RACE RELATIONS IN JAMAICA, 1833-1958
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ...................... 11
LIST OF TABLES .......................... v
INTRODUCTION ......................... 1

CHAPTER

I JAMAICAN SOCIETY DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS OF SLAVERY ......................... 23


Political Development in a Multi-Racial Society 87
Foreign Slavery and the Success of Emancipation in Jamaica ....................... 97
Free Trade and the Sugar Duties .................................. 99
Jamaica's Plantation Economy and Its Basic Needs .................................. 103
Immigration and Indentured Labour .................................. 111
The Peasant Economy and Society .................................. 121
Social and Cultural Divergence and the Lack of Basic Social Services ............. 131


The Disturbances at Morant Bay and Their Causes .................................. 140
a. Social relations between the various racial groupings ...................... 145
b. Political issues in the Assembly .................................. 149
c. Religion and the Great Revival .................................. 152
d. Economic decline and depression .................................. 154
e. Planter oppression and problems of land, justice and civil authority ........... 155
f. Increasing disillusionment of the black masses .................................. 160
g. Role of Governor Eyre and William Gordon .................................. 169
h. Failure of colonial policy .................................. 169

The Reaction in Jamaica and the United Kingdom .................................. 172
The Rise of the New Imperialism, 1872-1919 .................................. 177

111
# TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

## CHAPTER

### IV CROWN COLONY GOVERNMENT, 1866-1938: A STUDY OF NEGLECT

- Political Developments after Morant Bay, 1866-1938
- The Colour Groupings and Their Development

### V JAMAICA IN TRANSITION, 1938-58: JAMAICAN NATIONALISM AND THE "NEW BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY"

- The Westmorland Riots and the Awakening of the Masses
- The Failure of Crown Colony Government and the "New Colonial Policy"
- The Development of Island Political Parties and the Role of Jamaican and West Indian Nationalism

### VI JAMAICAN SOCIETY AT MID-CENTURY

- Jamaican Social Structure
- Dichotomic and Divisive Factors in Jamaican Society
- a. Poverty and the economic cleavage
- b. Social and racial friction
- c. The cultural clash
- d. Contemporary political outlook

## CONCLUSION

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## APPENDIX

## VITA
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>POPULATION GROWTH</th>
<th>359</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. Arnold Toynbee has cited race relations as one of the three major issues threatening international peace and stability and a problem that may well outlast the conflict of nationalism and the clash of ideologies between East and West. While Toynbee believes that nationalist sentiment often mitigates against the division of mankind into conflicting races,\(^1\) many social anthropologists have found that racial and national sentiments and prejudices are basically similar.\(^2\) Racial prejudice, which we may define as the tendency to evaluate an individual primarily on the basis of identity with a group thought of as racial and the failure to consider that person in the light of experience, has also been described as an instinctive antipathy due to physical differences;\(^3\) as the special pleading for the supremacy of a class or national group, which Dr. Ruth Benedict claims has taken other forms throughout modern history;\(^4\) as a mechanism devised by capitalist exploiters to obscure their real purpose; and as a function of "social distance." Among


\(^2\)H. S. Deighton, "History and the Study of Race Relations," ibid., p. 22.

\(^3\)Naomi F. Goldstein, The Roots of Prejudice Against the Negro in the United States (Boston: Boston University Press, 1948), pp. 31-32.

social scientists today racial prejudice is usually taken to be a psychological phenomenon—a relatively rigid and hostile disposition of an individual towards a particular ethnic group.\textsuperscript{5} 

The exact origins of modern racism are obscure, although it is generally believed to have arisen with the expansion of Europe at the end of the fifteenth century. Great impetus was given to the systemization of racism and race theories with the development of nationalism and the discoveries of science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{6}

The purpose of this paper is to trace the pattern of race relations in Jamaica from the abolition of slavery in 1833 to the establishment of quasi self-government for the island and its entry into the Federation of the West Indies in 1958. Jamaica offers a unique opportunity for the study of human relations and at present is passing through a very interesting phase of development. To understand today's social conditions one must consider the effect of slavery and Jamaica's colonial background. Several students of Jamaican affairs have emphasized this need. Throughout this paper it will be found useful to make references to other areas where slavery existed as a social institution\textsuperscript{7} and


\textsuperscript{6}B. Detweiler, "The Rise of Modern Race Antagonisms," \textit{The American Journal of Sociology}, Vol. XXXVII, No. 5, March 1932, p. 738. Benedict, \textit{op. cit.} See Chapter VII. Also Deighton, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 22-25. This will be examined more fully in Chapter 3, particularly with regard to its influence on British thinking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

\textsuperscript{7}Fernando Henriques, \textit{Family and Colour in Jamaica} (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953); Madeline Kerr, \textit{Personality and Conflict in Jamaica} (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press), passim; Eric E. Williams,
particular attention will be paid to British colonial policy affecting
the island since the Colonial Office was in the final analysis respon-
sible for Jamaican affairs during the 125 years covered by this paper.

Unfortunately the responsibility of rendering an accurate account
of Jamaican history is hindered by three factors. Firstly, until recent
times the Negro masses have not had spokesmen who really understood their
viewpoint and their aspirations. Any account of nineteenth century
Jamaica is debilitated by a serious lack of knowledge concerning the
Jamaican peasant and plantation worker. The second handicap is that
most recorded Jamaican history has been written from the standpoint of
the white planter or his brown ally—the coloured middleclass Jamaican—and reflects the 'European' bias. Another disadvantage is the fact
that most of the newspapers in the island studiously avoided considera-
tion of racial matters unless it was during a period of crisis.

The great weakness of most studies dealing with Jamaican histori-
cal development is their failure to recognize the importance and the
contributions of the African or Negro element to present-day Jamaican

Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina
Press, 1944), passim.

Naomi Goldstein has stated that American attitudes towards the
Negro cannot be explained without reference to his status as a slave.
Op. cit., p. 20. Gilberto Freyre makes much the same point in his
Masters and Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civiliza-
passim. He also emphasizes the value of comparing Brazilian slavery
with that of the southern states of America. See Introduction, p. 25.

Philip Curtin, Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical
Colony, 1830-55 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955),
passim.
A rewriting of local history is seriously needed, as indeed is that of the whole history of imperialism, coloured as it has been by the sublime contempt for assumed racial inferiors. For too long the importance of the European element in Jamaica has been exaggerated at the expense of the African and this tendency is still apparent in recent publications about the colony. All too often we find that historical accounts of abolition and the progress of emancipation were treated by apologists for the white and coloured planters and the Negro-phobes, or by persons sympathetic to the missionary interests who were bent upon providing the success of the great experiment and 'civilizing' of the freed Negroes.

9Lowell J. Ragatz, "Must We Rewrite the History of Imperialism," Historical Studies (Australia and New Zealand), Vol. VI, No. 21, November 1953, pp. 94-98. Already the reinterpretation is underway and a good deal of valuable work has been done by the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University College of the West Indies.

10Professor Morley Ayearst in his recent book, The British West Indies: The Search for Self-Government (New York: New York University Press, 1960), p. 17, states that "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries West Indian history is an account of romantic adventures, piracy, privateering and dashing naval and military battles," which implies that the problems of the colonizing whites were paramount and makes no mention of the fact that thousands of slaves were transported to the area throughout these years and that during this time there were a series of rebellions indicating to some extent that there were also serious problems of social and cultural adjustment. See also Clinton Black, History of Jamaica (London: Collins Clear Type Press, 1958), passim.

11Very little indeed was known about the peasant. Most reports merely repeated ad nauseum the cultural cleavage of the masses with the 'European' social superstructure in terms of ignorance, laziness, poor morals, and poverty. It has only been recently recognized that "the mass of West Indian peasantry has not been assimilated in any significant measure to British civilization." See Mary Proudfoot, Britain and the United States in the Caribbean: A Comparative Study in Methods of Development (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1954), p. 71.
In fact, there has been a deliberate attempt in the past by writers visiting the Caribbean to prove the 'innate' inferiority of the Negro, not only in Jamaica and the British West Indies, but also in Haiti. Dr. James G. Leyburn in his well known study, The Haitian People, stated that Haiti has suffered at the hands of white writers who went specifically to the 'Negro Republic' to demonstrate Negro 'inferiority' and to prove the maxim that he was 'born to menial labor.'

Surely the classic example of prejudiced thinking about the Negro in the West Indies is the well known diatribe of Thomas Carlyle written with no direct knowledge of the area and designed to relegate the Negro to a role of perpetual manual labor. Unfortunately, Carlyle influenced a whole generation of Englishmen and his vitriolic denunciation of the Negro has continued to have its influence upon European and American thinking to the present day.

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12See James A. Froude, The English in the West Indies: Or the Bow of Ulysses. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), passim; Anthony Trollope, The West Indies and the Spanish Main (London: Chapman and Hall, 1860), passim. Both these writers were obviously very prejudiced against the Negro long before they left England and were influenced by the type of Negrophobia characteristic of Thomas Carlyle. See Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question (London: T. Bosworth, 1853), passim.


14Carlyle, op. cit., passim.

15This will be discussed further in Chapter III. One of the first persons writing about Jamaica to realize this bias was the Scottish editor of the Kingston newspaper who, in 1899, wrote: "The Negro has never counted for much in the world. Almost all the literature dealing with him is dominated by prejudice and ignorance. It is held that he is destitute of initiative and incapable of social advancement [and] the
There is still the widely held view that the West Indian like his Negro brother throughout the New World is a man without a past largely because slavery erased all memory of his cultural background and left him culturally naked. Herskovits has devoted a lifetime of study to prove the point that he has retained many aspects of his African background and that his assimilation into the mainstream of European civilization—be it American, French, British, Portuguese or Spanish—has not been without a good deal of friction and resistance on the part of the displaced African.  

