

DANIEL MILLUM

Daniel Millum is a librarian currently working as the Political Archives Project Officer at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and the Institute for the Study of the Americas. His project was intended to catalogue and promote the two Institutes' collections of political ephemera, and this paper is intended to help fulfil the latter objective.

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**THE COLLECTIONS OF CARIBBEAN POLITICAL EPHEMERA AT THE
INSTITUTE OF COMMONWEALTH STUDIES (ICS) AND THE INSTITUTE
FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAS (ISA)**

**Daniel Millum
Institute of Commonwealth Studies
Institute for the Study of the Americas**

The Commonwealth political ephemera collection was begun in 1960-1961, with material continuing to be collected up to the present day, and consists of over 13 000 items from more than sixty countries. The collections of ephemera built up by the Latin American Studies Library at ISA (in its previous incarnation as the library of the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS)) encompass around 5000 items from the region, the majority of which were originally collected by the now-defunct Contemporary Archive on Latin America (CALA).

This paper begins by describing the collections in more detail, obviously concentrating on the Caribbean holdings, before discussing the policies and processes that have shaped and continue to shape them from the original intention simply to place "special emphasis on primary material" (ICS 1961, 11) to the recent decision to consider them together as part of a greater whole. Evidence for these processes will be sought both in the library archives themselves (from the "data regarding the context of creation" (Thomassen 2001, 379)) and in the contents of the collection itself.

This evidence concerning the nature of these holdings will then be interrogated to ascertain to what degree they can be considered to be archival in the conventional sense of the word, and recent post-modern approaches to archival methodology which question the assumptions which lie behind archival practice and use will also be introduced. For instance, Canadian archivists Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook stress the need to understand "records and archives as dynamic technologies of rule which actually create the histories and social realities they ostensibly only describe" (Schwartz and Cook, 2002, 6). In a similar vein Verne Harris (2001), director of the South African History Archive, introduces the concept of the 'archival sliver', a metaphor for the limited and refracted view of history that archives give.

Ideas of how the acquisition processes and organisational policies of an archive help construct the context in which individual items are used as sources will then be applied to the analysis of individual items from the collection, augmented by reference to the theories both of other studies of ephemera and those of printing techniques and visual methodologies. Interpretations by archivists of the deconstructionist writings of Derrida will be introduced. Thus it is hoped to elucidate a method of approach to collections such as these wherein an appreciation of the archive as a whole feeds in to the analysis as historical source material of the items within it.

Interrogating the collection as a whole

The Caribbean political ephemera collection is divided into two discrete parts, with the materials from the Spanish-speaking countries held at the ISA and those from the English at ICOMM. It is possible to see from this initial system of ordering knowledge that the shape of the archive is both a product of academic trends and one of the means by which they are perpetuated or challenged.

The two sections not only refer to different countries, but are also organised differently and consist of publications from different types of organisation. The Caribbean material at ICOMM consists of around 1300 items originating from political parties, trades unions and pressure groups. These can be divided again into two types of record. Firstly, policy documents such as manifestos and policy statements, speeches and articles by prominent figures, printed resolutions, constitutions and members'

handbooks. Secondly, material produced for election campaigns, consisting of pamphlets, leaflets, posters, sample voting papers, badges, stickers and the like.

There is a particularly large collection of Guyanese material from the 1950s onwards, dominated by the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the People's National Congress (PNC), and significant trade union holdings from Trinidad and Tobago, most notably from the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union (OWTU). The majority of the items are from the larger countries in the region, but all the smaller ones are also represented, including those that are still dependencies of the United Kingdom. Indeed, where a country has had a particularly controversial political history (like Grenada) the holdings are commensurately larger. Although collecting has recently recommenced, the majority of materials date from the period between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, and the vast majority are in English.

Similarly, the Caribbean material held at ISA is predominantly in the language of the former European ruling power of the country concerned, whether that be Spanish in the case of the holdings from Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, or French with Haiti. The materials are grouped by country alone, and include statistical bulletins, government papers, major daily and weekly newspapers, business reports, publications from international agencies and banks, analytical current-affairs journals, trade union papers, development agency journals, press-cuttings from Europe and North America, publications from church organisations and political pamphlets. In this collection there is a much greater concentration of material from NGOs both domestic and international, and a commensurately reduced number of items from political parties and trades unions.

The development of the two archives must initially be traced separately, before the circumstances that led to their (virtual) conjoining can be described. The ICOMM Annual Reports first allude to this material in 1961, when they report that "a beginning has been made in building up a collection of documents on political parties in the Commonwealth ... Many of the parties approached have responded generously and it is hoped to expand the collection as quickly as possible" (ICS 1961, 11). That the acquisition of materials in a coherent fashion would not necessarily prove straightforward quickly became evident, especially with world events moving apace:

"As increasing numbers of Commonwealth countries become independent new problems are arising in obtaining material for the Library." (ICS 1961, 11)

It also becomes clear that a pro-active approach to gathering material was adopted at an early stage, as for instance in 1964 when "the Librarian spent six weeks in the West Indies collecting local publications and visiting libraries ... A special effort was made to acquire the documents of political parties, trade unions and other groups ... and the Institute is grateful for the generous response of many of these organisations in donating their publications." (ICS 1965, 12)

