

ABSTRACT

Norman Cameron, the 1921 Guyana Scholar, returned home from Cambridge University in 1926 with a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and, almost immediately, published locally The evolution of the Negro, Vol. I (1929), a historical work which established the "humanhood" of mediaeval Africans and unmasked long-standing Negro inferiority stereotypes. The evolution... had parallels in E.W.Blyden's pan-African writings, superseded J.J.Thomas' Froudacity (1889), and prefigured Basil Davidson's Old Africa rediscovered (1959).

A small Guyanese reading audience, an even smaller buying public, the absence of publishing houses, and the unfamiliar content of his work multiplied the risks of local publication. Yet Cameron made a profit on the radically-inclined venture.

However, his conservatism and acceptance of the Establishment asserted itself as early as 1931 when he joined the Anglican Church, and characterised his ideas during the succeeding four decades. His consequent non-identification with the masses (ex-

cept at an intellectual level) distinguished him from contemporaries like E.F. Fredericks of the Negro Progress Convention, H.N. Critchlow of the B.G. Labour Union, and the "Rev." Claude Newton Smith of the Church Army.

Even his plays (veiled political commentaries, particularly on Guyana) projected his 'establishmentarianism' in an era of radical colonial Guyanese politics.

His long-nourished conservatism and an abiding Black pride, which put him out of step with the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the predominantly East Indian People's Progressive Party (PPP) especially during 1963-64 and led to his non-identification with progressive intellectual contributors to New World (1964-66), permitted his overt uncritical appreciation (which stopped short of actual membership) of the People's National Congress (PNC), a predominantly Black 'socialist' party with scarred credibility. Indeed Cameron's political ideas (1963-74) were generally reactionary and platitudinous, and were no credit to the author of The evolution of the Negro. Cameron's writings reached their nadir in his post-Civil Service years (1963-74).

part 1 abstract ?