

Return of the 6th Region: Rastafari Settlement in the Motherland Contributing to the African Renaissance

In loving memory of Dame Dr. Bernice Lake, QC, champion of people's rights and freedoms

Introduction

The purpose of university training is to produce people capable of achieving the progress and advancement of the nation. People of such calibre are expected to possess deep insight, high academic discipline and intellectual zeal to crave and search for truth, to know not only the causes but also effective remedies for any ills that affect the society...to know, not only the maladies and how to expound them in vain words but also to present effective solutions and accomplish them (HIM Haile Selassie I at Haile Selassie I University, 1st Graduation Exercises, July 12, 1962).

This article presents a unique opportunity for the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), to contribute to the process of African Redemption as espoused by the Rastafari Nation in its quest, indeed its demand, for Repatriation to the African continent, at the vanguard of the African Renaissance. During his term in office, South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki sought to popularize the African Renaissance but the rallying call for the re-birth of African pride and accomplishment seems to have diminished with Mbeki's demit from office. The Rastafari are supremely confident of their role and ability to realize this new awakening – a Pan-African awakening infused with the principles of self-knowledge for self-determination that draws from African origins and contributions to world civilizations and adds the moral component required for African Redemption.

But whence and whither this confidence? I would dare say that that confidence, in part, derives from a rediscovery of ourselves, from the fact that, perforce, as one would who is critical of oneself, we have had to undertake a voyage of discovery into our own antecedents, our own past, as Africans. And when archeology presents daily evidence of an African primacy in the historical evolution to the emergence of the human person described in science as homo sapiens, how can we be but confident that we are

Ijahnya Christian
Athlyi Rogers Study Center
Shashemane, Ethiopia

capable of effecting Africa's rebirth? When the world of fine arts speaks to us of the creativity of the Nubians of Sudan and its decisive impact on the revered and everlasting imaginative creations of the African land of the Pharaohs – how can we be but confident that we will succeed to be the midwives of our continent's rebirth? And when we recall that African armies at Omduraman in the Sudan and Isandhlwana in South Africa out-generalled, out-soldiered and defeated the mighty armies of the mighty and arrogant British Empire in the seventies of the last century, how can we be but confident that through our efforts, Africa will regain her place among the continents of our universe? (Mbeki 1998).

While the foundation and heart beat of the Rastafari Movement, the Nyahbinghi Order, has been adamant in its shout, 'No Migration, Repatriation!' and has been stoking spiritual fires in fulfillment of a return to Africa, a scholarly voice from within the Movement defines Repatriation as:

the self-actuated, individual or small to large group return of people of African descent to their original homeland – Africa – from various locations in the African diaspora. Specifically, these returnees, or repatriates, are descendants of Africans captured as a result of the Atlantic Slave Trade (Merritt 2006:xii).

The Rastafari demand is therefore couched in the concept of the United Nations Right of Return and it is from this perspective that the matter will be examined, to include the inadequacy of response by national governments as well as regional and international governmental organizations. CODESRIA, through its 13th General Assembly, is being invited into a research partnership with the Rastafari community in Africa and the Caribbean Region to strengthen historical academic contributions to the ongoing

lobby primarily of governments in the African Union (AU) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which are member states of the United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth of Nations.

It is not a new demand and, over decades, the Rastafari Nation has used every means at its disposal to bring this matter to attention. In fact, for Rastafari, Repatriation is synonymous with themes of Emancipation, African Liberation and Reparations. The Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress (EABIC), also known as the Bobo Shanti has been a leading voice in this struggle. During its Emancipation Day march from Bull Bay to downtown Kingston, to the Office of the Prime Minister and, finally, to the Emancipation Square in Spanish Town, Jamaica on August 1, 2011, one of its spokespersons, Honourable Empress Esther, halted the drumming and chanting to speak to the press. 'We are here today agitating for freedom, redemption, international repatriation in commemoration of the 173rd anniversary of Emancipation', she said, indicating that the march was initiated by the EABIC's Woman's Freedom Liberation League as mothers who found it necessary to march with their children to weep for repatriation. Her words were supported by those of Honourable Priest Christopher Morant who explained:

This march is to commemorate I and I emancipation that has been granted, but not fully given to I and I, the people... This march is to bring about I and I emancipation, and with emancipation is repatriation. And we are here on behalf of I and I cause of right to go home with recompensation and free transportation to take I and I home to Africa (*Jamaica Gleaner*, August 2, 2011).

Empress Esther, *The Gleaner* reported, challenged both the Government and the Opposition to bring reparation to the discussion table now and prepare the way for them to leave Jamaica. The demand is therefore insistent, consistent and current.

"Building Strategic Alliances to secure Reparations for Repatriation" was the title

of the position paper presented by the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation (CRO) to the African Descendants Caucus in Barbados in 2002. In 2010 the CRO was invited to join the CARICOM Civil Society Council and from this vantage point will be continuing its advocacy and lobbying for Repatriation as this seems to be a more feasible option than the organisation's request for the Caribbean governments to establish a CARICOM Working Group on Rastafari populations. The CRO identifies research, diplomatic relations between CARICOM and AU Member States willing to facilitate reparations, and government and civil society relations as elements of an affirmative action lobby.¹ The organisation also agreed to offer the services of its members to participate in the collection of data required in preparation for repatriation. The vision is for the commissioning of rapid, participatory, Action Research and case study documentation that can be presented at the African Union's Diaspora Summit in South Africa in May, 2012. CODESRIA is now being invited into a strategic alliance to provide institutional support and access resources for fieldwork in the Caribbean and in Africa in a very short time-frame.

It is a process in which the academic community may be able to redeem itself. Much ambivalence is expressed in relations between Rastafari and the academic community.² The University of the West Indies (UWI) Inaugural Rastafari Studies Conference held in Jamaica in August 2010, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the report on *The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica (1960)* provided another significant, albeit controversial, moment in the Rastafari demand for repatriation. During the opening ceremony:

Honored Rastafari representatives made inspiring statements – all giving thanks for the guidance of His Imperial Majesty. Ultimately, all of their remarks came full circle to emphasize the underlying importance and inevitability of repatriation (Homiak 2011, Homiak & Lutanie 2011:68).

Keynote speaker, Sir Roy Augier, the only surviving co-author of the UWI 1960 report was not well received by the members of the Rastafari community gathered there when he suggested that repatriation with reparations would never happen and that Rastafari should think of Jamaica, not Africa as the 'homeland'.

The Rastafari present erupted in protest! Irrespective of what any individual Rastafari might hold on the issue of repatriation (e.g., that one may be reunited with Africa on spiritual or cultural levels), the public commitment to literal and physical repatriation is widely regarded as an article of faith for the older brethren and sistren in Jamaica (Ibid, 2011:69).

Sir Roy Augier is not alone in his thinking, which echoes the well-known view of Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Prime Minister Gonsalves' administration has secured the removal of visa requirements between nationals of his country and Ethiopia and that is an important step. He is a committed Pan-Africanist of Portuguese stock who thinks that the Rastafari should claim the Caribbean as home because our ancestors bled and died to develop their lands of captivity and that reparations are also due to the Portuguese who were brought as indentured servants.

Both Sir Roy and the Prime Minister may be admired for their frankness but their positions must be challenged on the basis of evidence from the frame of human rights and freedoms. So, the purpose of this article is to provide justification for further investigation and to add to the documentation of the challenges of repatriation in the experience of Rastafari in Africa. It is an experience that involves, not only those returning, but also those who never left the Motherland. Finally, the concept is shared for the proposed mapping of Rastafari communities in Africa and the use of case studies for a situational analysis which will influence policies and budgets of AU member states and the CARICOM, address the brain drain and contribute to the African Renaissance in the African Millennium.

The intent is to present the case of people's initiatives worthy of multi-sector support and showing a remarkable degree of resilience in its absence. As the second decade of the 21st Century begins, the Rastafari community of the Caribbean Region is manifesting a new degree of readiness to engage with national governments and international governmental institutions by its participation in major Pan-African gatherings; by renewed attention to internal governance within its centralizing organizations and by continued documentation of the processes in which it is engaged. In this vein, the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation (CRO) has appointed a volunteer

Liaison to the African Union who serves on the executive committee of the African Union Diaspora Network in the Caribbean Region, which is also known as the Caribbean Pan-African Network (the CRO's lobbying interventions are presented in Appendix A).