The reliance on the generosity of the organisations themselves is further stressed by former ICS librarian David Blake, stating that "experience has shown that the most productive means of acquisition is the begging letter which, although expensive in staff time and postage costs, achieves the most significant results." (Blake, 1987, 5)

The difficulties involved in building a collection of this kind at this time were discussed by Valerie Bloomfield (ICS librarian at the time) in a piece on 'African Ephemera' (1970) which is also applicable to the process of gathering Caribbean material. In it she stresses that such ephemera are unlikely to appear in a national bibliography, even if such a thing exists, and as a consequence the librarian must rely on "periodicals and newspapers, press digests, conference and seminar papers and word of mouth" (Bloomfield 1970, 225), the deduction of the existence of material from an event such as an election, and strong co-operation with the research worker actually in the country in question. It can at least be argued that one of the problems concerning Bloomfield with regard to African ephemera, the under-representation of vernacular materials, is less of a factor in the Caribbean where the majority of populations tended to use the former imperial language.

This ongoing process was also supplemented by donations, such as that by Professor David Lowenthal (ICS 1983, 8), and augmented as a result of grants like that from "the Social Science Research Council to compile an annotated bibliography on Commonwealth elections" (ICS 1970, 15), which allowed for the acquisition of not just materials but also fresh contacts for the library.

Another important factor influencing the eventual makeup of the Caribbean political ephemera collections was the overall library policy towards donations. The archives of

both C.L.R. James and Richard Hart both contained publications that could have been deemed ephemera, but in order to maintain the integrity of the donation in both cases these items were kept with the manuscript material, and hence were separate from the main bulk of the political holdings.

By the time the electronic cataloguing of the political ephemera was undertaken in 2003 this "co-ordinated programme" had long since lapsed, with material at best being collected on an ad-hoc basis and with items often being added to the collection solely on the grounds that they were physically too small for the main library sequence (Larby, 2004). The influence of staff continuity, or lack of it, on a collection such as this should not be underestimated given the importance of the maintenance of personal contacts often developed through informal, extra-institutional networks.

A start has been made in re-activating the collection, and priority is being given at present to the identification and downloading of material from the web sites of organisations for which there are already holdings. It must of course be borne in mind that as it is the larger, more sophisticated organisations which maintain accessible websites their materials are more likely to be collected.

There are thus a variety of factors shaping the development of the collection in question. The response of local groups, the changes brought by independence, the success of personal ephemera-gathering trips (although these were relatively rare), and the availability of funding for programmes such as the Commonwealth election bibliography all affected the question of which material was eventually deposited at the ICS, with the aforementioned project augmenting the collection only in those areas in which it already had strengths. Thus the pre-existence of collections at different London institutions was itself exerting an influence on how these collections later grew.

In addition, as the examples above show, the development of the collection was affected by the library's policy with regard to the integration of donations. A final important factor was revealed when the 2003 cataloguing project was begun, namely that without institutional support for an agreed collection policy such a policy could easily fall into abeyance and collecting cease.

Most of the information available concerning the provenance of the Caribbean political ephemera collections at the ISA comes from the administrative file which dealt with the acquisition of the Contemporary Archive on Latin America (CALA), from which the majority of the materials originate.

CALA described itself as being "fundamentally a comprehensive documentation centre, with a particularly wide range of periodical and documentary materials from and related to Latin America and the Caribbean" (CALA 1976, 1). Despite this claim though, there is evidence that its sympathies and priorities lay more with human rights and other pressure groups than would have been the case with a more conventional library: "It contains a good deal of material on human rights and indeed serves as an information source for human rights organisations and committees with a special interest in Latin America ... Official sponsors include the Catholic Institute for International Relations, Christian Aid, Oxfam, the United Nations Association and the World University Service." (Garling 1978, 27)

This is not to say that the typical collection policy of a library or archive is not also skewed, just that it is important to be aware of the way policy decisions and the sponsor pressures affected the build-up of the CALA collection. By 1979 funding problems were escalating: "While CALA benefited from a number of initial grants to get our work underway, it soon became clear that such support [could not] ... be relied on to continue" (CALA 1979, 2). These problems were to lead to closure in 1981, but in the meantime they necessitated a change in emphasis, and "the development of fully professional services" (CALA 1979, 2). Thus the financial situation affected not only whether it was able to collect, but what it was collecting as well, with more stress being placed on economic coverage.

In 1981 CALA closed, having agreed to disperse its materials amongst a variety of organisations. However, the failure of many of these institutions to honour their agreements meant that the majority of the collection came to the library at ILAS which was by this point "the only institution involved which had the will and means to save this material in time and house it" (Travis 1982, 1).

Thus the eventual development of a collection of Caribbean political ephemera at ILAS can be seen to have depended to a large degree on factors beyond the control of any

archivist. Financial pressures forced the closure of CALA, its collections were then dispersed according a variety of institutional agreements, and it was only due to the capacity of the Institute to organise a last-minute retrieval operation (basically involving a race against time with a van across London) that a large proportion of these materials ended up at the same place.

