

MINORITY REPORT OF

**MISSION TO AFRIKA**

April 4, - June 2, 1961

*Depart Palisadoes Airport 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1961 (Tuesday) at 10.15 a.m. Arrived New York by B.O.A.C. 3.40 p.m.*

The Mission comprised of: Dr. L.C. Leslie, Adviser; Mr. V. S. Reid, Co-Advisor; Hon. E. H. Lake (Antigua) Ministry of Social Welfare; Dr. B. M. Douglas, Mr. Z. Munroe-Scarlet, Afro-West Indian Welfare League; W. Blackwood, U.N.I.A.; Cecil Gordon, Ethiopian Worlds Federation. D. Mack, Filmore Alvaranga, Rases of Eastern and Central Kingston, Mortimer Planno "Togo Desta", representing the Rastafarian Movement.

Tuesday, April 4. The mission left Kingston for New York where we spent tow days at the Hotel Theresa, on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. We were met at Idlewilde Airport by Members of the Ethiopian Worlds Federation, U.N.I.A. and other Back-to-Afrika Movements in New York. We visited the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in New York, the Headquarters of the Ethiopian Worlds Federation, New York. Also visited the U.N.O Buildings but was not successful in obtaining seats in the balcony of the U.N.O. general assembly.

Thursday, April 6, 9.30 p.m. The Mission left New York for London and arrived at 8.30 p.m. Friday 7<sup>th</sup>. We stayed at the Hotel Londoner. We visited the Ethiopian Embassy, the French Embassy and the Ghanaian Embassy to obtain visas for entry. The Mission visited the House of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. The Mission spent one week in London and during our stay there, met many black people from the West Indies and elsewhere who were all interested in getting back to Afrika. The Mission left London for Khartoum via Rome on April 14 at 3.40 p.m. and arrived at Khartoum at 4.10 a.m. on Saturday April 15 and stayed at the Grand Hotel, overlooking the River Nile. We drove by car to Omdurman from Khartoum; visited the Ancient House of the Caliph, who defeated and killed the English General Gordon and his troops there with Sudanese tribesmen. We saw other antiques of the famous battle. The Mission left Khartoum 4.30 a.m. our first stop on the Continent of Afrika for Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, and arrived there Haile Selassie I Airport, via Asmara, where Mack and Alvaranga met four Ethiopian Orthodox Priests, who flew to Addis-Ababa with us.

### **First Official Stop "Ethiopia"**

Ethiopia was The Mission's first official stop. We arrived Sunday April 16, 9.35 a.m. at Addis-Ababa by Ethiopian Airlines. We were met at the airport by Ato Getaneh Haile Mariam, chief of English and Commonwealth Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Woizaro Maize of the Ministry of Education; Lidj Ayele-Worq Abebe attached to the Foreign Ministry. We were then taken to Hotel Ghion, reserved for our stay on Sunday morning. We visited the British Embassy and met the Ambassador there. He said there was no clay in Ethiopia (which we disproved by seeing a lot). Later in the afternoon the Rases were invited to visit His Holiness Abuna Basilios, the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church at his residence. The other delegates came along too. We discussed H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie, being the returned Messiah. His Holiness the Abuna told us at the conclusion of the discussion that the Bible can be interpreted that way. We had tea and honey with him.

Monday April 17, 10 a.m. The Mission visited Her Imperial Majesty's handicraft and technical school for boys and girls where we saw hand weaving of wool, cotton, workings in gold and silver, carpentry, joinery, cabinet-making and wood carving.

Monday 5.00 p.m. The Mission paid a visit to the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Minister welcomed the delegation and asked us to state the purpose of our mission. We told him to seek the

repatriation of black people to the continent of Afrika. He said that the Imperial Ethiopian Government would have to handle that.

