anti-government groups of rebels. If then the western countries now decided to withdraw all their aid because the Tutsi withhold it from the Hutu, which would happen sooner, the arrival in force of the red peril, or a dramatic change in Tutsi policy? In view of Mobutu's recent visit to Peking and the improvement in relations between Zaire and China, the western powers might well conclude that now was the moment to test their assumption in Burundi about the dangers of China's expansionist designs.

Irenaeus Leonard Alexander 1932-1972

by Ian Hislop, O.P.

It is trite to say that anniversaries stir the memory but it is true enough. As I write this down I am remembering a young Dominican who died a year ago this July. His death was not only a deeply felt personal loss, for it was something more in that it challenged us with the problem of his unfinished work and involved us directly and intimately in a conflict of which we had previously only been spectators. It was—and is—a whole situation we had not understood till he came to live our life with us.

It might at first seem odd to select this one man's history out of so much that has happened to the Province in the last few years. Disasters and desolation, unparalleled since the period of the French Revolution, that laid us waste with a real death of God: this has been met with courage and constancy by the old and in a spirit of dutiful endurance by many of the elderly. The turmoil of renewal and the tensions created by change conflicting with ancient customs has led to a new experience of the role—not always pleasant—of discussion, a development that has associated itself with or sprung from the generous energy of the young determined to recreate the common life and rediscover a style of worship suited to the needs of today. After a spasm of rejection, almost anarchic in character, there has been in the studium a return to the tradition, even the text of St Thomas, purged of the trivialities of the manualists. All in embryo, all signs of hope and all associated with men loyal to their vocation as preachers. Why, then, pick on this one man when there obviously are so many others? Why this particular one, when we live with all our dead, having them in constant and loving memory—some well known to the public, others known only to their brethren? It would

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not be enough to say that he was an individual, with clearly defined gifts; many of us are individuals; far too many, some think. We have never lacked charismatic figures who, in the freedom the Order gives as one of her great gifts, do their thing to the glory of God and frequently to the confusion of their superiors. Certainly there is no lack of such men, so much so that something is always on the boil. Why, then, him? I pick him out because he shared in all these things, because I loved him and because he was *black*.

What a thing to write: that a man, a unique human being, with all his sensitivity, capacities and gifts; his zest for living; his gift of friendship; his eloquence; his quirks and oddities, is picked out because he was a different colour—a Negro. What a world it reveals in me—narrow, self-regarding and colonialist; what corruption has injected our society that this should be even noticed. How much I learn, unlearn and still must learn from that small group of black men, of whom Irenaeus was the trail breaker, who are our brothers in St Dominic. By their presence they have taught us a deeper and wider sense of our humanity and cherished the desolate souls of the conqueror with a compassion that springs from freedom found through suffering.

What I write can only be superficial and fragmentary; a few hints from a life that was rich, complex and tortured. He was born and educated in Grenada in the Windward Islands, which some will remember as the birth place of the mother of Malcolm X (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Penguin Books, 1968, p. 80). Grenada was then still a colony, the island—as is the case in all West Indian islands—blighted by its sterile history. The first peoples, Amerindians, Caribs in the case of Grenada, were annihilated and the new European owners stocked—it is the right word—their plantations with African slaves. They were property, things; the cheap and expendable labour of a highly capitalized economy. Controlled by methods that make sickening reading, they served a tiny minority whose main aim was to amass enough wealth to escape from the islands. Everything depended on outside markets, all major policy decisions were taken by the foreign owners, and the practice and control of the local government was confined to the major property owners. Something persisted, half-remembered customs and a whole style of life, despised but continuous with Africa. With the decline of the plantocracy there came emancipation and gradual economic decay; apart from the work of the peasants, stagnation and political torpor. There were disputes and controversies, but they simply reflected disagreements imported from Europe. The people were, so said the old missionaries, so polite, always so obedient and so cheerful; loveable children, loyal to those priests who had attempted to teach them. This was the world of Sambo and Uncle Tom, the world about which there was much sentimental writing but which remained the exploited world.