Since then the original collections have been augmented by fresh donations and the re-classifying of political ephemera within the main library stock, but with the amalgamation of new material it has been attempted to maintain the focus of the original CALA collection. Again, it is instructive in discovering the type of material added and the reason for its donation to consult the accompanying documentation. For example, the Peace Pledge Union passed on "a quantity of material from a defunct library specialising in Third World issues. Amongst items surplus ... to requirements is a small box [sic] papers and pamphlets, mainly dating from the 1970s and 1980s, loosely labelled Latin America." (Hetherington 1994, 1)

The factors described here in charting the evolution of the ISA Caribbean political ephemera collection, namely the way in which financial pressure and institutional circumstance can affect the location and organisation of materials, are of course present again in the decision to treat the Commonwealth and Latin American materials as part of one larger collection. At the time of the funding bid for the cataloguing and re-housing of these items the two libraries shared a librarian - had this not been the case it is likely that the Caribbean materials would have continued to be housed and described completely separately.

Having summarised the contents of and information about the collection the question of how far these holdings of political ephemera can be considered to constitute an archive now arises. In Theo Thomassen's (lecturer in archival science at the Netherlands Archiefschool) article 'A First Introduction to Archival Science' an archive is defined as consisting of records, regarded as constituting "information generated by coherent work processes" (Thomassen 2001, 374) and is itself considered to have "the function of documenting work processes"(Thomassen 2001, 377).

The archive has both a physical and a logical dimension, but it is the latter that is most important to maintaining archival quality. Records may be physically relocated, but

with the use of finding aids it is possible to maintain a coherent representation of the relationships between those records. In addition, it is vital for that information regarding the processes that created the records also be kept. Thus archival methodology stresses "respect for the structure (the principle of the original order) and the context of creation (the principle of provenance)." (Thomassen 2001, 383)

It is clear the collection here neither resembles the archive described as being generated by work processes nor demonstrates a respect for original order, though with regard to provenance a set of card files was kept for the Commonwealth materials recording all the approaches that were made to each organisation (Larby 2004). The materials in the collection are discrete items produced not to provide a record of the operations of an organisation but most frequently to appeal to the outside world on behalf of the organisations producing them. Their initial arrangement when deposited has been disregarded, and they have been arranged to fit in with the pre-existing order of the collection. This is particularly obvious when donations such as that highlighted above from the Peace Pledge Union are considered, with the new materials simply being split up according to the country they were concerned with, though it should be borne in mind that this is not unusual with collections of this kind (Tschabrun 2003, 309).

That this is a collection of individual units rather than an organically inter-related archive is made clear by the method chosen to catalogue them - as library items rather than using hierarchical archival descriptions. These factors ensure that the collection here is even more open to the criticisms of the model archive mentioned in the introduction, given that these are frequently concerned with debunking the perception of the archive as a neutral representation of a process and that it has been demonstrated that the acquisition and categorisation of the Caribbean political ephemera holdings have already been strongly affected by external factors and subsequent interventions in the organisation of the collection.

The main thrust of these arguments is that hitherto archivists have refused to recognise the importance of their role in shaping "historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity" (Schwartz and Cook 2002, 2) as a consequence of their tasks in the appraisal and selection of archives, description, preservation and use. The archive is a site on which power relations are contested (this idea is explored below in a discussion of the ideas of Verne Harris), and the assumption that this is not so means that the

consequences of these contestations are accepted as value-free collections of documents to be mined for historical truth. Schwartz and Cook reveal how the collection, weeding and reconstruction of medieval archives served to give prominence to certain figures and events at the expense of others, and how archives have excluded the role of women from society's collective memory (Schwartz and Cook 2002, 7).

It is easy to see how processes such as these may have taken place in the assembly of the collection under discussion here. The very decision to begin collecting political material assumes the value of this type of material produced by these kinds of organisation, as opposed to that produced by private individuals.

Secondly, there is the question of which organisations are privileged by the collection process. While the majority of material was collected by means of regular scrutiny of current press, press digest and journal sources (Larby 2004), it has been seen that some material was gathered as a consequence of personal contacts, which may have led to the arbitrary inclusion or exclusion of groups dependent upon a serendipitous meeting, and must certainly have favoured urban organisations over less accessible rural groups. Many smaller organisations would have had no means of supplying materials to or billing foreign countries (Larby 2004). The advantage of having a London-based office or branch should not be overlooked, as illustrated by the significant element of the Cuban holdings made up by items published by the Britain-Cuba Resource Centre.

Harris, an archivist working in South Africa, argues that archives both express and are instruments of prevailing relations of power. He suggests that while "characterisation of apartheid's archives system as being one controlled by whites and preserving services to whites is an over-simplification ... it captures nevertheless the essential character of the system." (Harris 2002, 74) Apartheid used its control over educational and cultural institutions, including the archive, to legitimise itself - records which reflected the viewpoint of the white state and served to support its claims to legitimacy would be privileged whilst "a vast simmering memory of resistance and struggle was forced away into informal spaces and the deeper reaches of the underground." (Harris 2002, 69)

The existence of two fundamentally different discourses in apartheid South Africa and the privileging of one by contemporary archivists inevitably shattered any illusions

their post-apartheid successors might have had as to the neutrality of the archive. However, Harris worries that while this has been accepted, South African archivists have not necessarily grasped his concept of the 'archival sliver'.

