B/N Sherlock, Phillip Manderson, (Sir)

NORMAN WASHINGTON MANLEY FOUNDATION
THE NORMAN MANLEY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE *

The terms of reference state that the 1992 Award will be in the FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT; and that the Recipient will be a person who has given outstanding Service to the Nation.

More specifically, the Awardee must by his/her research, writings and actions

have contributed significantly to our educational, social and cultural development, to our knowledge about these matters, and to the appreciation of our heritage and our history as Jamaicans;

have recognised the importance of our oral heritage and folklore in the transmissions of our customs and traditions;

and have instilled pride in Jamaicans in their ancestry, historical struggles, development and capacity for survival.

Finally, such a career must have had considerable Caribbean-wide influence and significance.

* Citation prepared and read by Wycliffe Bennett, Chairman of the Search Committee, at the Creative Arts Centre, U.W.I, Mona on Thursday, 15th October, 1992.

Obviously, we have been called upon to recommend someone, who within the parameters outlined is a giant among men and has become a legend in his lifetime.

By virtue of his performance and the quality of his life the search committee recommends that the award be given to Sir Philip Manderson Sherlock, OM. Sir Philip has been the Recipient of several honours, including Doctorates from different universities and a Fellowship from the Institute of Jamaica. He has served as a member of the Legislative Council and Chairman of various Commissions of Enquiry.

He was born at Manchioneal, Portland, on February 25, 1902, the son of a Methodist parson, the Rev. Terence Manderson Sherlock and his wife, Adina, of the Trotter family of Swift River. He married Grace Marjorie Verity on December 2, 1942, and together they have three children, John Manderson, Christopher and Hilary.

Sir Philip's bibliography provides an impressive list of books, essays, articles, papers and other publications. Of the 64 items held by the National Library of Jamaica, 18 deal with History, 20 with Education, 17 with Culture and the others with social and general issues. The Histories include The History of the West Indies (1956) with J.H.Parry, The West Indies (1966), The West Indian Nations (1973), and we should include here Norman Manley, a Biography (1980). He published a number of readers for young children, as well as drama, poetry and Anansi stories and folk tales. He has promoted the troubadours, Slim Beckford

and Sam Blackwood, and the Cudjoe Minstrels during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1991 with one of his protégés Professor Rex Nettleford, he published The University of the West Indies: A Caribbean Response to the Challenge of Change. This work contains some of Philip Sherlock's finest prose.

Sir Philip's poetry is occasional but memorable. Who can forget

A beauty too of twisted trees...
The harsh insistence of the wind
Writes lines of loveliness within
The being of this tortured trunk.
I know that there are some that spring
In effortless perfection still,
No beauty there of twisted trees
Of broken branch of tortured trunk
And knotted root that thrusts its way
Impatient of the clinging clay.

Or who can forget "Jamaican Fisherman"

Across the sand I saw a black man stride
To fetch his fishing gear and broken things,
And silently that splendid body cried
Its proud descent from ancient chiefs and kings,
Across the sand I saw him naked stride;
Sang his black body in the sun's white light
The velvet coolness of dark forests wide,
The blackness of the jungle's starless night.

He stood beside the old canoe which lay
Upon the beach; swept up within his arms
The broken nets and careless lounged away
Towards his wretched hut .....
Nor knew how fiercely spoke his body then
Of ancient wealth and savage regal men.

This presentation draws upon his writings, speeches and interviews he has given, and upon the records of institutions with which he has worked.

In his Norman Manley, a Biography Philip Sherlock writes:

> I entered Calabar High School in 1914. For three-quarters of a century the Theological College had been a part of the life of the great mass of the Jamaican people. To enter the school was to enter into that tradition of involvement and service, so the school continued what my home had started. The school stood on the border of the slums of West Kingston. The senior boarders and the theological students helped with Sunday School and with a boy's club in West Kingston, where we came face to face with poverty of a kind we had not known in the country... Through these activities Calabar took me more deeply into the realities of Jamaican

life, but the syllabus turned my eyes away from my origins to Britain, with the result that London was nearer to me than Port Au Prince, Walter Raleigh far more real than Toussaint L'Ouverture or Bolivar. I took over without question the stereotypes, values and attitudes of the metropolitan country, and on this basis I made my judgments, that the Americans who threw so much tea into Boston Harbour were an unruly undisciplined lot, Ghandi a troublesome little man, and De Valera beyond the pale in more senses than one. In this scheme of things Africa was a place without a history, and Africans a barbarous backward people.

Largely through the influence of Norman Manley and the inspiration of Edna, whose sculpture breathed the spirit of Jamaica, many of us rejected this intellectual dependency, discovered Jamaica and identified ourselves with our country.