In areas of the New World where there are concentrations of Negroes, a number of studies, including the works of the famous Brazilian sociologists Arturo Ramos and Gilberto Freyre and the Cuban social historian Fernando Ortiz, have verified Herskovits' main thesis.  

claim . . . that he is equal with the white is denied." See W. P. Livingstone, Black Jamaica: A Study in Evolution (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., 1899), pp. 1-2.  


In Haiti, Leyburn, op. cit., p. 310, and the recent studies in Jamaica made by George Simpson and J. G. Moore. See J. G. Moore and George Simpson, "A Comparative Study of Acculturation in Morant Bay and
A well known South African anthropologist at Oxford University also believes that the "steamroller of slavery failed to crush the traditional cultural patterns and values of the New World Negro populations out of existence," but he feels that a great deal more research is needed to validate the theory. The whole question of African cultural survivals is important for a proper perspective of Jamaican race relations.

As a well informed Caribbean researcher has pointed out, one of the chief weaknesses of studies on Jamaica in particular has been their constant references to colour and class concepts without paying sufficient attention to the cleavage between the folk and non-folk cultures.

Yet another misleading interpretation of modern Jamaica is that of the outsider who frequently compares the island society and its race relations with that of the United States or the Union of South Africa. Inevitably this leads to an idealizing of the situation in Jamaica.


19 M. G. Smith, A Framework for Caribbean Studies (Mona, Jamaica, Extra-Mural Dept. of the University College of the West Indies, n.d.), pp. 25-30. Dr. Vera Rubin, a Caribbean specialist, believes that African survivals are quite strong in the West Indies and suggests that they may be influencing the development of the new societies. Vera Rubin (ed.), Caribbean Studies: A Symposium (Mona, Jamaica: The Institute of Social and Economic Research, University College of the West Indies, 1957), introduction.

A recent editorial of the New York Times commenting on the emergence of a new West Indian nation stated that it enjoyed a long cherished democratic tradition and that as a non-racial society it would be an asset to the Western World. 21 One is reminded of the laudatory article written on Brazil by the German liberal Stefan Zweig in 1937 in which he stated that "Brazil has not yet discovered the race problem. Instead it has long solved the problem in the simplest and happiest way, by completely ignoring the differences in race, color, nationality, and religion among its citizens. . . . No distinctions are made and there is no strife of any kind." 22 Of course such a statement is completely erroneous, as recent studies have shown, 23 but it is understandable when comparisons are made between areas with relatively good race relations (such as is the case in both Brazil and Jamaica), and areas where racism is openly practiced and institutionalized. In Jamaica race relations are far from perfect. "On the surface it looks as if colour has ceased to matter, but more careful scrutinising reveals that colour prejudice


still disrupts human relations," writes a recent observer.24 Owing to
the derogatory values attached to things 'African' there has been a
conscious effort to reject them as alien even by the masses who have
unconsciously retained African cultural practices. To what extent this
exacerbates race relations is difficult to evaluate, but the existence
of cultural differences between the masses and the Europeanised middle
and upper classes has certainly been of great importance in Jamaican
history.25

The debate on the relative importance of African survivals and
the background of slavery continues without a satisfactory conclusion,
with perhaps the majority favoring slavery as the major institutional
influence. Henriques, Leyburn, and Simey maintain that slavery was all-
important, while Herskovits and his school oppose this view.26 The real

24J. L. Webb, In One Corner: Concerning the Church in Jamaica
(London: The Eyworth Press, 1951), p. 20. The recent report by a team
from the University College of the West Indies on the Ras Tafari move-
ment showed that elements of the lower class were acutely aware of con-
tinued exploitation and discrimination on the basis of race. See M. G.
Smith, Roy Augier, and Rex Nettleford, The Ras Tafari Movement in King-
ton, Jamaica (Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research,
University College of the West Indies, 1960), passim.

25See Henriques, op. cit., p. 169. J. G. Moore states that some
religious cults in Morant Bay—merely 30 miles from Kingston—have
practically no European Christian tenents in their religion and there is
reason to believe that "these people speak a language other than Eng-
lish as is usually assumed." See Moore, The Religion of Jamaican Negroes,
pp. 180-82. Herskovits states that the idea that there are cultural
survivals in the New World is not accepted with enthusiasm by the Negro
and the idea that his culture has influenced that of the European is met

26Y. A. Cohen, "Structure and Function: Family Organization and
LVI, August 1956, p. 664. See also Henriques, op. cit., p. 103;
problem is that the incidence of 'survivals' varies from area to area and that all too often the study of race relations or the structure of society has been carried out within one particular frame of reference. It is vital to realize that in Jamaica both slavery and the African cultural heritage have been very important. Much the same point has been made by Gilberto Freyre with reference to Brazil when he said that the Bahian Negro in the north-east of Brazil is the product of both his African and slavery background, but that it is almost impossible to determine where one influence begins and the other ends.

This paper will attempt to trace the pattern of human relations in Jamaica following the end of slavery; to account for the changes that have taken place; to evaluate their present status and to consider the relative importance of three major factors which in the opinion of the author have influenced the course of race relations in the 125-year period under consideration—namely, African cultural survivals, the legacy of slavery and the attitude of the British Colonial Office and the British people.

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28Freyre, Masters and Slaves, p. 321.
Before commencing with a consideration of Jamaican society as it existed in the last years of slavery, a brief description of contemporary Jamaica and its early history will be necessary.

Jamaica recently voted to leave the Federation of the West Indies and should she acquire Dominion status in 1962, she will be the smallest independent sovereign state in the New World in terms of area and one of the smallest with regard to population. The island, which is 4,411 square miles in area, is located in the Central Caribbean about 100 miles south of Cuba and about 450 miles north of Panama and Colombia, and includes the outlying areas of the Caymen Islands, the Pedro Keys, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Originally the name given it was 'Xaymaca' or the 'land of mountains' and this is an apt description of the island which includes a large range of mountains running east-west with several peaks over 5,000 feet in height and numerous unnavigable rivers. Some two-thirds of Jamaica is a limestone plateau with a narrow coastal plain and two fairly substantial inland valleys which are extensively farmed. Although the island is only 148 miles long and 51 miles wide at its widest point, there are considerable variations in rainfall and temperature from one area to

29 Other sovereign states with similar sized populations: Panama, Costa Rica, Paraguay and El Salvador.

30 The Cayman Islands have a population of 9,374 and the Turks and Caicos, 7000 (est. 1958). British Honduras was also administered from Jamaica prior to the 1840's.
another. The island average annual rainfall is 77 inches, but while the mid-south has only 30 inches, the northern coast has over 100 and some of the mountain areas in the interior record well over 200 inches a year. In the coastal areas the temperatures are high, averaging between 80-86°F although some of the upland interior regions are as low as 40-45°F.

Most of the upland areas are wooded, especially in the interior, but a good deal of lowland Jamaica has extensive sugar cane fields or pasture interspersed with secondary growth. Many of Jamaica's beaches are considered the finest in the Caribbean and this has proved to be one of the greatest attractions for the growing tourist industry. A high proportion of the rural population lives on scattered farmsteads or in barracks settlements on the plantations.

Resources and Economic Activities

While Jamaica is often thought of as being an undeveloped country it is not poor in resources. Much of the soil is highly suited to agriculture or pastoral farming and the benign climate is favorable to farming and tourism which form two of the island's three main sources of revenue. Recent statistics show bauxite and alumina are the main exports with sugar in second position. Nonetheless cattle-raising is

\[31\] In 1959 Jamaica's receipts for export were as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value (Sterling)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bauxite and alumina</td>
<td>20,420,957 pounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar and rum</td>
<td>12,890,944 pounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>4,949,128 pounds</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Much of the tourist revenue is 'invisible' and cannot be recorded statistically.
of increasing importance and a number of small industries are being established which will result in a better balanced economy. In the past sugar dominated Jamaican economic life but began to lose its hegemony by the end of the nineteenth century. Market gardening or peasant subsistence farming is another major economic activity, but it is difficult to estimate its exact impact on the economy.

An estimate based on figures from the last available census (1943) gives Jamaica a population of 1,685,000 of which 377,400 live in the Greater Kingston area (namely the Parish of Kingston and the Parish of St. Andrews). A large number of Jamaicans have immigrated to Panama, Costa Rica, Cuba, the United States (especially New York) and the United Kingdom. Up to the abolition of slavery population growth was slight and depended to a large extent upon the slave trade. Mortality rates of the slaves were very high indeed, and little attempt

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32 Jamaica with some 380 persons per square mile has, with the exception of Puerto Rico and some of the lesser antilles, a heavier concentration of population than any other area in the New World.

33 It has been estimated that Jamaica received over 600,000 slaves in the 18th century and population growth during this period was governed by two principal factors—the unlimited control of the slave trade by the English and the policy of increasing the white populations for reasons of security. See G. W. Roberts, The Population of Jamaica (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 59; W. E. Mathieson, British Slavery and Its Abolition 1823-38 (London: Longmans Green and Co., Ltd., 1926), p. 42. Note that after the abolition of the slave trade and before manumission, the population of Jamaica was actually declining. See Roberts, op. cit., p. 40.