The 'archival sliver' acts as a metaphor for the idea that the preservation of all of a country's records would still only provide a sliver of a window onto the experience of that country, and that with the loss of records through deliberate and inadvertent destruction that sliver shrinks still further. Extending the metaphor, "the window is not only a medium through which light travels; it also reflects light, transposing images from 'this side' and disturbing images from the 'other side.'" (Harris 2002, 65)

Harris intends to show that many actors, including archivists selecting and ordering the records and the researchers using them to write history, affect the necessarily incomplete archive. Archival records are not a fixed mirror reflecting reality, but rather participate in the ongoing process of memory formation. As such, the concept of the archive must also be re-evaluated. It is not enough to replace one narrative with another, to substitute for archival practices complicit with the apartheid regime a set of practices that simply seek to correct this bias in the archival record. The very criteria for determining what constitutes a valid archival source will affect what kind of story of the experience of the country the archival record will support, for these criteria are part of the images transposed from 'this side' of the sliver.

Harris is particularly concerned about the neglect of oral history, both in terms of its exclusion from the archive and in terms of trying to force it to conform to the same structures applied to written sources, ignoring its essentially fluid nature (Harris 2002 84). This is a particularly appropriate in terms of the collection under consideration here - again, the use of the ephemera here as a source for the construction of knowledge privileges those groups and individuals who wrote, and who in general wrote in English, and downgrades the historical importance of those whose political activities were either conducted or reported and transmitted orally. Indeed, the maintenance of the oral tradition is seen by some Caribbean historians as a stemming from the fact that "the word in print during the colonial period embodied colonial perspectives or bureaucracy." (Habekost 1993, 71) From this point of view any political archive consisting solely of written documents appears extremely suspect.

Harris also stresses the need to be aware of the way in which 'records' pass into the archive and are interpreted as they pass out into histories, and this can be seen to resonate with the ideas of the historian David Scott, writing about recent analyses of Jamaican politics.

Scott is critical of the different teleological approaches to Jamaican political history, seeing liberalism, subaltern approaches and Marxism all as simply taking different points on the same terrain - whereas what he wants to do is question the terrain itself (Scott, 2003). Could it be that in our archive the predominance of items emanating from the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP) shows the archivist has bought into this terrain (namely the importance of the party political system in Jamaica) and believes that the topic is being covered in a neutral fashion by including parties which ostensibly oppose each other, while ignoring the fact that a more informative exploration of Jamaican politics might not include political parties at all? For Harris, the danger lies in "using our exhibitions, posters, pamphlets and so on to tell the story of ... the struggle against apartheid, or of nation building, or of transformation" (Harris 2002, 83) - that is, of drawing from them a meta-narrative and ignoring the sub-narratives they contain. For Scott the danger is of archives that are conditioned to receive and produce material which is already limited to a particular terrain.

The application of these ideas to the Caribbean political ephemera collection shows how the acquisition of material can be prejudiced in further, subtle ways beyond those inherent in the collection's failure to adhere to the conventions of the classical archive model.

Interrogating the collection at an item level

Discussing the collection as a whole and in terms of organisations raises a question as to what is assumed of the content of the items themselves. There is a danger that in looking for general patterns amongst the pamphlets these assumptions will mean that one simply finds what one is looking for, superimposing theories over a more complicated whole and ignoring those aspects of the material that appear not to support the argument that is being advocated. For example, it was assumed above which narratives will be represented by different pamphlets produced by the JLP and PNP.

As Ann Laura Stoler, a critic of this broad-brush approach, states, "Assuming we know these scripts ... diminishes our analytic possibilities. It rests too comfortably on predictable stories with familiar plots." (Stoler 2002, 100)

Stoler is concerned with the colonial archive, specifically the nineteenth and twentieth century archives of the Dutch authorities in the Indies, a state-produced collection of documents both recording and informing the administration of the colony. As such, this is a very different body of material to that which is being considered here.

However, the importance that she places on re-reading the archive "for its regularities, for its logic of recall, for its densities and distributions, for its consistencies of misinformation, omission and mistake - along the archival grain" (Stoler 2002, 100) can also be applied to the political ephemera. Rather than assuming what a pamphlet or poster represents it is necessary to at least acknowledge, if not challenge, those assumptions by turning the attention from the collection as a whole to individual items within it.

Bearing in mind that the remit of this paper is to interrogate the way in which the collection serves as a site for the construction of historical knowledge, these individual items will be considered in terms of the influence upon them of the archival practices discussed and critiqued above and in relation to ideas developed in previous studies of ephemera which will be detailed in a moment.

However, in keeping with the post-modern rethinking of the archive that has already been described, the approach to the individual pamphlets will be informed by some of the deconstructionist ideas which have recently been taken on board by some archival methodologists.

