but in general the sugar-producers in the islands continued to thrive, right down to the 1790s. Indeed, in the case of Jamaica 'the point at which [the island] seems to have been in clear economic decline gets pushed back closer and closer to the eve of emancipation' (220).

By then, of course, Saint-Domingue had undergone a traumatic transformation. But the authors invite us to suspend our later knowledge in 1790, when the position of the islands had been reversed. About 1750, Jamaica might have been slightly ahead of Saint-Domingue in sugar-production, but by 1790 or so the latter island was producing three times as much sugar as Jamaica. This was due not only to the island's greater size, but also to greater investment in both machinery and irrigation-systems (246).

By that time the industrial machine, in the shape of 'the integrated plantation model', had been perfected in both islands, even as it was coming under repeated and sustained criticism from humanitarians in Europe. By the end of the eighteenth century, we would have the remarkable phenomenon of coffee-planters from Saint-Domingue fleeing with some of 'their' slaves to Jamaica, where, in a final example of the islands' interrelationship, these Saint-Dominguans succeeded in setting Jamaican coffee-cultivation on a new footing.

Professor David Buisseret, The Newberry Library, Chicago
doi.org/10.68027/742907

Birte Timm, *Nationalists Abroad: The Jamaica Progressive League and the Foundation of Jamaican Independence* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2016). 500 pp. ISBN 9789766378653. US$ 44.95, paperback.

This book comes on the heels of three recent works on twentieth-century Jamaica: Arnold Bertram's *N.W. Manley and the Making of Modern Jamaica* (2016), Colin Palmer's *Freedom's Children: The 1938 Labor Rebellion and the Birth of Modern Jamaica* (2014) and *These Many Years: the Autobiography of*

Adolphe Roberts (2015), edited by Peter Hulme. Timm's work relies on the manuscript version of the Roberts autobiography, materials from the Jamaica Archives, the manuscript section of the National Library of Jamaica, UK and US archives, including the Schomburg Center in New York, private archives, local newspapers, and personal correspondence. Nationalists Abroad records the history of the Jamaica Progressive League and the major contributions of Adolphe Roberts, Wilfred A. Domingo, Jaime O'Meally, Ethelred Brown, the founders of the Jamaica Progressive League (JPL) in New York, and agitators for Jamaican self-government. The title *Nationalists Abroad* is entirely apt, since so many of the major players in the movement for self-government were based overseas or, like W. G. McFarlane, the founder of the Kingston Branch of the Jamaica Progressive League, were returning emigrants.

The author's intention is to analyse the role of the Jamaica Progressive League which was founded in September 1936 for the explicit purpose of agitating for Jamaican self-government, a role which she argues is usually attributed to Norman Manley by PNP partisans. Manley's essential role in the self-government movement, valuable as it is, must be understood against the role of the Jamaica Progressive League in assisting in the foundation and nurture of the People's National Party. Those who attribute self-government or independence to Alexander Bustamante refer to the outcome of the referendum of 1961, which led to Bustamante becoming the first prime minister of Jamaica in 1962. It is already well-known that prior to the referendum Bustamante was generally opposed to self-government. Manley himself, unlike his partisan followers, always acknowledged the role of Roberts and Domingo in the formation of the PNP. Timm dismisses earlier efforts at self-government (such as Sandy Cox's National Club, the Jamaica League, and even Garvey's PPP) as too associated with loyalty to the British monarchy to be considered serious movements for independence. The JPL, she argues convincingly, was the most aggressive promoter of the concept of immediate self-government for Jamaica. What Timm does in her very readable Nationalists Abroad is to reinforce and expand on the conclusions of Ken Post, Arnold Bertram,

and Colin Palmer who note the role of the Jamaica Progressive League in the agitation for immediate self-government and indeed in the foundation and growth of the PNP.

The almost evangelical enthusiasm with which the JPL agitated for self-government is perhaps an indication that the experience of nationalists abroad did not always conform to local perceptions of reality and self-interest.

The JPL, having persuaded the reluctant Norman Manley to cooperate with the JPL, continued to play a very important role as mentor and financial supporter of the PNP, aware as it was that the movement for self-government was complicated by war-time conditions (1939–1945). In this respect, the autocratic governor Sir Arthur Richards imposed Defence Regulations that were conveniently used to imprison those accused by Richards of disloyalty to the 'Realm'. Timm supports the view that Governor Richards engineered the rift between Manley and Bustamante. In 1941, Manley and the PNP were agreed on the question of self-government; and Manley's determination to struggle for it was strengthened, not weakened, by the decision of Arthur Richards to incarcerate for two years, W. A. Domingo, who was returning to Jamaica at the request of Norman Manley to boost the PNP campaign for self-government.