Tuesday, April 18 was to be our audience with H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I, which was cancelled until we see more Government Ministers. We visited the Lions Den opposite the Imperial Palace instead which contained 21 lions. In the afternoon The Mission paid visits to their Excellencies the Minister of National Community Development. He welcomed the delegation warmly and said that Ethiopia had land for us. Mr. W. Blackwood wept while expressing his hopes to the Minister. The Minister of Commerce and Industry, he too welcomed the delegation; the Minister of Agriculture---the Minister, who was away in another province at the time. The Chief Educational Officer to the Ministry deputized and said that Ethiopia and Ethiopians eagerly await our coming. The Officer agreed with the Mission's purposes but said that the Imperial Government would have to work it out.

Wednesday April 19. The Mission visited the Co-operative Farm at Awasa, on the way we stopped at Shashamane, about 200 kilos from Addis; this is the land granted to the people of the Western Hemisphere who sided Ethiopia during the Italian occupation.

We met Mr. And Mrs. Piper, West Indians living there for 17 years. Mrs. Piper served us Enjera and Watt (Ethiopian National Dish) under a sycamore tree. They also operate a flour mill. We crossed the Awash River and had lunch at Lake Awasa Rest House.

Thursday April 20: Members of the Mission flew by Ethiopian Airlines Special Charter Flight to Jimma in the Province of Kaffa (where coffee originated). The dominant tribe there is the Wall-Galla; the soil is extremely rich and fertile; coffee grows wild there and streams traverse the land. We saw hippopotamus in one of the rivers; foodstuffs and fruits of all descriptions--both familiar and unfamiliar to us; fishes and cray fishes abound in numerous streams; mangoes are wild and plenty, also cattle, goat and sheep. We lunched at Hotel Ghion (Jimma) and flew back to Addis-Ababa.

Friday April 21, 10 a.m. The Mission was granted audience with H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I at the Imperial Palace, Addis-Ababa. We were introduced to H.I.M., by the Minister of the Imperial Guard. Emperor Haile Selassie I welcomed the delegation warmly. Speaking Amharic which was interpreted by the Minister of the Imperial Guard, H.I.M. told us that he knew the black people of the West and particularly Jamaica were blood brothers to the Ethiopians and he knew that slaves were sent from Ethiopia to Jamaica. He said we should send the right people. The Emperor said Ethiopia was large enough to hold all the people of Afrikan descent living outside Afrika and he would send a delegation to the West Indies. Dr. Leslie told H.I.M. that Jamaica had plenty of sugar cane factories making sugar and rum. H.I.M. replied that in Ethiopia there was a refinery making sugar but not rum. H.I.M. thanked the delegation and presented each of us with a gold medal.

All the rest of the delegation left His presence except the three Rastafarian Brethren (Bros. Fil, Mack, Planno, as we had presents for H.I.M.). Alvaranga presented H.I.M. with a wood-carved map of Afrika with a portrait of the Emperor on one side of the wooden case. The Emperor then spoke in English for the first time to us. He said, "That's Afrika. Is it from the Rastafari Brethren?" (That showed that he knew us before). We said "Yes". Brother Mack presented photographs of the Rastafari Brethrens in Jamaica. H.I.M. said again in English, "Photographs; thank you". Mack also gave H.I.M. a painting of Errol Flynn's island in Jamaica (i.e. Navy Island, off the mainland of Port Antonio). Brother Planno gave H.I.M. a woven scarf in red, gold and green. H.I.M. said "Is it you that wove it". He said "Yes". He said "Thank you again". We also gave H.I.M. a photograph of a widow and six children--her husband, a Rastafari Brethren, was shot and killed by the Police in Jamaica. H.I.M. asked us to who was taking care of them now. We told H.I.M. that we took the case to Jamaica's Premier but left the island before it was settled. The Emperor said that he would do what he could to help. We then took leave.

Friday Afternoon: The Mission drove by car to the Wonji sugar estate about 80 miles from Addis-Ababa. We again passed by Shashamane, also passed by Nazareth, 77 miles east of Addis-Ababa. At 8.00 p.m. Friday afternoon the Mission was invited to dinner with the Abuna Basilios at his residence. Bishops Theophilus and Phillipos were also present.

Saturday April 22: The Mission visited the Ministry of the Interior; the Minister welcomed the delegation and said that settlement in Ethiopia was all right for people of Afrikan descent. In the afternoon Archbishop Baslios again called the delegation to his residence where we had tea and honey wine. He then gave us all robes and said that he did not only give them to us as a gift but that we should all know ourselves to be Ethiopians. The Mission had lunch with Dr. and Mrs. David Talbot, West Indians residing there. Enjera and Watt were served.