Brien Brothman, an American archivist working at the Rhode Island State Archives, has sought to make clearer to those working in this field the relevance of the ideas of French deconstructionist Jacques Derrida. According to Brothman's interpretation of Derrida, the concepts of deferral and difference argue firstly that meaning can only be conferred on a piece of writing by a subsequent reading and secondly that words have no intrinsic meaning, but that "meaning arises from the internal differentiations among a network of signs in a language system" (Brothman 1999, 71).

The combination of this ensures that the meaning of a text can never be fixed - the meaning is deferred awaiting a subsequent reading, and in the time that elapses before the text is read the network of signs will have shifted in their relations to each other, thus changing the meaning of the text.

Such changes of meaning are subtly evident if the pamphlet 'Castro's Tropical Gulag' (American Foundation for Resistance International, 1986) is considered. At the time of publication, during the final phases of the Cold War, the use of the word 'gulag' would have created a straightforward association in most reader's minds between the pamphlet's subject, Cuba's treatment of its prisoners, and the worst excesses of the Soviet Union. Read in 2005 the initial message is somewhat more confusing, as given the demise of the USSR and the current high profile of Guantanamo Bay the initial reaction to an item concerned with torture in Cuba is to assume that it involves hooded Muslims and Koran-flushing marines. Thus the pamphlet reads differently depending upon whether the reader comes to it through the prism of cold-war thinking or from the modern standpoint surrounded by the debate on the 'war on terror'.

It is important to remember in approaching texts in this way the dangers of misrepresenting Derrida's ideas, as it is obvious that even in writing about meaning assumptions are being made that are themselves open to deconstruction. In particular, the pamphlet was still being discussed within its historical framework, something that radical deconstructionists would take issue with, arguing that all historical sources are texts and that there are no philosophical grounds for privileging a reading of the above pamphlet in the context of the history of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe over a reading of it in relation to a book on gardening.

Even archivists sympathetic to ideas of deconstruction find that "it is still necessary to draw the line between those who regard the record as having no particular distinctive characteristics from other texts, and those who recognise its 'recordness'" (Tyacke 2001, 24). In other words, the methods used by archivists in evaluating materials for inclusion in the archive mean that those records can be relied on by historians to be of a different nature to sources whose provenance and original organisation is less clear.

This quality of 'recordness' will be borne in mind when applying deconstructionist ideas to the pamphlets of the ICS collection - despite the differences outlined above between

this and the classic archive there is still sufficient information about the origins of the materials and sufficient rationale behind their arrangement for it to be counter-intuitive to treat them as a series of un-related items adrift from the circumstances of their historical creation.

Further ideas relevant to the following pamphlet analysis come from pieces on other political ephemera collections. Laura Lyons (2003) analyses Irish Republican posters, Susan Tschabrun (2003) is interested in the experience of managing a collection of posters while Joanna Lewis (2000) writes about the production of pamphlets during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. Approaches taken by scholars concerned with different types of ephemeral material, including Helen Pierce's (2004) work on graphic satire in seventeenth century England, will also be introduced. In addition Alison McClean-Cameron's thesis (2000) on the Mexican printing house El Taller de Grafica Popular and Gillian Rose's introduction to the critique of visual images (2001) provide perspectives applicable to the items here.

The following pamphlets have been selected simply on the basis that they would prove illuminating in what they revealed of themselves and of their relations to other materials in the archive.

'Federation and Self-government Now or Colonialism and Slavery Forever' (fig.1) was produced by the London Branch of the Caribbean Labour Congress and is catalogued amongst the sequence of Barbadian Trade Union materials (TU.BB.CLC.3), incidentally providing an example of the arbitrary nature of the arrangement of the archive - it appears that the CLC materials have been placed here owing to their connection with a conference held in Barbados.