Why do Rastafari persist on returning to Africa in a climate of the ongoing and new expressions of neo-colonialism, where governance serves to protect foreign interests and food security is not guaranteed? African youth are witness to and victims of peoples' uprisings fuelled by new social media; while child soldiers continue to be recruited and the rape of women is a weapon of war. In the Caribbean, the war is related to gangs, drugs and small arms with a high incidence of youth fatality in relatively small populations. Both in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and in the African Union (AU) where the absence of mass support for these institutions is visible and audible, there is apparent lethargy regarding the return of the 6th Region.³

Nothing in these scenarios detracts from the Rastafari demand for repatriation with reparations which is not apolitical but is issued from a position of non-alignment, as espoused by Haile Selassie I when addressing the OAU Summit in Cairo in 1964. As he emphasizes:

...Non-alignment is in no way anti-Eastern or anti-Western any more than it is anti-Northern or anti-Southern. It is neither anti- nor pro- in any absolute fashion. It is largely affirmative, not negative. It is for peace and freedom. It is for a decent standard of living for all men. It is for the right of people of any nation to adopt that economic and political system which the majority of them freely elect to follow. It is for the right of men and nations freely to take their stand on the great issues of the day, as their conscience and their sense of right and justice – and these alone – dictate (Haile Selassie I, 1964).

Yet, there is a discernible shift which may be an extension of the third phase of Rastafari 'developmental ideology' in which Rastafari brethren/sistren have begun to seriously consolidate their global linkages through formal organisational structures (Tafari 2001: 343); or it may be a sign of advancement beyond social theory (Semaj 1990:30), to strategic action for repatriation (Christian 2005:21).

Rastafari continue to insist on their Right of Return.⁴ From the perspective of

resilient African people drawing on indigenous knowledge systems of cultures suppressed in the most brutal ways and submerged for their survival, Rastafari are creating their own knowledge systems in the processes of re-creating self in transformation from enslaved to the free African heralding in the age of African Redemption. The first government commissioned study of Rastafari provides the backdrop of verification.

The Right of Return

The first recommendation of the report on *The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica (1960)* was that 'the Government of Jamaica should send a mission to African countries to arrange for immigration of Jamaicans. Representatives of Ras Tafari brethren should be included in the mission' (Augier, Salter, 2010:42). That recommendation was taken and a Government of Jamaica Mission to Africa which included three Ras Tafari brethren from Jamaica visited Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. *The Majority Report of Mission to Africa (1961)*, verified discussions with '...the Heads of each State about "their migration policies and the possible movement of persons from this island to settle in those countries."'

More significantly 'The Mission found in all the territories a ready acceptance of the principle of 'repatriation of Africans living abroad, to the ancestral land...' (Ibid, 2010:47).

Another report, *The Minority Report of Mission to Africa (1961)* was produced by the three Rastafari brethren, Philmore Alvaranga, Douglas Mack and Mortimo Planno, who were dissatisfied with the process by which the Majority Report was produced and also with what they considered to be its watered down contents. In a letter of complaint to Jamaica's Premier, the Hon. N. W. Manley, QC, they wrote:

We the Rastafarian brethren claim Ethiopian ancestry in Jamaica years ago and it is principally through us that a mission was sent to Africa: that is why we should all have sat together and compile a report instead of being asked to correct one which was completely short of facts, Sir' (Mack 1999:114).

Both the Majority Report submitted to the Government of Jamaica, and the Minority

Report, affirm the blood/family, race, and history ties acknowledged in all five countries as the following references to the former show:

Ethiopia – HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I '... welcomed the members of the Mission as "brothers of one blood and race'.

Nigeria – The Oba (King) of Lagos...declared that West Indians migrating to Nigeria would be welcome, not as immigrants, but as people returning to the 'land of their fathers'.

Ghana – President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah said of the meeting that it was of 'historic significance, not only because we're blood relations, but also because so many attempts were previously made and failed. Marcus Garvey tried and was prevented'.

Liberia – President Tubman told the Mission, "We in Liberia agree on the principle of immigration into Liberia of our fellow members of the African race. The details will have to be worked out".

Sierra Leone – Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai said that 'the principle of repatriation of West Indians whose ancestors had been forcibly removed from Africa was accepted. There was no question about the desirability of having them nor of the welcome they would receive...' (Majority Report, 1961).

Less than a year later, on the verge of Jamaica's independence from Britain in 1962, the late Mortimo Planno, a leading Ras Tafari personality even then, in a Letter to the Editor of the *Daily Gleaner* dated 3 January 1962, queried:

What provisions will be made within the new constitution for the desire of those who alienate themselves from the Jamaica way of life? I am thinking principally of those whose desire is to be repatriated to Ethiopia. One of the countries of Africa that already granted lands for the sole purpose of resettling people from the Western world. I as one who is claiming by originality (Ethiopian) would like the world to know that our rights must be respected. Because I am of the opinion that respect for man's right is the greatest achievement of peaceful solution to problems which has a temperature of 100 degrees (Planno *Daily Gleaner* January 3, 1962).

The issue of repatriation is still hot in the Rastafari community, and Planno's reference to the United Nations' (UN) Declaration of Human Rights Charter later in the letter, indicates a clear appreciation on the part of the Rastafarians of the

Rights dimension of their demand, though the desire to return to the African homeland is by no means peculiar to Rastafari.

The imperative of repatriation among Rastafarians reflected trends all over the Americas, as witnessed in both the mythic and the physical return of Brazilian and Cuban Blacks to West Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as in the repatriationist efforts in the United States during the same period (Lewis 1998:151).

Rastafari's invocation of the Right of Return provides interesting metaphorical insights for a people whose exodus is envisioned as a prophetic Biblical parallel with a political counterclaim paralleled by the Palestinian cause.

Unlike the Palestinian cause, however, Rastafari have never accepted definitions of identity other than that of Africans forcibly removed from Africa, desiring to return home. This is reflected in the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation's (CRO) submission for distribution to the 3rd Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli in November 2010 cited as follows:

The global Rastafari community applauds President Wade and the Government and People of Senegal who recently accepted 160 Haitian students in response to the most recent catastrophe in Haiti, as a sterling example of international morality and African solidarity....This consistent demand [for repatriation], goes beyond a response to disaster or provision for *Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons* and must be appreciated as the demand of free Africans, legitimately claiming the Right of Return, African citizenship and the restitution of lands (CRO 2010).

Arguments against the Palestinian Right of Return also show that the case for the Rastafari Right of Return is distinctively different in several ways. The Rastafari have never indicated that their Right of Return is dependent on the elimination of any other Nation or people as there has never been any dispute that the Africans in the Caribbean arrived there in the colonial 'crime against humanity'⁵ that was the trans-Atlantic trade in African people. Though Ivan van Sertima (1976) has shown,⁶ the presence of Africans in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans, there is no evidence that the African people who were kidnapped, enslaved and forced to work on plantations in the Americas, were either

homeless or hungry in their African homelands. To the contrary, it is noted that 'Most Africans caught in the slave trade were skilled farmers, weavers, and metallurgists; smaller numbers were herders, hunters, foragers, or city dwellers. Some had been enslaved in their homelands and some were African royalty'.⁷

This is supported by Toney in her article on Africans on Caribbean Plantations published in the *Indigenous People of Africa and America* magazine:

For the most part the peoples of Western Africa, where most of our ancestors originated, lived in settled agricultural societies....The Western Africans lived comfortable lives punctuated by the usual environmental and ecological problems that one would expect in the 6th century through the 19th century... Actually, it was because of their settled domestic situations that Africans made good targets for slavery and the slave trade. The very similarity of their material existence to the Europeans of that period made it possible for them to function in the plantation economy of the Americas. If they were wild people living in jungles they would not have made good workers (Toney *IPOAA*).

Rastafari religious thoughts and practices add to the rich mix of religious diversity in Africa, and there is no indication whatsoever that Rastafari repatriates have ever wanted to desecrate the holy sites and sacred places of others. The following account by a four man Ras Tafari delegation from the USA visiting Ghana on a networking and repatriation initiative on the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence⁸ reveals a significant show of mutual respect and accommodation of diversity. It describes the plan to enstool a visiting Rastafari elder:

We were given a list of things to bring which included local alcohol, money, European alcohol, and a ram. We told them that we would reason about it and get forward to them. After reasoning with some of the indigenous Ras bredren about the list, we were informed that is custom for the blood of the ram to be spilled on the feet of the person being enstooled. This caused a problem for InI being Ras because the only sacrifice that we give are joy and thanksgiving unto H.I.M. Because of this we set up a special meeting with the chief's representatives and respectfully explained to them our tradition, and let them know that we would not be able to take part in any ceremony where blood was shed. They explained to us that they

would not ask us to do anything against our tradition and that an alternative ceremony could be performed without the blood sacrifice (Atlanta Ras Tafari delegation 2007).

From a Rastafari perspective, the Right of Return is therefore a critical element of the concept of the Blackman Redemption. Bob Marley's lyrics on Blackman Redemption reach into the heart of the Black Africa and reflect the religious political paradox in asserting the authority of the Rastafari demand and the inevitability of its being met:

Woy-a Natty Congo

A Dreadlock Congo I

Woy-a Natty Congo...

A Blackman redemption

Can you stop it?

Oh no, oh no, oh no

Coming from the root of King David

Through to the line of Solomon

His Imperial Majesty is the Power of Authority (Marley and Perry 1983).