Saturday 8.00 p.m. The Mission was invited to luncheon given by the Vice-President of the Imperial Patriotic Association, in our honour. We were also entertained with Ethiopian National songs and dances by boys and girls and the Ethiopian Police band.

Sunday April 23, 10:30 a.m. The Mission left Haile Selassie I Airport by Ethiopian Airlines for Lagos, Nigeria via Khartoum. Mr. Ayele-Worq Abebe was our guide, during the Mission's stay in Ethiopia.

## **Nigeria**

Sunday April 10:30 p.m. The Mission arrived by Ethiopian Airlines at Ikeja Airport, Nigeria. Mr. Babatunde Harper, of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other officials met us. The Mission spent two days at Ikeja Airport Hotel, before going to the Federal Palace Hotel in Lagos, the Capital.

Monday April 24: The Mission visited the Oba Adele (The Kings of Lagos). The Oba greeted us and said that West Indians coming to Afrikan would be returning to the land of their fathers. In the afternoon we visited the Yaba industrial estate.

Tuesday April 25: The Mission had discussions with the Hon. J. M. Johnson, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and Dr. Esin Esin, the Minister of State. They both welcomed the delegation warmly and Dr. Esin said that the Back-to-Afrika Movements would be like the Jewish Restoration to Israeli and repatriation would be taken up by the Federal Government. Dr. Esin also stated that Afrika could easily absorb all the three million people of the West Indies. "The people of the West are bound to come home, he said and Nigeria would have to alter her immigration laws to entertain immigrants.

Wednesday April 26: The Mission visited His Excellency the Governor General Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, at State House, Lagos. Dr. Zik welcomed the delegation and said that Nigeria would do what it could to resettle the people of Afrikan descent, scattered throughout the West. His Excellency also made mention of Marcus Garvey, who helped to inspire him. The Mission was also guest of Dr. Azikiwe at an ice show in Lagos.

Thursday April 27: The Mission visited the furniture factory at Onike Village, also the Defacto Bread Factory Surelere at Yabba. We drove around Ikoyi Village.

Friday April 28: The Mission had discussions with the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Immigration and Permanent Secretary.

Friday 1 p.m. A Luncheon party was held at the Federal Palace Hotel in our honour. Ministers of Government attended.

## **Ibadan, Western Nigeria**

Saturday April 29: The Mission drove by car to Ibadan from Lagos and was accommodated at Green Springs Hotel, 80 miles from Lagos. 10:00 a.m. The Mission called on the Head of Service and Chief Secretary of the Government in his office. Then met the Acting Premier of Ibadan, Oba C.D. Akran in the Premiers office. He spoke very favourably of repatriation for the black people in the West residing outside of Afrika. He said that the Federal Government would take up the matter. At 1:00 p.m. a luncheon was given by the Government in honour of the Mission. We met many West Indian residents

there. In the afternoon the Mission toured the University of Ibadan. 6:30 p.m. West Indian residents in Ibadan gave a cocktail party at the residence of the Solicitor General, a Jamaican birth citizen of Ibadan, Mr. Alexander, "Agodi".

Sunday April 30: We drove by car to Illora Farm, settlement, 50 miles from Ibadan. This is a co-operative farm, which the Government runs. There are about 50 boys on the farm, who will eventually be the owners within a period of 5 years. There are 13 such farms existing at Ibadan. 14 are now under Government's consideration.

### **Kaduna, Northern Nigeria**

Monday May 1, 9:00 a.m.: The Mission left Ibadan by air for Kaduna by Nigerian Airlines. We arrived at Kaduna Airport at 11:55 and stayed at the Catering House. We drove around Kaduna; we were met at the Airport by S.A.S. (S.D.) Premier Office.