34 Richard Hill, Lights and Shadows of Jamaican History (Kingston: Ford & Gall, 1879), p. 145. Undoubtedly ill treatment and the hardships of slavery acted as a positive check upon the Negro reproduction rates. Abortion was widely practiced and relatively large numbers of slaves were African-born and were not as well adjusted to their new condition.
was made to encourage a higher birth rate until after the slave trade was abolished.35 Since the abolition of slavery there has been a spectacular increase in the population of Jamaica but both the proportion and the absolute numbers of whites have declined.36 Since 1844 the white population has remained constant at about 15,000 although it is now concentrated mainly in Kingston and the other urban areas of Montego Bay and Mandeville. A higher proportion of the coloureds is also concentrated in the urban areas as are the Chinese and Syrians, whereas the East Indians are to be found largely in rural districts.37

Despite various efforts made throughout the nineteenth century to secure indentured labor this never proved to be an important source of new population. Between the years 1844-81 the net population increase as a result of immigration amounted to only 26,000 persons. In the years 1881-1921, however, with the heavy movement of Jamaicans to Panama, Central America, Cuba, and the United States, there was actually an excess of emigrants over immigrants and it was only with the

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36 See Table I (Appendix.). In 1791 the white population of Jamaica was 30,000 and at no time before or since has it been so high. See Herbert G. de Lisser, Twentieth Century Jamaica (Kingston: The Jamaica Times, Ltd., 1913), p. 41.

37 Roberts, op. cit., pp. 64-69.
increasing restrictions put on the free movement of people after World War I, especially those of the United States, that the trend was reversed. The first indentured labourers were Europeans introduced between 1834-44 and included Germans and Scots-Irish, but the unfavorable reports on the conditions of the immigrants led to a suspension of the system. During the 1840's the first of several batches of Africans freed from Atlantic slavers was introduced but although they were considered good workers this source of new immigrants was of little importance. The only system of indentured labor that was to be of any significance was that of East Indians which was initiated in the 1840's and ended in 1915 after the Indian government complained about the ill-treatment of the labourers and declared the traffic illegal. Chinese were also introduced but most of the Chinese who came to live in Jamaica came as free settlers and not as laborers under contract. All told, some 52,550 persons entered Jamaica as indentured laborers in the years 1834-1914, of which some 36,410 were Indians, 10,000 Africans, 4,087 Europeans, and 2,050 Chinese. The Syrian and Lebanese immigration is of more recent origin and, although insignificant as far as numbers are concerned, has made an impact on the local economy. More recently still there has been relatively heavy migration of Jamaicans to the United Kingdom which began in the 1950's. Within Jamaica itself a

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38 Ibid., pp. 44-47.
40 R. K. Ruck, et al., The West Indian Comes to England (London:
heavy rural-urban migration began in the 1880's which has resulted in a tremendous growth of the Kingston area and which has involved persons from all the parishes of the island.\(^1\)

Classification by racial categories for census purposes raises many problems not only because it is often difficult to ascertain a person's exact racial composition due to racial mixing, but also there is the practice of associating class with colour. The census-taker may often list persons who are biologically Negroid, but who enjoy a high socio-economic status as coloured, while enumerating coloureds of lower class status as blacks.\(^2\) One does not in Jamaica encounter the practice used in the United States of classifying a person as a Negro if it is known that he has some Negro ancestry, no matter how remote.\(^3\)

The last census recognized eight separate categories: Black, Coloured, East Indian, Chinese, White (Jamaican), British Isles, Europeans (including Jews), and Syrians.

The first year (1861) in which statistics were recorded for educational status showed that only 13 per cent of the population could read or write, but by 1943 the percentage of illiterates had fallen to 32 per cent. Today the highest incidence of illiteracy is found among

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\(^{1}\)Roberts, op. cit., p. 142.


\(^{3}\)Arturo Ramos, "The Negro in Brazil," in Smith and Marchant, Brazil, p. 128.
the black masses and the East Indians while the whites and the other immigrant groups have relatively low rates of illiteracy. In great part the lack of opportunity for the lower class Jamaican, who is invariably a black, is closely allied to his colour and this is reflected in the great disparity of incomes found between the British Isles whites whose median weekly wage in 1943 was 115 shillings and three pennies and that of the black who earned only six shillings and two pennies.

One also finds that the blacks and the Indians have the lowest percentage of 'legal' marriages while the whites and the immigrant groups have few common-law or consensual unions. This results in very high official illegitimacy rates for the lower classes.

With the relative decline in external migration over the past four decades the sex ratios have risen, giving the population a more balanced nature. At the end of the last century it was customary to find low sex ratios among the Negro and coloured segments of the population while the whites and the immigrant groups had fantastically high proportions of men to women.

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45 Cumper, op. cit., p. 34; Andrew Lind, "Adjustment Patterns Among the Jamaican Chinese," Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 1958, p. 155. (See Table III in Appendix)

46 Cumper, op. cit., p. 36; Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 84.

47 Roberts, op. cit., pp. 73-74. (See also Table IV in Appendix)
Originally Jamaica was settled with the intention that it should be a white man's country. All desirable land was granted out by the Crown in large patents of 2,000 acres or more to English settlers so that by the end of the eighteenth century most of the land was concentrated in the hands of the white minority. Although there has been some redistribution of land and a large increase in the total number of holdings since the abolition of slavery, the large holdings persist and the problem of minifundia is quite serious. In 1943 there were 333 units with over 1,000 acres while of the 66,000 farms with an acre or more, some 50,000 had less than 10 acres, and there were over 130,000 holdings of less than an acre.

With respect to religious affiliation, the 1943 census listed some 350,000 Jamaicans as members of the Anglican Church, closely followed by the Baptists with 310,000 and the Catholic Church with a relatively small following of 70,000. Only 4,230 persons were classified as members of the pocomania revivalist cult but there is reason to believe that the actual numbers of this cult and other syncretic religious cults must be considerably larger. Before the abolition movement began in earnest, the Anglican Church enjoyed a virtual monopoly.


49 Cumper, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

At present Jamaica's political status is that of an advanced type of responsible government which is often regarded as the last step before receiving full sovereign independence, and is closely patterned on that of a dominion of the British Commonwealth. Until the twentieth century whites dominated the political life of the island. In recent years, however, their influence has been reduced to negligible proportions, at least as far as direct political representation is concerned. The coloured element which was important for a period during the mid-nineteenth century now dominates the Jamaican political scene with the blacks playing a minor role, in terms of their real potential strength. There are three political parties of importance in Jamaica today, one of which is the present government, another is the principal opposition, and a third which claims to have the allegiance of the black masses is growing in importance. Prime Minister Norman Manley's People's National Party (the present government) is essentially the coloured middle class party, while the Jamaican Labor Party, although still enjoying large mass support, is basically a conservative organization dominated by the unpredictable personality of Sir Alexander Bustamonte and is apparently losing ground. A new political movement which is an amalgum of Garveyism and a new pride in African nationalism forms a small but potentially powerful party called the People's Political Party, and its leadership is composed almost entirely of Negroes.

Jamaica's recorded history is short but the island has passed through 450 years of development that should be of particular interest to the social historian, especially the past 250 years. The island was
discovered by the Western World in 1492 on Columbus' second voyage and the first Spanish settlement of a permanent nature was set up in 1509. Under Spanish rule Jamaica was not developed to any great extent although efforts were made to exploit the production of sugar cane using African slaves. With the advent of British occupation in 1665 most of the Spaniards left the island and their slaves fled to the interior to join the maroons who were without doubt the descendants of former African slaves who had escaped from the Spanish plantations and intermarried with the native Caribs.51

When, in 1661, the cultivation of sugar was undertaken in earnest, civil government was established with a constitution similar to the representative type of government conceded to many of the North American colonies. Jamaica became one of England's major colonies. Prior to the abolition of slavery and the Parliamentary Reform of 1832-33, it enjoyed a privileged position in the empire and the mercantile system; but with the emergence in Britain of new economic interests in the late eighteenth century and increasing competition from other sugar-growing areas, the colony rapidly declined to a position of unimportance in the eyes of the 'mother country' by the end of the nineteenth century.52


For a variety of reasons which will be briefly considered later, slavery was abolished in 1833-38 and technically the Negro became the political equal of the white.

Before we begin with the study of race relations and the British Colonial policy following the abolition of slavery, which is the real concern of this paper, it will be necessary to consider Jamaican society in the years immediately preceding Abolition. It is the opinion of several students of Jamaican history that the colony was not really ready for emancipation of the slaves in 1833, in the sense that neither the slave nor the white planter class were sufficiently prepared for the great change or at least to make the new social order work. To evaluate the validity of this argument it will be necessary to consider the state of society and the prevailing attitudes of the whites, the coloureds, the blacks and the viewpoints of the groups in the United Kingdom whose policies affected the progress of the colony. Not only did the attitudes of the respective groups within Jamaica and their role in the death struggles of slavery continue to have significance long...


