



PLANES grounded at Anguilla Airport.

After more than 20 years as a folk leader, one of the Negro shepherd-kings of the Caribbean, Robert Bradshaw of St. Kitts—"Papa" to his followers—is in trouble, writes Vidia Naipaul.

Bradshaw, the man, the legend and his present plight as ruler of the Caribbean's ungainly mini-state of St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla is brilliantly etched by Naipaul writing in the May issue of the New York Review of Books.

The Trinidad author's study

Once Papa Bradshaw's yellow Rolls-Royce was thought to be a suitable emblem of his kingship and courage, a token of Negro redemption. Few people outside knew about the Rolls-Royce; now it is famous and half a joke.

The folk leader who has been challenged cannot afford to lose. To lose is to be without a role, to be altogether ridiculous.

"Papa Bradshaw" started something," a supporter says. "As long as he lives he will have to continue it."

Bradshaw prepares to

airstrip and the capital, Basseterre. There is one vertical in this plain: the tall white chimney of the island's single sugar factory.

The neatness and order is still like the order of the past. It speaks of Papa Bradshaw's failure. He hasn't changed much. His fame came early, as an organizer of the sugar workers; a thirteen-week strike in 1948 is part of the island's folklore.

But Bradshaw's plantation victories mean less today to the young. They do not wish to

Dangerous Opposition

and fishermen of Anguilla, 70 miles away.

SUGAR INDUSTRY

The Nevisians and Anguillians never voted for Bradshaw. Bradshaw didn't need their votes, but he was irritated. He said he would put pepper in the soup of the Nevisians and bones in their rice; he would turn Anguilla into a desert and make the Anguillians suck salt.

That was 11 years ago. "Gahd bless Papa Bradsha' for wa' he do." It is only the old and the devout among the plantation Negroes in St. Kitts who say that now. They remember the "ola" or trash houses, the cruel contract system, the barefoot children and the disease.

Bradshaw himself worked as a young man in the Basseterre sugar factory; he carries a damaged hand as a mark of that service. Like many folk leaders, he never moved far beyond his first inspiration. It is also true that, like many folk leaders, he is responsible for the hope and the restlessness by which he is

It seems to be drama for the sake of drama. But there are bullet marks on the inside wall of the hut. These are shown as evidence of the armed raid that was made on Basseterre by persons unknown in June 1967, at the beginning of the Anguillan crisis.

The police station was also attacked. Many shots were fired but no one was killed; the raiders disappeared. Bradshaw added to his legend by walking the next morning from Government Headquarters to Masses House in the uniform of a colonel, with a rifle, bandolier and binoculars.

The raid remains a mystery. Some people believe it was staged, but there are Anguillians who now say that they were responsible and that their aim was to protect the independence of their island by kidnapping Bradshaw and holding him hostage.

The raid failed because it was badly organized—no one had thought about transport in Basseterre—and because Bradshaw had been tipped off

Severe Test for Papa Bradshaw

In His Mini-State

of Bradshaw, headlined "St. Kitts: Papa and the Power Set," follows his profile of the Anguillan crisis — The Shipwrecked 6,000 — published in the special Spring issue of the New York Review and excerpted in the Sunday Guardian of May 4.

Two years ago Bradshaw became the first Premier of the three-island state of St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Naipaul continues.

The state had a total area of 153 square miles and a population of 57,000. It has since become smaller. Anguilla has seceded and apparently gone for good, with its own islet dependencies of Scrub Island, Dog Island and Anguilla: a loss of 35 square miles and 6,000 people.

There is discontent in Nevis, 50 square miles. In St. Kitts itself, Papa Bradshaw's base, there is a dangerous opposition. The opposition union is

DEADLY HUMOR

called WAM, the opposition political party PAM. Wam and Pam: It is part of the deadly comic-strip humor of Negro politics of kingship, in which there are as yet no rules for succession.

It is only when leaders like Papa Bradshaw are in trouble, when they are threatened and fight back, that they become known outside their islands; and it is an irony of their kingship that they are then presented as dangerous clowns.

continue. The opposition are not allowed to broadcast; their supporters say they do not find it easy to get jobs. Men are recruited from the other Caribbean islands for the police.

A HELICOPTER

The St. Kitts army, called the Defence Force, is said to have been increased to 120: Papa Bradshaw is the Colonel. There are reports of a helicopter ready to police the island's 68 square miles.

It has been played out in other countries, this drama of the folk leader who rules where he once securely agitated and finds that power has brought insecurity. In St. Kitts the scale is small, and in the simplicity of the setting the situation appears staged.

Think of a Caribbean island roughly oval in shape. Indent the coastline: beaches here, low cliffs there. Below the sharp and bare 4,000-foot peak of a central mountain chain there is forest.

Then the land slopes green and trimmed with sugarcane, uncluttered with houses or peasant allotments, all the way down to the sea.

A narrow coast road encircles the island; it is impossible to get lost. The plantation workers live beside this road, squeezed between sugarcane and the sea. Their timber houses are among the tiniest in the world.

In the southeast the flat coastal strip broadens out into a little plain. Here, still set in the level green of sugarcane, are the

work on the plantations. They look for "development"—and they mean tourism—on their own island.

The air over nearby Antigua rocks with "Sunjets" and "Fiesta Jets." St. Kitts only has brochures and plans; the airfield can only take Viscounts. It is unspoiled, the tourists do not come. The feeling among the young is that Papa Bradshaw has sold out to the sugar interests and wants no change.

And Bradshaw's victories were only of St. Kitts. They meant little to the peasant farmers of Nevis, and nothing to the long-independent farmers

now, at the age of 51, rejected.

The weatherbeaten little town of Basseterre also has a stage-set simplicity. There is a church at the end of the main street. PAM hangs its home-made board in the verandah of a rickety little house.

Directly opposite is a building as rickety, but larger; this is labelled "Masses House" and is the headquarters of the Bradshaw union. At times of tension this section of the main street is known as the Gaza Strip.

EVERY MORNING

At about ten every morning the guards change outside Government Headquarters. The green-bereted officer shouts, boots stamp; and the two relieved soldiers, looking quickly up and down the street, get into the back of the idling Land Rover and are driven to Defence Force Headquarters, an exposed wooden hut on high ground near ZIZ, the one-studio radio station.

Against the soft green hills beyond Basseterre, the bright blue sea and the cloud-topped peak at Nevis, a Negro lounges about in a washed-out paratroopers uniform, thin and bandy-legged, zipped-up and tight, like a soft toy.

by an Anguillan businessman.

Days after the raid leading members of PAM and WAM were arrested. They went on trial four months later. Defence lawyers were harassed. Bradshaw's supporters demonstrated when all the accused were acquitted. Ever since, the rule of law in St. Kitts has appeared to be in danger.

There may no longer be a danger from Anguilla, but the police and the army have come to St. Kitts to stay.

I first saw St. Kitts eight years ago, at night from a broken-down immigrant ship in Basseterre harbor. We didn't land. The emigrants had been rocking for some time in the bay in large open boats.

THE OPEN SEA

The ship's lights played on sweated shirts and dresses, red eyes in upturned oily faces, cardboard boxes and suitcases painted with names and careful addresses in England.

In the morning, in the open sea, the nightmare was over. The jackets and the ties and the suitcases had gone. The emigrants, as I found out moving among them, were politically
(Continued on p. 14, Focus)



ROBERT BRADSHAW
Premier St. Kitts - Nevis-Anguilla