Tuesday May 2: The Mission met the deputy Secretary to the Premier S.A.S. (S.D.) Premier's Office. Objects of the meeting were to discuss what our mission wanted and to consider the arranged programme. In the afternoon we visited the Legislature and the Kaduna Textile Plant, which employs over 1,600 workers. The cotton used in this factory is grown in Kaduna.

Wednesday May 3: The Mission drove by car to the city of Zaria about 60 miles from Kaduna. Zaria is an ancient city with a wall of stone and mud around it. We visited the Institute of Administration at Samuru; Zaria and Educational Centre. We saw mothers with babies attending classes there.

Thursday May 4: Departed from Kaduna Airport for Enugu.

### **Enugu, Eastern Nigeria**

Thursday May 4, 1:50 a.m.: The Mission arrived by Nigerian Airlines at Enugu. We stayed at the Catering Rest House. In the evening the Mission was invited to dinner by Dr. Michael Okapara, Premier of Eastern Nigeria at the Premier's Lodge. The Premier welcomed the delegation warmly and stated that his Government welcomed their Afrikan brothers from the West Indies particularly Jamaica and was very pleased indeed to see us all now look to Afrika as our home, for Afrika is the original home of all black people. Continuing Dr. Okapara said he must apologize for his ancestors who used to sell his brothers in slavery to America and the West Indies and other parts of the world but was glad to see that all is forgotten. Dr. Okapara further stated that the Ibo tribe has a Law whereby anyone who can trace his descent back to this tribe, will be immediately received into it. They would carry you from any part of the world and your land accordingly by parents possessions would be restored to you. Dr. Okapara finally said that Afrika welcomes all both skilled and unskilled.

Friday May 5: The Mission met the Town Clerk and Assistant, Also passed through the College of Technology. We visited the District of Obaja and Ngwo; we lunched at the Catering Rest House, Nsukka and visited the University of Nsukka.

Saturday May 6: The Mission visited the Premier Dr. Okapara in his office. In the afternoon the Mission was invited to dinner with Sir Francis Ibiam, Governor of Eastern Nigeria at Government House, Enugu. Sir Francis welcomed the delegation and said that the Federal Government would take up the matter of repatriation.

### **Ghana**

Monday May 8, 4:20 p.m.: The Mission arrived by Nigerian Airlines at Accra, Ghana. We stayed at the Ambassador Hotel. Government Officials met us at the Hotel.

Tuesday May 9: A press conference was cancelled until we met Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. 8:00 p.m. a reception was held in our honour at the Ambassador Hotel, where we met the House of Chiefs from

various states in Ghana. Among them was Nii Amoo Nakwah II Obtobulum Mensta oldest Chief of all the Chiefs in Ghana---92 years of age. He informed us of past history when slaves were leaving Ghana. Agreements were made between Portuguese and Dutch and the Chiefs to return these slaves within a given period of but they never did return. Seeing us now, he knew that we were some of those people. He said that the time had come for black people's return. He also prayed for us. We met two Rastafarians from Jamaica, now residing in Ghana at the party. One was Brother Jackie Payne, a compositor working at the Guinea Press, Accra. The other Brother, a machinist working in Osagyefo Builders Brigade.

Wednesday May 10: The Mission met the Osagyefo, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of the Republic of Ghana, at State House, Accra. Dr. Nkrumah welcomed the delegation warmly and said that this meeting is an historical one; historic from the point of view that many people have tried to bring Afrikans from the West Back home to the continent, but they have all failed. Marcus Garvey himself was sabotaged but our Mission could not be sabotaged now, because this was the opportune moments for negotiating resettlement. Continuing he said that Ghana has an area of over 100,000 square miles—population 7,000,000 which means that they had space. He said that he personally had no objection to this approach for repatriation; “Look upon yourselves as Afrikans and land was here for the asking.” Dr. Nkrumah set up a special committee to meet us the next day at the Ministry of Establishment.

Thursday May 11: The Mission met the special committee set up Osagyefo. The committee comprised of:

- (1) Dei Anang, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- (2) Sir Tisbu Darku, Chairman, Cocoa Marketing Board.
- (3) Enoch Okoh, Principal Private Secretary to the President
- (4) Nana Kobina Nkersia, IV, Ph.D., Paramount Chief of Essi Kadu, Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Ambassador Extra-Ordinary for the Ghana Government;
- (5) Hon. Tawia Admafio, Minister for Presidential Affairs.