Philip Curtin says, "It would be hard to imagine a society worse prepared to face a social revolution than European Jamaica in the 1830's. . . . If the Negro was not ready to assume the role of a free citizen in 1833 the white was equally ill prepared despite his claims of an intimate knowledge of 'Negro Character'." Op. cit., pp. 41, 60, 126. See also William L. Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, 1848-66 (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1936), pp. 2, 22; Anton V. Long, Jamaica and the New Order, 1837-1847 (Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UCWI, 1956), pp. 93-95; Livingston, op. cit., pp. 31-33.
after the abolition of slavery, but the motives of the English Abolitionists and other interest groups involved in the Parliamentary struggle over abolition also had an important bearing upon the success of the 'great experiment.' This will form the subject matter of Chapter I.
CHAPTER I

JAMAICAN SOCIETY DURING THE LAST YEARS OF SLAVERY

Slavery was without doubt the greatest single influence upon all elements of Jamaican society in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was responsible for the establishment of a caste system based upon racial distinctions and assigned a specific economic role to each ranking within the social structure. One should remember, however, that at first white indentured labourers lived under a system that was practically bondage. Dr. Eric Williams states that slavery in the Caribbean has been too narrowly associated with the Negro and "a racial twist has thereby been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon." A great demand for labor was created by the establishment of the sugar industry in the West Indies, but initially the demand was for a constant supply of labor with emphasis on the cost of that labour rather than its color. The need for absolute control over plantation workers finally


2Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 7. Williams gives a detailed analysis of the early fortunes of the white indentured labour in the Caribbean and shows how little their status differed from that of the early African labourers. See Chapter I. Much the same point is made by Franklin Frazier in Chapter II of his work, The Negro in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951). See also Oscar Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1957), Chapter I. Slowly the Negroes in the United States ceased to be servants and became slaves, so that over a period of time colour "emerged as the token of the slave status." Ibid., pp. 12, 21.

resulted in a rationalization of Negro slavery on a racial basis with the expulsion of most of the marginal or poor whites. 4 By the end of the 17th century a planter class had emerged and the idea of the Negro slave as property was institutionalized by a law of the British parliament which stated that slaves could be seized and imprisoned for owner's debts. 5

Nonetheless it appears that by the end of the 18th century, relative status rather than economic considerations supported the social structure. There was a certain preoccupation of the ruling classes to safeguard the social status quo particularly when the economic system of slavery was in danger of destruction 6 and the hard lines between whites and blacks were being broken down by miscegenation. 7

Whatever the reasons, the structure of Jamaican society was based upon the concept of a fixed social status that was in turn defended by a whole series of enactments aimed at preserving the social order and maintaining the "social distance" between the whites and the

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non-white elements. Race determined the three main social divisions which comprised free persons enjoying full civil rights, free members of society but with limited civil rights, and those who were without liberties of any kind. The whites were divided into two principal groups—the planters and the minor whites employed on the sugar estates—but they were the only persons with full civil liberties. The free coloureds, free blacks and the Jews belonged to the second category while the blacks and coloureds who were slaves enjoyed none of the privileges of the other two main groups. 8 Fernando Henriques has represented this diagramatically as follows: 9

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whites
free coloreds
freed people of color
free blacks
freed blacks
black and colored slaves
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A good deal of the determination of the Jamaican white to retain his exclusiveness can be explained by the desire to retain his economic supremacy, 10 but the ethnocentricism of the Anglo-Saxon together with

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8 Smith, "Some Aspects of the Social Structure, in the British Caribbean about 1820," pp. 75-78. See also Pitman, op. cit., pp. 3-4, 27.

9 Henriques, op. cit., p. 36. Those persons who were born free or who had been manumitted in the past enjoyed greater status than the recently freed. Ibid. A similar system existed in Brazil but even before the abolition of slavery the color line bent and many persons of mixed ancestry moved into the upper classes. See Donald Pierson, Negroes in Brazil (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 164-65.

10 As will be seen later the attack upon slavery as an institution was resisted by the planters who claimed that abolition would wreck the economy of the West Indies. It is interesting to note that the establishment of Jim Crow laws in the United States following the Civil War
his lack of experience with alien cultures, particularly those of Africa, resulted in a strong aversion to Negro culture and intermarriage with persons of color. Jamaica did not develop to any degree the extended family which in the Noreste region of Brazil did much to reduce the clash between the various color groups and rendered possible a two-way assimilative process. Rather the oligarchy attempted during slavery to maintain the hard physical and cultural cleavage between the white and the black which existed when the African was first brought into contact with people from the British Isles. The extent to which this was successful in matters of culture is difficult to ascertain since the observers of the slave were not in a position to make an accurate appraisal of the situation, but, with respect to miscegenation, the policy was largely ineffective. A large class of mulattoes emerged and as an intermediary group tended to assimilate the culture of the dominant whites.


13Philip Curtin, Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical
Indies and North America were designed to frustrate any possibility of the Negro acquiring his liberty and to keep him in a position of absolute inferiority. Throughout the New World slavery was a brutal institution but even in Brazil and Cuba the Negro had a place in society which was vastly superior to that enjoyed by the mulatto or the freed Negro in the British colonies. In Jamaica and the British Caribbean we find that a whole series of enactments which helped the Jamaican whites treat their slaves "as being outside the pale of Christian or human rights," persisted until ameliorative legislation was passed towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.


14 Frank Tannenbaum, The Destiny of the Negro in the Western Hemisphere (New York: The Academy of Political Science, 1946), passim. "Obstacles were placed in the way of manumission legally (in the British colonies) and it was discouraged in every other manner." Ibid., p. 25. See also Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas (New York: A. Knopf, 1947), passim by the same author.


17 M. G. Smith, "Slavery and Emancipation in Two Societies," Social and Economic Studies, Vol. III, nos. 3 & 4, December 1954, p. 271. With regard to the American situation Naomi Goldstein states that legislation in the South during slavery affirmed that every white person had the right to challenge the status of any Negro thus creating "a psychological system in which the Negro and slavery were inextricably bound together." See Roots of Prejudice Against the Negro in the United States (Boston: Boston University Press, 1948), p. 106.
As a chattel the Negro slave lost all claim to legal protection since the "principles of English Common Law did not apply to the slaves." Prior to 1824, even the freed Negro was refused permission to give evidence in court and although the religious instruction of the slaves had been decreed as early as 1696 this provision was successfully evaded until the end of the eighteenth century on the grounds that it would provide a cloak for plots against the existing order. Specific legislation was passed in the early years of slavery to reduce the number of manumissions made at the discretion of the slaveowner because it was felt that the growing class of free mulattoes and Negroes presented a threat to the security of the island.

Marriage as a legal institution had no place in slave society because as property slaves were prevented from forming permanent relationships that would interfere with and restrict their owner's rights. It was also believed that the Negro made a better slave when relieved of

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18 Tannenbaum, Slave and Citizen, p. 103.


21 Smith, "The Legal Status of Jamaican Slaves Before the Anti-Slavery Movement," pp. 297-98; Phillippo, op. cit., p. 161. The number of manumissions was very small in any case since there were no legal facilities for the slave to purchase his freedom. Ibid.
his responsibilities as a legal father and permitted to enjoy the freedom of finding his sexual satisfaction among the female slaves in general. For this reason the illegitimacy-legitimacy dichotomy was applied only to persons born free. 22

Thus we find that the Negro slaves were excluded from Christianity and the Christian community to which their masters belonged, creating a social and cultural gap which was expressed in the systematic exploitation of slaves as real property and which in part explains their inhuman treatment by many whites. 23 "There was no doubt that slavery was extremely cruel and this probably was emphasized by the power given to a few uneducated whites over persons of an alien culture." 24 Histories of the West Indies are full of the most gruesome stories of ingenious methods of torture devised by the slaveowners. 25 It will suffice to cite two examples of barbaric and inhuman treatment by Jamaican slaveowners.


24 Curtin, op. cit., p. 22.

Monk Lewis, himself the owner of slaves, but who was an example of an enlightened planter, cites in his journal the case of a Jamaican plantation owner called Bedward who used to send his old and sick slaves out to a deserted valley to perish in order to avoid the 'unnecessary' expense of taking care of them before they died. 26 Another Jamaican planter wrote of an eye-witness account of three Negroes being burnt feet first and reduced to ashes for their alleged part in an insurrection which resulted in bloodshed. Two others were "hung up" in irons to die—one living eight days and the other nine. 27

Coercion and the display of force were standard features of the plantation system 28 but eventually created a reaction both within the West Indies and the United Kingdom that in turn led to legislation designed to protect the slave. As will be seen later, the planters resisted the ameliorative legislation in the belief that the plantation system could hardly exist without coercive labor. 29


27 S. D. Scott, "To Jamaica and Back" (London: Chapman Hall, 1876), p. 211.


29 Even Monk Lewis who has been frequently cited as the model planter believed that strict discipline backed by force if necessary was a requisite for the continued success of Jamaican sugar production. See Lewis, op. cit., passim. In 1748 a bill which would have prevented the mutilation or dismemberment of slaves by their owners without the consent of a magistrate was rejected by the Jamaican Assembly since the general consensus among the whites was that the state should interfere as little as possible in the relations between master and slave. See Smith, "The Legal Status of Jamaican Slaves Before the Anti-Slavery Movement," p. 296, and Burn, op. cit., p. 53.
It would be unreasonable, however, to believe that all planters resorted to extreme cruelty to exact work from their slaves if only for the reason that they represented valuable property. In 1811 a manual for the treatment of plantation labor was published which, although restating the need for coercion by the slave-owner to exact work, recommended that "A slave who does his duty or rather who obeys your (the owner) orders to your satisfaction should always be distinguished by some mark of favour. . . ." Many slaves were responsive to kindness shown them and this fact could not have gone unnoticed by all intelligent slaveowners. Although the codification of the slave laws in 1781 demonstrated the planter's ideal of discipline and does not necessarily show the true relationship between the whites and the slaves, there was a progressive improvement in the treatment of the blacks in the eighteenth century. Greatest improvement took place after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.


32 Lewis, op. cit., pp. 275, 335.


How did the Negro react to his illicit and often brutal abduction from his homeland; to his treatment as a slave; and to the Jamaican environment in general. Unfortunately we can only form an approximate idea of the Jamaican Negro under slavery. Much research remains to be done in this field and in many respects we may never get a true appreciation due to the paucity of materials. Although he may have reacted in a number of different ways, there are numerous indications that the Negro was not—as he has often been pictured—the happy contented plantation slave, satisfied with his institutionalized inferiority and disposed to accommodate himself to any role offered him by the dominant white. Many slaves resisted capture fiercely and took their own lives rather than submit to slavery. Those who survived often showed signs of extreme distress and dejection and attempted insurrection at sea or on the plantations, while others managed to escape to form Maroon communities that threatened the security of the plantations.  

