in their writing and political organizing throughout the 1940s and 1950s, shaping their political ideas into a distinctive group on the US left known as the Johnson-Forest Tendency. But while James’s contact with Nkrumah was somewhat limited, his return to England in 1953 afforded a closer connection again with Padmore. And when Ghana celebrated its independence in March 1957, both James and Padmore traveled from London to Accra as invited guests. James stayed in Ghana for two weeks, while Padmore stayed for two months. Back in London, James set to work on three projects at once: a revision of his 1938 *Black Jacobins*, a co-authored pamphlet with Grace Lee Boggs and Cornelius Castoriadis (Pierre Chaulieu) on the Hungarian Revolution, and the book on Ghana. The letters in appendix 1 show how these projects all collided in James’s thinking.

In September 1957, James explained to Padmore that he hoped to return to Ghana in order to research some articles and possibly a book or pamphlet that would give the majority of “thinking people I meet” in England the information he believed they sought: “Many of them want to see [Ghana] in a better light. They are not deceived by the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Express* any more.”¹³ Although James did not make the trip back to Ghana until 1960, he nevertheless set about writing his proposed book, which aimed to fan the spark of worldwide interest in Ghana as one of the first African countries to successfully negotiate independence from European colonial rule. The intention for James’s *Ghana Revolution* came from a different time and place to that of Padmore’s *Gold Coast Revolution*. Padmore’s aim in 1954 was “to trace the evolution of Gold Coast nationalism from the foundation of the Ashanti Confederacy to the emergence of the Convention People’s Party.” *Gold Coast*

Revolution detailed the institutional and constitutional political history of the Asante and Fante in the Gold Coast from the sixteenth century, in order to set up the demand for self-government: “When the Gold Coast Africans demand self-government today they are . . . merely asserting the birthright which they never really surrendered to the British.”¹⁴ The point, for Padmore, was that Nkrumah’s leadership of the CPP proved his “statesmanship.” Padmore’s book was a case for political independence under the terms that British “progress” toward self-government demanded. James’s book set a different tone: to inspire postcolonial futures. *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* never mentions Padmore’s earlier book.

For both Padmore and James, independent Ghana seemed to demonstrate the possibilities for building socialism in societies and governments that were trying to forge a new path out of European colonial rule. By the end of the year, both men had departed London in order to involve themselves more directly in this task. Padmore and his partner, Dorothy Padmore (Pizer), moved to Accra in December 1957 and lived there until their deaths in 1959 and 1964. Dorothy, also an author and journalist, collaborated with Padmore on his manuscripts, and the couple coauthored some work together. Indeed, James’s unfinished biography of Padmore always maintained that “Padmore was the man he was because of the tremendous assistance he had from Dorothy.” She remained in Ghana after Padmore’s death and worked for the Nkrumah government.

In early 1958, James accepted an invitation to participate in the opening ceremony of the British West Indies Federal Parliament in Trinidad. He also began to help draft party documents for the People’s National Movement (PNM), a young political party founded by one of his former students, Eric Williams, whom James tutored in Trinidad in the 1920s and then mentored in London in the 1930s while Williams completed his doctorate at Oxford. Williams’s dissertation became the basis for his groundbreaking book *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), which set out to show how African slavery and the slave trade provided the financial basis for the development of modern industrial capitalism.¹⁵ In 1956, Williams consulted both James and Padmore in London before founding the PNM. By the end of 1958, James and his wife, Selma James, were living in Trinidad and working together to edit and produce the PNM’s official organ, which James renamed the *Nation*.¹⁶

The fact that James’s return to Trinidad in 1958 coincided with the inauguration of the British West Indies Federation was not inconsequential. The idea of regional unification, and in particular plans for a federation of

British West Indian islands, had been debated since the nineteenth century by various interest groups both in the Caribbean and in metropolitan Britain. In the early twentieth century, proposals for regional cooperation and/or federation were championed by the Colonial Office and even the planter-merchant oligarchies as a means of coordinating administrative bureaucracies and combating the poor economic status of the region. Federation, in the minds of the Colonial Office, became associated with ideas of progress, order, and efficiency en route to modernization of the region.¹⁷ After 1945, the Colonial Office began negotiations for a British West Indies Federation, ostensibly as part of a transition toward self-government.

Full independence, however, was not enshrined in the federal government that emerged in 1958 (an omission that served as a major, if not the only, factor that divided political leaders and interest groups in their commitment to the government). Yet while the West Indies Federation was fraught with tension from the early planning process in the late 1940s to its demise in 1962, it was also a serious attempt by many Caribbean leftists to plan a new and unified future for the Caribbean out of the division and destruction of colonial rule.¹⁸ Some Caribbean leaders, like Richard Hart in Jamaica, looked toward federation in the 1940s and 1950s as a framework for developing the Caribbean along socialist lines and approached federation not as an ideal end point, but as a practical solution, whatever the difficulties. These small and underdeveloped islands faced even greater challenges if each island tried to tackle self-government on its own.

More than this, James conceived of Caribbean peoples as interconnected—the different sociohistorical context of their islands did not negate for him the fact that Caribbean peoples were knit together by a similar history and in a proximity whereby events impacted each other. James's 1962 letter to Nkrumah, printed in part II of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, articulates this idea that Caribbean people held the tools to “establish themselves as a modern progressive people” (151). When James asked Nkrumah, in this letter, to intervene and encourage Caribbean leaders not to break up the federation, James directly connected Ghana, as a model for modern national development based upon human emancipation on a worldwide scale, with the fate of Caribbean cooperation.

When James took over the *Nation*, it provided a vehicle for his belief that building up knowledge within a people was essential to self-government. In the pages of this weekly newspaper, he promoted socialist planning and, crucially, the development of Caribbean identity as a unique and unified peo-

ple. He also made it clear why he believed Nkrumah's project was relevant for Trinidad: "If we pay attention to India and to Ghana, it is because they are clearing the road which vast millions in our position are following. Our racial affinities with them give us an added interest but we know the degree to which we as a people . . . [are also] organically associated with British civilization."¹⁹ In May 1959, the *Nation* reprinted a speech given by Nkrumah in Guinea for the celebration of Africa Freedom Day. And, in July 1959, contrary to James's later criticism of Nkrumah's treatment of the Opposition, the paper reprinted a series of articles supporting Nkrumah's strict policy toward the opposition and curtailment of the press in Ghana.

In March 1960, the *Nation* produced a special memorial number for the third anniversary of Ghana's independence. The front page was emblazoned with a message from now-premier Eric Williams, which praised the "progress" of Ghana as a "model which in our own way . . . we would do well to emulate." In contrast to this more general and nation-building oriented message, James's editorial offered a wider, more international, humanist interpretation: it was the "vision" and "courage" of Ghana "in the service of a better world" that "should be admired and studied by all." His editorial sent greetings to Ghana "in the name of our whole community," and the supplement reprinted a transmission by James about the West Indies delivered to Ghana and Nigeria via a BBC London broadcast. This special issue of the *Nation* included an essay by James entitled "The People of the Gold Coast: They Created Ghana," which contained elements of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*.²⁰

In the *Nation*, James aimed to put forward "the problems of the people . . . as stated by the people themselves" rather than the "point of view of the government."²¹ But as someone who had been away from Trinidad for more than a quarter of a century and in a subordinate position to Williams, his younger, former student, James walked a thin line while in Trinidad. He faced increasing opposition from within the PNM, and Williams began to distance himself from James. James was vocally critical of US military imperialism in Trinidad, a critique that in principle Williams also shared. But when it came to Trinidad's negotiation of the terms of the US lease of Chaguaramas, a military base occupied since 1940 under the terms of the Anglo-American Lend-Lease Agreement, the two men's approaches did not align in practice. After March 1960, James resigned from editing the *Nation*. In October 1960, the PNM voted to expel him from the party.

For the next six years, James moved back and forth between London and the Caribbean. In London he continued to write, deliver lectures, and run

a study circle with young Caribbean radicals including the Jamaicans Richard Small and Norman Girvan, future sociologist Orlanda Patterson, and historian Walter Rodney.²² In Trinidad he built up connections with the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union and its leader, George Weekes. In 1965, James cooperated to found a new political party, the Workers and Farmers Party, which contested Trinidad's elections at the end of the year. Unfortunately for James, the party was unable to win electoral support, gaining no elected seats and only 3 percent of the popular vote.²³

Yet James also found inspiration from his interactions with a group of Caribbean students based in Canada. Between late 1966 and early 1968, James made several visits to Montreal, where he was invited to give public lectures as well as private sessions with a group of students who admired, but also prodded and challenged, James's thinking.²⁴ The group of students in Montreal had contacts in most other Canadian cities as well as in New York, and many went on to play prominent roles in the rise of a new left in the Caribbean. These students included future prime minister of Dominica Rosie Douglass, Anne Cools of Barbados, Franklyn Harvey of Grenada, Tim Hector of Antigua, Robert Hill of Jamaica, Alfie Roberts of St. Vincent, and Walton Look Lai of Trinidad.