Though Marley embraces, declares and speaks with the 'power of authority' of a Black African God, given the universality of his message, the Rastafari theme of African Redemption is racial but not racist. As the late UWI Professor Barry Chevannes describes it: '... by electing to lead a life based on the affirmation of being black, without at the same time being racist, the Rastafari have seized hold of one of the mainsprings of national development, namely a sense of national identity' (Chevannes, 1998:62). This spiritually grounded Ethiopian national identity sometimes seems out of step with the reality of repatriation, particularly with regard to the Shashmene land grant and Ethiopia's immigration requirements. Though racial consciousness is at the root of Rastafari repatriation, white Rastafari brothers and sisters are among those who have been allowed to settle in the Shashamane community which was meant to facilitate the return of Africa's children. Among the black brothers and sisters who have returned mainly from the Caribbean Region, the issues of elusive citizenship, illegality in terms of immigration status and stateless persons, as well as the challenges associated with daily living are yet to be effectively redressed. (Zips 2005, Merritt 2006, White 2007).

The thrust of the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation's (CRO) lobby for Repatriation is executed in the wider context represented at the UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Intolerance (WCAR) held in Durban. The CRO which participated in the WCAR therefore welcomed the language of the Durban Programme of Action (POA) which called for the 'Provision of effective remedies, recourse, redress and other measures at the national, regional and international levels'. The last of 19 items listing such measures reads, '... facilitation of the welcomed returned and resettlement of the descendants of enslaved Africans' who were traded across the Atlantic' (Durban POA Section IV, item 158, 2001). The main point is that the Ras Tafari Return is not so much the Return of the 6th Region of the African Union but the certain knowledge of the Rastafari that theirs is the Return of Africa's Creators.⁹

Rastafaria Knowledge

'... It is one of the central tenets of the Rastafari to spurn the idea of 'belief' and affirm 'knowledge' instead. Rastafari do not 'believe'; they 'know'. (Chevannes in Tafari 2000:xvii).

What Rastafari know can be analyzed within the framework of Indigenous Knowledge (IK), which has been defined as 'knowledge that is unique to a given culture' (Warren 1991:479). It is dynamic, creative and experimental, contributing to communication and decision making (Flavia et al 1995), with defining characteristics (Ellen and Harris 1996) interpreted and summed up below. Rastafari knowledge is:

- contextualized by a righting of the historical injustice of colonialism and slavery by Rastafari word sound (often sung) and power to create new realities and ways of being;
- repeated for reinforcement and agency, a characteristic particularly evident in Nyahbinghi *groundational* chants;¹⁰
- enduring to become tradition and culture, negotiating and adapting to change and ensuring survival, progress and transformation;
- grounded in shared spiritual and social experience of everyday life that is subject to varied interpretation while resisting the limited status quo of what constitutes validity;

- able to generate its own authoritative voice, status, symbols, structure and gendered, inter-generational meaning that is not easily investigated;
- peculiar but functions as universal for the wider good of humanity;
- connected to wider fields of knowledge and social constructs while;
- maintaining its own distinctive reason and purpose.

Rastafari know that they will return to their ancestral African homeland, they know that they will return in the vanguard of the African Renaissance and they know that their return is the trumpet call for African Redemption. It is the how and the when, the details that are negotiable. The sphere of negotiation is Pan-African in 'a paradigm based on the idea that African people should re-assert a sense of agency in order to achieve sanity...' (Shipale 2010:1).

The link between repatriation, mental and psychological health and empowerment is further explored by Merritt who finds, among the repatriate Rastafari community in Shashemane, the 'shared spiritual essence' that binds the African family together in oneness with our ancestors and our Creator (Merritt 2006). The assertion of Rastafari knowledge of themselves as empowered Africans is reflected in their use of language. Rastafari 'I-words provide an avenue through which Rastas show their total rejection of the values of Babylon while demonstrating their ability to create a new language medium for the liberation of "Jah people" within Western Babylon culture' (McFarlane 1998:107). Edmonds goes further to explain that the Rastafari expression "I-an-I"

...signifies the divine principle that is in all humanity, "I-an-I" is an expression of the oneness between two (or more) persons and between the speaker and God..."I-an-I" also connotes a rejection of subservience in Babylon culture and an affirmation of self as an active agent in the creation of one's own reality and identity (Edmonds 1998:33).

This writer defines Babylon globally as, '...that worldly state of affairs in which the struggle for power and possessions takes precedence over the cultivation of human freedom and the concern for human dignity' (Edmunds 1998:24).

The sense of agency is also evident in Redemption Song which echoes Marcus

Garvey's call of Black Consciousness to 'emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds' (Marley 1980), and suggests cognizance that 'The recognition and appreciation of IKS is a source of healing of therapeutic import, in the context of unhealthy imbalances, distortion, trivialization and neglect, as inflicted by eurocentric education and governance' (Emeagwali 2003).

Ideas about Black Consciousness originated in the African Diaspora and were popularly framed by Steve Biko in South Africa's anti-Apartheid struggle.¹¹ He defined Black Consciousness as, 'the realization by the Black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude' (Biko 1971). An African rebirth, then, must mobilise African people psychologically, spiritually and politically in order for the continent and its Diaspora to engage in a process of recovery, re-awakening and/or rebirth which would empower Africans to free themselves from the Euro-centricity of neo-colonialism.

The process of re-awakening and recovery has to be one of historical reconstruction, consciousness raising and restatement by Africans tracing the origins and achievements of their civilizations with a view to developing new epistemologies of knowledge production (Nabudere 2010:1).

Rastafari knowledge, as a strand of African indigenous knowledge is also important for the economic inputs that the Rastafari have been preparing to make as contribution to Africa's development. Among their points of reference are Haile Selassie I's exhortation as he opened Africa Hall, that: 'Our economies must be strong and viable...Cultural and natural resources are the mainstays of the African Economy. Unless progress in these fields keeps pace with development in other areas, a serious obstacle will be created to accelerate growth in any area' (HIM Haile Selassie I on the role of the Economic Commission for Africa 1961); and in his message to the 6th Session of the Economic Commission for Africa, to '...mobilize our resources for our common good and for the good of our great continent' (Haile Selassie I February 20, 1964). Indeed, Repatriation itself has been defined as sustainable development:

Ian'I who really want repatriation learn to love Mother Earth – Nature – while Western society depreciate' her with unnecessary mass production, motivated by greedy men of destruction. When Earth react, her sons and daughters suffer...drought, famine, earthquake, volcano eruption (brimstone), fire, hurricane, long winter, heatwave, pestilence...Repatriation is also a return to the way of life that is friendly towards the Earth (Gayle/Ras Iah C 1995:62).

Knowledge of Rastafari natural *livity* and vast cultural resources has been spread universally through the vehicle of reggae music and the iconic red, gold and green colors of the Ethiopian Lion of Judah flag.¹² The thrust toward self-sufficiency held in common with the goals and principles of Marcus Garvey's UNIA was quite evident in Leonard Percival Howell's first Rastafari commune at Pinnacle. Brother Duggie (Douglas Mack of the 1960 Mission to Africa), offers this vignette of the families at Pinnacle. The details may differ in terms of the application of modern technologies but this description captures the ethos of what a Rastafari community in Africa could look like today:

They planted plenty of crops such as banana, yam, peas, sweet potato, tampi, cocoa, corn and plantain. Natural herbs were also grown. They reared chicken, cows, goats, horses, and donkeys. The brethren were self-sustained and self-employed. They made slippers from old automobiles tires which they called "Power". The scarves they made were weaved in the Rastafari colors of red, yellow and green (red, gold, and green). They also made mats, baskets, hats and other items from straw. Rope and cord were made from sisal and hem which they planted; and they also burned charcoal. The ware and produce were sold in the surrounding areas of Spanish Town and to frequent Pinnacle visitors (Mack 1999:60-61).

With regard to contemporary Rastafari culture, Rastafari poet, author, publisher, edutainment practitioner and promoter, Yasus Afari, writes:

...the food and nutrition of the RASTAFARIANS highlight meticulous thought, insight and creativity... RASTAFARIANS make a conscious and natural effort to live close to nature and the environment. Therefore, foods are consumed as close to their natural state as possible and the utensils used are oftentimes made from coconut shells,

calabash, clay, bamboo and other eco-friendly materials... Since the 1970s the clothing and dress code within the community has consciously reflected an "Afro-centric" look, accentuated by RASTAFARIAN colours, motifs, symbols and creative products and designs. Natural beads and other craft items made from bamboo, shells, straw and other natural materials are used to augment the RASTAFARIAN fashion taste... The fashion and culturally uplifting spectacle at a RASTAFARIAN event is a throwback to the former African glory, as well as a vision of the glory and splendor of the African cultural future (Afari 2007:286).