He was just 17 when he took up teaching as a career. He was at Calabar High School, and it was the year in which Spanish influenza took a dreadful toll of lives in Jamaica. He was one of the two at Calabar who really became dangerously ill and then pulled through somehow, largely he

believes, because the other boy, Noel Helwig and himself were intoxicated.

"Do you mean intoxicated?" he was asked. "Yes, I mean intoxicated" he replied. "What happened was that Mrs. Price, bless her soul, nursed us day and night. You know we were boarders. She was the matron and she didn't spare herself; she looked after us and she told Dr. G.V.Lockett that we were not doing well. So he said to her: "Give them a spoonful of brandy." I think it was a dessertspoon or a tablespoon of brandy. She thought he meant every hour and next day when he came to see us, she said to him: "Dr. Lockett, I can't get them to wake up." So he said: "What did you do?" and she told him and he laughed and said: "Well, they are drunk." And I think that saved both Helwig and me."

Well he left school in December 1919. The following March one of the teachers at Calabar fell ill, and Headmaster Ernest Price sent for him and asked him if he would put in three weeks, at a Pound a week with board and lodging. Well, that was better than nothing, he was earning nothing at the time. So he jumped at the offer, found that he liked teaching and that despite his obvious youthfulness he and the boys got on very well. He always felt that he would have been greatly helped if he had been trained in the theory and principles of education, but he got his training the hard way "by learning from the boys". He taught at Calabar until 1927, by which time, working on his own he had passed two degree exams, the B.A. General in the first

division and the B.A. Honours first class. He then became Headmaster of Manchester High School, which he left after two years, because his efforts to expand the school met with obstacles he could do nothing about. In 1932 he became Headmaster of Wolmer's Boys' School. He was the ~~first~~ second Jamaican to hold that post, and at 30 was the island's youngest headmaster. He found Wolmer's a great school in terms of tradition, staff, parents, student body and scholarship. He introduced Physical Training and classes in Civics and in one year the school won every single sports trophy except swimming, while at the same time improving upon its academic record.

He developed the view early in 1938 that if he and the other heads of secondary schools could find a way of grouping the sixth forms together, they would have the nucleus for a university college of Jamaica. He felt that if he could somehow persuade the headmasters to get the sixth form to work for the Intermediate Arts of London, scholarships could still be awarded to the top one or two, but a number of others would have had degrees or be on the road to a degree. He tried to get this course of action accepted at a conference of headmasters. Mr. Price of Calabar was in favour, Cowper of Jamaica College was against, Harrison at Munro was against - the established schools didn't want it. Because they were after winning a scholarship. They didn't mind what happened to the other 10

or 12 people who didn't get it; their schools' reputation rested on that scholarship.

He had been teaching for some 20 years when he began to sense that he was becoming too authoritarian. As he himself put it, "I found that I was becoming God in many ways. I tended to, not to speak like God, but as if I were a minor deity at least. I said to myself, look, even if I were to come back to it I had better get out of the classroom for a time."

He was very fortunate because just at that time the Institute of Jamaica was looking for a Secretary to replace H.Delves Molesworth and they wanted a Jamaican. The Chairman of the Board of Governors, Herbert George DeLisser, went up to Wolmer's to see him. From time to time they had met and talked, but on this occasion DeLisser took him completely by surprise, because it was the one job Sherlock felt he would like to do in Jamaica. So when DeLisser asked, "Would you like to be Secretary of the Institute?" he said he would love it, because he was fond of history. Two years earlier he had represented the Institute at a conference of American historians and had thought of working for a Ph.D in African Survivals. He had, therefore, been using the reference library.

One day soon after he went to the Institute, a King Street/Harbour Street businessman came in, and three or four minutes after sitting down he took out a cigarette and lit it. Sir Philip says: "I nearly gave him a hundred lines.

Write out a hundred times, "I must not smoke in the Reference Library." He realized then that it was a good thing he had given up school teaching.

Philip Sherlock assumed the office of Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica on December 12, 1938. Shortly after his appointment, the Gleaner editorial of January 21, 1939 summed up opinion on his selection thus:

> We are not going to over-praise Mr. Sherlock, that in the end could only do him much more harm than good. The Institute now has a promising future, and in a talented young Jamaican it has secured an excellent Chief of Staff. There were many applications amongst whom the Institute's Board was called upon to choose. We must be pardoned if we say we are pleased that the man upon whom its choice fell is a Jamaican.

And thus was set the tone of the tenure of the first Jamaican Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica. His years at the Institute were characterized by his intense desire to bring the institution to the service of the educational needs of Jamaica. A number of achievements stand out:

(1) The revival and development of the Science Programme under the curatorship of C. Bernard Lewis. Under his Secretaryship plans were developed for a new building to

house a lecture hall, art gallery, science museum and archives.