Montreal thus served as an intellectual petri dish for a new phase of Caribbean radicalism. At the same time, events in Montreal reverberated outward into the Caribbean.²⁵ Two separate sparks from Montreal set off protests in the Caribbean that articulated a "regionally-linked, home grown Black Power movement."²⁶ In October 1968, Montreal hosted the Congress of Black Writers, which witnessed a convergence of US and Caribbean leaders including Walter Rodney, James Forman, and Trinidad-born and US-based Stokely Carmichael. James delivered two lectures at this event, but it was the ideas and leadership emanating from Carmichael in particular that impressed the audience and captivated James. When Walter Rodney attempted to return from the conference to his teaching post at the University of the West Indies Mona (Jamaica), the government denied him entry and deported him back to Canada. The Jamaican government's expulsion of Rodney set off the wave of "Rodney riots" that stimulated Black Power in Jamaica.²⁷

The second spark from Montreal came months later. In January and February 1969, after university administrators at Sir George Williams University appeared to be stalling action in response to a complaint lodged by six black students from the Caribbean of racially biased grading by a biology professor, students and community organizers occupied the university computer

lab. The “Sir George Williams affair” placed Canadian racism on stark display, with racist vitriol shouted at those occupying the building, police violence against demonstrators, and blatantly harsh legal punishment administered to black participants after the end of the occupation.²⁸ Once news of the treatment of those who participated in the Sir George Williams occupation reached Trinidad, people organized protests in front of the Canadian High Commission and the Royal Bank of Canada targeting Canadian racism. But the students who organized these protests also looked inward, challenging Eric Williams’s government directly and initiating a wave of public protests and marches against the government that spread throughout Trinidad. The Sir George Williams affair was, according to Brinsley Samaroo, merely the “trigger” for an uprising in Trinidad in 1970, with origins in a longer historical struggle for “meaningful participation” since the nineteenth century.²⁹ These were, therefore, major internal uprisings organized by students and workers in the Caribbean. They also reveal, as Kate Quinn argues, “an interconnected network of activists . . . operating across a variety of geographical spaces, engaged in cognate struggles in which local and international concerns intersected.”³⁰

It was this frame, of internal self-organizing combined with international connection, that was also important for James’s interpretation of Ghana’s revolution. The growth of Black Power and James’s increasing interest in these movements clarifies why James continued to view Ghana and Nkrumah as relevant. At the end of 1968, James returned to the United States for the first time since he had been deported in 1953. James again led discussion groups from his apartment in Washington, DC, alongside his formal teaching at Federal City College. He also worked with the Center for Black Education, an organization that founded a community school for youth and ran education forums. Activists involved in this center also set up the Drum and Spear Press, to which he offered his 1938 book, *A History of Negro Revolt*, for reissue. When it appeared in 1969 under its new title, *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, it included a long epilogue where James attended in particular to the new political thought of Julius Nyerere in Tanzania. Parts of this epilogue were also chosen by James for reprinting in part II of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*.

That James chose to focus on Tanzania in 1969, and to reprint these thoughts in part II of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* in 1977, is not surprising. After Rodney was barred from reentering Jamaica at the end of 1968, he made his way from Canada to Cuba and, from there, back to his old teaching post at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, where he had worked between 1966

and 1967, and then again from 1969 to 1974. Rodney's circuit between the Caribbean and Africa is just one example of a new phase of pan-Africanism that James also became involved in. Indeed, in the early 1970s James participated in the early planning sessions and helped draft the call for the Sixth Pan-African Congress (PAC), which eventually convened in Dar es Salaam in 1974.³¹

What is striking, however, is James's decision in 1977 to affirm his analysis of Tanzania from 1969 without qualification. We know that James drafted a different introduction to the one that appeared in 1977 (see appendix 2, "Africa: The Threatening Catastrophe—A Necessary Introduction"), which commented on the "paper-thin veneer of Dr. Nyerere." This draft covers a wider range of African politics and leadership but does not go much beyond this remark about Nyerere, choosing rather to comment on Jomo Kenyatta and to focus on a critique of Hastings Banda's Malawi. Yet the introduction James chose in 1977 makes no negative mention of Nyerere; rather, it simply affirms his analysis that "something new" had, as in Ghana, emerged out of Africa. James never attended the Sixth PAC and was fiercely critical of the conference as a failure but, as Monique Bedasse shows, he remained committed to Tanzania as a pan-African-oriented revolutionary state through his support for Rastafarian repatriation to Tanzania in the 1980s.³² The draft "Necessary Introduction" strengthens Robin Kelley's observation that James never really responded in print to the corruption in Tanzania, nor addressed criticisms of Nyerere's policies in the 1970s.³³

All of James's activity in the 1960s gave new life to his thinking. Appendix 2 contains a 1964 draft of a new "Necessary Introduction" on "Africa: The Threatening Catastrophe." In 1973 James shared an almost exact typescript of this draft with one of his students at Howard University in Washington, DC. It contains substantive sections that ended up in the final 1977 published version as well as significant portions of what became "Lenin and the Problem." The dedication "To Francis" in this version ends, however, not with any reference to failure but with "hope springing eternal of the things that you yet can do." There is also no final paragraph, of course, on Tanzania. But what this 1964 introduction means is that even before Nkrumah and the CPP were overthrown in 1966, James had already drawn his conclusions about the direction of Ghana and of the continent more generally.

In the time between James's first draft in 1958 and this 1964 draft with its added introduction, Nkrumah and the CPP had busily embarked on a project to transform Ghana into an internationalist, socialist state. This project sometimes pursued contradictory policies. Ghana became a beacon of in-

ternationalism and a haven for African freedom fighters, even as preventive detention measures silenced Togolese activists and forced deportations to rid the country of unwanted elements.³⁴ National cultural symbols were created that were conducive to CPP ideology and often intimately tied to images of Nkrumah as leader, while massive infrastructure and modernization projects resulted in a ballooning bureaucracy and large-scale population re-settlements.³⁵ At the same time, the plans and projects of Nkrumah and the CPP could never be imposed unilaterally from above. They were built up, constrained, and negotiated on the ground by young recruits, elders, intellectuals, journalists, market women, and expatriate experimenters, as well as by Nkrumah and party officials.³⁶ In other words, Nkrumah-era Ghana was inspirational and aspirational, and it did produce results. But we should also see Nkrumah and the CPP for what the project was: a human and messy approach to nation-building.³⁷

The other noticeable omission from revised drafts of the book is any substantial reassessment of Eric Williams. Not only was James expelled from the PNM, but his relationship with Eric Williams became increasingly acrimonious. When James returned again to Trinidad in February 1965, Williams, fearing unrest on the oil fields, used recently passed legislation to place James under house arrest for a week.

Thus James broke not only with Nkrumah in the first half of the 1960s, but also with Eric Williams. This is not inconsequential to *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*. As I will discuss in the next section, Eric Williams's leadership in Trinidad in the 1950s was crucial to James's analysis of the uniqueness of the Ghana Revolution and the distinctive contribution of African and Caribbean leadership. James's decision to retain part I of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* in its original 1958 rendering, therefore, involved a decision to affirm not only what Nkrumah had achieved in Ghana, but what Williams had achieved in Trinidad, despite subsequent disagreements with the actions of both men. And it prompts anew my question at the beginning of this introduction. If James knew more about Nkrumah's revolutionary strategy in 1977 than he did in 1960, and if he broke so decisively from Williams's strategy for independent Trinidad, then why did he insist upon publishing the manuscript without revision? Why, if so much had occurred to change conditions between James's early draft of the manuscript and its publication, was he so sure of his original conclusions?

The answer to these questions is twofold. First, the structure and content of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* are driven by James's historical sen-

sibility. When the pioneering publisher and editor Margaret Busby worked with James in the mid-1970s to bring out some of his unpublished work, James carefully discussed with her each piece selected. Her new publishing house, Allison & Busby, collected significant pieces of James's work and made them available in three volumes: *The Future in the Present* (1977), *Spheres of Existence* (1980), and *At the Rendezvous of Victory* (1984). James, she recalls, presented pieces to her in their discussions with a sense that "I wrote that, I am not changing it."³⁸ This was something more than a determined spirit. James was a chronicler of movements: rewriting something he said previously would change the impression of what he thought at a particular time and alter the record. Instead, James kept his first draft about Nkrumah and Ghana as part I and supplemented it with further material. As part II of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* shows, James read the movements in the Caribbean, the Americas, and Africa as interlocutors in understanding the significance of Nkrumah's Ghana. But what is crucial for understanding both parts of the book is precisely that these events and changing ideas were not revisions, but supplements. The structure of the book in two parts is key to James's method and approach as a political activist, theoretician, and historian.

The second answer lies in the fact that James was not simply writing a history of the transition to political independence in the Gold Coast/Ghana; he was writing a blueprint of a new revolution. *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* is, ultimately, a contribution to revolutionary theory (see the letters in appendix 1). This is James's global thinking at work. It draws upon his knowledge of the French, American, Haitian, and Russian revolutions and applies these models to events in Ghana.