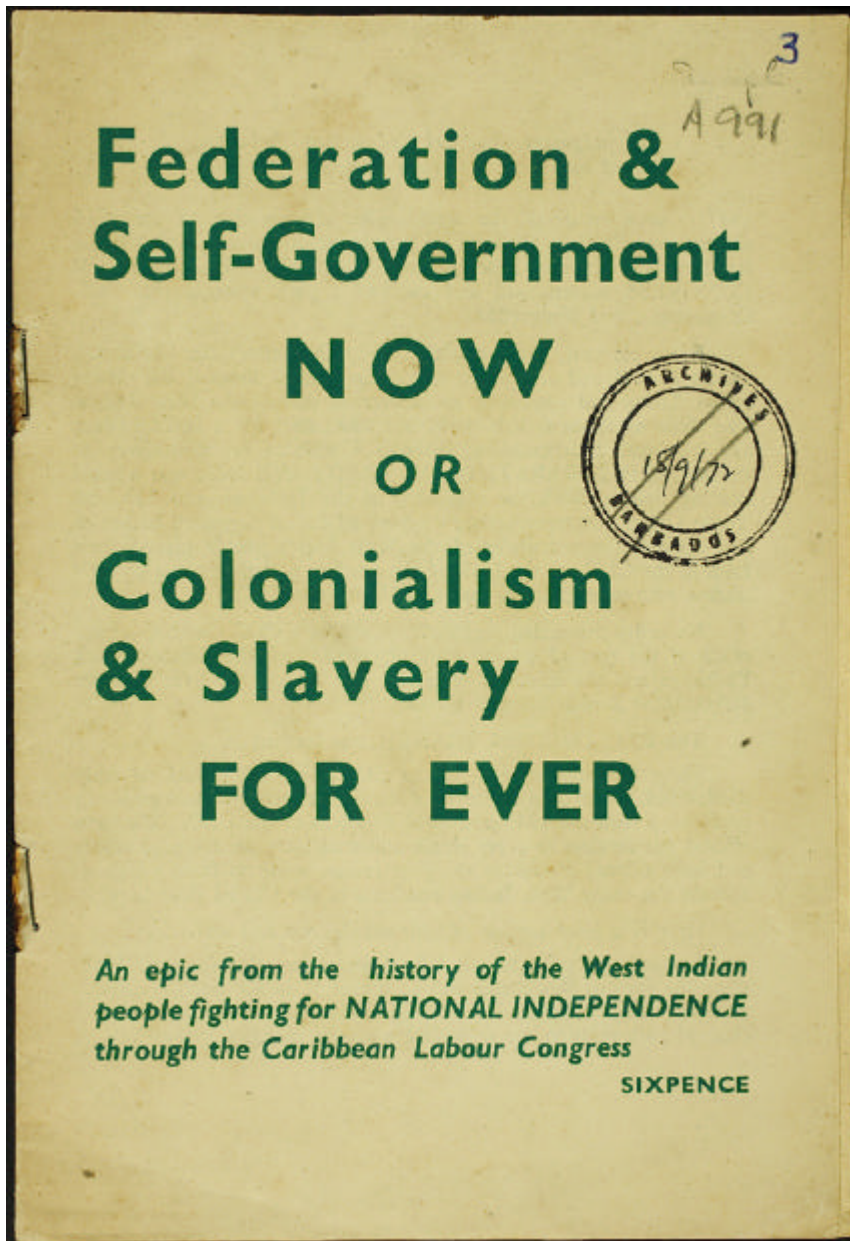


fig 1.

This eleven-page pamphlet retailed at six pence and reported on the fallout of the split between the CLC and its London Branch. The former "was a broad association of Labour parties and trade union movements in the area" (Howe 1993, 210) that was agreed on its commitment to an independent federation of the West Indies but divided over the degree to which it was also committed to radical social change.

The London branch was significantly more radical than its parent, and hence when the 1949 split in the international trade union movement occurred between the communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the new anti-communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and it took the side of the

WFTU in defiance of the stance of the CLC proper, it gave the latter the opportunity to expel the branch from the organisation.

The pamphlet refers throughout to CLC archival evidence - internal telegrams, letters and the like. Were it to have been kept as part of the CLC archive, or the archive of the London branch, it would have been in context and it would have been relatively straightforward to decipher at least its basic message. As it is, without outside historical sources (in this case Howe) it is very difficult to unpick the web of accusations and counter-accusations.

Lewis, in her analysis of Kenyan pamphlets, writes that they were intended "to influence or even to create a constituency of political action; to disseminate 'information'; and to help propagate ... official propaganda" (Lewis 2000, 222). The CLC document very much fits this categorisation, being in essence a polemic aiming to provide one side of the story of the split. Its audience is likely to have been limited to London members, given that it appears unlikely that many members of the general public would pay sixpence for the privilege of reading the obscure details of an internal party dispute.

Lyons is interested in the "timeliness" of ephemera - the way in which it is written without regard for history and hence can provide detail that is later omitted as irrelevant from the main historical narrative (Lyons, 2003). This pamphlet could only appear at this particular time, and provides a snapshot of an organisation in flux both internally and in terms of its relations with external bodies (the WFTU and the ICFTU).

Another approach that can be taken to the item concerns its visual style, along the lines of McClean-Cameron's treatment of Mexican political printmaking (2000). The very lack of illustrations and utilitarian typeface of the CLC pamphlet could be seen to be an a deliberate decision to ensure that "the form of the work is pre-determined by and subservient to the nature of its content, didactic imperatives taking precedent over those of aesthetics" (Maclean-Cameron 2000, 18) - or more probably it reflects limited technology and conditions of post-war austerity.

A very different example of the pamphlet form is 'Man of Destiny' (fig. 2) from the People's National Party (PNP) of Jamaica. This eight-page comic strip tells the life

story of Norman Manley, founder of the PNP, up to the eve of the April 1962 elections which prefigured the achievement of independence in August of that year. It could probably most accurately be termed a hagiography, given that it does not just attempt to secure a vote for Manley in the aforementioned elections but also paints him as having been from childhood Jamaica's 'Man of Destiny'.



fig. 2

It is interesting to compare this treatment of Manley senior by his own party with the no-holds barred demonisation of his son by the rival Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) in items from the same collection, most notably in a pamphlet entitled 'Judas is thy name, lying is thy game!' produced by Young Jamaica, the youth wing of the JLP.

However, the most unique feature of this item is its full colour comic-book format, whose images fit Tschabrun's view that with political ephemera artists are "constantly recycling, re-interpreting and transforming a large but restricted body of icons and images" (2003, 315). Thus there are classic scenes of war heroes, schools, hospitals,

farmers, Manley meeting Kennedy and the like but in the unfamiliar setting of a boys-own style comic strip.