Finally, we resolved with the Committee that the delegation return to Jamaica, make a comprehensive Memorandum and declaration of the category, numbers, etc. of settlers.

Thursday May 11: The Mission visited Tema Harbour, the home of the Black Star Line, 20 miles from Accra.

Friday May 12: Visited a botanical garden and rest house. We were given some seeds to suck, which made everything eaten after taste sweet.

Saturday May 13: The Mission visited the Museum at Accra.

Monday May 15: 11:59 p.m.: The Mission left Ghana for Liberia.

## **Liberia**

Tuesday May 16: The Mission arrived at Robertsfield Airport, Liberia by P.A.A. 1:00 a.m. We stayed at the Ducor Palace Hotel in Monrovia the Capital, 50 miles from Robertsfield. We drove through miles of Firestone rubber plantations on our way to the hotel.

Wednesday May 17: We met the Secretary of State in his office.

Thursday May 18: The Mission paid a visit to President Tubman at his office. He greeted the delegation warmly and said that Liberia ever since the Republic was founded, had existing immigration laws, which allowed for people of Afrikan descent from the West Indies and elsewhere to settle here. He

spoke highly of Marcus Garvey and his works. In the evening the Mission was invited to a Ball at the state house hall, Monrovia.

Friday May 19: The Mission paid a visit to President Tubman's private farm about 90 miles from Monrovia. He showed us his zoo which contained lions, leopards, elephants, ostrich, snakes, hippopotamus, deers, porcupines and other animals. He held a dinner at Coo Coo's Nest, a countryside restaurant in our honour. President Tubman asked the Rastafarian Brethren to bless the table. The brethren replied with the prayers, "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand unto God". During the course of the dinner the President asked for information concerning the Rastafarian Movement. We defined our spiritual conceptions to him. He finally said that Liberia was open to all peoples of Afrikan descent, whether they said Rastafari is God or not.

Sunday May 21, 2:05 p.m.: The Mission left Liberia by Air Liban for Freetown, Sierra Leone.

### **Sierra Leone**

Sunday May 21, 4:05 p.m.: The Mission arrived in Sierra Leone and was met at the Queen Elizabeth II Quay, Freetown, by representatives of Government.

Monday May 22: The Mission met the Prime Minister, Dr. Sir Milton Margai (an old man of 66 yrs with faculties of 25 years). He was filled with delight to see us and welcomed us warmly. The Prime Minister said that Sierra Leone was founded for the slaves emancipation in Britain, America and the West Indies and in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Britain bought a portion of land in Sierra Leone for the repatriation of slaves. Continuing the Prime Minister said that in 1178 over 200 black people were brought back from the West to Sierra Leone, and help to build the Capital of Sierra Leone, now called Freetown. He stated that his Government was young, having just got independence, so he would have to settle down.

Tuesday May 23: We visited Njala Agricultural Centre and training college. Pineapples were sold for 1d. per pound, grapefruits for 4d. per doz. We bought Palm wine along the way for 2d. per quart.

Wednesday May 24: We visited the Marampa iron ore mines and met with a Mission from the U.A.R. also touring the mines.

Friday May 26: The Mission was invited to the Premier's Residence where a party was held in honour of the U.A.R. and the Back-to-Afrika Mission. On Monday May 29, the Mission was scheduled to leave by air for Dakar, Senegal. The plane developed engine trouble and the departure was postponed. We stayed at Rest House.

Tuesday May 30, 9:30 a.m.: The Mission left by Air France for Dakar, Senegal. We stayed at the Hotel N'gor. We departed Dakar, for Lisbon. We spent three days in Lisbon, Portugal at the Avenida Palace Hotel.

June 2, Friday: The Mission left by Avianca Aircraft for Puerto Rico, via Santa Maria, Asores.

