Chapter 3
The Ras Tafari Movement, Marxism, and Race

Saturday, July 8
Donald Introduces Me to Mr Fitz

At 6 pm Donald Innis, who is preparing to leave tomorrow morning by boat for Canada, took me to visit his new acquaintances at 12 Beaumont Road, August Town (Figure 1.5)—Mr Ralph Fitzherbert (54), Miss Clara Armstrong (56), Susie (16), and Ricky (3). The children are in some loose way related to Miss Clara. Miss Clara is light in color and quite passive. Mr Fitz is dark, articulate, and impressive. He has a UNIA flag and black star. He asked me to read his life horoscope.

Beaumont Road is part of the Central Housing Authority scheme at Hermitage, August Town. The house, which cost £200 repayable over 20 years, has two rooms divided by a partition, a water closet and shower, and a small kitchen with an oil stove. The walls are covered with Victorian Christian messages; the beds and furniture are in quite good condition. I notice that the metal bed ends have been painted to resemble wood.

Mr Fitz, Sam Brown, and the PPP

The Rastafarian, Sam Brown, who lives on the Foreshore Road in West Kingston, is Mr Fitz’s friend. Brown is said to be bitterly disappointed by the Back-to-Africa mission—will there be violence now? Hailie Selassie is reputed to have welcomed migration to Somaliland, but not repatriation to Ethiopia.

The PPP will use racism as the last resort, according to Mr Fitz. It will back Busta (whose powers are thought to be limited) to drive
out the PNP, which has been captured by capitalists. Mr Fitz claims that the political street fights in which he was involved in the 1940s and 1950s were to no avail. He fought for Manley and the PNP, but was then dismissed.

The Rastas look to Ras Tafari, because the God of the white man has never favored them. But they believe in a creator. Mr Fitz tells us about ganja and its side effects—hunger and thirst. The PPP was campaigning in Port Antonio last week, and this week is in Mandeville, Black River, and Savannah-la-Mar. Mr Fitz would like to go back to Africa.

**Sunday, July 9**

**PPP**

After lunch Mr Fitz and I went down to the PPP and Council on Afro-West Indian Affairs (CAWIA) headquarters at 169 Spanish Town Road, located at the junction with Maxfield Avenue (Figure 1.4). Most of the people in the building were black, but the vice-president of the PPP, Martin Allen was light-skinned. He is a TUC (Trades Union Council) man, and was a leftist when the 4 Hs (Richard Hart, Ken Hill, Frank Hill, and Arthur Henry) were expelled from the PNP in 1952. Martin Allen explained that the main purpose of the PPP is to emphasize African culture and exclude the US and British. He believes in the Africanization of Jamaica, but the present Back-to-Africa movement is a mirage. An appeal to color would be a last resort (he does not seem to be particularly antagonistic to whites).

I found Martin Allen articulate and soft-spoken. On incentive industrialization, he seemed supportive of the strategy, but he would stop the loophole by which firms may pull out after their tax exemption period is over. Although he spoke about agricultural settlement in Jamaica, he has no direct plans. He doesn’t come across as particularly socialist; he thinks that the middle class will follow whoever is in power. Education is important, especially technicians—more idealism and pulling of weight is required. He added that “the Krushchev technique may be required” (compulsion?)—and pointed to “Garvey’s dignity of the black skin.” Allen seemed well informed about conditions in Africa. But migration to Britain was scandalous and tantamount to abandoning a sinking ship. He supported the Garvey slogan “Africa for the Africans at home and abroad,” but Back-to-Africa was defensible only where blacks were in a national minority—as in the United States.

After the 1955 election, Norman Manley claimed that “socialism was only a label.” The TUC, which was formerly affiliated to the PNP,