It is worth noting that comparisons with Russia in particular were not merely due to a personal interest on James's part. Nor were they simply part of a necessary attempt by James to address Nkrumahism in relation to 1950s Soviet politics and criticism of the one-party state. Certainly, the introduction to part I does this. But the strong emphasis upon the Bolshevik Revolution also suited the strategy of Nkrumah and the CPP; it was not alien to their own thinking. Thanks in part to the advice and influence of George Padmore in the 1950s, the CPP party structure and revolutionary program paralleled the Bolshevik vanguard model. Padmore involved himself with ideological training of CPP members and recruits, and the party emphasized disciplined internal party loyalty under the direction of a popular leader who could mobilize mass support for their socialist program.³⁹ This dynamic is important to keep in mind when reading the first item in part II, James's speech in Accra

in 1960, in which he rather vigorously affirms the role of the socialist party and Nkrumah's place as a world historical figure. But it also means that in part I when James compared the CPP's effort to give the illiterate villager "the best that was being thought and said in the world" (103) with the first years of the Russian Revolution, and when he analyzed Lenin's two essential recommendations to the Bolshevik Party—reconstruction of the government apparatus and the education of the illiterate peasant—in part II, James was applying the terminology that the Ghanaian revolution also, if not exclusively, spoke.

Although there are only two brief mentions of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955–56, these events were crucial for James's thinking about the self-organization of working people against state authority. As the letters in appendix 1 of this edition show, James put aside work on the Hungarian Revolution to prioritize the Ghana manuscript. And at the end of March 1957, James met and spoke with Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King Jr. on two occasions. The second occasion took place over lunch at his home, where James was stirred by the Kings' account of the events in Montgomery.⁴⁰ It is therefore striking that although James proposed, in his letter on 21 March 1957 (see appendix 1), to do an entire section on Montgomery in order to draw the attention of shared struggle between Africans and African Americans, this was never completed. Two of his other manuscripts from the late 1950s, *Every Cook Can Govern* (1956), which analyzed slavery and democracy in Ancient Greece, and *Facing Reality* (1958), a manifesto in response to the Hungarian Revolution cowritten with Grace Lee Boggs and cosigned with Pierre Chaulieu (Cornelius Castoriadis) that linked Hungary with the "Gold Coast Revolution," show how James was thinking through all these movements together. Part I of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* draws from the model of the Greek city-state and revolutionary change from above as well as from below and argues that events in Africa cannot be understood without first understanding "the substantially documented and widely debated historical experiences of Western civilization" (9). This Western experience held value precisely because debate was captured and analyzed in documentation. To this same end, James aimed to show that events in Africa were not sporadic and unintelligible episodes but a "developing pattern" that could be discerned with reference to other patterns.

James is quite clear that his analysis is intended not as the application of revolutionary theory to Africa but, rather, as an explanation of how the work

of Nkrumah and the CPP in Ghana in the 1950s pushed the strategies of revolution not simply onto a new geographic stage, in Africa, but into their next phase. “Every revolution must attempt what by all logic and reason and previous experience is impossible,” he writes. “Like anything creative it extends the boundaries of the known” (107). Ghana had extended the bounds of the known by orchestrating a paralyzing economic boycott of the country in 1950. The planned character of the boycott, and the role of trade unions in particular, marked this revolution as “blood and bone of the twentieth century” (111). By linking an absolute threat (a general strike) to a sweeping demand (self-government), the Ghanaian revolution boldly pressed on into inconceivable territory. But this, James declares, was why it served as a blueprint for revolution: “That is what revolution is, reasonable madness” (108).

With this “reasonable madness” the Ghana Revolution overcame the potency of the colonial “myth”—a myth that is the organizing force of the entire book. As explained by James, all societies have governing myths, and the “greatest of modern myths” is that which justifies colonialism (James states clearly that colonialism is not dead). This myth is governed by two interlocking components: first, it holds that Africans are backward and barbarous; second, that through contact with Western civilization (via colonialism) they are brought into the modern, “unified world” (25). This second component consequently extended the first principle of the myth, which justified colonialism, to its perpetual maintenance: the myth of the primitive Africans became also the myth that colonialism was an ordered and “systematic advance” toward human development and freedom (27). The two components of the original myth thus mutate into a second myth: that colonialism is advancement, not expropriation and destruction. This myth is not exclusive to Britain, but James is concerned in particular with how the British version of the myth prescribed stages of training to a political program justified by the myth.

In chapter 7, James makes clear why the workings of the myth, which he has laid out in chapter 1, are so crucial to his explanation of the revolution in Ghana. The logic of the originary myth of the “primitive African” drove the tactical miscalculations of the colonial administration, who consistently underestimated the Ghanaian people, the CPP, and Nkrumah. By stretching their tactics and demands to the point of unreason, the revolution overturned the logic of the myth of colonialism as development. More than this, power was reversed. James writes, “The people saw in the party a government of their own. They were listening to it, and not to the one with the power and

the police and the laws” (110). By overcoming the myth, power was no longer with the Power.

Part I of the book takes up several key themes in James’s intellectual thinking, including the self-organization of the masses as a creative revolutionary force, transformative educational practices, and the value and limits of Western political thought. Part II engages with some of the resulting complexities of these issues, including the role of the party and the dangers of bribery and corruption.

For James, the relation between people and leader was the “recurrent problem” of revolution (88). Indeed, at least three of his previous books—*The Life of Captain Cipriani* (1932), *The Black Jacobins* (1938) and *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* (1953)—were in many respects absorbed by a working-out of the relation between the individual leader and the people. The Ghana revolution, he believed, helped to “illuminate” this problem. Part I places great emphasis upon African intellectuals as the people “who will lead the continent” (11). But James ultimately concludes that the people of Ghana had demonstrated that it was the movement of the masses that came first. Through the general strike in 1950, the people learned their own power and capacity to work together. With Nkrumah and most of the CPP in prison, the people proved that “For a movement to be led it must exist” (115–16). In other words, despite the importance of the individual, the movement preceded the leader.

Taken together, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* and *Facing Reality*, the coauthored book written in the same period, demonstrate how James came to emphasize the self-activity of the masses as a revolutionary force. His political work in the 1960s and 1970s with the Oilfield Workers’ Trade Union in Trinidad serves as one example of how he built this relationship into his own activity. Both texts give critical attention to independent labor organizing and show how the creative self-activity of the masses acts as a catalyst for revolutions to advance into new and unknown terrain. *Facing Reality* argues that in Hungary, a “total uprising of the people” had disclosed to the world a new political form capable of “destroy[ing] the bureaucratic state power.” Independent Workers Councils demonstrated a mastery of production that would allow government “to be based upon general consent and not on force.” Through the creativity of Workers Councils, Hungarian workers had reversed the revolutionary process of seizing political power in order to organize production by instead “seiz[ing] power in the process of production and from there organiz[ing] the political power.”⁴¹

This was, of course, distinct from Nkrumah's campaign to "seek ye first the political kingdom." But the self-organizing of Ghanaian workers had also made its mark on CPP organizing. In Ghana, the independent activity of the Trades Union Congress resulted in the expansion of the Positive Action campaign to form two demands—full self-government and the reinstatement of dismissed government employees—instead of one demand, ensuring that organized labor "set their own proletarian mark upon the national revolution" (111).

Yet the "problem" of the leader and the people is never far behind. The next sentence after James's statement emphasizing the proletarian mark on Ghana's revolution alludes to another problem that it will face: "But dominant over all was the will of the people symbolised in the person of Nkrumah" (111). Thus leaders acquired their value not from exceptional skill or intelligence but from an ability to capture and then embody the impulses of the people. James repeatedly placed a great deal of confidence in Rousseau's concept of the general will. Not inconsequential to James's faith in his own ability to see with rapid clarity what was going on in Ghana (articulated in the letters in appendix 1), he argued that Rousseau's analysis of France was so sharp because he was an outsider who could look in. And James vehemently opposed, without a sustained explanation, any argument that Rousseau's ideas were "the ancestor of totalitarianism."⁴²

Paget Henry has argued that James interpreted Rousseau's general will such that the "creativity of the public selves of polities" became the "primary engine of history."⁴³ Indeed, James argued that it was the Parisian masses' vocal application of Rousseau that made them the driving force of the French Revolution, and that he himself had seen this principle in action twice in his lifetime, with the movements surrounding Captain Cipriani and Eric Williams in Trinidad, when a "social conception" came into view and "something for the total benefit . . . is lifting the population to a higher stage."⁴⁴

Is this interpretation by James, of Nkrumah as the symbol of the will of the masses, the reason he blamed Nkrumah's downfall on a personal failure to surround himself with the right people? James explained the political struggle in Ghana as a separation between the "native masses" and a Westernized elite whose social aim drove them toward government positions and thus state bureaucracy. Yet the role of the party in this relationship, and in particular the CPP, is somewhat shrouded in James's analysis of Ghana in part II. From the late 1940s, James began to question the idea of a "vanguard party" and argue instead that the end result of the labor movement must be the abolition of the party.⁴⁵ The article in part II, "Slippery Descent," first published in the

Trinidad *Evening News* in 1964, contends that he “hinted” in 1960 at the dangers of an urge to the one-party state and its inherent corruption. His warning against corruption in this article explains that because of the stage of material development in postcolonial states, the government becomes the most powerful determining economic factor: what should occur outside government, occurs inside government. But James’s statements about the relationship between the party, the people, and the state were complicated. James’s speech in 1960, reprinted as “Government and Party” in part I, places great faith in the CPP, arguing that the party must be the check on government by studying socialism and serving as an outside voice. His critique of how the party becomes the state—evident, for example, in *Facing Reality*—is absent. Rather, in James’s 1964 assessment it is ultimately Nkrumah’s failure to listen to what his people needed that was the downfall of the revolution.