Saturday June 3, 7:30 a.m. The Mission arrived at San Juan, Puerto Rico. We stayed there until 12:30 p.m. and departed by B.W.I.A. for Palisadoes, Kingston, Jamaica and arrived at 2:45 p.m. at Palisadoes Airport. The Mission was met by Hon. William Seivright, Minister of Home Affairs and other Government Representatives, who welcomed the delegation back.

There was a tremendous welcome prepared for us by members of Back-to-Afrika Movements, including the Rastafarian Brethren, U.N.I.A., Ethiopian Worlds Federation and others. There were about 5,000 persons with banners, flags, singing and shouting with joy as the Mission Members landed in their robes.

## SUMMARY

### Fact Finding: Back-To-Afrika Mission

The Back-to-Afrika Mission, which recently concluded a two month fact-finding tour of five Afrikan States, found that the Mission's purpose of repatriation to Afrika, people of Afrikan descent, from Jamaica and elsewhere, was agreed upon by the government of all the Afrikan countries visited i.e. Ethiopia (one week), Nigeria (two weeks), Ghana (one week), Liberia (one week), Sierra Leone (one week).

The Afrikan Governments were willing to co-operate in resettling people of Afrikan descent within their ancestral borders. The courtesy and attention afforded the Mission by all Afrikan states were excellent.

Foodstuff prices were low in the markets and streets; prices at hotels were high. Food was plenty and in variety. Cattle, goats and sheep were plentiful throughout Afrika especially in Ethiopia. Land was controlled by the Chiefs in all the States except Ethiopia, where it is controlled by H.I.M. Every citizen is entitled to land in Ethiopia by Constitution (about 10 acres) and in some other States.

Roads are good in every State but traveling towards the interior, smooth surfaces lessen.

In Ethiopia we find the people extremely courteous and loving and look upon all black people as their brothers. H.I.M. is held in the highest esteem by all Ethiopians citizens. In one instance we gave some photographs to an Ethiopian man and woman. She refused to show him although he wanted to see them. He spoke to in their language and instantly she showed him the photograph. He turned to and said in English that he had asked her to show him in the name of H.I.M. This incident shows the spiritual conception of the people of Ethiopia towards their Emperor.

Our meeting with H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I is likened spiritually to the visit of the three wise men who journeyed from the West to the East to visit the Baby Jesus, bringing with them gold, frankincense and myrrh to offer H.I.M. When Herod heard of the new born King of Kings he gave orders to kill all the babies of the 3 years old and under.

When we presented our gifts to the Emperor before we could tell him who it was from, he said "Is it fro the Rastafari Brethren"? We told him "Yes". That Shows H.I.M. knows of the Rastafari Brethren. H.I.M. also gave each member of the Mission a gold medal for our work, fulfilling biblically, equality cometh for all. Only the Rases presented gifts to H.I.M. and the rest of the Mission left us in the palace, fulfilling the parable of the ten virgins—five had oil in them and five had none.

At the Church Residence of the Arch-Bishop Abuna Basilius, 10 of us were presented with Ethiopian National Robes, although the tailor had measured 11 of us previously, 1 white man—Mr. Iless, 1 brown man—Mr. Lake and 9 black men; fulfilling biblically the Ethiopian cannot change the colour of his neither can the leopard change his spots.

All the Afrikan Governments were willing to negotiate in resettling people in Afrika. In every state that we visited, the Rastafarian Brethren expressed to each Government, our conception of His Imperial Majesty, as the Messiah. In Ethiopia and in some of the other states, this conception was not disputed; only in Liberia was there any opposition.

The Rases also gave each Afrikan Government written documents with formulas on how we saw repatriation in the U.N.O.

The Ethiopian Government paid all the Mission's expense in Ethiopia.

In Sierra Leone, the Newspaper carried an article extracted from a London paper under the caption, “Incredible deportations planned for Jamaica’s fanatic” with photographs of the 3 Rastafarian under it. This was expressed by two Jamaican Government Officials, the paper said.

One of the Rases, Bro. Mortimer Planno presented H.H. the Abuna Basilios with a painting depicting H.I.M. in Psalm 2.

The climate in Ethiopia is the best throughout the world, comparing it to all other climates experienced during our tour.

*Filmore Alvaranga, Douglas Mack, Mortimer Planno*