They were, as the 17th century source said, 'the strength and sinews of the Western world'; controlled by whips and hunger, their labour was our wealth (even the wealth of Mr Gladstone). Under the smile was rage. 'The docility of the negro slave is a myth', wrote Eric Williams. And Stokely Carmichael—also born in the West Indies—adds: 'There has been virtually no institution of negro life, from the church to the blues, which has not had a fundamental preoccupation with freedom'. Throughout the whole history of slavery conspiracies and rebellions abounded, particularly in Jamaica, and there has always been a bitter though often undefined sense of resentment.

'My grandfather is dying, Hurrah! Little by little the old negritude is turning into a corpse. There's no denying it; he was a good nigger. The White say he was a good nigger, a really good nigger; a really good nigger, his good master's good negro. And I say Hurrah.' So wrote Aime Césaire, the black West Indian from Martinique, in 1939. (A. Césaire, *Return to my native land,* Penguin Poets, 1969.) As a little boy Irenaeus did not feel this, but as a youth he did. It was a society, and in many ways it still is, in which wealth, status and power is equated with being light or white, and colour is regarded as having a value according to the hue. As was shown by another black West Indian, Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), white skin is equated with power, status and wealth, and hence with superiority. Blackness is, then, not only a symbol of inferiority, of rejection, but is defined in terms of inferiority and deprivation by the economic and social structures.

In an area like the Caribbean this expresses itself in tensions—even in world-denying movements like Ras Tafari in Jamaica—that formulate the deep feelings of self-doubt and confusion among the blacks. It is difficult for a white man to appreciate this, and many have not even tried. Certainly Irenaeus felt it; in some ways it determined his life. Here, however, it is best to listen to what black men say. Perhaps it is a little misleading to listen to French-speaking voices. Irenaeus was very English in his outlook, not least in his view of the French. The French-speaking West Indian uses language much more precisely than the English speaker and here too, in spite of the strong influence of France in Grenada, it must be granted that Irenaeus belonged much more to the Bible-impregnated culture of the English West Indies than he showed the Cartesian outlook of the French. Still, Fanon does put it well, and he was one of the few West Indian psychologists to write on the subject: 'The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialism is beyond question.' (*Black Skin, White Mask,* Paladin Books, 1970, p. 13.)

The tension is felt acutely by the educated, the new middle class that has recently arisen—perhaps they do not deserve all the bitter

things Fanon and Naipaul have written of them and it might be better to say that it is the educated Negro who has most clearly expressed his awareness of his predicament. For, of course, the member of the Negro proletariat also feels the tension. A very slight acquaintance with him will prove that. He finds himself defined by his colour in a society he does not control. This definition according to colour varies from area to area. The French, the English, the Spanish and the Americans have each, characteristically, drawn the line or placed the bar according to different rules. But what they all share is the determination to maintain the division (cf Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery. A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life,* New York, 1963). Of course, the way in which the bar was defined shaped the institutions that maintained it, from the slave codes to marriage customs. And each group tended to be shocked by the behaviour of the others, though most agreed that the Dutch were the most cruel. Père Labat, a Dominican, who was a kindly master to his slaves but who was the bland spectator of savage punishments, was mildly shocked by the way the English dealt with their slaves. 'They beat them,' he writes, 'without mercy, for the least fault, and appear to care far less for the life of a Negro than for a horse'. This was on his visit to Barbados in 1700. But he adds that we must be careful before blaming the inhabitants of an island for the punishments they inflict for (and here speaks the patriot) the slaves are always ready to revolt even on the French islands, where they are treated more gently. (*The Memoirs of Père Labat,* translated by J. Eaden, London, 1931, pp. 126-8.) The differences mean that one must be careful in arguing from data drawn from one area to clarify the position in another, though one can be confident that there is common ground when general attitudes are considered. The subject has many ramifications and it affects West Indians, as it affected Irenaeus, at almost every level of their experience.