James’s lifelong project of wrestling with the “problem” of the leader in revolutionary politics came into sharp relief in *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* with regard to his analysis of not only Ghana, but also Trinidad. In chapter 6 of part I, James turns to an extended analysis of the role of education in revolution, and the ways that a revolutionary leader can participate in an egalitarian sharing of knowledge with the people. To do so, he explains Eric Williams’s “University of Woodford Square” in Trinidad as a model for a new and different approach to political education. In this model, Williams chose not simply to lecture in the halls of institutional universities, but to convene an assembly of people in a public square and engage in direct public education. This strategy was important because Williams, as an Oxford-educated university professor, did not deign to speak a different language or to separate himself from working people, but entered their spaces and engaged in thoughtful discussion.

Taking education as his example of the “organic unfitness of the Colonial Office” (100) to the task of social development, James showed how workers read differently from traditional intellectual models. Crucially, for James, it is not that semiliterate or working people do not think, but that they do so in a different environment, with different tools and at different rhythms to the “almost automatic acquisition of information” of traditionally educated intellectuals (101). Print and oratory gain power and authority among workers as items are passed around, repeated, discussed, and thought about over a period of days or weeks. James argued that Eric Williams’s lectures in Trinidad, as well as the CPP’s journalism in Ghana, showed that both movements understood the rhythm and the drive workers had for education.

James's analysis of the education strategy of Eric Williams and the People's National Movement in Trinidad, alongside that of Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP in Ghana, remains illuminating because it provides a concrete example of how postcolonial projects thought about social and political organization in alternative ways to the supposed European prototype. From the point of view of metropolitan colonial planners and African nationalist leaders alike, educational programs in the 1950s were intended to affect both material and psychological transformation. The CPP Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education, initiated in 1951, involved annual campaigns to eradicate adult illiteracy, small-scale self-help projects in towns and villages, and regularly scheduled instruction in the domestic "women's work" of hygiene, nutrition, and family care. By combining education with social and economic development projects in villages, this program always aimed at ideological reorientation of the population toward the goals of socialist reconstruction.

We now know that this presented a new set of problems after 1958, as the expertise of "knowing" the will of the masses also became entwined with Nkrumah's personal power and with the maintenance of CPP authority.⁴⁶ But, for James, at least, the CPP project still indicated a different approach to popular education. In contrast, in the 1940s and 1950s the colonial "welfare and development" strategy financed agriculture and education projects, which also aimed to change hearts and minds by, for example, training workers in the "appropriate" paths of professionalization.⁴⁷ This Colonial Office program faltered, James argues, because it calculated its strategy mainly in terms of "bums in seats" and built infrastructure. This was the conception of development that underwrote the gradualist rationale of modern colonial rule. And it was precisely this rationale that meant that the metropolitan Colonial Office and colonial administrators on the ground would never be able to achieve real "development." Something new was required.

Part II sees James wrestling with what Tony Bogues has rightly characterized as one of the most prevalent issues in the study of African political thought: the modernity/tradition paradigm.⁴⁸ The dynamic of this paradigm is suffused with a pervasive assumption that African "tradition" is static and unchanging—resulting, as Terence Ranger first enumerated and African historians have since expanded, in misreadings of African politics that cannot account for the flexibility of custom and values over time and space.⁴⁹ In his 1964 article on Nkrumah's "Slippery Descent," James insists that Africans have a "tribal way of life" that is in a sense inherent, that is "in the bones" of Africans for "hundreds of years" (154).⁵⁰ Here James only hints at this ques-

tion of the role of tradition in African politics as he attempts to confront the withering of political life in Nkrumah's Ghana. But it follows that Nyerere's political thought and, in particular, his emphasis on an African "tradition" that could develop into its own form of African socialism based on the extended family, *ujamaa*, would capture James's attention.

Structurally, then, the inclusion in part II of James's 1964 criticism of Nkrumah, followed by Lenin's analysis of Russia's backward illiterate peasantry and then a comment on the Arusha Declaration, follows a sequence of thinking about African political theory and socialism. If James's analysis of the place of "tradition" in African political strategy was cursory and implied a static interpretation of "African" history, he was more direct in confronting the dichotomy of "backward" and "advanced" societies. James consistently articulates a Marxist developmental analysis of backwardness as the material and historical components of a given society. Russian illiteracy was the result not of the "psychological . . . weakness of men, nor the vices of instincts" but of the "defects of a system" (166–67). Hungarian workers had "advanced" to the stage where power could be seized via the process of production "as a result of the stage reached by modern industry and its experience under the bureaucratic leadership of the Party."⁵¹ Ghana's economy, infrastructure, and education were backward, but Ghanaians faced the task of modernization with their eyes open and in full understanding that the "advanced" societies of Europe developed over hundreds of years by taking advantage of outside territories and resources—a point that his then-future student, Walter Rodney, would confirm in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

For James, this historic relationship meant there was necessarily a double task of addressing difficulties and deficiencies while at the same time "throwing [Europe's advantages] back" at the developed world. Europe's development pattern, as James explains in his 1960 speech, was not an option for the underdeveloped world. But it is precisely this point that is important. Africans were demonstrating that they had all the capacity, the "ability to learn" and to invent. What they could not do was follow the exact same pattern as existing developed countries. They had to go beyond the known.

Parts I and II together articulate at least three ways that African movements had contributed something new to history. In the Convention People's Party, Africans had demonstrated a "creative adaptation" of Western political ideas to their own environment and needs, creating a political instrument forged out of contact between Europe and Africa (131). This something new challenged an insular logic to political theory and practice. Where Nkru-

mah's practice had truly stepped beyond the known, however, was in its pan-Africanism. "Never before," James writes, "has any state ever declared that it is ready to abandon national sovereignty in the interests of a continent" (136). In 1960, when James made this declaration, Nkrumah's willingness to give up state sovereignty for regional cooperation was an important model for the British West Indies Federation James worked for. In the late 1970s, when James made the decision to include this speech in the book, the appearance of a periodic dwindling of the Pan-African movement perhaps sharpened James's investment in Nkrumah.

Finally, the Arusha Declaration's creation of cooperative villages as the fundamental social unit, with the Tanzanian farmer as the nucleus of the education system, broke the bounds of the known again: "Not in Plato or Aristotle, Rousseau or Karl Marx will you find such radical, such revolutionary departures from the established educational order" (180). The first paragraph of ". . . Always out of Africa" makes clear that James is more interested in foregrounding the historical achievements of an African state than anything else. He exposes what he believes to be fraudulent African claims to build socialism, but the thrust of the work is clearly to identify a new stage of society produced in Africa. Nyerere's translation of socialism as a doctrine of human equality rather than class struggle, Tony Bogues argues, was a prominent interpretation of socialism within radical anticolonial thought of the era.⁵² Whatever James's full view of Nyerere's interpretation, particularly with regard to the role of production in socialist and capitalist societies, we have already seen that human equality played a role in how he situated Ghana's importance for his Trinidadian readers in the *Nation* in the early 1960s. And it is ultimately the harmony between humanism and socialism, which Nyerere's thought had exposed, that James celebrates.⁵³

James's description of what African leaders like Nkrumah and Nyerere were doing was an affirmation of experimentation that contained an unequivocal rejection of the status of lab rat: "To let other people stand aside and look upon us critically as if we were some experiment. . . . That we will not stand" (142). And its method, which involved multiple terrains of activity and thought, was fundamental to many of the thinkers and leaders James engaged with. Tony Bogues has argued that one characteristic of early postcolonial African and diaspora thinkers, including Nyerere, was that they directly engaged their political thought and theory with practice, a move that demands some sympathy: it required both "a willingness to question the orthodoxy of political thought and the capacity to begin to understand their own societies

on their own terms.” The questioning of political orthodoxy—the “throwing it back in their faces,” as James put it—was in itself a complex task of critical and imaginative thought. Discerning exactly what “their own terms” were is another. It required the ability to operate “at the daily level of political life and also engage in reflection and political work.” The result was a “political discourse [that] was being continuously reshaped.”⁵⁴

James believed that his conclusions about Nkrumah were still as relevant as ever two decades after he originally wrote them. They gain new life today. His concern that university training could “instil [a] poisonous medicine into the veins” (101) that would produce no new ways of thinking have been taken up by student movements in South Africa, Britain, Europe, and the United States. Current movements to decolonize the educational curriculum demand more honest intellectual tools from universities and thus reinvigorate James’s attention to different modes of education. New ways of thinking about education, beyond the number of schools built or teachers counted, were “at the heart of the emancipation of Africa” (103). Across Africa political and intellectual agendas are asking critical questions about the trajectory of the continent after independence, demanding new political forms and ways of thinking about the relationship between politics and society. The questions of what it means to decolonize, and how that might be done, are being critically rethought not just in the former “Third World” colonies but, finally, in settler colonies and in the heart of the former colonizer.