The fact that Rastafari culture supports micro-enterprise is also relevant to this discussion in that the informal sector in the Caribbean is linked to Indigenous Knowledge systems as it is in the Motherland. Emeagwali tells us that this sector accounts, in some cases, for over 50 per cent of total economic growth; and so, in this regard also, Rastafari is prepared to contribute to the African economy. 'The interesting issue here is that many of the agents and agencies associated with the second economy tap into the accumulated skills and expertise, and indigenous knowledge systems, from traditional Africa' (Emeagwali 2003).

It must also be noted that the threat to Rastafari and others engaged in micro-enterprise is evident in the increasing quantity of items now available in the Ethio-Rastafari colors – green, gold and red. The most inexpensive Lion of Judah flags on the Caribbean market are made in China. Rastafari stands therefore to benefit from participation in the manufacturing sector in a significantly larger market than can be found in the Caribbean Region. There is undoubtedly need for the attention that the Rastafari Nation has now begun to pay to Intellectual Property Rights. Hence, the focus on governance within the Rastafari Nation in the most recent centralization initiative in Jamaica – the Ethio-Africa-Diaspora Union Millennium Council (EADUMC, also known as the Millennium Council).

The Millennium Council is seeking to secure intellectual property rights for the wider good of the community and its intent with regard to intellectual property and economic empowerment is made clear in the following excerpt:

Over the past years, successive governments, anthropologists, music producers, film-makers, artists, tourism operators,

businessmen, academic researchers and many other individuals and organizations, have dealt informally with various individuals and groups amongst the Rastafari peoples for cultural and financial gain with none such accruing to the members of the faith as a collective. Rastafari symbols, artifacts, music, art and religious marks have been appropriated by many with no acknowledgement or benefit for the Rastafari. This has resulted in losses to the Rastafari, as well as much confusion in authenticity, and has influenced the decision by the Rastafari leadership to take active steps to manage and control all aspects of their legacy and heritage (EADUMC Position Paper 2009:5).

This is certainly the kind of knowledge that can be mutually beneficial, both to the Rastafari community globally and to the African countries to which they are returning.

We now turn our attention to the experiences of those who have returned.

Repatriation and Experience

This last section of the article contributes to the documentation of the Rastafari experience, as it relates to repatriation in Ethiopia, Ghana and South Africa. It acknowledges the research done by Rastafari scholars like Drs. Leachim Semaj, Dennis Forsythe, Koura Gibson and, more recently, Imani Tafari Ama, Anthony Anta Merritt and Jalani Niaah; and wants to pull together their findings from the fields of Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology, unearthing evidence that the Rastafari homecoming is something that would be of benefit to African embrace. Greatest attention will be paid to Shashamane, Ethiopia, with notes from Ghana and South Africa as repatriation host countries. It must be noted that returning Rastafari are also in countries such as Benin, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and Zimbabwe, some in small pockets, others as lone individuals settling in their new African communities.

The following narrative is based on casual observation and independent reading from the insider/participant perspective of a recently repatriated Rastafari woman. It shares some of the notes exchanged between those who have always been there, the pioneers and the new wave of arrivants. The experiences are mainly those recounted by women, women on their own, women with families, women who left men and children to go home and open the gates.

While the history of the Shashamane settlement is well documented, Rastafari of the EABIC (Bobo Shanti) who share the black star in their flag, have always had their eyes set on Ghana, not as the Gateway to Ethiopia but as fulfillment of the promise of Marcus Garvey's Black Star Line. The Bobo Shanti community in Ghana is therefore most prominent but one of the leading community administrators in the Shashamane settlement is EABIC Priest Paul whose advice and assistance with land matters is crucial for those wanting to repatriate to Ethiopia now. One can more easily speak of Rastafari settlement in these two countries than is the case in South Africa where small communal type beginnings are being initiated by homegrown Rastafari, with one element of the development being preparation for repatriation.

In all the three countries, it is evident that repatriated individuals and families are in constant touch with the West, all having access to cell phones, computers and other information and communications technologies (ICTs). This is critical when one considers that repatriating parents are sometimes apart from their children. Children of school age in these families become self-reliant when their mothers are required to travel, whether to Africa or to the Caribbean. Adult children who voluntarily stay behind are not always accepting their parents' calling and repatriating grandmothers feel the continuous pull to return to enjoy short encounters in the growing up of their grandchildren, whom they regale with their experiences in Africa. Increasingly adult children are visiting and some are deciding to stay when opportunities for further education or family employment become apparent and ways are found around legal obstacles. In the context of Repatriation, the following observation made primarily in relation to the Rastafari in the music industry, is also apt:

...the emerging encounters with laws create kaleidoscopic confrontations in an evolving new field of legal pluralism for which not all of the actors involved are well prepared.

For many, it will even be difficult to discern the various sources of law and their unique interpretations and transformations, much more to explore legal ways of dissolving contradictions... Yet, the Rastafari claim for repatriation and their various legal and political activities to put it into practice will hopefully provide

some insights into the creation of new multi-legal fields in which some actors seek to transform and implement international law, such as (their interpretations of) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Zips 2005:71).

The issue of the holy sacrament, cannabis sativa (herb, ganja) still requires discretion and major problems seem to be encountered (as they are in the lands of exile) mainly with large scale cultivation and failed export attempts. One very interesting account from a small Rastafari settlement in South Africa is that the police one day brought them some herb confiscated from neighborhood youth because they recognize the settlement to be one of 'real' Rastas. Repatriated Rastafari are also pivotal points for South-South remittance flows, depending on the economic status of families left behind. These remittances are not yet recognized on either side in the same manner as the North-South flow is counted in the GDPs of the Caribbean islands and African countries. The remittance flows do not provide personal support only. They also build institutions that benefit entire communities, and the absence of reciprocity or facilitating policies from the governments of receiving African countries is another aspect of the injustice. Among the parents, both males and females volunteer in the provision of education, health, other social services, sports and music. Food and music are also fields in which some find informal employment with others. Despite climatic differences, those who have come from the Caribbean are engaged in some level of farming, and learning about healing plants in the new environments is just as important as propagating familiar Caribbean remedies. In this manner, the Rastafari health and healing traditions also return home with them. To some extent, the Rastafari community in Addis Ababa is part of the market for agricultural produce from Shashemane; and among the repatriated Rastafari in Ghana, one may have difficulty remembering that one is in Ghana and not Jamaica, as the environment is similar and familiar foods are grown and prepared as they were in the islands of captivity.

In addition to the hand crafted items usually associated with Rastafari micro-enterprise, other businesses that could be categorized as small and medium sized are now beginning to emerge. Businesses built around food, craft, clothing, music

and entertainment are found and these include formal and informal imports and exports. One Rastafari brother who repatriated from the USA has, in partnership with others, established private primary and secondary schools in Addis Ababa and elsewhere and provides employment for others as appropriate. In all three countries, there are individuals who have returned and are supporting themselves, though, in the absence of specific immigration regulations designed to accommodate Rastafari, immigration issues continue to affect their progress. The ability to travel freely is enhanced for those who have kept current, the passports of their former countries of residence. A number of enterprising middle-aged Rastafari women have come to attention. One owns a home and two stores in Shashemane and a store in Jamaica. Similarly, one owns a house and a store now run by her adult son in one community in South Africa, while she lives in another home purchased more recently in another community. She too supplies her shop in Jamaica with African goods. Most well-known is Nana Rita Marley, Bob Marley's widow who has been quietly making sterling contributions to several community initiatives in Ghana. Another sister in Ghana is an itinerant healer who moves between Accra, the Eastern Region and Volta in Ghana. These Rastafari matriarchs would have had their entrepreneurial skills honed in the Caribbean and bolstered by their faith, arrived in Africa ready to put them to work.

More recently arrived are women on their own who have benefitted from further and higher education and who have chosen Ethiopia to provide professional and consultancy services contributing to the development of visual and performing arts, tourism, education and sustainable development. They seem to travel back and forth more frequently than those who arrived earlier, suggesting a process of repatriation, more so than an event, as new vistas are reached and linkages forged and strengthened between their old and new worlds. In all instances, they are active within the repatriated Rastafari communities as well as their African communities, and seem to have no major difficulties with integration. When the women meet, they compare notes on the sacrifices made to come home but there are no expressions of regret.

Unlike the first families that arrived, these women have to find other support struc-

tures, that is, outside of family. In many ways, this helps them to integrate into the communities in which they settle. Some are members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as well as the Ethiopian World Federation and the Nyahbinghi Order. The 12 Tribes of Israel seems best organized to receive its members in Ethiopia.¹³ On receipt of information about the intent to travel, a member of that same tribe is designated to meet the brother or sister at the airport and to secure temporary accommodation until they can provide for themselves. Temporary accommodation is provided at the 12 Tribes Headquarters for up to one year. A particular challenge has been the repatriation of elders and this is being best overcome in Shashemane where there is an established fund for their systematic care and medical expenses, supported by donations from those who are still abroad.