One of the ways in which the division emerges is seen in West Indian writing in the contrast presented between the cold intellectuality of the West and a direct or felt apprehension of life which is held to be more properly West Indian. In his poetry Derek Walcott, a West Indian from St Lucia, contrasts the 'custom and gods that are not born again' with the 'English tongue I love'. Many West Indians say that in times of stress they find that they cannot express themselves in dialect and patois and find themselves without a language suitable for the situation, with all the frustration that involves. There is a real dilemma here. Either dialect or frustration and/or alienation. At a deeper level it is found in the role of the West Indian male—emasculated of responsibility in a matriarch-dominated group within a society essentially ruled by patriarchal values. At the level of the school there is the struggle carried on by teachers and ambitious parents against dialect. The rejection of the

talk that reveals the world of folk culture and even the creative world of myth (true in the sense that it corresponds to what is thought and, above all, felt): with this is contrasted educated talk, the talk necessary for survival in a sophisticated world, but formal, rhetorical, often inflated and pompous, basically non-emotional talk. One of course has to be careful not to overdo the contrast. The romantic European, immersed in his own problems, often projects a mystical content into folk behaviour that has more of the character of a picnic than of divine rebirth. What is of interest here is the contrast between what is natural and dialect and what is educated and foreign. Of a black man in Martinique who speaks good French they say, 'He speaks like a white man'. The same division appears in behaviour, particularly in matters of marriage customs. There is a contrast between 'lower' and African ways of life and 'better', almost Victorian, respectability, that gives life a double focus. And always the division is associated with the colour line.

'(Niggers-are-all-the-same, I tell you they-have-every-conceivable-vice-every-conceivable-vice, I tell you that nigger-smell-makes-the-cane-grow, like the old saying beat-a-nigger-and-you-feed-a-nigger)' (Césaire, op. cit., p. 64). How does he escape? He tries to pass as white, he marries light, he straightens his hair (with some pain), he lightens his skin. If you don't believe this just look at the advertisement pages of *Ebony,* the American magazine. He practices magic, he searches for refuge in that exhausted Africa beyond all suffering. For all this is the imposition of history, the heritage of the unspeakable middle passage by which a whole people were uprooted for the profit of others and dumped in a vast concentration camp—for that is what the plantations were. The whole system—the trade, the slave gang, the policy of segregation and breeding—was the product of the greedy hunger of the white world for cheap labour, and in this system black became a symbol of evil and ugliness, married to self-distrust, insecurity and dependance. No longer could it be said 'black and beautiful' no longer would artists paint one of the Kings round the infant Christ as a black man, no longer would Christians invoke St Maurice of Africa or St Moses the Black; it was the colour of slaves. Everyone was corrupted—the dignity of the blacks was destroyed, the whites lost their humanity. Even in the missionary literature of the 19th century, when at last the churches awoke in the Anglo-Saxon world to the situation they had created, the old attitude persisted. An old Dominican, well known in his day as a spiritual writer, wrote in 1911 from Grenada: 'A vast proportion of the folk are of the black Negro type: some very pronounced, like regular Africans, others, brownies. . . . The scenery here is quite beautiful, and is a constant compensation for the large proportion of the Negro type.' (G. M. Anthony, *Father Reginald Buckler, 1840-1927*, London, 1927, p. 124.) This goes deeper than mere culture shock. It is on the brink

of invoking those primitive fears associated with the image of colour used so skilfully by Mr Powell in his 1968 speeches and which appear, much more crudely, in the works of Thomas Carlyle and J. A. Froude. At its worst it was dominant in the thinking of those very distinguished men who defended Governor Eyre's savage and frequently illegal reprisals after Morant Bay (1865), which included 450 executions. Eyre was not a bad man; simply a frightened one who reacted according to a stereotype.