(2) The opening of the Junior Centre at East Street in 1940, and a Centre in Halfway Tree in 1941. These Centres, under the stewardship of Robert Verity, became the cradle of many promising youngsters, who would later become famous.

(3) A scheme for higher education; the subjects taught were English, History, Economics and Latin.

His ongoing concern was the inadequacy of the resources to meet educational needs. He once commented on the fact that only eight out of 100 children completed elementary school; the Institute he felt, should make an effort to help these deprived children.

When readers complained about the Institute being closed on weekends, he readily facilitated Sunday openings. In addition there were of course, the regular series of exhibitions and lectures covering a wide and interesting range of subjects.

Philip Sherlock's deep interest in and concern about every aspect of the work are features of his tenure. A member of the Institute, the late H.A. Lake, commented as follows after hearing the Institute's report for 1941:

> [His] enthusiasm embraced any branch of the work, whether it be art, music, natural history, the archives, lectures, science - every aspect received the keenest and most enthusiastic attention of the Secretary.

His interest in and love of the arts were well known; equally well known was his sense of humor. When invited to be Honorary Representative in Jamaica of the Associated Board of Music, while seeking to have his views heard on what he deemed should be the aims of music in Jamaica, he was equally at pains to ensure that his own lack of musical skills would not be in doubt:

> Let me point out in the first place that I am no musician. I long ago began to study music and passed the lowest exam by the proud margin of one mark. My efforts earned me the contempt of my friends. Like Artemis Ward, when I sing I always feel sad, but those who hear me feel sadder than I do.

Three letters published in the Gleaner in 1939 give interesting insights into his period at the Institute. The first was a note written to the Secretary by a member, but with author unattributed. The piece was headed: "Filth" in

Shelves of Institute of Jamaica. Member Condemns "vile, lewd" Book: Asks that it be Destroyed"

The member was careful to state that he felt quite sure that the present Librarian had nothing to do with the selection. He said:

> [This] is an indecent book - vile, lewd, a good character ravisher, the devil's own vicious teacher ... A book which will prostitute the young and old reader. We do not want our Institute to be the high school for immorality; but the young reader who reads such passionate stuff must fall. I am ashamed to find such absolute filth on the shelves of the Institute of Jamaica. Shame! Shame! Shame!!! Do destroy it."

In a response published in the Gleaner on September 29, 1939, the Secretary replied:

> For the information of the public, I would like to point out that the member in question is Mr. Astley Clerk; that the book so sweepingly denounced is "Of Human Bondage" by Somerset Maughan; and that I placed the book on the shelves of the Institute.

Apparently that was the end of that matter.

In the Gleaner of October 9, 1939, the poet Geo. B. Wallace took up the matter and added: "It is evident that Brother Sherlock is not wanting in bravery for only a courageous man could tell Mass Astley, "I placed the book on the shelves" and get away with it. However, as I am old enough to be 'prostituted' I hope I will yet read this 'filthy book'."

Before we leave his schoolmastering days and his tenure at the Institute we should note two experiences that overtook him during that period. One came in the 1920s. He was watching Garvey, and the march along Harbour Street of the crew from the Black Star Line. The boat had put into port, and he found himself in the midst of everything. He hadn't planned to go down to see it, he just happened to have been there; and he stood in the great crowd at the side of the road and watched the procession pass. He didn't know what Garvey was talking about until he saw that procession. It was then he realised, to use his own words, "that you could have a White Star Line and that you could have a Black Star Line." That experience taught him how much we had been broken up as a society into segments, but that didn't come home to him so much as the feeling when Garvey was sentenced to prison, that it was an unjust thing.

He then began to understand what Garvey was doing not necessarily when he saw the parade of dukes and sailors and nurses and so on. What struck him most was the pride with which Garvey and his followers marched along the road. You

saw it in their faces and in the dignity with which they carried themselves, and although he was a young man and had not taken the trouble up to that time to learn about such matters, it became obvious to him that the law was being used to silence Garvey.

His next most decisive experience of that period was being associated with Norman Manley, not in politics, though he had great sympathy with his work, but with the old Jamaica Welfare. Jamaica Welfare Limited, a philanthropic organization had come into existence in 1937 as a result of discussions between Norman Manley and Samuel Zemurray of the United Fruit Co. Zemurray had got his own and other fruit companies to put up a cess of half-a-penny on every bunch of bananas purchased in Jamaica to provide funding for Jamaica Welfare Ltd.

Mr. Manley had invited him to join the movement in 1945 as Education Officer. That became one of the biggest courses in education that he ever took; he was able to observe ways in which grassroots leadership could help to build the country. He spent two years with Jamaica Welfare, two wonderful years. And people would come from overseas and hear the Pioneer Clubs sing, "We are out to build a new Jamaica" and would look at the movement and say "This is wonderful" but at the same time question what might be called the evangelical element. To this Sherlock and his colleagues would say, "This is the whole business of the thing. You have got to have a national purpose that people

can commit themselves to and the song expresses that purpose." This emphasis on the building of a new Jamaica by the united effort of a united people distinguishes the movement towards social betterment.