The layers of time present in *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* meant that James was constantly gesturing forward and backward on different scales. The present infiltrated his reading of the past, just as the past incited the future. “It is the present, and not researches into archives which determine our understanding of the past,” he writes. “So it is our conceptions of what is going on around us that will enable us to renew ourselves at the richness of heart which was present in the people of the Gold Coast as it was in the people of France at the greatest moment of their national history” (88).

The fact is that James was never very far from his own work. In the 1964 draft of his introduction, James admitted that a publisher had read the manuscript and found it “dated,” to which James replied, “I should hope that this history is dated.”⁵⁵ He then proceeded to locate the book in his own personal history from the 1930s, which included his work with George Padmore and *International African Opinion* and their early belief in the coming African revolution. That historical explanation remained in the final published version in 1977.

This “dated” history was no mere aside or qualifier. It was, it could be argued, at the root of James’s project. We can return again to the question, Why did James persist in his effort, over decades, to make his manuscript public? His corpus demonstrates a deep and long-standing commitment to serve as a spokesman for revolutionary change and as a chronicler of the “remarkable men” that Africa and the African diaspora produced. In a lecture on “The Old World and the New,” James argues that “you cannot under any circumstances write the history of Western civilization without listing” the achievements of René Maran, George Padmore, Marcus Garvey, Aimé Césaire, or Frantz Fanon.⁵⁶ One of James’s first published books was his biography of the Trinidad labor leader Arthur Cipriani. And if *Beyond a Boundary* was about Trinidad just as much as it was about cricket, it was also a record of the achievements of his friend Learie Constantine and James’s fight for Frank Worrell to become the first black captain of the West Indian cricket team. If *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* was a record of Nkrumah’s achievements in spite of many mistakes, its preface was also an archive of George Padmore’s work in Africa, and its postscript a commitment to Julius Nyerere and his project in Tanzania.⁵⁷ Padmore’s death in September 1959 affected James deeply. If he remained committed to revisiting and publishing his book on Nkrumah throughout the 1960s and 1970s, he also continued to work on a biography of one of his earliest friends.

Unlike the Nkrumah book, James’s book on George Padmore was, as far as we know, never completed.⁵⁸ But he was still researching it in the late 1960s, and the text of “The Old World and the New,” which was delivered as a speech in London in 1971, paid homage to Padmore as one of the men produced by a particular Caribbean situation.⁵⁹ James’s elaboration in 1971 of how and why these “remarkable men” emerged reads very much like a letter written in 1968 requesting research funding to write his book on Padmore.⁶⁰ Even if this drive was not entirely conscious, the publication of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* in 1977 realized another small archive of Padmore’s work. Indeed, in a 1973 interview, James explained that much of his information about independent Ghana in the late 1950s, during the writing of part I, came from his direct correspondence with Padmore. Until his death, in September 1959, Padmore sent James frequent updates and documents of “everything that he was doing” in Ghana.⁶¹

James always identified his own position within a text and the history that informed that position. The author was never absent from his writing. I wish to do the same here. I write this introduction from Winnipeg, Canada, a set-

tlar colony only barely able to acknowledge that its policies of land and resource expropriation, cultural genocide, and pass system instituted against indigenous peoples are not the distant past, but the lived history of the twentieth century. This is the country of my birth. It is a country that, in James's arresting prose, is so "choked and stifled by the emanations from the myth" (29) that in 2009 its prime minister could stand before a gathering of world leaders and state that Canada has "no history of colonialism."⁶² In 2016, from the mouth of a new prime minister, and despite his personal admonitions against "colonial behaviours" toward Canada's indigenous peoples, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau still found it possible to paint Canadian government as a more benign form of rule that did not bear "some of the baggage that so many other Western countries have—either colonial pasts or perceptions of American imperialism."⁶³ The powerful ideas contained in what James has called "the myth" remain in our world today. James's careful delineation not only of the ideas but also the "politics that flow from the myth" make the first chapter of *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* a productive resource "for all those seeking to lift ourselves from the parlous conditions of our collapsing century" (19).

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NKRUMAH AND THE GHANA REVOLUTION

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TO FRANCIS

in never-to-be-forgotten memory.
Like Cromwell and Lenin, he initiated
the destruction of a régime in decay—
a tremendous achievement; but like them,
he failed to create the new society.

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In 1957 in Accra, I had long conversations with Nkrumah about the Ghana revolution. It was the revolution in the Gold Coast, ending in the state of Ghana, which had struck imperialism in Africa the blow from which it would never recover. I told Nkrumah that I thought it was one of the most significant revolutions of the century, and that there was still much of great importance to past and future history to be said about it. He said he had been thinking the same, and ultimately I willingly undertook to write a history of the Ghana revolution. I felt myself particularly qualified to do so. I had known Nkrumah in New York before he came to London to join George Padmore; Padmore was from 1935 the founder and guiding spirit of the African Bureau and today is universally known as the father of African emancipation. It was under the auspices of the Bureau that Nkrumah went from London to the Gold Coast in 1947 to begin his preparations for the revolution which was to initiate a new Africa. I went to work at once and completed the history by 1958. What I then wrote is the basis of Part 1 of this book.

I had been the editor of the journal *International African Opinion*, published by the African Bureau, and between 1953 and 1957 had seen a great deal of Padmore, not only a close political associate in the struggle for colonial emancipation but a friend from boyhood in the West Indies. During the struggle for independence Padmore had been Nkrumah's personal representative in London. Padmore stage by stage in articles and in books had publicly recorded the development of the African struggle for independence. He and I had been in Ghana together in 1957 when I was discussing with Nkrumah. We examined the African revolution in Ghana itself in 1957 and what I wrote in the history expressed, I believed, more or less what our circle, which had lived with the African question for over twenty years, thought of the future of the struggle for African independence at the time of its first success. By 1957

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we had acquired great confidence in our own approach to these questions, for in the years before the second world war we had been the sole political grouping which not only foresaw the coming independence of Africa but under the guidance of Padmore worked unceasingly for it. We were not wrong in 1935, and events since 1958 give me no reason to modify and bring up to date what I wrote in 1958.

In that year I went to the West Indies. There, as Secretary of the West Indian Federal Labour Party which governed the now defunct Federation, I had a practical and illuminating experience of a colonial territory on its way to independence. I am now in a position to say that the political officials and pundits, especially the ones sympathetic to colonial freedom, illuminated their far less complicated bankruptcy over Africa by their miscomprehension of the West Indies. In 1960, on political business connected with the West Indies, I again visited Nkrumah in Ghana. We talked, not as much as in 1957, but this time I knew more about these matters and renewed acquaintances and friendships in Ghana. Ghana, from being the finest jewel in the crown of Africa, was obviously in a state of impending crisis. After getting Nkrumah's agreement as to what topics I should deal with, I addressed a meeting of his party in Accra. The speech was recorded and I have reprinted it here (135–48) without annotation or omission. Nkrumah learnt about the speech and its reception, expressed his approval and told me that he would get the text printed. I sent the script to him and it was never acknowledged, far less printed: Nkrumah was very acute and, knowing my general political ideas well, he must have recognised far more than anyone else what I was saying; without fanfare I had not modified the perils that I saw ahead. As I had occasion to say later, I was quite certain that my audience understood what I was talking about.

I nevertheless continued to consider Nkrumah one of the forward looking politicians of the day and the most important political leader in Africa. Against all criticism of the unquestioned anomalies of his régime, I stood firmly by the fact more important than all others added together that in a situation of enormous difficulty, on the whole he was not only doing his best but was, as politicians go, one of the most enlightened. As late as 1962 I had occasion to say so. Deeply disturbed at the impending collapse of the West Indian Federation and the effect of this defeat on his struggle for a United Africa, Nkrumah addressed a carefully phrased but no less powerful political letter to every head of government in the West Indies, pointing out what the collapse would signify for the public image of black men, and with firmness

and sobriety asking them to reconsider. He also sent me a copy of the letter saying rather formally that he knew my interest in the subject. I was a little surprised, but not for long. No West Indian political leader allowed it even to be known that he had received such a letter. I therefore published it, and Nkrumah's régime then being under fire for its anti-democratic tendencies (putting the opposition in jail)¹ I took the opportunity to add to the publication a personal letter to him stating that then, in 1962, as over the previous twenty years, I had always found him a great African statesman and one who stood in general on what I can best call the progressive side of world politics. That letter I have republished here (149–51).

In 1963 I had occasion to write to him of my concern at a second attempt to assassinate him: I implied that something was seriously wrong with a régime in which there were two attempts at assassinating the political head of state: I knew that in 1957 over a large part of Ghana Nkrumah could have walked for days without a single attendant. His reply to this letter I found most lacking in his customary political sense. But I have always paid attention to politics in Ghana; I could see there was trouble ahead and I was deeply disturbed at the way things were going. For one thing I had always found that many ordinary people in the Western world looked hopefully at Africa on account of the impact upon them of Ghana. I therefore wrote a long memorandum to Nkrumah about the continuing and growing crisis in newly-independent African states. Unfortunately I never sent it—one has to be careful in relations with political leaders, especially leaders of new states. But shortly afterwards I had occasion bitterly to regret that I had not sent him the memorandum.