Second language acquisition is also a challenge but certainly not a deterrent. Like the first wave, they all share a sense of mission, a calling to trod ahead and prepare a space for those who will come later. In some instances, Rastafari brothers and sisters took advantage of the opportunity to travel to the Mother-land, ignoring the requirements of governmental institutions. They have no intention of leaving and are quite prepared to take any risks associated with the notion of 'overstaying' time allotted by immigration on arrival.

Ethiopia in the New Millennium

It is well known that Ethiopia is the spiritual home of the Rastafari who pay homage to His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I and His Empress Menen. It is also well known that in 1955, Haile Selassie I granted 5 gashas (almost 500 acres) of land in Shashemane, Malcode, Ethiopia, to Black people of the world, to thank them for their support during Mussolini's invasion and to facilitate the resettlement of those desirous of return. Most of the land was repossessed by Mengistu Haile Mariam's Dergue during the period 1974 to 1991 but with some negotiation the repatriated community was left with approximately 44 hectares. A number of families have stood their ground over the last 30 years of in spite of all attempts to frustrate the community's development. Be that as it may, the Shashemane Land Grant settlement is the best known example of Rastafari repatriation. It may also be the only one

that can be properly called a settlement and for this reason, it is given more extensive treatment than other accounts of repatriation. Oral sources indicate a communal settlement of mainly white Rastafarians in another part of Ethiopia while there are pockets comprising Rastafari from the Caribbean Region also in Bahar Dar. There is also a regularly interacting, integrated community of ones who have settled in various parts of Addis Ababa and the same people are found attending social events related to Rastafari lividity and culture. Most recent expressions of interest in new areas for settlement refer to possibilities in Ejersa Goro.

In July 2011, the first historic Rastafari Pilgrimage was held in Ejersa Goro, the birthplace of His Majesty in a remarkable union between Rastafari, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Ejersa Goro community which is largely Muslim. Members of the Rastafari committee organizing the pilgrimage were required to submit their profiles for the necessary government authorization (The profiles of three members are presented as Appendix B). The other two committee members were from France and Sweden.

Among the Black (mainly from the Caribbean) Rastafari community in Ethiopia, there is an ongoing quest for a status that will enable the fulfillment of prophecy, the realization of dream and the practice of nation-building. According to the Rastafari Fact Finding Mission to Ethiopia (popularly known as the Harar Trod)¹⁴ which visited Shashemene in November 2009, the Rastafari community there:

...is a community of unshakeable faith whose members are highly conscious of their role in safeguarding Rastafari patrimony in Ethiopia. The tenacity of their ongoing presence into second and third generations, thriving against all odds is nothing short of inspiring. It is their view that the imperative of the international Rastafari community is to find every available means of investing in the development of the Shashemene community and to strengthen the community by increasing the numbers resident there (Harar Trod Report 2010).

The agenda of the second of two community meetings held in Shashemane during the Fact Finding Mission, highlighted the community's needs for:

- Unity
- Strong economic base
- Community fund

- Commercial buildings
- Farming projects
- Music projects
- Administrative and technical assistance (Harar Trod Report, 2010)

These specifics were overshadowed by the community's burning desire to have three critical areas resolved by diplomatic, political and legal intervention on the part of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and by the governments of the CARICOM. The critical demands were for:

- i. Land tenure and security
- ii. Diplomatic relations for representation with regard to repatriation and
- iii. Special legislative and regulatory measures to guarantee legal status/citizenship

The Shashemane community expressed weariness with providing the same information time and time again to various delegations to no avail, and gave several examples of how their goals and aspirations for development continued to be frustrated and thwarted. During one of several consultations with the community in Shashemane, members of the Mission assisted in drafting a letter seeking audience with Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, a segment of which is cited below:

Some of the families most drastically affected have lived in Ethiopia for over thirty years, having been pioneers exercising the moral duty of occupying the lands granted to Africans in the west by His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I. The majority of these residents are Jamaican, with Ethiopian born adult children and grandchildren. Other nationalities include the EU, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Montserrat. Their families have established substantial homes and well kept gardens with mature fruit trees; some are farmers, some engage in small business enterprise. Rastafarians own two of Shashemane's main hotels and also a Soy processing factory. The Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community has operated a school on the land for the past seven years and 95% of the 450 student population is Ethiopian. All except one member of staff are Ethiopian. In short, the Rastafari community has contributed to the development of the Shashemene community and has consistently cooperated with local and regional authorities in matters of security and social development. (Harar Trod Report 2010)

The matters of land, status and citizenship were tabled by the CRO's representative for the agenda of the meeting with the Director and Staff at the African Union's Citizens and Diaspora Unit in Addis Ababa at the end of the Mission. The CIDO agreed to follow-up with the Ethiopian government. The CRO Liaison to the AU also highlighted these issues in the Rastafari Discussion Paper at the technical meeting in South Africa, in preparation for the upcoming Diaspora Summit, and secured a response by way of a follow-up meeting with Ras Wolde Tages King, President of the Ethiopian World Federation Local at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By May 2011, the community was subject to yet another census exercise initiated by the Ethiopian government but much disillusionment was expressed as that step had been taken several times before.

At this juncture, the vehicle of investment is being used to enable sustained periods of stay and maintain legality, though the requirements for investment are unreasonable and beyond the means of most ones committed to Ethiopia's development. This is the option now advised by those who arrived before, in preference to repeated extension of a tourist visa stay which is shorter, costly and limited. There is some indication that governmental accommodation is being made to facilitate Rastafari stay so long as there is evidence that progress is being made with the purported investment. This is still a far cry from the desired permanent residence, or citizenship or the ideal of a special arrangement for repatriation. At the time of writing, one recently repatriated Rastafari sister is fundraising for a medical center in Shashemane. Another is establishing the Athlyi Rogers Diaspora Center there. The Nyahbinghi tabernacle in Shashemane, the largest of its kind anywhere, was built by the global Rastafari community around the commemoration of the centenary of the birth of Haile Selassie I.

Though accounts from South Africa and Ghana show that significant overtures are being made with repatriation in mind, the fact of a land grant for repatriation has not yet been replicated anywhere in Africa. The CRO Discussion Paper distributed at the AU Technical Meeting of Experts (TCEM) on Diaspora held in South Africa in February 2011, lauds Senegal's response to the plight of Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake as

'a practical example of African-Diaspora solidarity.' However, it describes the Shashemene Land Grant in Ethiopia as 'a model that can be replicated in other Member States of the AU, with application of the lessons learned' (CRO 2011). The discussion paper also highlighted recent improvements in relations between the Rastafari community, mainly due to the committed pursuits of Priest Paul Phang of the Ethiopia Black International Congress (EABIC), who heads a *Kabele*¹⁵ in Shashemene and works administratively with the Oromia municipality; the momentous Africa Unite commemoration of Bob Marley's 60th birthday in Addis Ababa which demonstrated the strong impact of public, private (including Rastafari) and civil society (Rastafari) partnership as well as smaller, more recent initiatives in Shashemane supported by the AU.¹⁶ The Shashemane community also acquired a burial plot in 2010, though arrangements for burials have not yet been institutionalized by the community for those who are not members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Ghana the Gateway

During the Kwame Nkrumah Centenary Colloquium held in Accra in May 2010, highly acclaimed Pan-African Elder, Baba Ambassador Dudley Thompson reminded the gathering of the strong anti-colonial and Pan-African links forged in the activism of the movements in the United Kingdom. He emphasized the fact that 'Africans in the diaspora never gave up their African citizenship because their forebears were forcibly taken from the continent' and called for the sixth region of the African union to be 'fully recognized and treated as part of the larger African nation, and for diaspora Africans to be treated as non-resident citizens of African countries' (Colloquium Report 2010).

The truth, as expressed by the Director of the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate of the AU Commission is that the 6th Region is still symbolic, not yet realized. Rastafari in the Caribbean continue to pay close attention to Ghanaian government initiatives such as the Immigration Act of 2000, the Joseph Project and more recent provision for indefinite stay for Africans in the Diaspora. As is the case elsewhere, the Right of Return seems most easily applicable to progeny of Ghanaians who left in the 20th Century and to tourism related enterprise.

According to an article in the leading Pan-Africanist magazine, *Pambazuka News*:

...Ghana is the first African nation to provide the right to return and indefinite stay for Africans in the Diaspora. Under Section 17(1)(b) of the Immigration Law, Act 573 of 2000, the Minister may grant the 'right to abode' to a person of African descent in the diaspora with the approval of the President. Some say, this provision was aimed at tapping into the rich African Americans who have returned to Ghana since its independence and taken up residence in the country, and rewarding those who contribute to the budding tourist industry (Lwanga 2007).