To what extent the traumatic experience of slavery destroyed the native culture of the African is difficult to ascertain. Some have claimed that it effectively erased all memory of his African background, because the slave traders were careful to use the principle of divide et impera so as to break down their tribal cultures with a view to avoiding

subsequent rebellions and in order to facilitate their adaptation to
the new environment. 36 Professor Leyburn says that since Haitian slaves
were selected from some 38 different tribes this alone would have militated
against the transplanting of their previous cultures intact. He believes
that Haitian peasant culture was formed from three main sources—namely
Africa, Europe, and local experience. 37

Yet the constant flow of new African immigrants must have served
to remind the Jamaican slaves of their African heritage and to refurbish
to some extent the cultural practices already established, 38 despite the
conflict and friction between the creoles (those born in Jamaica) and the
newly arrived slaves. 39 During slavery British policy did not encourage
assimilation and only sought to curb those features of African culture
that resisted slavery or threatened the lives and property of the whites. 40
In many respects the slave code helped to retain the gap between the
African and the Europeans. At best it encouraged partial assimilation by
concentrating on the destruction of those cultural features of the Afri-
can slave that were in conflict with the economic aims of the oligarchy.

36 Peter Fleming, "The Lesser Antilles of the West Indies," Holiday,
Vol. 5, March 1949, p. 190; Lawrence Hill, ed., Brazil (Berkeley: Univ. of

37 James G. Leyburn, The Haitian People (New Haven: Yale University

38 Pitman, "Slavery on the British West Indian Plantation in the

39 Roberts, The Population of Jamaica, p. 225. See also Burns, op.
cit., p. 55, and Lewis, op. cit., p. 299.

40 Pitman, "Slavery on the British West Indian Plantations in the
With reference to St. Dominique a Haitian scholas has described the Code Noir in the following way:

It does not mean that labor will be forced to give up all its cultural traditions. Once it accommodates or submits to the basic cultural traits which are in conformity with its economic role it is left to keep or rather develop -- and I insist on develop -- what we call "secondary" cultural elements, secondary of course from the point of view of the ruling class.

The Mohammedan slaves, of which there must have been a considerable number since the British planters apparently preferred the Coromantine from the Ashanti region of West Africa, often refused to learn English, and were less frequently converted to Christianity. Even when they did make the outward gesture of becoming creolized they often blended their 'superstitions' with Christianity. Jamaica's exploitation of the British monopoly of the slave trade resulted in a high proportion of newly arrived Africans to creoles. Those planters who were in the habit of maintaining a high ratio of African slaves by frequent purchases were criticized since it was believed that the owner could not possibly train them properly and that recent arrivals would not adapt so readily to their new environment.


To a certain extent at least the slave accommodated himself and often formed strong attachments for both his local community and his master, if only for reasons of economic security. Without doubt the second generation of slaves born into servitude was better equipped psychologically to accept its position. There is reason to believe that a popular legend which supposedly damned the African race to eternal inferiority helped its accommodation to a life of perpetual labor. Herskovits in a study of Negroes in the Bahian region of Brazil reports that the retentions of African cultural traits, rather than creating additional friction between the whites and the blacks, actually helped the African adjust himself to his new condition by permitting the sublimation of some of his acute frustration.

It should also be remembered that the Jamaican slave had many different tribal origins: namely those of the Mandingo (Senegambia), Chamba (Liberia), Coromantine (Upper Gold Coast and Nigerian area), Nago (Dahomey), Ebo (Camaroons) and the Congo and Angola from the southern area. As Leyburn says with reference to Haiti, this confusion must proportions and which were successful in maintaining a steady supply of European immigration throughout the period of slavery. Ibid., pp. 47-48.


Phillips, op. cit., p. 11.
have left the newly arrived slave bewildered\(^48\) and rendered him more amenable to acculturation and accommodation in the new world.

There has been a tendency in the past to interpret the abolition of slavery solely in terms of British idealism or the changing fortunes of the English economy, but what is often forgotten is that the Negro slave himself undoubtedly played quite an important role in establishing his freedom.\(^49\) One thing is certain—the African in the new world was never completely reconciled to slavery. Whether his response was passive resistance or open rebellion his reaction was obviously resented and feared by the whites, who dreaded another Haiti.\(^50\)

One cause of rebellion may well have been the official persecution of certain religious practices of the Africans that often served as a rallying point for the many slave insurrections in Jamaica and throughout the New World.\(^51\) Arturo Ramos writes that in Bahia in the period

\(^{48}\)Leyburn, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

\(^{49}\)Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 197. Williams says the British officials did not make the same mistake since the official documents show their concern over the growing unrest among the slaves. *Ibid.* This is particularly the case with respect to the great slave rebellion in Jamaica in 1831 which will be considered later.


1807-1835 there were a large number of slave revolts led by islamized Negroes which he did not feel were entirely motivated by economic reasons and ill-treatment but were rather attempts to preserve their religious practices against the onslaught of the dominant catholic religion. It has been said that Obeah was used in every important slave uprising in Jamaica.

The Maroon communities in Jamaica afford a good example of African communities that fought at any cost to preserve their freedom and their culture. The British tried unsuccessfully during the eighteenth century to eliminate them as a strategic threat. Not even the large scale deportation of the Maroons from Jamaica after the uprising in 1795 broke their spirit of independence and pride. Father J. J. Williams, a long time resident of the island and a student of African survivals in the twentieth century, claims that the Maroons were dominated by the Coromantines and that elements of their West African culture and their


53Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 173.


55Peter Abrahams, Jamaica: An Island Mosaic (London: HMSO, 1957), pp. 52-61. Many of the leaders of slave revolts were Ashantis. Monk Lewis reports that the leaders of a slave revolt in 1817 were all African born and one of them had been a slave in Haiti before being brought to Jamaica. The death of all whites on the island had been one of the expressed aims of the uprising. See Lewis, op. cit., p. 186. See also Phillips, op. cit., p. 11.
fierce spirit of independence formed the basis of society in the isolated mountain communities. Despite the antipathy between the slaves on the plantations and the independent Maroons the latter were a perpetual example to the more independent minded slaves.

It should not be assumed, however, that the African-born and therefore the more unacculturated elements of the island population were the only persons to concern themselves with freedom and the destruction of the socio-economic system of slavery. Several observers report a growing restlessness among the slaves in general during the last years of slavery. Although the creole slave enjoyed a certain prestige over the African-born that created divisions among the mass of slaves, and the caste system operated to instill a deep sense of racial inferiority among the Negroes, there is little reason to believe that they recognized the system as part of an unchangeable order.

Jamaican slaves were very obviously aware of the struggle being waged on their behalf in official circles and by the missionaries both

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57 Burns, op. cit., p. 553-54.
59 Mathieson, op. cit., pp. 208-211; Williams, Capitalism & Slavery, pp. 204-205; Burn, op. cit., p. 90.
in Jamaica and the United Kingdom. As early as 1817 Monk Lewis reported that there was a growing consciousness among the Negroes of their condition and he suggested that the only way to get their cooperation was by kind and fair treatment, since they were becoming better informed as time went on. The main leader of the 1831 revolt was a slave called Samuel Sharpe, who had a good knowledge of Christianity. In a conversation with a Baptist missionary, Henry Bleby, he stated that, although he had been well treated on the plantation, his principal aim had been to secure the freedom of his fellow bondsmen.

The role of the non-confirmist missionaries and the British government regarding the whole issue of slavery and its eventual abolition will be considered in more detail later. It will suffice now to say that the slaves eventually identified them with emancipation and tended to support their efforts, especially since the local white planters considered the activities of the missionaries seditious and opposed at every turn attempts by the authorities to improve the relations between planters and slaves.

Both the missionary societies and the authorities were aware of the possibility of the Negro taking matters into his own hands. Strict

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61 Olivier, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
62 Lewis, op. cit., passim.
65 Burn, op. cit., pp. 90-92. Several West Indian governors reported an aroused Negro slave populace showing an increased awareness
instructions were given to the missionaries not to arouse the hopes of the slaves unduly, and the Colonial Office ordered West Indian governors to warn the slave population of stringent counter-measures to be taken in the event of "any general misconduct or acts of insubordination." 

Ironically enough, the planters, although they acted as if emancipation would never be implemented and tried to ignore the increasing demand of the Negro for freedom, were partly responsible for the restive mood of the slaves with their careless talk of seceding from the empire and their treats and reprisals against the missionaries. It was the opinion of James Stephen, the permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the irresponsible attitudes and actions of the planters were stampeding the slaves into revolt. Certainly a large number of slaves felt that the local whites were withholding their liberation which they believed had already been decreed by the British Government and by 1830 they were in a very excitable mood. Governor Mulgrave reported to the Colonial Office that when he arrived of all matters pertaining to its interests and welfare. See Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, p. 201-202, and Williams (ed.) Documents of British West Indian History, p. 194.

66Olivier, op. cit., p. 60.


68Burn, op. cit., p. 92.

69Ibid., p. 90. See also Mathieson, op. cit., pp. 209-11.
in Jamaica in 1832 a great multitude of slaves followed him around apparently believing that he had come out with the Emancipation Proclamation. 70

Two other factors influenced the Negro's growing dissatisfaction of his role under slavery. A number of white planters had immigrated from Haiti during the Toussaint revolt, bringing their slaves with them to Jamaica. Although the presence of the French planters fresh from the strife in St. Domingue probably had a greater effect upon the whites, Governor Coote reported in 1807 that there was reason to believe that disturbances in the parish of Portland had been inspired by the Haitian slaves in the area. 71

Also of some significance was the emergence of an independent class of coloured Jamaicans who, although not personally sympathetic with the plight of the black masses, eventually realized that it would not be able to enjoy full political equality with the whites while slavery persisted as an institution. Thus the coloureds joined the anti-slavery fight to further their own ends, but the spectacle of a group of 'second class' citizens successfully contesting the white oligarchy's monopoly of political power did serve to encourage the plantation blacks in their hopes for freedom. 72

70 See CO 137/183, Mulgrave to Howick, 6 August, 1932, quoted in Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, p. 204.
71 CO 137/118, Coote to Windham, 9 January, 1807, quoted in Williams, Documents on British West Indian History, p. 194.
Under slavery the black masses found considerable comfort in certain African religious practices that had survived the proscription of the authorities who felt that Obeah and other religious manifestations of the slaves provided an incentive for rebellion. These cults also furnished an avenue for the black to perpetuate his original culture and alleviated some of the extreme frustration of slavery. Although often used as a vehicle for slave revolts, Obeah did help to discharge tension when physical violence was impracticable and was, due to its secretive nature, an effective institution for keeping alive cultural practices without immediate fear of white interference.73

Both Obeahism and Myalism tried to control the forces of the supernatural world—the former being an attempt to utilize the forces of evil while the latter was designed to offset the effects of maladventure and misfortune. Usually the Myalman was pitted against the Obeahman since his services were sought to offset the "Obeah" wrought by the witchdoctor of Obeahman. Although the whites frequently regarded Obeah as 'black magic,' in that it was used to inflict revenge on another party, and considered Myalism as 'white magic' since its function was that of counteracting the evils of the former, this was not altogether the case.