The continuous crisis in Ghana had reached a climax when Nkrumah dismissed his Chief Justice for giving a judicial decision of which he disapproved. I have to emphasise that, as the book will show, this act showed the degeneration not only of the régime but of his own conception of government. As usual most commentators seemed to believe that Nkrumah, an African inexperienced in the ways of parliamentary democracy, was drunk with the wine of power, and had once more proved the inability of Africans to govern except as some reactionary tribal chief in modern dress. I on the contrary realised at once that Africa had crossed a Rubicon. In order to drive home the significance of this dismissal I have gone to the length of saying to public audiences that an unscrupulous head of government might find it necessary to shoot his Chief Justice while trying to escape, arrange for him to be run over by an errant motor lorry, have a bunch of doctors declare him to be medically unfit and, Kremlin-fashion, put him out of the way in an asylum, send him on

a long holiday and beg the British government to make him a life peer on resignation, even invite him to dinner and poison him. But what a head of state does not do is to dismiss his Chief Justice after he has given a major decision on a matter in which the whole country is interested. *The very structure, juridical, political and moral, of the state is at one stroke destroyed, and there is automatically placed on the agenda a violent restoration of some sort of legal connection between government and population.* By this single act, Nkrumah prepared the population of Ghana for the morals of the Mafia. Those learned societies which passed resolutions disapproving of his act should have known that Nkrumah could have said the most admirable things about the rule of law. It wasn't that he did not know. What was important was that he knew all the arguments against such a step and its inevitable consequences.

I wrote to him at once making clear the far-reaching consequences of the mistake he had made. I asked him to write to me or ask some trusted secretary to do so. I told him that if I had been able I would have come to talk to him: he needed as most of these leaders do some old associates who could talk to him without any sense of past obligation or future hopes. I suspected the pressures which had driven him to this fateful action. He never replied and after a month I wrote three articles in a West Indian newspaper using the situation in Ghana as a peg on which to hang my long-felt premonitions of the African degeneration. These articles are republished in Part II of this book. I have no need either to add to or subtract from them.

I had not come to an end of my relation with Ghana. In 1963 I was asked to write for a political journal to be published in Accra. I declined to write anything about Africa—I knew the hopelessness of the situation in which the African leaders found themselves, and knew that *all* that I had to say would not be published in any African paper. Ultimately I compromised by suggesting and agreeing to write a study of Lenin's final reflections on Soviet Russia, the first underdeveloped country to face the problem of the transition to the modern world. The book's penultimate chapter is a reprint of the article. It deals with Lenin's summation of what Soviet Russia had done and had not done by 1923. It could have been written with contemporary (and future) Africa in mind. As far back as 1958 I had sent a bound copy of these writings of Lenin to Nkrumah to mark his fiftieth birthday. But it seems that only after an ocean of blood, sweat and tears will African politicians be able to understand Lenin's prophetic warnings and drastic revolutionary proposals for solution.

The future of Africa will be rooted in the African experience of African life. Yet nobody, European or African, can make anything clear and consis-

tent of the developing pattern in Africa unless upon the basis of the substantially documented and widely debated historical experiences of Western civilisation. That must first be established so that he who runs or merely looks at television may read. Modern Europe begins in France in 1848, and Karl Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* pointed a fearsome finger at what he then saw as the dominating political reality of the age which was beginning:

It is immediately obvious that in a country like France, where the executive power commands an army of officials numbering more than half a million individuals and therefore constantly maintains an immense mass of interests and livelihoods in the most absolute dependence; where the state enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends and tutors civil society from its most comprehensive manifestations of life down to its most insignificant stirrings, from its most general modes of being to the private existence of individuals; where through the most extraordinary centralisation this parasitic body acquires a ubiquity, an omniscience, a capacity for accelerated mobility and an elasticity which finds a counterpart only in the helpless dependence, in the loose shapelessness of the actual body politic— it is obvious that in such a country the National Assembly forfeits all real influence when it loses command of the ministerial posts, if it does not at the same time simplify the administration of the state, reduce the army of officials as far as possible and, finally, let civil society and public opinion create organs of their own, independent of the government power. But it is precisely with the maintenance of that extensive state machine in its numerous ramifications that the *material interests* of the French bourgeoisie are interwoven in the closest fashion. Here it finds posts for its surplus population and makes up in the form of state salaries for what it cannot pocket in the form of profit, interest, rents and honorariums. On the other hand, its *political interests* compelled it to increase daily the repressive measures and therefore the resources and the personnel of the state power, while at the same time it had to wage an uninterrupted war against public opinion and mistrustfully mutilate, cripple, the independent organs of the social movement, where it did not succeed in amputating them entirely.

That is what I saw in Ghana in 1960 and this is what has been mounting in ever-widening circles as the outstanding social and political development in contemporary Africa. The African state enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends and tutors civil society from its most comprehensive manifestations

of life down to its most insignificant stirrings. At least it attempts to do so, and where it fails will compromise for static acquiescence. That is so and must be so. The contemporary state has not only a finger in every pie, it initiates the gathering of material for all new pies, and finds it necessary to claim at least a token share in all the old pies. This is so more particularly in underdeveloped countries and overwhelmingly so in dynamic underdeveloped countries determined to “catch up with and in time surpass” the advanced countries. Stalin, to whom we owe the phrase, at least caught up with and surpassed many millions of his own subjects.

The concentration on the one-party aspect of the term “one-party state” is a typical myopia of people who insist on looking for two parties and are horrified to find only one. In actuality they see none. In the African one-party state the term “party” is a euphemism. It is the state, that expanding source of dignities, wealth and power in countries and among people which have very little of these and are accustomed to being excluded from them.

Politically the people of Africa have gone through the initiation from puberty into manhood. Sometimes, though not always, the circumcision was rough: the physician was modern, but often a member of the Royal Family was the only anaesthetic. The great barrier in the way of grasping, of absorbing this simple but shattering new portent in contemporary history has been the defensive reiteration by the leaders of British public thought that the British government “gave,” “handed over” independence for which (God save us) it had long been training them.

The truth is that the population was trained by two forces: imperialism, which exploited them with a brutal and horrible cruelty and shamelessness, and the concomitant violence adequate to ridding themselves of this burden grown intolerable. All politics in Africa today begins from there. As in independent India, the violence in face of which the imperialist power retreats can burst out after the imperialist departure.

Economic relations are the basis of any form of state and the colonialist states of Africa were from start to finish organisations for economic exploitation. Economic relations in Africa have not collapsed, although they were very near to collapse. Economic relations are relations between people. The economic relations in the African states have acquired new functionaries, that is all, but it is now that the total collapse is imminent, because *the people the new functionaries have to manage are not the people over whom the colonial power and its civil servants, its chiefs and its army, kept order.*

The whole of the Western world became poisoned by the fantasy of whether independent Africa could work the two-party system or not. And as the unreality of this has become manifest, there has been a spreading tendency to accept the one-party state as for the time being the next best substitute. The reality is that the new African states for the most part are bastard imitations of the Russian one-party state of Eastern Europe or headed for that haven by way of bastard imitations of the two-party state of Western democracy (with the opposition in jail, in exile or very conscious that that is the fate which awaits it unless by hook or by crook it gets hold of the power). Both cohorts in the manner of African chiefs are ennobled by a large new umbrella which they quite shamelessly dignify with the title of African socialism. Thereby they seek to do two things: sanctify the concentration of all available funds in the hands of the state, i.e. their own hands, and seek to build a wall of consciousness between themselves and the capitalist imperialism against which they mobilised the African masses in the struggle for independence. One feature is common to all these states. As I found in Ghana in 1960, and have verified on innumerable occasions for practically all of newly independent Africa, the population is convinced of one new inescapable feature of the new governments, the corruption of government and party officials from the highest to the lowest. Where the ordinary citizen does not find it he is uneasily aware that something is wrong. As Lenin said so clearly of the Russia of 1923, corruption is inherent in the system. The brutality which follows this corruption pervading any new sphere of government has been amply demonstrated for all the world to see and even officially acknowledged by the late Nikita Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

The man at the helm is the African intellectual. He succeeds—or independent Africa sinks: unlike Britain in the seventeenth and France in the eighteenth centuries, there is no class on which the nation falls back after the intellectuals have led the revolution as far as it can go. In the twentieth century it is quite impossible for Africa to develop the class of large-scale capitalists that followed the victory over the slave-owners in the Civil War: apart from the changed picture of the world view, there is not even the mercantilist base that America had. As in Russia after the 1917 revolution, it is the intellectuals who will lead the continent. Yet Western racial prejudice is so much a part of the Western outlook on life that the African intellectual continues to be looked upon as some kind of primitive barbarian climbing the sharp and

slippery slope to civilisation. The Congo rebels against Tshombe, threatening and even shooting white prisoners, evoked a chorus from minds not merely tinged but soaked in the mire of racial superiority. The following from the *Evening Standard* was typical:

One of the many paradoxes of the violent and unhappy Congo is the part now being played by Mr Thomas Kanza, the Foreign Minister of the Stanleyville rebels who, according to one report, threatened to “devour” the European hostages.