In the whole long history—from the slave coast to San Domingo, from Morant Bay to Mozambique—there is the counter movement of protest. The black man does not in his soul accept. He is—he is compelled to be—a man of rage, a primitive, for (to reverse George Lamming's phrase) he is a colonial by education but a peasant by birth. His roots are in the land and it is there he rediscovers himself. It is not very much, but it is a beginning; he belongs in the world of the calypso, the steel band and the dance . . . 'Poopa, da was a fête'. It was from this world, far more than from the middle classes, that the dynamism of the movement that erupted in the labour riots of 1938 came. In the English-speaking West Indies its herald was Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) proclaiming 'The Ethiopian cannot change his skin and we shall not . . . The entire Negro race must be emancipated . . . We make no compromise'. He called for the return to Africa, a call interpreted variously by his followers—spiritually, mythically and physically. It is a world in which the black can say, in the words of Martin Luther King: 'I am somebody, I am a person, I am a man with dignity and honour'. That is why, almost in ecstasy, he shouts 'Black is beautiful'. It is the slogan of release and freedom.

I think when Irenaeus came to us in 1955 he assumed two things: first, that he was British, and secondly, that the difficulties he had encountered as a youth would be transcended in a religious order. He was wrong on both counts. About being British he was speedily disenchanted. In spite of the fact that his formal education—text books and all—had been almost absurdly English, he discovered that a black man just does not belong. Whether the situation in this country is dynamic or gradually hardening on the American pattern is here beside the point, for he came into a society in which 'there is racial discrimination varying in extent from the massive to the substantial . . . no doubt that the major component in the discrimination is colour' (W. W. Daniel, *Racial Discrimination in England* based on P. E. P. Report, Penguin Books, 1968, p. 209). Somewhere from the recesses of his unconscious the white man produces a picture of the Negro that accounts for everything: the Liverpool merchants in 1792 wrote, 'Africans being the most lascivious of human beings, may it not be imagined that the cries they let forth at being torn from their wives proceed from the dread that they will never have the

opportunity of indulging their passions in the country to which they are embarking?'

The primary reaction of the blacks is to fall back on the primitive world in which, at least, they are real. So many West Indians retreat from the strangely hostile English environment into the world of home; the family and their church. Significantly, it is almost always a black church that has sprung up as a spontaneous creation of the black people seeking satisfaction for their spiritual needs (cf Clifford Hill, *Black Churches,* British Council of Churches, 1971). Irenaeus, like most of the West Indian middle class, was too sophisticated to take this way, but, unlike most of them, he remained a practising Christian. He did not see Christians, as Fanon did, simply as the white man's instrument, nor did he—like George Jackson—reject out of hand 'that horrible church'. He knew very well what Charles C. Anderson meant when he wrote, 'I know Jesus heard me/'cause he spit right in my eye/said—go 'way boy/Don't want to hear you cry'. He knew, but in spite of institutional corruption and the barrier of history he continued to see in Jesus the promise of brotherhood and renewal.

With strong faith, a good deal of courage and humour, a lot of anguish, and helped by the writings of James Baldwin and George Lamming, supported by companionship of a few West Indian brothers and guided by the understanding of some of the white brethren (especially Father Henry St John), he made it and was ordained in 1962.

But there was much more to come. We had to learn that it was not enough to be interested in anthropology, folk customs or jazz. With benevolent self-satisfaction we confused equality with improvement by us and on our terms. Too many of us—I mean the Europeans—saw the black man or woman as a romantic object, for, as Stokeley Carmichael wrote, 'too many middle class whites have wanted to come alive through the black community'. Or we condescended. Fanon puts it well: 'Oh, I want you to meet my black friend. . . . Aime Césaire, a black man and a university graduate. . . . Manon Anderson (be careful, he's extremely sensitive). . . .' (op. cit. p. 82.) We had to learn to meet the man. For we did not grant him equality. That the question could be even mentioned was a sign that the situation had become corrupt. But he was, even in the white world, a man, a person, who grew steadily in understanding, overcoming or harnessing his rage . . . and quite naturally identifying himself with an educated middle-class way of life that is—ironically enough—characteristic of his brethren.

Perhaps he might have rested there if he had not had the courage and resolution to return to Grenada. Back to the narrow, parochial and stultifying world of the island; tiny and culturally isolated. It meant another painful transition; all the shocks involved in the

return of the native, all the exposure to jealous inspection, so well described by Fanon and evoked so vividly by Naipaul in *The Middle Passage* (1962). He returned, too, to a different Grenada—an island in the throes of political development, calling for an independence that was, they believed, to bring an end to the black man's dependance.