The Obeahman was the true sorcerer—a private practitioner—while the Myalman was invariably the leader of a cult group devoted to

organized religious activities, so that the protection he offered against
the machinations of the Obeahman were only part of his religious func-
tion. This dichotomy becomes apparent in the last years of slavery
and the early years of the nineteenth century when many of the native
Baptists broke away from the formal Baptist faith of the Christian mis-
sionaries and formed their own religious groups. It was then that the
Afro-Christian synthesis became apparent and Myalism joined with the
native Baptists to hunt down the old enemy, Obeah. Once the Christian
proselytizing began in earnest at the end of the eighteenth century it was
inevitable that there should be adaptation and rejection of certain
features of Christianity and that a religious syncretism of African
cultism and Christianity be established. As Dr. Curtin says, it was
natural that "Christ and John the Baptist should have been elevated into
the remnants of the African pantheon."

Although African religious practices played an important role in
the life of the Jamaican slave, they were not the only examples of 'cul-
tural focus' for the African in his new environment. Music and musical
instruments also had considerable significance. Most slave communities

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Henriques, Jamaica, p. 185; Curtin, op. cit., p. 34.
Curtin, op. cit., p. 34. Apparently the rate of conversion to
Christianity of the Negroes was governed by such practical considerations
as its effectiveness in fighting Obeah and there is evidence that the
Negroes allowed themselves to be Christianised more readily after natural
disasters. See Pitman, "Slavery on the British West Indian Plantations
developed their musical instruments based upon African models such as the Goombah, which was a hollow block of wood covered with a goat skin and which, when struck, gave a deep booming sound. During the Christmas season the Goombah was used in a popular ritual and procession called the 'John Connu' dance. 77

Recent research has begun to reveal the importance also of certain economic forms retained under slavery by the Negro which obviously had African origins—namely the elaborate marketing system. Not only did the growing of provisions prove attractive to the slaves because of its African associations and provide them with an opportunity to free themselves from some of the control of the Plantation whites, but it also gave them the chance to attend the Sunday market and escape from many of the rigors of slavery. The whites tended to encourage the peasant agriculture on a small scale with the result that this cultural feature, already deeply ingrained, was reinforced under slavery and became a most important aspect of Jamaican peasant life after emancipation. 78 Peasant agriculture carried on under slavery never reached great proportions but it had far reaching repercussions after emancipation.

On the plantations there was an elaborate division of labor into three main groups: the tradesmen and the jobbers; the field hands

77 Gardner, op. cit., pp. 183-84.

charged with cultivating and cutting the cane; and the domestics who were mostly coloured. Each of these groups enjoyed widely differing rights and privileges which tended to create tensions within the slave community. Not only was the difference between the creole and African slave exploited by the whites to maintain order, but there seems to have been quite a strong mutual antipathy between the two groups since the creoles were often excluded from the rebellions organized by the newer arrivals. Many slaves who did not work on the plantations belonged to small settlers and townspeople. They were craftsmen or did incidental labor in jobbing gangs and quite frequently their conditions were worse than those of the plantation slaves.

With respect to marital relationships among the slaves it is probably here that the influence of the plantation and the institution of slavery was greatest. It has been claimed that the polygamous forms of mating found in the New World are merely continuations of the cohabiting customs of Negro Africa, which were perpetuated under slavery in the Americas, but those who are convinced that the experience of slavery was the most important factor in shaping the modes of mating behaviour

80 Ibid., p. 69. See also Steward, op. cit., pp. 256-61.
81 Stewart, op. cit., pp. 234-35.
among the Negro slaves are not only numerous but their arguments are convincing. 83

The most obvious factor was the planter policy of discouraging marriages at all costs. At first there were no privileges given to the pregnant woman on the plantation because her condition was frequently regarded as an economic liability which detracted from her effectiveness as a labourer. 84 Even when it became profitable to breed slaves and certain rights and incentives were given to the female slave to reproduce, no encouragement was given to the male to form a permanent union. Slaves were property, and the children belonged to the slaveowner, not to the mother. 85 Because most if not all of the advantages of reproduction accrued to the owners of slaves there was little incentive for the establishment of permanent unions between the female and the male slaves. Marriage had no guarantees and most Negro women were very reluctant to bear children under slavery. 86

83 See the works of T. S. Simey, George Cumper, George Roberts and Fernando Henriques. M. G. Smith, while recognizing the importance of slavery in molding the mating patterns, does allow for the possibility of African influences. See Smith, "Some Aspects of Social Structure in the British Caribbean About 1820," p. 72. George Cumper says that resistance offered by some slaves to the breaking up of their families was not entirely the result of missionary influence and suggests that they made efforts to maintain the stable relations they had known before. See "A Modern Jamaican Sugar Estate," p. 131.


During the period of the slave trade the sex ratios were already high, so that the tendency of the plantation whites and the head Negro employees such as drivers to take several concubines from among the female slaves merely aggravated the situation. 87 Quite apart from forming a bad example for the masses and even the free coloured middle class, the widespread incidence of concubinage as practiced by the 'prestige groups' came to be regarded as normal and inevitable, and encouraged loose unions by lowering the number of women available to the slaves. 88 In the eyes of the blacks, marriage came to be associated with high social status and was not something to which they could reasonably aspire, although the higher rate of marriage among the Negroes after abolition does show to some extent the degree to which it had been implanted as an ideal by the missionaries during slavery. 89

There is little doubt that the traumatic experience along with the social and psychological disruption wrought by the slave trade and slavery fundamentally affected the Negro’s attitudes toward forming stable family relationships in the New World. The shock of finding


89 Cumper, "A Modern Jamaican Sugar Estate," p. 130. Even among the slaves apparently there existed a colour preference and this often served to reduce the number of permanent unions and frustrated the efforts of the missionaries to instill the ideal of Christian marriage. See Smith, "Some Aspects of Social Structure in the British Caribbean About 1820," p. 73.
himself in a strange environment with slaves of all different tribal backgrounds whose mating habits differed from his own, coupled with the hostility of the white owners, must have mitigated successfully against such a development. The whole social milieu of the plantation was against it.\textsuperscript{90} It has been suggested that although polygamy was fairly common in Africa,\textsuperscript{91} marriage was more widely accepted and was supported with strong sanctions in most societies. It must be remembered, however, that as an institution it depended to a large extent upon tribal sanctions and when these were no longer possible in the New World it disintegrated.\textsuperscript{92}

The white planter completely dominated Jamaican society in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In his hands was concentrated all the economic and political power. Yet within the white caste there were differences between the 'Europeans' (or those whites born outside of Jamaica) and the creole whites, quite apart from the socio-economic ranking on the plantation itself which distinguished between the planter-attorney group and the overseers and lesser whites employed as book-keepers or servants. No matter how humble the position occupied by the white he was always considered superior to persons


\textsuperscript{91}Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{92}Cousins, op. cit., p. 35.
of colour and the blacks irrespective of the circumstances of the latter.\textsuperscript{93}

Many of the marginal whites employed in the lesser functions on the plantations lived under disgraceful conditions. Often they were badly treated by their employers. Their principal function was to get as much work out of the slaves as possible and, frustrated as they were, it is hardly surprising that the relations between the blacks and the poor whites were bad.\textsuperscript{94} The aristocracy comprising the richer planters and attorneys formed a closed social class, and they looked down on the lesser whites whom they regarded as 'white Negroes' due to their constant association with the blacks.\textsuperscript{95}

Absenteeism also helped to create a gulf between the creoles and the English born. Those planters whose economic circumstances justified their absence from their plantations often preferred to place control of their estates in the hands of attorneys and managers in order to live in the United Kingdom. Quite apart from encouraging in the Jamaican whites an almost neurotic attachment for all things English, which retarded their adjustment to the Jamaican environment, absenteeism also had two other unfavorable effects. Firstly, it resulted in a great deal of


\textsuperscript{94}Pilkington, \textit{Daybreak in Jamaica}, pp. 36-37; Curtin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 17.

economic inefficiency by preventing the planter from acquiring first
hand knowledge of the problems of the plantation. Secondly, the treat-
ment of the Negroes on the estates of the absentee landlords was in-
variably worse than that on the estates of the resident planters, where
they enjoyed the moderating attention of the owner. 96

Jamaican whites appeared to be preoccupied with questions of
status and authority. In all situations they tended to present a
united front against the slave so as to maintain discipline on the
plantation and ensure their position of supremacy. 97 The whip played
an important role even after it ceased to be used to inflict physical
punishment. It was the symbol of white authority. 98 White children
were taught from birth that the Negro was born to slavery. Their youth-
ful tendencies to tyrannize over their black playmates were encouraged
rather than repressed, in the hope that they would be better adjusted
to future modes of Jamaican living. Many of the whites who had been
educated in the mother country, however, were offended by conditions in
the West Indies and worked to improve them. 99 A contemporary observer
reported in 1823 that the gap between the creole whites and the British

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96 Curtin, op. cit., pp. 50, 205-206; Henriques, Jamaica, pp. 111-12;
Burn, op. cit., p. 31. Intelligent Jamaican planters were not unaware of
the dangers of absenteeism and appointed a special commission in 1797 to
investigate the problem. See Olivier, op. cit., pp. 66-68.