Mr Kanza, a Harvard man, is well known in London, where he was Congolese Chargé d’Affaires from 1962 until last December. He is a sophisticated and amusing bachelor of thirty-one who is remembered as the host of some lively parties while he was posted here.

He played a leading part in lobbying against the Union Minière interest behind the scenes at Westminster. He resigned when Mr Adoula was succeeded as Prime Minister of the Congo by Mr Tshombe.

His father was Burgomaster of Leopoldville. After graduating from Louvain University in Belgium, he read psychology and education at the College of Europe in Bruges, won a scholarship to Harvard, joined the EEC in Brussels and returned to America as Congolese delegate to the United Nations. He is now negotiating in Nairobi on behalf of the rebels.

Personal political ambition and long-term opposition to Mr Tshombe no doubt explain his present loyalties, but many people who knew him in London find them a little difficult to reconcile with the memory of an urbane diplomat.

One would believe that the régimes of Hitler and Stalin had existed ten thousand years ago in the twilight dawn of history. In fact the African intellectual is a modern type, and will never be understood except as a type of Western intellectual. Luckily the type has been analysed and described with a clarity and force unsurpassed in modern history, literature or psychology. The author is Dostoyevsky, and the occasion is that supreme masterpiece of European criticism, his address on Pushkin, delivered in Moscow in 1880, a year before his death. The only thing to do is to quote various passages, and the reader is asked himself to substitute Africa wherever Dostoyevsky says Russia:

The character is true and admirably realised; it is an eternal character, long since native to Russia. These wanderers are wandering still, and it will be long before they disappear. In our day they no longer visit gypsy camps,

seeking to discover their universal ideals and their consolation in that wild life, far from the confused and pointless activity of Russian intellectuals; now, with a new faith, they adopt socialism which did not exist in Aleko's day, and labour eagerly, thinking like Aleko that they may reach so their final goal, not for themselves alone, but for all men.

Dostoyevsky knew the origin of these socialists:

The greatest number of intellectual Russians in the time of Pushkin served then, even as now, as civil servants in government positions, in railways, banks, or other ways, or even engaged in science or lecturing—earning money in a regular peaceful, leisured fashion, even playing cards, without desire for escape, whether to the gypsies or other refuge of more modern days. They only played at liberalism, “with a tinge of European socialism” which in Russia assumes a certain benignity—but that is after all only a matter of time. One man is not even yet annoyed while another, encountering a bolted door, furiously beats his head against it. All men meet destiny in their turn, unless they choose the saving road of humble identification with the people. Even though some escape, this must remain truth for the majority.

Like the African, the Russian of Dostoyevsky's day yearns for truth,

yearns for the truth, somehow and somewhere lost, which he can nowhere find. He cannot tell wherein this truth resides, when this truth was lost, nor where it can be found, suffering nonetheless. Meanwhile a restless and fantastic creature searches for salvation in external things, as needs he must. Truth continues external to him, perhaps in some European country, with its more stable organisation and settled mode of life. Nor can he understand that truth is after all within him. How could he understand this? For a century he has not been himself in his own country. He has no culture of his own. He has forgotten how to work. He has grown up within closed walls, as in a convent.

Despite the consistently reactionary character of his politics, Dostoyevsky knew where only salvation could be found. He knew that

Truth is within them, not without. Find thyself in thyself. Humble thyself to thyself. Be master of thine own soul, and see the truth. Not without, nor abroad is this truth; not in things, but in thee and in thine own labour upon thyself. If thou conquerest thyself, then wilt thou be free beyond

dreams, and make others free; thou wilt labour upon a great task, and will find in it happiness and fulfilment, and, at long last, understanding of thine own people and their holy truth. If thou art thyself unworthy, proud, and given to malice, if thou demandest life as a gift, without payment, neither with the gypsies nor in any other place, whatsoever shalt thou discover the “harmony of the spheres.”

And the great master of fiction returns once more to the reality of the Russian intellectual:

In the remote heart of his fatherland, he is yet in exile. Conscious of his aim, he yet knows not where to turn. Later, he still feels himself in the midst of strangers, even more a stranger to himself, despite his brains and his sincerity, wherever he may roam. At home or abroad. He loves his country, but cannot trust it. He knows its ideals, but has no faith in them. He cannot see the possibility of any work in his own country, and he can feel only sorrow and derision for those few who can believe in it.

That is why African intellectuals kill. Perhaps we are watching in Dostoyevsky’s pages the crisis of the intellectuals of all the underdeveloped countries and African peoples.² What Dostoyevsky feared more than anything else was their coming to power. He had died before the Russian proletariat appeared on the scene. Lenin unreservedly placed his faith in a new Russia upon the proletariat, small and inexperienced as it was. But as we shall see, before he died he was very much aware of what Dostoyevsky had divined, in fact seen. The African intellectual may even in times of stress revisit and consult the juju of his parents. That does not in the least alter the fact that if he is an educated person, he is a man of Western civilisation. The only advantage he has is that Africa is so backward that he will be guilty of violences far closer to Mussolini’s cruelties than to the unbridled savagery of hitlerism or stalinism seeking “to catch up with and surpass.”

The road out of this fearful morass which daily multiplies must of necessity be a simple one. A government must arise which will state publicly and officially what all the population knows. In Ghana in 1960 I found the educated section of the population seething with anger against this cancer. Ghanaians in 1960 were very proud of themselves. They felt that they had made history—which they undoubtedly had. And now corruption was eating away at the foundations of the new state they so proudly cherished. Under strong public pressure Nkrumah had appointed a government commission of inves-

tigation, but the opinions that I pertinaciously sought and found were that such a commission was bound to be powerless before so pervasive an evil. There was a sense that not a commission seeking wrongdoers but the whole function of government was involved. I did my best to let them see that I understood their problem. As best I could I indicated the way out. The problem is first and foremost an internal problem of the African state. That no outside body can fix for them. But the problem also lies at the nub of Africa's international relations. Without economic, technological and educational help and encouragement from the advanced areas of Western civilisation, Africa will go up and go down in flames, and heaven only knows when that conflagration will be halted. But the advanced world will hear and understand the need for aid on the scale and in the manner required only from a continent which has righted itself and registers across the skies that something and something new has again come out of Africa.

One definitive stage has been reached and passed. All, including the sycophantic rulers themselves, recognise the utter futility of constant begging for aid. They will never get it, and even if they get it they are in no position to make adequate use of it. At present they are allowed to create glittering units of foreign-owned exploitation, a token industrialisation which only places them more tightly and firmly in the shackles of the economic domination which they denounce and woo almost in the same breath.

The future of this vast continent and its millions lies in their making the advanced peoples realise that on the millions of Africans, as much as on any other section of modern society, hangs the real beginning of the history of humanity to which all that has hitherto taken place is only prehistory, more dehumanising and self-destructive in the twentieth century than ever before. But this embracing of the millions of Africa by the West can take place only on a clear recognition that they are an African people, with a way of life and a view of life and society thousands of years old. Tribalism is this way of life. Everything that does not begin there is for the Africans vanity and vexation of spirit. Tribalism in contemporary Africa has a fantastic and curiously modern history. I take leave to give some indications of it.

It is the practice of the contemporary African politician in power to denounce tribalism as the chief enemy of progress in Africa. By that he is usually defending the centralised power he wields (this he identifies with the nation) against trivial and unscrupulous politicians who, defeated at the elections, i.e. the struggle for the centralised power, find in their own tribe a basis for immediate partial and possible complete power. These quite unprincipled trib-

alists are not helped to see the error of their ways by a similar unscrupulous use of tribal connections, associations and rivalries by the very government which is denouncing tribalism. These unsavoury practices are a commonplace of African politics, and their superficialities are quite often repeated by the liberal and socialist supporters and apologists of African self-government. Yet certain observers of African tribalism have claimed for it an integral place in any universal reconstruction of the modern world. It is a West Indian, i.e. a Western poet, direct heir of Rimbaud and Baudelaire, who is the creator of the concept of Negritude. In *The Black Jacobins* I have translated and published a review of sections of the now world-famous poem, Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*:

My Negritude is not a stone, its
deafness a sounding board for
the noises of the day
My Negritude is not a mere spot of
dead water on the dead eye of
the earth
My Negritude is no tower, no cathedral
it cleaves into the red flesh of the
teeming earth
it cleaves into the glowing flesh of
the heavens
it penetrates the seamless bondage of
my unbending patience
Hoorah for those who never invented
anything
for those who never explored anything
for those who never mastered anything
but who, possessed, give themselves up
to the essence of each thing
ignorant of the coverings but possessed
by the pulse of things
indifferent to mastering but taking the
chances of the world

In contrast to this vision of the African unseparated from the world, from nature, a living part of all that lives, Césaire immediately places the civilisation that has scorned and persecuted Africa and Africans:

Listen to the white world
its horrible exhaustion from its
immense labours
its rebellious joints cracking under
the pitiless stars
its blue steel rigidities, cutting
through the mysteries of the flesh
listen to their vainglorious conquests
trumpeting their defeats
listen to the grandiose alibis of their
pitiful floundering.

The poet wants to be an architect of this unique civilisation, a commissioner of its blood, a guardian of its refusal to accept:

But in so doing, my heart, preserve
me from all hate
do not turn me into a man of hate of
whom I think only with hate
for in order to project myself into
this unique race
you know the extent of my boundless
love
you know that it is not from hatred
of other races
that I seek to be cultivator of this
unique race.