The JPL took action to prevent British colonialism from being replaced by US domination. The role of the JPL in addressing the issue of self-government at the Havana Conference was a clear indication of the sound grasp that Roberts and Domingo in particular had of the international situation, and of the dangers of the US bases in Jamaica becoming a racist Trojan horse. Timm records the role of the JPL and its subsidiary WINEC (West Indies Emergency Committee) at the Pan American Conference in Havana (July 1940) to rule out US trusteeship of the Caribbean in the event of British defeat, which seemed very possible at the end of 1940. The Havana conference accepted (with the assistance of Argentina) the right of the West Indies to self-government in the event of British defeat.

Adolphe Roberts has committed his life experiences to his autobiography. Timm has done a commendable job of introducing us to W. A. Domingo, using mainly his articles in *Public Opinion* and his personal correspondence. Domingo certainly deserves to be better known for his role in Jamaican anti-colonial history, his initial warmth towards the USSR, and his subsequent disillusionment with the COMINTERN (Timm hints that Domingo in his 'nationalist' phase, never really surrendered his basic socialist beliefs). His earlier association with Marcus Garvey (and particularly as editor of *The Negro World*) indicates that Domingo was profoundly concerned with the future of blacks not only in Jamaica but worldwide. The FBI was even concerned that his presence in the United States could inflame the Black American/Caribbeans axis, resulting in his being stranded in Jamaica for over four years. His correspondence with Norman Manley indicates a deep commitment to self-government. Mutual admiration is self-evident. Domingo was well aware that subjugated people often accept the mores of their conquerors:

> Jamaicans, like other colonial peoples, are subjected to a continuous barrage of subtle influences intended to induce them to identify their interests with those of their rulers. The reason for this is plain. If a subject people think in terms of their own interests they lose the sense of inferiority deliberately infused in them by their alien political masters. (316)

Timm's work emphasises that the relationship between the PNP and its founder, the JPL, was not always smooth, and rifts between them were often papered over. For example, Roberts was strongly anti-socialist and the adoption of a democratic socialist platform by the PNP in 1940 would hardly have pleased the JPL which, however, continued to support the PNP financially. The most serious rift occurred over the PNP's support for the West Indies Federation. The JPL considered the PNP's support of the West Indies Federation a betrayal of Jamaican nationalism.

What remains, in my mind, a mystery, is the decision of Roberts to promote immediate self-government for Jamaica in 1936. By that year, he had spent over thirty years abroad. There is little indication in his

autobiography that he had pondered the question of Jamaican self-government. Was it nostalgia or a desire to imitate the political development of Latin America, and Cuba in particular, for which he had a profound admiration? Roberts was a strong Pan-American advocate. Even more mysterious is that Roberts and W. A. Domingo were surprised at what they collectively called the 'ignorance', 'indifference', and 'apathy' of the mass of Jamaicans towards self-government. I say this because there was no significant socio-economic class or group in 1936 that favoured independence and the influential *Gleaner*, edited by Herbert George de Lisser, was consistent in its endorsement of Empire. Since de Lisser was not regarded as 'ignorant' or 'apathetic' it must be assumed that the JPL considered their programme to be of interest to the majority classes. Yet, the JPL nationalist programme seemed largely devoid of social content, the absence of which led to direct mass action in 1938. It was in this spirit that Marxist Richard Hart noted that 'without Socialism self-government would not be of benefit to the majority' (102). It is relevant to ask—even if there can be no answers in the present documentation—whether mass indifference was the result of British 'brainwashing' – or was a perception that self-government did not address their interests, a point made by Timm (309)? It is an irony that it was the upheavals of 1938 that really energised the self-government movement. The Moyne Commission's recommendation to grant a new constitution to Jamaica on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage was a very important development that turned the tables in favour of (at least) apprenticeship in self-government between 1944 and 1962.

It is true that Roberts was not beloved by the Bustamante administration, which denied Roberts (a US citizen) a visa to enter Jamaica, even claiming that Roberts, contrary to all the evidence, was a communist. The roots of political partisanship were thereby laid. Timm notes, however, that both Roberts and Domingo were, in 1962, guests of the newly independent government, and their historical role was noted in the columns of the *Daily Gleaner*. Yet, it seems curious, as Timm notes in her conclusion, that W. A. Domingo and Adolphe Roberts have become scarcely memories. Roberts' *Six Great Jamaicans* and other

historical works still grace Jamaica's library shelves. Domingo is less well-known; his powerful intellect all but forgotten.

The Progressive League did succeed in its primary objective – political independence. We must thank Timm for a book, thoroughly researched and well written, which offers a history of twentieth-century Jamaican politics through the eyes of the Jamaica Progressive League. The book, which also exposes the factionalism and divisiveness of Jamaican politics, should be of interest to all students of Jamaican/Caribbean history and politics.

Professor Patrick E. Bryan, University of the West Indies, Mona
doi.org/10.68027/742908