98 Ibid., p. 18.

99 Gardner, op. cit., p. 337.
born was narrowing due to better educational opportunities, so that this must have resulted in an over-all improvement of the treatment of the slaves. 100

Class distinctions were, nevertheless, maintained in the militia in which the free coloureds and the whites were obliged to serve. Planters and attorneys formed the officer class, while the lesser whites usually made up the non-commissioned officers. 101 Missionaries were not usually considered members of the white caste because their interest in Christianizing the slaves made them pariahs in the eyes of the Jamaican whites. 102 Conspicuous consumption and ostentation were marked features of planter-class living—obviously with a view to making its presence felt. It has been said that the cultural focus of the Jamaican white was economic success which in turn was the main prerequisite for social status in the white community. 103 There was very little appreciation of aesthetics and learning—rather "The planters reveled in material luxury, and in giving banquets and dances. . . . The women loved dancing [and] it was said of them that their ordinary laziness vanished at the sound of dance music. . . ." 104

100 Stewart, op. cit., p. 168.
101 Curtin, op. cit., p. 46.
103 Ragatz, op. cit., passim. See also Curtin, op. cit., pp. 46, 104. This was also very apparent in other areas where slavery existed. See Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves, passim.
104 Roberts, Jamaica, p. 83.
Perhaps the most harmful aspect of slavery was the subjection of one human being to the absolute control of another. In this respect it did as much to harm the white as it did the slave, warping his whole outlook. The planter, always capable of displaying great charm to outsiders, was at the same time disposed to extreme stubbornness and violence when he felt his interests were being threatened. Besides his sense of isolation in a hostile community the slowly declining fortunes of plantation agriculture in the West Indies added to his frustration. Yet his reaction was one of conservatism and aversion to innovation and experimentation, not only in agricultural techniques but also with respect to the socio-economic order. His defence of slavery as a workable institution was fanatical because he regarded emancipation as a fatal blow to his way of life. Although many Jamaican whites admitted that it was a social evil—an offence to Christian morality—they defended the system on economic grounds claiming that its advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

Most Jamaican whites had a very low opinion of the black, who they felt benefitted in the long run from slavery. They tried to picture

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105 Burn, op. cit., p. 113.
107 A. Barclay, A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies (London: Smith and Elder, 1828), passim; Curtin, op. cit., pp. 62-65, 104. M. G. Lewis says that practically everyone wished that slavery had never been devised but they believed that abolition would produce worse mischief than the good it would accomplish. See Lewis, op. cit., p. 331.
the slave as being essentially content with his lot and argued that he was incapable in any case of attaining the 'higher things in life'.

Frequently Negroes were considered little better than wild animals to be treated at best like children so that many whites who accused them of savagery and immorality regarded slavery as the only means of civilizing them and maintaining control over their wild animalistic passions.

Yet the local whites never made any real effort to improve the social, educational, or moral conditions of the slaves. Rather they were hostile to the religious instruction of their slaves and proceeded to blame the missionaries for their growing restlessness, because as one planter put it, "education and religion will make the negroes better men, but it will not make them better slaves."

Of course there were notable exceptions. As mentioned previously M. G. Lewis is often cited as an example of an enlightened planter who was capable of recognizing the good traits of his slaves and rewarding their good behaviour with kindness and special favors. He favoured education for his slaves and stated that his experiences with Jamaican

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110 The Royal Gazette (Jamaica), Vol. LIII, No. 28, June 2-July 9, 1831, p. 31; Richard Hill, Lights and Shadows of Jamaican History (Kingston: Ford and Gall, 1859), pp. 95-96.
111 Quoted in Phillippo, op. cit., p. 428. It is interesting to note that prior to the Civil War a fine was imposed on persons who taught a slave to read or write in the state of South Carolina. See Goldstein, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
Negroes had been more pleasant than his dealings with English labourers.\footnote{112} Alexander Bravo, one of the island's largest and most substantial planters, claimed that the slaveowners' cries that emancipation would disrupt the flow of labor and make the Negro even more unmanageable was without foundation.\footnote{113} The Marquis of Sligo was the most notable example of a Jamaican planter who openly opposed the viewpoint of his fellow planters and campaigned for abolition—both as a slaveowner and later as governor of the island.\footnote{114}

Nonetheless the basic viewpoint of the white was one of fear and antagonism to all forms of advancement made by the blacks and the coloured sections of the population.\footnote{115} The increasing number of free blacks and coloureds greatly alarmed the planters who remembered the successful alliance in Haiti of the blacks and the coloureds against the whites.\footnote{116} Despite the tendency of the coloureds to identify themselves with the white culture, a similar alliance did develop in Jamaica with the express purpose of destroying slavery and the white monopoly of

\footnote{112}{Lewis, op. cit., pp. 121, 182-84.}
\footnote{113}{Sturge and Harvey, op. cit., pp. 183-84.}
\footnote{114}{Burn, op. cit., pp. 148-49.}
\footnote{115}{W. L. Burn, The British West Indies (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), p. 113; Curtin, op. cit., p. 38; Pilkington, Daybreak in Jamaica, p. 45.}
\footnote{116}{Hall, op. cit., pp. 157-158; Cundall, op. cit., passim, especially the Introduction. See also Elso Goveia, An Introduction to the Federation Day Exhibition on Aspects of the History of the West Indies (no facts of publication), p. 23.}
political representation. Thus the situation in Haiti was watched very closely. Every effort was made to restrict the number of manumissions and the practice of using blacks in the militia was not regarded with favor.

To some extent planter absenteeism had the unfortunate effect of encouraging loose living among the Jamaican whites because some of their wives never visited Jamaica. Also the economic position of the marginal whites on the plantations did not permit them to bring their own women from England so that the shortage of white women in Jamaica certainly encouraged the formation of loose unions with slave women and free women of color. Yet even the rich planters whose white wives lived on the plantations invariably formed illicit alliances with free women of colour whom at times they treated with great respect and often preferred.

In many ways the miscegenation that resulted brought the black and the white closer together. Because the coloureds were usually given lighter work and special privileges and were frequently manumitted, they soon came to form a buffer between the two other groups. The coloureds

117 Mathieson, op. cit., pp. 194-95.
118 Goveia, op. cit., p. 23.
119 Gardner, op. cit., p. 245; Williams, Documents on British West Indian History, p. 169; Smith, "Some Aspects of Social Structure in the British Caribbean About 1820," p. 60.
120 Burn, Emancipation and Apprenticeship, pp. 30-39.
acutely aware of their differences from the black's way of life, were especially careful at all times to emulate the white. This desire to be considered part of the dominant caste was virtually pathological. Coloured women who preferred to become the concubines of the whites rather than marry people within their own group would almost never consider marrying someone darker than themselves, no matter what his economic circumstance.

Despite the obvious attraction of the coloured woman for the white male he seldom treated her as a social equal nor was she accepted in white society although education and property were given to the illegitimate offspring of such unions. There were no laws prohibiting marriages of persons of colour with the whites, but it was unthinkable under the conditions that existed before the abolition of slavery. The most respectable of the coloureds tended to form a society of their own which by 1825 had become an important section of the Jamaican population, numbering some 30,000 persons.

With the whites colour was the all-important determinant of social status, but with the coloured it was a question of shade. The latter tried to reject their African ancestry, showing a definite preference

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122 Henriques, Jamaica, p. 103.


for European ways. Their rapid acceptance of European culture was facilitated by the traditional practice of employing them in special functions on the plantations. As owners of plantations and slaves they often came to occupy important positions in the island economy and adopted most of the ideas of the whites concerning slavery.\textsuperscript{126} Like the whites they avoided manual labor because of its associations of slave status.\textsuperscript{127} They were not, however, content with their position of second class citizenship, and by the 1820's a schism had developed between the white and the coloured owners of slaves over the question of the political rights of the latter. In 1721 a law excluded them from the franchise while an earlier enactment had deprived them of the right to occupy public posts.\textsuperscript{128}

The coloureds were aided in their fight for equal rights by another Jamaican minority that suffered discrimination, namely the Jews. Many of them had come from families who had been long-time residents of the island, yet they continued to be denied first class citizenship. A large number of these Jamaican Jews had abandoned their religion for that of the established church, with the object of merging themselves with the local whites. Nonetheless their economic success excited the envy of the Christians who continued to exclude them from all the public


\textsuperscript{127}Curtin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{128}Mathieson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 194; Chapman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 32.
offices and commissions in the militia.  

After the coloureds made it clear that they would bring every weapon to bear upon the recalcitrant whites in their fight for equality, the British Government came to their rescue. The whites talked of secession but the coloureds remained completely loyal to the British connection and organized a movement to oppose the former under the leadership of two coloured Jamaicans, both of whom were later to play important roles in the development of Jamaica. Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn were the founders of the Watchman, a newspaper that became the mouthpiece of the coloured section. After publishing material that proved to be offensive to the whites Jordon was put on trial and sent to prison, but the whites who were afraid of his influence with the coloureds released him after six months. Slowly but surely the coloured element in Jamaica forced recognition of its demands on the ruling whites by the sheer weight of its numbers and its increasing importance in the community. By 1832 all persons other than slaves enjoyed full political rights.