Like the families who arrived in Ethiopia earlier, each repatriating family has to carve out its own path to sustainability, though the environments being met now are much further developed than those met by the first wave of pioneers. Two of the families that have settled in Ghana have come via the USA where they have maintained economic ties that support, families, communities and businesses at home. In both instances, the father remains on the ground, literally and symbolically protecting and managing property and businesses acquired on repatriation, while the women are in paid employment and travel periodically. According to the Ghana report cited earlier:

In general, InI found most of the Rastafari sons and dawtas to be very practical-oriented and living close to the land. Several ones are tapping into business markets as well, but InI see agriculture being the base even for those businesses. Another strength of the Rastafari community in Ghana is that there is a general sense of productivity and inity in the livity of ones and ones. There are Rastafari sons and dawtas in every region of Ghana from the Volta region to Accra area, to Kumasi and other outlying areas. Furthermore, the communication amongst bredren and sistren is strong to the level that Idren are aware of each other's works and whereabouts. That is a strength because as InI coming in from the West, the potential is unlimited in terms of various regions to settle in and various works to get involved in. InI witnessed bredren calling on each other for assistance in building water wells, establishing businesses and building homes and because of this collective reliance, the fraternity amongst bredren seemed to be strong no matter the differences in background. Whether one trod within Nyahbinghi, 12 Tribes, Bobo Ashanti, EWF or whatever, there was little attention given to such things and from the time one trod as a Rastafari son or

dawta, fullest respect was given InI. Also, many bredren and sistren live the Aburi area (mountainous region outside of Accra), which seemed to be a location of centralization for Rastafari. As such, there is an abundance of land available to InI outside of the city life, which is conducive to InI livity as connected to the earth (Atlanta Ras Tafari delegation 2007).

Two years after the receipt of this report, Ghana established its first National Rastafari Council and the Council has made provision for repatriating Rastafari to become members of its Black Star Line Credit Union launched one year later in March 2010. This is a sterling example of Rastafari prioritization of self-governance and self-reliance and the spirit of Marcus Garvey and Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah are most evident.

South Africa

During the South Africa - AU - African Diaspora Caribbean Conference in Jamaica, March 16-18, 2005, representatives of the Caribbean Rastafari community developed consensus positions reflected in the final text of the meeting's Statement. The Statement and Plan of Action of that conference recognized the contributions of the Rastafari Movement as follows:

The conference gained a new appreciation of the creative way in which the Rastafarian movement had sustained the vision of the Founders of the OAU, and promoted an African-Caribbean identity and Afro-centric values that strengthened the impulse for African Liberation on both sides of the Atlantic, while serving as a positive force for Africa globally...The Rastafari and other movements have served as cultural forces of integration in both the Caribbean and Africa. Their status as agents of sustaining and promoting an African-Caribbean identity and an Afro-centric value system should be recognized as a positive force of integration (AU-SA-CARICOM Statement and POA 2005).

Mainly through engagement with the Republic of South Africa's High Commission in Jamaica, the government of that country has shown great willingness to facilitate the participation of Rastafari in the process leading up to the AU Diaspora Conference at which the case for Rastafari repatriation must be made. Like Ethiopia, it is clear that some accommodation is being made for repatriation and similarly, this accommodation is best seen in informal and local spaces. The strongest thrusts are being made by the

Rastafari brothers and sisters themselves who are acquiring lands for Rastafari development, including repatriation. In my capacity as the CRO Liaison to the African Union, I have been privileged to make assessment visits to two of them. The South Africa Report from the Fact Finding Mission reflects the findings thus:

At Bikoland, I experienced basic Ital livity in a rural community, relying on cow dung for biofuel, using outdoor toilet facilities provided by nature and attempting hands-on repair to "my" house after a hail storm damaged a small corner of the outer mud plaster... Papa Lord as the keeper of the land has gained Permission to Occupy (PTO) for the purpose of establishing a Rastafari Village. The King has already approved the PTO and the village Head Man has already designated the boundaries. However, the PTO process has not yet been completed so there is a verbal agreement but no papers yet in hand with the authority of the King's signature. Papa Lord was encouraged to move expeditiously to complete this step as a requirement to be able to access various government services. Apparently "the paper" has to come from the office of the King and Papa Lord has to keep checking with this office. After this, the Government Department of Environment will survey the land. Then the cost of fencing for agricultural production can be estimated as the first step towards the Development Plan... Since the cattle owners are obvious stakeholders, it was suggested that an estimate be prepared for fencing the areas demarcated for cultivation as that was a project for which support could be sought in the West. Later on, the entire area could be fenced to establish perimeters with large gaps in the fencing to accommodate grazing while signaling to the community the possibility of the eventual establishment of the village. On December 25, we paid a brief visit to the Head Man indicating that I would like to have a house erected on the land as I cannot return home to pay rent. He listened attentively and said, "I understand." (Harar Trod Report, 2010).

In addition to older established sites in South Africa such as Marcus Garvey in Cape Town and Judah Square in Knysna, as well as Rastafari strongholds in Johannesburg and Soweto, other Rastafari sites designated by South African Rastafari for development as Rastafari villages are in Jerusalem (which the Rastafari refer to as JAH RULE SALEM), Qwa Qwa and the King Haile Selassie Village being

established on Magaliesberg Mountain in Mamelodi, near Pretoria.

This last site is significant in three regards. It has the support of the surrounding community and there seems to be a meeting of minds that it should be considered a heritage site as it is used for spiritual purposes by several different groups. The expressed goal as stated in the site's brochure is for the mountain village to be operated as a self-sustaining, environmentally sustainable entity. Thirdly, though the site's development decision making is done by Zion Development Team (ZDT), a loose formation of Rastafari with various areas of relevant expertise, the actual construction work to erect structures on the site is spearheaded by Rastafari Sisters. According to the brochure:

Foods and beverages consumed at the KHSV restaurant will all be flavored using herbs from the village garden, which will also supply aromatic herbs for the spa. Tree planting, the use of renewable energy sources and grey water irrigation for the gardens are all features of the preservation program envisaged. Using indigenous knowledge systems to influence architectural design and construction, ZDT engages in sustainable use of the mountain's resources. The primary materials used in all structures erected on the mountain come from the land itself. Residents and visitors actively participate in the construction themselves, learning as they do so, how to work with the mountain and the elements that shape their environment (ZDT brochure).

It is not insignificant that the shared historic vision of Edward Wilmoth Blyden and Marcus Mosiah Garvey for a Diaspora Nation on the African continent was articulated at the AU TCEM in South Africa in February 2011 by stalwart Caribbean Pan-Africanist, David Comissiong of Barbados. Rastafari in South Africa are clearly ahead of the game.

Conclusion

Among the lessons learned by Rastafari is that no matter how land is acquired in the process of repatriation, if it is not occupied and developed it may be lost, regardless of what seemed to be sound contractual arrangements for tenure. Physical planning, engineering, construction and other skills needed for settlement are of critical importance as are the provision of social services and safety networks. Organizing and

centralizing Rastafari initiatives are not yet large enough or effective enough to independently achieve the realization of repatriation as a mass movement. Capacities must therefore be enhanced among the communities that already exist in repatriated spaces and among those lobbying for repatriation and to apply strategies advanced by the people affected, to determine the terms and conditions of their repatriation.

Though the African Union (AU) has made constitutional provision for the inclusion of the African Diaspora as the 6th Region of Africa, this is evidently not a priority of the AU and the process of determining modalities for Diaspora representation is moving at a snail's pace. The Caribbean Region, because of its largely African ethnic make-up, has been privileged to be given a civil society voice in the person of Khafra Kambon of Trinidad and Tobago who was in 2008 appointed an Ex-Officio member of the AU Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), 'Ex-Officio' because the 6th Region is not yet a Member of the AU and this was the way to formally engage with Civil Society through Caribbean Pan-African Network (CPAN).

This is the vehicle that the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation has been using to dialogue in various AU processes. The CRO representative, who has repatriated to Ethiopia, attended the Second Technical Meeting of the ECOSOCC Standing Committee in Uganda (2009), the Technical Meeting of Experts on the African Diaspora in South Africa (2011) and the African Youth Forum in Addis Ababa (2011). She is lobbying for life to be brought to Article 21 of the African Youth Charter, which is about the participation of Diaspora Youth. The CRO Liaison has been recommending various ways in which the governments of the CARICOM and the AU can hold true (and not pay lip service), to the intent of the African Diaspora Global Conference: Caribbean Regional Consultation in Barbados in 2007, which acknowledged 'the Rastafari Movement as historically integrative of the African Agenda and whose cultural philosophy, actions and assets, particularly its indigenous rights, form the cornerstone of African Union and should be uniquely supported (Outcomes Document 2007, emphasis mine).