Philip Sherlock spoke to Eddie Baugh about Jamaica Welfare during an interview in 1983:

> There was the feeling of coming together for the first time. It wasn't people coming into a village to do good to others; it was a whole village coming together. I remember going into St. Thomas with Rudolph Burke and talking with the people up in his little district. And we might have gone in with the idea that these people should have a health clinic, they should have this, they should have that, but when we sat down round the table and talked to them, they said, "What we want is a cricket pitch!" and Burke gave the land and I would go over there on a Saturday sometimes, or mid-week and they would be clearing the land after they had finished working, and they built the field. And then Jamaica Welfare helped them put up the pavilion and it became not a cricket field but a community centre. But you know if we had gone in with our ideas it would never have worked that way. No, we learnt a lot and we learnt above

everything else a tremendous respect for the Jamaican working man.

When Philip Sherlock succeeded Sir Arthur Lewis as Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies in 1964, he brought with him several years of service to an institution that he had served since the time of its inception in 1948. He had been the first Director of Extra-Mural Studies, Vice Principal and Acting Principal of the University College of the West Indies as it was prior to 1962. He was the founding Principal of the new campus at St. Augustine, Trinidad, which set up the new faculty of Engineering and transformed and incorporated the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture.

In 1956, while still Director of Extra-Mural Studies Philip Sherlock wrote:

> In the early years of development the urgent need is for trained minds. Development is the child of knowledge. That is why the founding of the University College was essential for Caribbean development. From it will come in ever increasing numbers the teachers, administrators, doctors, scientists, men of business, the scholars and men of letters who will assist in the development of their homelands. Educated within the region, aware of the problems and difficulties of the present,

> responsive to the problems of their own country, and able to relate them to the knowledge of the world, they will share in the common task of developing natural resources and of building a democratic society based on spiritual values.

He also brought to the University a strong commitment to the cultural development of the Caribbean, to the study and writing of Caribbean History from a Caribbean perspective, and to the identification and analysis of those features of Jamaican life, our myths, our legends, our folklore that give us unique meaning within the framework of an evolving universal civilization. He also brought with him a conviction that the democratic process was inseparable from creative and original expression in all areas of personal and educational development.

Underlying all these commitments was a larger vision of a Caribbean that was more than a series of islands tossed up volcanically from the Ocean, but a living, breathing, vibrant rainbow of cultures and peoples, which (in his own words) would "become the unity of sunlight ... when morning dawns." For him the University was "at one and the same time a symbol of national unity and of the universality of knowledge; a sign of national independence and of human interdependence ... The University represents a West Indian effort at collaboration that is in direct opposition to the

fragmentation and divisions imposed upon the region by the imperialist rivalries of distant powers.

Sherlock was part of that school of thought that opposed the notion of the University as an outpost of Empire, and his work there accelerated the process of Caribbeanization. This outlook helped to make post graduate research a reality during his administration.

The conceptualization and establishment of the Creative Arts Centre came out of his understanding of the role of the Arts in the formation of civilized societies. As he said himself, "As the University grows in size, it becomes increasingly important that every possible step should be taken to deepen and enrich its cultural life. It would be easy to become so encumbered with many duties as to overlook the creative arts. What is essential is that music and drama, the theatre, the dance and painting should have a place in the University and that creative artists should be as welcome here as are scholars and men of learning."

On one occasion, he cited the book of Isaiah, Chapter 54: Verse 2, in exhorting his colleagues to meet the challenge of the times:

> Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes.

After his retirement in 1969 Philip Sherlock preferred not to rust unburnished but to shine in use. He formulated the creation of the Caribbean Universities and Research Institute that embraced tertiary institutions in the non-Anglophone Caribbean, the Virgin Islands, and the University of Guyana.

Philip Sherlock describes himself as a commercial traveller for education. He has been a catalyst and proselytizer who brings about change without chaos. He has been the educator and educational administrator *par excellence* and the University of the West Indies stands as one of his lasting monuments.

We mentioned earlier in this presentation the role played by Norman Manley in the development of Philip Sherlock's career. Tonight, after so many years, the careers of the two men come together again. Sir Philip has earned many prizes, many awards, many tributes during his long and productive life but there is still one important lacuna in his distinguished *curriculum vitae*.

The presentation to him of the Norman Washington Manley Award for Excellence in the field of Educational, Social and Cultural development will not only fill the gap. It will pay public tribute to a Jamaican who richly deserves this honour.