It could be argued that the mixture of the comic format with the historical detail and portentous narrative fits with Pierce's (2004) ideas of ephemera breaking down the barriers between high and low culture. Indeed, with the advent of mass politics is this not exactly what the politician must do - appeal simultaneously to different classes (at least until the recent development of targeting messages at particular groups of voters) - hence the disparity exhibited here between form and content.

Rose is interested in "the ways social subjectivities are pictured or made invisible in a range of media, and how these processes are embedded in power relations" (?). In looking at this item it is possible on a very basic level to consider how women are portrayed - mother, wife, nurse (and voter, which is slightly different) - in comparison to the endless images of the heroic Manley and other statesmen.

Yet while there may be validity in this type of approach to the pamphlet as a source of historical knowledge it would have to be put on a more sound methodological basis before it could be hoped to draw any meaningful conclusions - simply reading the images with the traditional feminist critique already formed is in a sense begging the question.

'Buy and Eat More Local : Fiesta 12-13-14 1963' (fig. 3) was produced by the People's National Movement (PNM) of Trinidad on the occasion of the Buy and Eat Local Fiesta of the PNM Women's League in 1963, which occurred around the first anniversary of independence. Costing 25 cents, this illustrated programme contains PNM-authored political articles as well as advertisements and recipes. The theme is the idea that buying local is one of the major ways in which Trinidadians can progress towards 'economic' independence - and the programme also provides a platform for the advertisements of Trinidadian companies.



fig.3

The introduction to this item shows how the ideas of deferment and difference detailed above can be particularly useful in the analysis of ephemera. Trinidad Prime Minister and PNM leader Eric Williams states here that "the Law, both written and unwritten, of our economic development in the age of Independence must be an unequivocal reversal of the colonial tradition. Stated simply, it is this: we must produce (as far as feasible) what we consume and we must consume (as far as possible) what we produce" (PNM 1963, [5]).

At the time, this would have been accepted truth to many 1960s development economists, and generally a mainstream view to hold and express. In the age of globalisation, unchecked capital flows and strict IMF prescriptions regarding the limits of state intervention in the economy this introduction may read like an article of faith, outmoded and quaint.

Thus this difference in the reader's perception of the meaning of the text over time shapes the whole way in which the pamphlet is viewed - the modern reader must be

aware that his perception of it as a historical artefact (heightened by the anachronistic phrases of the introduction) is very different to the way in which it would have read to the contemporary Trinidadian.

In terms of Lewis's (2000) pamphlet analysis one of the main functions the PNM pamphlet fulfils is to disseminate information. Here the information is both moral (it's better for the country if you buy local) and practical (here are ways in which you can buy local and recipes for using local produce). However, the item is both informative and promotional, in that while it contains the above information it is also clearly an advert for the PNM (showing them to be a concerned local party) and full of advertisements for local companies who presumably care about the 'buy local' campaign precisely as far as it increases their sales.

Lyons' study of Irish Republican ephemera considers the way in which such information is supplied - in one of her examples "the group insists that this history and current events demand not only analysis but also action - and so the imperative, 'LOBBY YOUR MP'." (Lyons 2003, 409) This use of the imperative can be seen in the item under consideration here, where the imprecation is of course to 'BUY MORE LOCAL'.

Also applicable with regard to this pamphlet is Tschabrun's (2003) argument that one of the most important aspects of this type of material is that they often represent the only report of a particular happening. An event like this is likely to have slipped out of the mainstream narratives of history, and it is only through the use of ephemera such as this that it can be recuperated and possibly alter our perspective of contemporary aspirations and policy in Trinidad and Tobago in the early years of independence.

The final item under consideration differs from the previous three not just in the area covered, Cuba as opposed to the formerly British Caribbean, or its date of publication in the mid-1980s, but also with regard to its authoring body and purpose. Entitled 'Castro's Tropical Gulag : the Tribunal on Cuba, Paris, April 1986' (fig. 4) and catalogued with the rest of the Cuban ephemera, this unpriced eleven page pamphlet was published by the American Foundation for Resistance International and concerns an inquiry into human rights abuses in Cuba sponsored by both Resistance International and the Coalition of Committees for the Rights of Man in Cuba.