The governments need to understand and appreciate that whatever their views of Rastafari spirituality, the basis of the

Rastafari demand for repatriation and reparations resonates in the United Nations principle of the Right of Return. They need to consider that their failure to act may impede the tide but will not diminish the Rastafari resolve to return home. Ethiopia's accommodation of Rastafari settlement needs to be accompanied by special legislative and regulatory arrangements for permanent residence and citizenship. There is need to broaden the reciprocal unilateral arrangements for no visa requirements in the case of St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Ethiopia, South Africa and Jamaica, to an agreement between CARICOM and the AU. This will undoubtedly be more problematic for the small island developing states that are already experiencing anxiety about the free movement of people in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

While the May 2011 agreement between Nigeria and Jamaica for direct air travel between the two countries is welcome, it may mean very little to Rastafari aspiring to repatriate as the cost is still likely to be high. In any event, market forces will determine the viability of actualizing such agreements. On the other hand the Rastafari Nation must give no ground in its own efforts at readiness for prophetic, politically supported, permanent, physical return.

Notes

1. The CRO was approached on this matter by the representative of a trade initiative being formulated by the Government of Barbados Commission for Pan-African Affairs in 2007.
2. One perception is that the University of the West Indies (UWI) report on the Rastafarians of Kingston (1960) served to dilute the more revolutionary aspects of Rastafari expression. However, UWI conferred an honorary doctorate upon His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie I during his state visit to Jamaica in 1966. Another perspective is that Rastafari Intellectual Property Rights must be protected from academic exploitation. <http://millenniumcouncil.webs.com/apps/blog/show/4417628-rastafari-conference-objection-by-eadamc>
3. Amendment to the Constitutive Act (2003) of the African Union invited membership of the African Diaspora as the 6th Region of the Africa.
4. A United Nations principal associated with and applied to the Palestinian cause.
5. France's Parliament passed the Taubira Act declaring the slave trade as a crime-againsthumanity on 10 May 2001 <http://>

www.ambafrance-uk.org/Slavery-Slavery-was-abolished-in.html

6. They Came Before Columbus (1976).
7. http://www.countriesquest.com/north_america/usa/people/growth_of_us_population/growth_through_immigration/european_and_african_immigration_in_the_colonies.htm
8. Binghi Shawn, Ras Tre, Ras Ishach and Congo Isef report on <http://rastaites.com/news/hearticals/Ghana/report01.pdf>
9. 'In a very real sense, our continent is unmade; it still awaits its creation and its creators' (HIM Statement to the 1963 African Summit at which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed. <http://rastaites.com/speeches/africa.htm>
10. Nyahbinghi *groundation* – 'an all day, all night celebration, when brethren would assemble at a particular camp for a special occasion' (Mack 1999: 81) connected to Ethiopian monarchy, history and culture.
11. Frantz Fanon and the USA Civil Rights Movement.
12. Livity - 'The Spiritual, Divine way of life of The RASTAFARIANS, Culture of Spirituality (Afari 2007:327), 'covers the totality of one's being in the world' (Lewis 1998: 155).
13. Organised by the names of the Biblical Tribes of Israel.
14. The Mission also included visits to South Africa and Ghana by a reduced team.
15. A kabele is a small, administrative unit similar to a neighbourhood in Ethiopian municipal structure.
16. African Liberation Day event in 2008 and Youth leadership training in 2011.

References

- Afari, Y., Shawn, B., Ras tre, Ras Ishach and Congo Isef, 2007, *Overstanding Rastafari "Jamaica's Gift to the World"*, Senya-Cum, Jamaica.
- Atlanta Ras Tafari Delegation to Ghana Report (2007) by Binghi Shawn, Ras Tre, Ras Ishach and Congo Isef, <http://rastaites.com/news/hearticals/Ghana/report01.pdf> (accessed September 2011).
- Augier, R. and Salter, V., eds., 2010, 'Rastafari – The Reports', in *Caribbean Quarterly*, (CQ) Cultural Studies Initiative, University of the West Indies, Jamaica.
- Biko, S., 1971, 'Address to Black Theology Seminar in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa <http://www.sahistory.org.za/20th-century-south-africa/black-consciousness-movement> (accessed September 2011).

Chevannes, B., 1998, 'Rastafari and the Exorcism of Racism and Classism', in N. S. Murrell, W. D. Spencer & A. A. McFarlane, eds., *Chanting Down Babylon: the Rastafari Reader*, Temple University Press, USA (pp. 62).

Chevannes, B., 2001, (Foreword of Tafari, I.) *Rastafari in Transition*, Research Associates School Times Publications/Frontline Distribution Int'l Inc. USA and Miguel Lorne Publishers, Jamaica.

Christian, I., 2005, *Empress of Zion – She Hands Us Her Rulebook Right Now*, Empress of Zion Inc, Atlanta.

Edmonds, E.B., 1998, 'Dread "I" In-A-Babylon', in N. S. Murrell, W. D. Spencer & A. A. McFarlane, eds., *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*, Temple University Press, USA, pp. 24-33.

Ellen, R. F. and Harris, H., 1996, 'Concepts of Indigenous Environmental Knowledge in Scientific and Development Studies Literature: A Critical Assessment', in *Avenir des Peuples des Forêts Tropicales (APFT)*.

Emeagwali, G., 2003, 'African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIK): Implications for the Curriculum', in Toyin, F., ed., *Ghana in Africa and the World: Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen*, New Jersey: Africa World Press, <http://www.africahistory.net/AIK.htm> (accessed August 2011).

Ethiopia Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Council, 2009, Position Paper, *'The Rastafari Nation Fundamental Rights for Repatriation and Reparations for Rastafari and Africans in the Diaspora Who So Desire to Return to the Continent of Africa'*, Jamaica.

Flavier, J.M. et al., 1995, "The Regional Program for the Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge in Asia", pp. 479-487 in Warren, D.M., L.J. Slikkerveer and D. Brokensha (eds) *The cultural dimension of development: Indigenous knowledge systems*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, <http://www.worldbank.org/aft/ik/basic.htm> (accessed August 2011).

Gayle, C. and Ras, Iah C., 1995, 'Repatriation - Upful Livity is a Must', in *JAHUG* Vol.4 Published by C. Gayle & Y. Gayle for Repatriation Productions, London.

Haile Selassie I (1931-1970), 'Selected Speeches of Haile Selassie I', posted online by The Church of Haile Selassie I Inc. Ba Beta Kristiyan Haile Selassie, http://www.himchurch.org/Recommended_Reading/Selected_Speeches/Haile_Selassie_I-Selected_Speeches-Chapter_III-19640721.html (accessed September 2011).

