Colin Clarke (2016), *Race, Class and the Politics of Decolonization: Jamaica Journals, 1961 and 1968*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 218pp.

It is rare these days for scholars to keep meticulous diaries of their earliest research volumes, much less be willing to publish them fifty years on. Yet Colin Clarke has done just that, and his careful observations on Jamaica's pivotal decade of the 1960s stand the test of time and make worthwhile reading. The resultant book provides a fascinating account of personal encounters, recorded in daily journal entries during his research visits to the island in 1961 and 1968.

The first of these journals was written in a critical year in Jamaica's history, being the year before independence from Britain. The British government had intended the decolonisation of its Caribbean colonies to occur within the framework of the West Indies Federation. But by 1961 the issue of staying in the federation, or becoming an independent state, was high on Jamaica's political agenda and public discourse, and culminated in the decision to leave the federation in September that year.

This coincided with Castro, Cuba's new leader, being labelled a communist. Cuba attracted support from Marxist intellectuals in Jamaica, and although so-called communist sympathisers had already been expelled from the Peoples National Party a decade earlier, they still had political influence. Simultaneously, the decade saw the emergence of the Ras Tafari as a socio-political force, with members mounting an unsuccessful attack against the government. Additionally, as part of the search for a postcolonial identity, 1961 was the start of popular support for a Black Power movement modelled on that of the United States.

Clarke's journal of his visit in 1961 reflected the socio-political ferment of the time. It describes his encounters and conversations with leaders, followers, and commentators of radical socio-political views, as well as those of the upper middle classes who held more conservative, if nor reactionary, opinions. Conversations with members of the Ras Tafari and Back-to-Africa movements, the Peoples Political Party, the Black Man Political Party, and the Peoples Freedom Movement, led Clarke to appreciate that both black racism and Marxism were catalysed by the independence issue.

Clarke, himself, was cause for suspicion in regard to his intentions for moving around in places considered unusual and hostile for a white man. Yet his very foreignness, and evidence of being engaged in an enquiry as an overseas graduate student, facilitated his links with gatekeepers of the places and people in an underworld generally invisible to participants of the usual activities taking place in Kingston. His awareness of these entry points into the society gave him an understanding of the complexity of class, race and power inherited from the past, and which was about to be carried forward into the decolonization process of the future. He noted that, 'contrary to accepted wisdom, Jamaica's transition to independence was anything but smooth and uncontested' (26).

Part 2 of the book, comprising just one chapter, is based on the author's journal written on his return to Jamaica in 1968, and takes a comparative perspective on the seven-year gap. By 1968, Clarke observes the changes and the general impact of independence and the elections of 1962 and 1967. Ras Tafari (visible in the increased wearing of locks) had gained the support of radical intellectuals. The communists had already been subdued, although Walter Rodney, the Guyanese academic at the University of the West Indies, was reportedly radicalising students as well as persons in West Kingston along racial and Marxist lines. The racial imprints of

slavery and plantation-based colonialism were indelibly woven into the texture of Jamaica's emerging post-colonial society. Yet, post-Independence Jamaica had become firmly dominated by its previously established two parties, and Black Power had been cloaked with a softer touch, associated with the concept of 'black is beautiful' and the wearing of Afro-hairstyles.

Change had certainly taken place in the intervening years since Independence, and Clarke was struck by the shift to the darker skin tone in persons employed in the civil service and private sector. Meanwhile, his accounts of observations and conversations demonstrate the way in which independent Jamaica and its political elite allowed the two-party system of government to initiate a system of patronage, whereby homes and jobs were granted in return for electoral support, often leading to gang violence on the streets and rival ghetto communities. This system of political patronage, Clarke notes, set the pattern for the rest of the twentieth century and beyond.

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