He returns once more to the pitiful spectre of West Indian life, but now with hope:

for it is not true that the work of man
is finished
that man has nothing more to do in the
world but be a parasite in the world
that all we now need is to keep in step
with the world
but the work of man is only just beginning
and it remains to man to conquer all
the violence entrenched in the recesses

of his passion
and no race possesses the monopoly of beauty,
of intelligence, of force, and there is
a place for all at the rendezvous of
victory.

Here is the centre of Césaire's poem. By neglecting it, Africans and the sympathetic of other races utter loud hurrahs that drown out common sense and reason. The work of man is not finished. Therefore the future of the African is not to continue not discovering anything. The monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, is possessed by no race, certainly not by those who possess Negritude. Negritude is what one race brings to the common rendezvous where all will strive for the new world of the poet's vision. The vision of the poet is not economics or politics, it is poetic, *sui generis*, true unto itself and needing no other truth. But it would be the most vulgar racism not to see here a poetic incarnation of Marx's famous sentence, "The real history of humanity will begin."

In this poem Césaire makes a place for the spiritual realities of the African way of life in any review and reconstruction of the life of modern man. Césaire's whole emphasis is upon the fact that the African way of life is not an anachronism, a primitive survival of history, even of prehistoric ages, which needs to be nursed by unlimited quantities of aid into the means and ways of the supersonic plane, television, the Beatles and accommodation to the nuclear peril. Césaire means exactly the opposite. It is the way of life which the African has not lost which will restore to a new humanity what has been lost by modern life with

its rebellious joints cracking under
the pitiless stars
its blue steel rigidities, cutting through the
mysteries of the flesh.

These are poetic divinations of worlds to come. They are the waves of reality in which present-day Africa must live if it is to live at all.

One final word about the form the book has taken. Beginning with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and reaching a completion in Sartre, modern philosophy expresses its modernity by assuming the form of a personal response to extreme situations, and is no less philosophical for that. I record here a sequence of political responses to an extreme political situation, the African situation, as it has developed during the last thirty years.

This book was concluded at a time when I feared for the future of Africa under African auspices, a fear which was immediately justified by the fall of Nkrumah. My bewilderment, however, was almost immediately soothed by the appearance of the Arusha Declaration of Dr Nyerere. Before very long, on my way to lecture at Makerere, I was able to pass into Tanzania and read, hear and see for myself what was going on. I remain now, as I was then, more than ever convinced that once again something new had come out of Africa, pointing out the road not only for Africa and Africans but for all those seeking to lift ourselves from the parlous conditions of our collapsing century.

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NOTES

Introduction. Ghana and the Worlds of C. L. R. James

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- 32.** Monique Bedasse, *Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, and Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 169–81.
- 33.** Robin Kelley, “Introduction,” in *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Oakland, CA: PM, 2012), 31.
- 34.** Jeffrey S. Ahlman, “Road to Ghana: Nkrumah, Southern Africa and the Eclipse of a Decolonizing Africa,” *Kronos* 37 (2011): 23–40; Meredith Terretta, “Cameroonian Nationalists Go Global: From Forest ‘Maquis’ to a Pan-African Accra,” *Journal of African History* 51, no. 2 (2010): 189–212, 192; Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 180–92. For the relationship between Togo and Ghana, see Kate Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland: Literacy, Politics and Nationalism, 1914–2014* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2.
- 35.** For the cultural and symbolic nationalism developed by Nkrumah-era Ghana, see Harcourt Fuller, *Building the Ghanaian Nation-State: Kwame Nkrumah’s Symbolic Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). For CPP development projects and resettlement, see Stephan F. Miescher, “‘No One Should Be Worse Off’: The Akosombo Dam, Modernization, and the Experience of Resettlement in Ghana,” in *Modernization as Spectacle in Africa*, ed. Peter J. Bloom, Stephan F. Miescher, and Takyiwaa Manuh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 184–204. For these development projects in the Cold War context, see also Stephan F. Miescher, “‘Nkrumah’s Baby’: The Akosombo Dam and the Dream of Development in Ghana, 1952–1966,” *Water History* 6, no. 4 (2014): 341–66.
- 36.** The CPP plan to nurture disciplined, socialist, and cosmopolitan citizens involved the creation of groups like the Ghana Young Pioneers and Builders Brigades and witnessed rallies and marches, self-help projects, and competitions. These generated familial, gender, and generational tensions in Ghanaian communities. See Jeffrey S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017).
- 37.** As Jean Allman has shown, Nkrumah’s development-oriented projects did not transpire as straightforward proof of Nkrumah as the model modernizer and revolutionary. His recruitment of Hanna Reitsch, the famous West German pilot who was intimately tied to the Nazi war effort, complicates Nkrumah’s anticolonial, antiracist project and, ultimately, offers a richer appreciation of the man and the era. Jean Allman, “Phantoms of the Archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi Pilot Named Hanna, and the Contingencies of Postcolonial History-Writing,” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 104–29.

38. Margaret Busby, interview with the author, 8 March 2018.
39. James, *George Padmore and Decolonization*, 172–77.
40. J. Williams, *C. L. R. James: A Life beyond the Boundaries*.
41. C. L. R. James, Grace C. Lee, and Pierre Chaulieu, *Facing Reality* (Detroit, MI: Bewick Editions, 1974), 7, 8.
42. C. L. R. James, “Rousseau and the Idea of General Will,” in *You Don’t Play with Revolution: The Montreal Lectures of C. L. R. James*, ed. David Austin (Oakland, CA: AK, 2009), 105.
43. Henry, “C. L. R. James, Political Philosophy, and the Creolizing of Rousseau and Marx.”
44. James, *You Don’t Play with Revolution*, 111–12.
45. C. L. R. James, *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1980), 11.
46. Kate Skinner, “Who Knew the Minds of the People? Specialist Knowledge and Developmentalist Authoritarianism in Postcolonial Ghana,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, no. 2 (2011): 297–323, 306.
47. Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 58–110.
48. Anthony Bogues, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals* (London: Routledge, 2016), 97–99.
49. Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 211–62.
50. James’s emphasis on the family as the fundamental unit in Africa would also form a key part of Walter Rodney’s analysis of African politics. See Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Cape Town: Pambazuka, 2012).
51. James, Lee, and Chaulieu, *Facing Reality*, 8.
52. Bogues, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets*, 1056.
53. I have offered only cursory remarks on James’s interpretation of Tanzania and African socialism. For readers interested in this issue, alongside study of James’s work there is a wealth of new scholarship on Tanzanian history in this period. As a starting point, see Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Emma Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania: Freedom, Democracy and Citizenship in the Era of Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).
54. Bogues, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets*, 123.
55. C. L. R. James, “Nkrumah Then and Now,” unpublished manuscript, 1964–65, box 128-19, folder 417, Dabu Gizenga Collection, Moorland Spingarn Archives at Howard University, Washington, DC.

56. James, *At the Rendezvous of Victory*, 20–45.
57. I am grateful to Robert Hill for emphasizing this as motivation for James's work.
58. What does exist are essays published in the *Nation* immediately after Padmore's death in 1959. C. L. R. James, "Notes on the Life of George Padmore," *Nation*, October 2, 1959, 17.
59. In 1968, James sent enquiries to archives and police records in Paris, Copenhagen, Hamburg, and London requesting information on Padmore's early life. He corresponded with Immanuel Geiss in Hamburg, St. Clair Drake in Chicago, and the National Library in Accra about the project. Box 7, folder 194, C. L. R. James Collection, University of West Indies–St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.
60. James to Victor Rabinowitz, 17 July 1968, box 7, folder 194, C. L. R. James Collection, University of West Indies–St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.
61. Taped interview, Dabu Gizenga with C. L. R. James, 19 April 1973, box 128-27, Dabu Gizenga Collection, Moorland Spingarn Archives at Howard University, Washington, DC.
62. David Ljunggren, "Every G20 Nation Wants to Be Canada, Insists PM," Reuters, 25 September 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/columns-us-g20-canada-advantages-idUSTRE58Po5Z20090926>.
63. Tim Fontaine, "What Did Justin Trudeau Say about Canada's History of Colonialism?," CBC, 22 April 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/trudeau-colonialism-comments-1.3549405>.

Introduction. 1977 Edition

1. The severity of Nkrumah in relation to Dr. [K. A.] Busia, Dr. [J. B.] Danquah and other oppositionists drew no protests nor anguish from me. They were advocates neither of democracy nor even of the Christianity they professed. They aimed at establishing an enclave of power among the Ashanti who despite their many virtues have the least claim in Africa below the Sahara to either democracy or Christianity. Not only do they make no claim to either: neither Busia, Danquah nor [Joseph] Appiah ever made any such claims for them.

2. Certainly the West Indians (British, French and Spanish), the most articulate of the formerly colonial coloured peoples, are an embodiment in the twentieth of what Dostoyevsky saw in the nineteenth century.

PART I

Chapter I. The Myth

1. In this respect the BBC comedians who call themselves "The Goon Show" understand what is required more profoundly than all the learned men of good will who are