- Homiak, J., 2011, "Reverberations 50 Years On: Negotiating the African Presence in Jamaica, The Inaugural Rastafari Conference 2010", in *Reggae 17 Festival Guide 2011*, RBA Publishing Inc., Reno, Nevada.
- Homiak, J., 2011, '2010 Rastafari Conference in Jamaica', in *Rhetoric of Reggae*, Wednesday, June 22, 2011.
<http://rhetoricofreggae.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default?orderby=updated> (accessed September 2011).
- Homiak, J. and Lutanie, B., 2011, 'Each-One-Teach-One' La Première Conférence Internationale Sur Le Mouvement Rastafari à L'Université des West Indies in *Reggae Édito # 19*, August/September 2011, Detroit Media, Paris.
- Jamaica Gleaner News Online Archives (August 2, 2011) <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/>
- Kwame Nkrumah Centenary Colloquium – 'Contemporary Relevance of Kwame Nkrumah's Contribution to Pan-Africanism and Internationalism', 22–25 May, 2010 Accra, Ghana – Final Report, Ghana Youth Movement Facebook page (accessed August 2011)
- Lewis, R., 1998, 'Marcus Garvey and the Early Rastafarians', in N. S. Murrell, W. D. Spencer & A. A. McFarlane, eds., *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*. Temple University Press, USA, pp. 151.
- Lwanga, D., 2007, 'Ghana Upholds the Spirit of Pan-African Citizenship', in *Pambazuka News*, 2007-03-07, Issue 294, Fahamu - Networks For Social Justice <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/40114> (accessed September 2011).
- Mack, D. R. A., 1999, *From Babylon to Rastafari*, Research Associates School Times Publications, Frontline Distribution Int'l Inc., Chicago, Jamaica, London, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.
- Marley, (Bob) R. N. and Perry, L. (Scratch), 1983, 'Blackman Redemption', in *Confrontation* album produced by Rita Marley, (accessed September 2011) http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/b/bob_marley/blackman_redemption.html
- Marley, (Bob) R. N., 1980, 'Redemption Song', in *Uprising* album produced by Bob Marley and the Wailers, audio mixed by Chris Blackwell and Errol Brown and originally released by Island Records (9596).
<http://www.cduniverse.com/search/xx/music/pid/1965126/a/Uprising.htm> (accessed September 2011).
- Mbeki, T., 1998, The African Renaissance, South Africa and the World, presentation at United Nations University, 9 April 1998, <http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/mbeki.html> (accessed September 2011).
- Merritt, A. W., 2006, 'Ethiopianism, Africanity and Repatriation: An Africentric Social History of Shashemene Repatriation Community, Ethiopia: 1995-2004', PhD dissertation, Union Institute and University, Cincinnati, Ohio/ProQuest Information and Learning Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- McFarlane, A.A., 1998, 'The Epistemological Significance of "I-an-I" as a Response to Quashie and Anancyism in Jamaican Culture', in N. S. Murrell, W. D. Spencer & A. A. McFarlane, eds., *Chanting Down Babylon: the Rastafari Reader*, Temple University Press, USA, (pp. 107).
- Nabudere, Dani W., 2010, 'African Indigenous Knowledge' in *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, Centre for African Renaissance Studies, University of South Africa-UNISA-Volume 1 Number 1, pp. 7-32.
- Outcomes Document on the African Diaspora Global Conference: Caribbean Regional Consultation (27-28 August 2007), Bridgetown Barbados.
http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community_organs/african_diaspora_caribbean_consultation.jsp (accessed August 2011).
- Planno, M., 1962, 'Letter to the Editor', *Daily Gleaner*, Jamaica. http://download-plaza.dutchrasta.nl/SistrenItes/SistrenItes_Vol_3_Issue_04.pdf (accessed August 2011).
- Report on the Fact Finding Mission to Ethiopia/Harar Trod Report, 2010, Harar/Ethiopia Trod, October 24 – November 22, 2009, collaboratively written by Sister Ijahnya Christian et al, compiled by Debra Kiliru-Liontree & Christopher Keiser-Liontree, Co-Directors, Motherland International Relations, USA.
- Shipale, Paul Tuhafeni, 'Reclaiming the values and institutions of African heritage' in *PRÉ-vue [discourse's –analysis] TRI-vium*, Feature Article of Friday, 3 December 2010, of the *New Era* and *Namibia Today*, commentary on a speech entitled 'Commitment to the Civil Society: The Role of an Afro-centric Ideology in Reducing Religious, Regional and Ethnic Obstacles to National Integration', Dakar, Senegal, July 27-30, 2009.
- South Africa, African Union, Caribbean Diaspora Conference 16 -18 March 2005 Kingston, Jamaica, <http://www.dfa.gov.za/events/diaspora/docs/background.htm> (accessed August 2011).
- Tafari, I., 2001, *Rastafari in Transition*, Research Associates School Times Publications/Frontline Distribution Int'l Inc. and Miguel Lorne Publishers, Chicago, Jamaica, London, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean.
- Toney, J., 'Africans on Caribbean Plantations', in *IPPOA Magazine* - Indigenous People of Africa and America, Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, http://www.ipoa.com/africans_on_caribbean_plantations.htm (accessed September 2011).
- WCAR Durban POA, 2001, <http://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf>, (accessed September 2011).
- Warren, D. M., 1991, Using Indigenous Knowledge in Agricultural Development, *World Bank Discussion Paper No. 127*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm>, (accessed August 2011).
- White, C. M., 2007, Living in Zion: Rastafarian Repatriates in Ghana, West Africa in *Journal of Black Studies*, May Vol. 37 No. 5, (pp 677-709), <http://www.cmich.edu/chsbs/x19205.xml>, (abstract accessed August 2011)
- Published online before print March 8, 2007, doi: 10.1177/0021934705282379 Zips, W., 2005, 'Global Fire: Repatriation and Reparations from a Rastafari (Re)Migrant's Perspective', in von Benda-Beckman, F. et al., eds., *Mobile People, Mobile Law*, UK, USA: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., pp. 69-83.

APPENDIX A

List of Lobbying Interventions by the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation

2011

Aide-Mémoire submitted to African Union (AU) Economic Social and Cultural Council

May 29-31

Standing Committee Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago

May 23

Letter to Secretary General (Ag.) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Guyana

April 4-6

AU African Youth Forum - CRO Liaison invoked inclusion of African Diaspora Youth in accordance with Article 21 of the African Youth Charter

28 February 2011

FoI-low-up letter to CARICOM and Ethiopian diplomatic, technical and political representatives at AU TCEM in South Africa

February 21-22

Discussion Paper 'Repatriation: An Over-arching Theme for the Rastafari Nation' presented at AU Technical Committee of Experts Meeting in South Africa

February 16

Letter to African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Observatory on Migration seeking support for research on Rastafari relocation from the Caribbean Region to Africa.

2010

November 24

Rastafari Fact Finding Mission meeting with Director and Staff of AU Citizens and Diaspora Directorate and representatives of AU ECOSOCC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

November 15

Call on Member States of the AU and the European Union (EU) to include Reparations as defined by the UN Durban Declaration and POA, in the framework of the Second Action Plan (2011-2013) adopted at the 3rd African EU Summit, 29-30 November in Tripoli

9 2009

Position Paper 'The Case for Rastafari Representation on the African Union's

December 19-21

Economic, Social and Cultural Council ECOSOCC Kampala, Uganda

2008

Discussion Paper distributed by Ambassade de la Diaspora at the UN Durban

August 24-26

Review Conference/African Region PrepCom, Abuja, Nigeria

2007

AU-Caribbean government supported representation at the African Diaspora

August 27-28

Global Conference: Caribbean Regional Consultation in Barbados

October 18

Proposal for the establishment of a CARICOM Working Group on Rastafari Populations and AU Permanent Forum on Rastafari Issues prepared for:

- (i) AU Ministerial Meeting on the Diaspora in South Africa, 16-18, November
- (ii) African Union Diaspora Summit in South Africa in 2008 and

(iii) 17th meeting of the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development, Guyana

2005

Position Paper 'Preparation for Integration into the African Union: The South

March 16-18

African Option', presented at the South Africa-AU-CARICOM meeting in Jamaica

2004

Nomination of CRO member as Rastafari representative to executive of AU

September 11-12

Diaspora Network in Barbados - also known as Caribbean Pan-African Network (CPAN)

2002

Position Paper 'Building Strategic Alliances to secure Reparations for Repatriation', presented at the African Union meeting of Caribbean Pan-African Organisations in Barbados

APPENDIX B

Profiles of 1st Rastafari Pilgrimage Organizing Committee

Ras Nkrumah Sellassie (Chairman) is Treasurer of the Ethiopian World Federation (EWF), Addis Ababa Local 777 and a leading personality of the Rastafari community in Ethiopia. He was born in Jamaica and is a businessman who owns the Royal Afrakan Link PLC (RALCO), which established the first soybean processing factory in Ethiopia. The factory is located in the Shashemane Industrial Zone, with its Head Office located in the Kirkos Building, Addis Ababa. RALCO is a family business which promotes healthy eating and provides a diversified line of health food products found in leading supermarkets, hotels and restaurants. Throughout his life, Ras Nkrumah has been involved in organizing and participating in cultural programs, staging a number events in Addis Ababa and engaging in the EWF Rain Water Harvesting and Naked be Clothed Programs. Ras Nkrumah is married and the father of seven. He and his family have lived in Ethiopia since 2007.

Ras Hailu Tefari/Raymond (Bandi) Payne is Treasurer of the Rastafari Pilgrimage Organizing Committee, advisor and consultant for nation building projects

and programs and a member of the EWF Inc. Ras Hailu is a Rastafari Priest, Banana Art specialist, cartoonist, poet, musician, organic farmer and herbalist. He was awarded a diploma in Art and Design from the Greenhill College at Harrow-on-the Hill, UK, during his four and a half year sojourn there. Ras Hailu was born on the island of Aruba and grew up in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He established the world's first Banana Art Gallery in Shashemane, where he has also preserved a vast collection of Ethiopian medals from the era of Emperor Menelik II to that of Emperor Haile Selassie I. Ras Hailu arrived in Ethiopia in 1994, was baptized at Mariam Cathedral in 1997 and married an Ethiopian wife in that same year. Together they have four daughters.

Sister Empress Ijahnya Christian is a freelance writer, cultural activist and Pan-African consultant who was born in Anguilla, grew up in St. Kitts and Nevis and relocated from the Eastern Caribbean to Ethiopia in 2010. For 35 years she has provided multi-sector research, facilitation and international representation in environmental management, social development and organizational governance. She was a member of the Rastafari Fact Finding Mission to Ethiopia in 2009 and is the Caribbean Rastafari Organization's Liaison to the African Union (AU). She is also on the executive committee of the AU Diaspora Network (Caribbean). Sister Ijahnya holds a M. A. (Ed) from the University of Southampton and a B. Sc. (Social Work) from the University of the West Indies. As Executive Director of the Anguilla National Trust she was awarded fellowships in Land Stewardship from the Quebec Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment and a certificate in Environmental Leadership from the Smithsonian Institution. She was Anguilla's first Coordinator of Adult and Continuing Education and initiated Guidance and Counseling Services in the island's education system. In Ethiopia she is establishing the Athlyi Rogers Diaspora Center to offer sustainable development services to Africans at home and abroad. Sister Ijahnya is the mother of three adult children and grandmother of four.