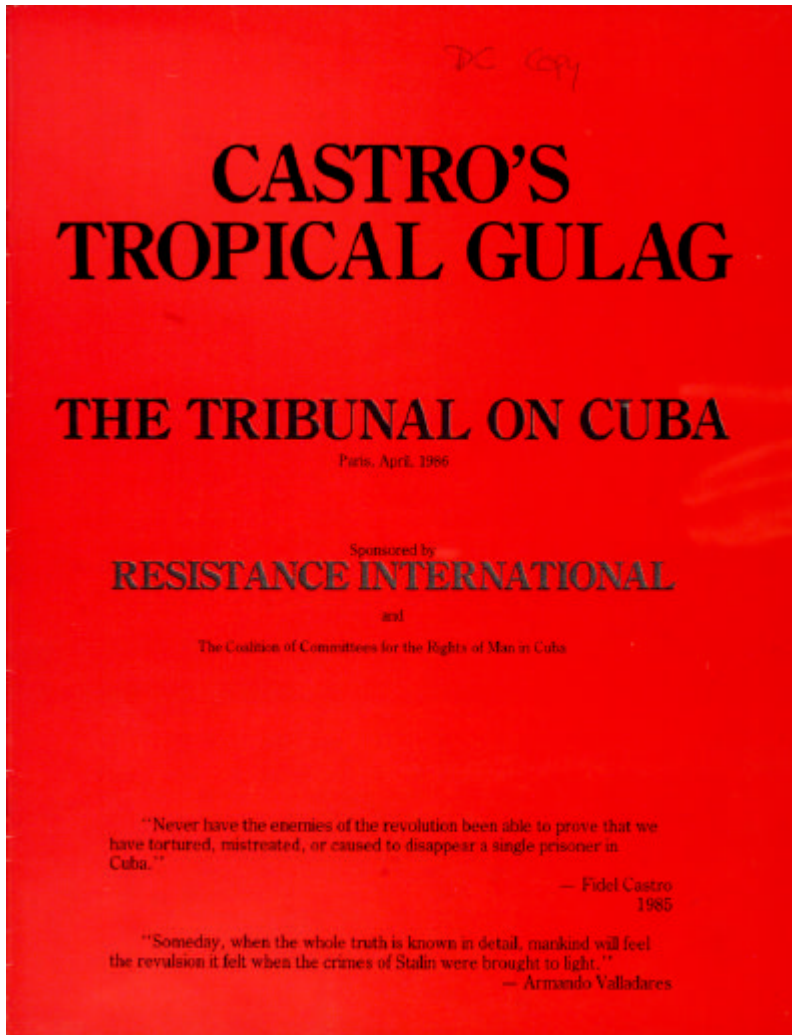


fig 4.

It features testimonies from former Cuban prisoners alleging torture and other human rights violations in Cuba's jails. The tribunal at which these were delivered was set up for propaganda purposes rather than as having any jurisdiction over those being indicted in Cuba, bearing similarities to the Bertrand Russell Tribunals which were concerned with human rights abuses in Latin America. The main sponsor of the event, Resistance International, was founded in 1984 for the purpose of investigating the humanitarian situation in 'totalitarian' countries, and benefited substantially throughout the 1980s from grants from prominent right-wing charities such as the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Inc. (Levine 2005).

Filed amongst the other Cuban materials, largely state-produced or from pro-Cuban NGOs, this pamphlet comes as a bit of a shock given its very different stance. In a different archival setting - alongside other publications by Resistance International, or

other materials concerned with human rights abuses in communist countries the effect would be entirely different.

In a sense this highlights one of the main arguments against considering the archive a neutral repository of historical materials. There was, as discussed previously, a clear bias at CALA towards collecting materials that were considered to run against the archival grain, or prevailing mainstream media narratives. The fact that this item seems to stand out so is an indication of the degree to which this policy was pursued, for it was only added to the collection following its transfer to ILAS, when the policy with regard to the inclusion of material had become somewhat broader.

It is also interesting with regard to this item to consider Lyons' (2003, 414) idea of the use of 'inversion' in political propaganda. She was concerned with the way republican texts turned the negative descriptions of Irish nationalists into critiques of the British state, but there seems to be a more subtle process occurring here.

This pamphlet takes a form most commonly seen in publications by the likes of Latin Americas Watch, which are concerned with human rights abuses under regimes receiving United States support, and funding and applies this to a regime opposed to the US. Thus those that "still harbour the delusion that Castro is some kind of romantic revolutionary and that his version of Communism is less repressive and less brutal than the Soviet version" (*Resistance International*, 1986, [1]) are confronted with the 'evidence' that Cuba is committing the same human rights violations that they deplore when they occur in pro-Western countries.

However, it is instructive what the pamphlet does not show. The usual images which occur in human rights publications of torture and murder victims are replaced by pictures of jurors and of witnesses testifying. This is a way of looking at pamphlets that takes Roses's (2001) or Sigel's (2000) ideas of the way images can be read using discourse analysis and again inverts it, wondering about the intention behind and the effect of the fact that certain images are absent.

In conclusion, it can be seen from the above that whilst there is validity in approaching these items using concepts of visual and textual analysis this appears to yield most value when conjoined with an appreciation of the historical context in which the items themselves were produced. Similarly in the discussion of the Caribbean ephemera as a whole, whilst appreciating the value of approaches such as those of Schwartz and Cook and Harris it is also essential to have gathered as much background information as possible on the actual motives and policies behind the development of the collection in order to avoid "readings of the archive based on what we take to be evidence and what we expect to find." (Stoler 2002, 100)

While the Caribbean political ephemera collections are substantially removed from the archive as traditionally defined, theories which warn of the dangers of treating the archive as a 'neutral' source have been proven applicable. These theoretical approaches may also be applied to individual items in the collection. That such approaches require methodological refining is without doubt. Yet it is to be hoped that any researcher seeking to use the collection will be more aware of the way in which its background and organisation can affect approaches to and perceptions of the potential 'sources of historical knowledge' that lie within it.

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