One can only select a few facets of Irenaeus's experience. He rejoiced in the new possibilities; he was irked by what he regarded as the conservatism of both his countrymen and his brethren and he was shocked by the effect of power on some of the island's leaders. Some of the insecurity returned, but in a new way. The timidity of ecclesiastics revolted him, as he became involved in the new struggle in which the West Indian strives to define himself, and Grenada too, within the West Indies. He was conscious of a continuing dependance on outside influence that was bad both socially and economically and he was angered by the failure of the leaders of his people to meet the challenge. When I spoke to him a few months before he died we discussed the baleful influence of tourism, which, as it is at present organized, is disruptive and degrading, creating a nation of bell boys and call girls. The behaviour of tourists, no doubt very proper people in their own homes, is—to say the least—unrestrained under tropical conditions. Simple and godly people are quickly seduced. To those caught up in all this, primitivism was not enough; nor was the élite adequate, an élite stuffed with irrelevant information and, anyhow, controlled or managed from outside to such an extent that on the small islands the governments behave very much as sub-contractors of the great companies. Irenaeus found himself in critical opposition to the régime. He was haunted by the fear that Papa Doc might represent the future rather than the heroic figures of Toussaint or Bogle. He was a Christian and, I think, a social democrat with a bias towards the thinking of Nyerere. But he was, at the time of his death, struggling with the problem of how a West Indian and a priest should act.

'Beware, my body and my soul, beware of crossing your arms and assuming the sterile activity of the spectator, because life is not a spectacle, because a sea of sorrow is not a proscenium, because a man who cries is not a dancing bear.' (Césaire, op. cit. p. 50.) The problem is clear—decolonization in the sense of a calling in question of the whole system. It is not simply a question of increasing an individual's chances of success, but a recreation of his total situation. But how? Irenaeus was called one way by Martin Luther King, to power through non-violence. Fanon told him something else: that men can only be purged by violence. When he died he did not yet know which way to go, but he was ready to take the step forward.

In many ways his life was more painful than we can imagine. I think it was a very important life, because he broke through many

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barriers. I don't think we will ever inflict so much on anyone else; I don't think there will be so many misunderstandings and well-intentioned blunders. He was a pioneer, but not without disciples with the courage and the capacity to pick up where he was forced to stop. Inevitably they will carry on his work and for themselves think out a theology of liberation, and in so doing they will compel the rest of us to reject the structures and societies that prevent us from living together as brothers. We cannot avoid the problem, for we live with it from Kentish Town to the Rand and from Kingston back to Leicester. We are committed quite clearly and irrevocably and out of principle, by our common vocation with Irenaeus; through his experience and the continuing presence in the Province of our West Indian brethren we are brought some understanding and concern for the black world as it really is, so that we know that racism is simply a manichean abuse of the term black that masks principles and systems that are inherently evil and must be resisted at any price.

Kami-Natures

by Louis Allen

Stiff opposition from the Socialist and Communist parties in Japan has forced the Japanese Government to cancel the visit to the United States of a marine biologist, author of *Some Hydriods of the Amakusa Islands* and ten other works. Censorship? Persecution of intellectuals? No, nothing so sinister. The distinguished scientist in question also happens to have another role, and is known, outside the pages of biology periodicals, as the Emperor of Japan. This gives the postponement this week[1] of his visit to America planned for the autumn an importance of a different kind. The Socialists and Communists claim that the Liberal-Democratic party is misusing the person of the Emperor by making him a factor in relationships with the US. It is, they say, giving him a political role, and this is in direct contradiction with the Japanese Constitution of 1947. Indeed, that constitution does state quite clearly in Article 1 that the Emperor 'shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power'. It doesn't matter now that this new constitution was largely American-inspired, in ideas and language; what matters is that a totally new concept of the Emperor's function was forcibly introduced into Japanese life by it. The Meiji Constitution of 1889 had stated categorically that the Emperor was sacred and inviolable, the heir of a 'line of emperors unbroken for ages eternal'. 1947 introduced the

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