129J. A. P. M. Andrade, A Record of the Jews in Jamaica (Kingston, Jamaica Times Ltd., 1941), p. 63; Pitman, The Development of the British West Indies, p. 29.

130Mathieson, op. cit., p. 190.

131C. H. Wesley, "The Negro in the West Indies," p. 64; Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, p. 201.


133Hall, op. cit., pp. 154-55; See also Williams, Documents on British West Indian History, p. 231; Burns, op. cit., p. 625.
Of interest also is the attitude of the British government towards Negro slavery and the forces that influenced its action in abolishing slavery in 1833. There is little doubt that idealism played a significant role, but its importance has been greatly exaggerated at the expense of other factors which were equally important. The anti-slavery movement was a strange mixture of humanitarianism and economic interests—of idealism and self-interest. It was not, as Professor Coupland and others have pictured it, a group of disinterested Christian patriots whose only motivation was to aid the West Indian slave. Professor W. L. Burn, a British historian, has referred to the abolition of the slave trade as an act of national self-abnegation, but as Dr. Eric Williams suggests, the British government may have had the ruination of the French sugar islands in mind when they agreed to forfeit their monopoly in the infamous transportation of captured Africans to the New World.

Anton V. Long in his study of Jamaican society immediately following slavery says that "Freedom came to Jamaican slaves as a wonderful and a highly prized gift." A. V. Long, Jamaica and the New Order, 1827-1847 (Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University College of the West Indies, 1956), p. 95.


136 Burn, The British West Indies, p. 102.

137 Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, pp. 146-47.
The whole question of abolition was linked with the important political and economic changes that were taking place within the empire. Of considerable significance was the fact that mercantilism and the West India sugar monopoly were under attack by the proponents of laissez faire who were frustrated by the system of privilege that restricted their economic progress. British manufacturers felt that the growing markets in the Americas and other parts of the world could not be tapped unless the British people were prepared to buy some of the raw materials produced by these areas, especially sugar and cotton. Thus many of the allies of the abolitionists and some of the abolitionists themselves were motivated by economic considerations. East Indian sugar producers resented the monopoly enjoyed by the West Indians. They allied themselves with the abolitionists to destroy the special privileges of the sugar planters and reduce the sugar duties to parity.

A number of historians who believe that the West Indies had entered a period of chronic economic stagnation and decline by the end of the nineteenth century do not accept the thesis put forward by the planters and their supporters that the ruination of the West Indies, which was evident by the mid-nineteenth century, was due solely to the


139 Mellor, op. cit., p. 81; Mathieson, op. cit., p. 115; Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, p. 151.
abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of the slaves. Rather they interpret the decline of the area in terms of soil exhaustion, increasing competition from Brazil and Cuba, and the increasing failure of the plantation system under slavery which was in great part due to the mounting desire of the slaves for freedom. Once the West Indies had outlived their usefulness in the imperial economic system and were considered an economic liability, it was only natural that the latter would be reorganized to fit in with the aims and interests of the new class of industrial capitalists and the bourgeoisie. The fact that slavery was uneconomic was even apparent to some slaveowners, and was reflected in the growing lack of conviction shown by the pro-slavery writers. Parliamentary reform in Britain was tied up with the slavery issue because the West India planters who formed the so-called West India bloc in the British Parliament opposed the Reform Bill of 1832 and fought to preserve the dominance of the rural aristocracy against the rising middle classes. It was not long before the proponents of political reform in England saw that the old mercantilist system with its ally slavery would have to be destroyed in order to acquire their immediate goal.

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142 Mathieson, op. cit., p. 219.
Certainly the economic and political motives behind the abolition of slavery was strong, but the humanitarian factor also played an important role. A small group of members of parliament who waged a long and eventually successful battle against Negro slavery had close associations with the evangelical movement in England. These people not only influenced British parliamentary opinion but had a strong influence on the Colonial Office as well. In fact James Stephen, the permanent Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, was not only a staunch abolitionist and evangelical but he unquestionably played an important part in the eventual destruction of slavery in the British Empire.

Since slavery was considered a moral evil it was singled out by the non-conformist churches in Britain for attack. They sent their missionaries to the West Indies to christianize the slaves against the opposition of the planters and the established church. Owing to the Church of England's catering solely to the whites, the Anglicans resisted attempts to christianize the Negroes and fought alongside the planters to retain slavery. Eventually attempts were made to reform the established church in order to establish contact with the common

143 Burns, op. cit., p. 559; Schuyler, op. cit., p. 120; Burn, The British West Indies, pp. 100-101.


people, but this never proved successful. Evangelical churches, on the other hand, took a very real interest in the conditions of the slaves and were moderately successful in attracting members, not only because they were helping the slave achieve his freedom, but also because the non-sectarian faiths encouraged more group participation and displayed a more egalitarian spirit. Although few slaves received religious instruction before the nineteenth century the Baptist church attracted a relatively large number of believers before the Emancipation Act. Nevertheless its control over the new converts was tenuous because large numbers of adherents later broke off and formed their own native Baptist sects with revival-myalist tendencies. The role of the missionaries was a difficult one. They were outcasts as far as the resident whites were concerned while, as self-appointed leaders of the blacks, they never really gained the confidence of their wards.

The anti-slavery forces which developed during the second half of the eighteenth century were at first weak, but by the second decade of the nineteenth century they commanded a large following. It has been stated that the decision of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield outlawing

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\(^{146}\) Olivier, op. cit., pp. 88, 91-93; Mathieson, op. cit., p. 41; Curtin, op. cit., pp. 48-49.


\(^{149}\) Curtin, op. cit., p. 35.
slavery in the United Kingdom was the beginning of the end for the system in the empire. Certainly the trial showed an increasing awareness of the problems associated with the 'peculiar institution' that expressed itself through parliamentary and Colonial Office pressure upon the West Indian planters, firstly to ameliorate the conditions of their slaves and then, when this was ineffective, to abolish Negro slavery entirely. 150

Every effort by the Colonial Office to persuade the Jamaican Assembly to pass legislation which would humanize the harsh condition of slavery in the island was strenuously resisted. 151 In part this opposition was based upon a longstanding jealousy of the Colonial Assembly concerning what it liked to call its prerogatives. All control by the 'mother parliament' was considered interference so that when the Colonial Office began to take the initiative after 1823, the Jamaican Assembly, comprising as it did the planter interests, sent numerous petitions protesting its 'sovereignty.' 152

Despite the attitude of the Jamaican Assembly, the Colonial Office continued to observe a policy of central control over the colonial legislatures, doubtless with the idea that it was pursuing

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151 Williams, Documents on British West Indian History, pp. 110-11.

the doctrine of trusteeship developed by Edmund Burke. At first both parliament and the Colonial Office were cautious and afraid of complete and immediate emancipation for the Negroes, but after the great slave revolt of 1831 the British Government decided to take stronger measures with the Colonial Assembly.

The rebellion which was largely the result of the growing impatience of the black masses caused by the blind opposition of the whites to the enlightened policy of the British Government, was repressed by the Jamaican authorities with great severity. Not only was the number of executions of slaves excessive but the planters formed a body called the Colonial Church Union specifically for the purpose of persecuting the missionaries and the coloureds whom they blamed for the uprising, and openly talked of secession. The Assembly sent a memorial to the Imperial parliament castigating it for the misfortune that had befallen the island.

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154 Burn, Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies, p. 105. See also The St. Jago de la Vega Gazette (Jamaica), Vol. LXXXVII, No. 11, March 1831, p. 7.

155 Schuyler, op. cit., pp. 171-76.

156 Curtin, op. cit., pp. 85-89; Mathieson, op. cit., p. 218; Burn, Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies, pp. 94-101; Burns, op. cit., p. 623.

157 Williams, Documents on British West Indian History, pp. 172-73.
This latest manifestation of planter defiance created a strong reaction in Britain eventually providing the popular support for the abolitionists and their allies to pass the Abolition Act of 1833. Compromise was now out of the question, so the British Government decided on legislation passed through parliament which would force the West Indian legislatures, especially that of Jamaica, to take positive action. Once the latter saw that the mother country was determined, the Assembly reluctantly accepted emancipation as inevitable in the hope of trying to get the most favorable terms possible for the planter interests.

Considerable debate took place in parliament and the Colonial Office as to the best method of achieving freedom for the Negro slaves. Indeed the whole matter of whether the Negro would work on the plantation without coercion; the question of whether the plantation system could be continued successfully without a radical change in the outlook of the planter; the issue of independent cultivation and the development of a stable Negro peasantry; and the problem of establishing a true political and social democracy, were important considerations in the years 1833-65 affecting both the policy of the British Colonial Office and Jamaican politics.

Despite a rapid decline in British interest in Jamaican affairs in this period, basic colonial policy continued to regard Jamaica as

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158 Schuyler, op. cit., p. 170; Mathieson, op. cit., p. 224.
159 Mathieson, op. cit., p. 207; Burns, op. cit., p. 620.
naturally adapted to plantation agriculture and large scale production of cane sugar. In general, opinion in Britain and Jamaica was divided into two groups; one taking the pessimistic view that the Negro masses, while naturally suited by nature to the hard physical labor demanded by the sugar plantation, were indolent and spoiled and needed to be coerced to work satisfactorily; the other maintaining that the Negro was a good worker when provided with sufficient incentives and treated decently and that he should be permitted the choice of either plantation labor, with its potentially greater material compensations, or independent peasant cultivation. These problems will form the subject matter in Chapter II.
CHAPTER II

EMANCIPATION AND THE PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHING A NEW SOCIAL ORDER:
THE ROLE OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE CONFLICT
OF INTERESTS IN THE ISLAND, 1833-65

Slavery as an institution was dommed by 1833. Whether emancipation came from below or from above it was now merely a question of the most propitious method of arranging for the freedom of the Negro slaves with the least amount of disorder.¹ James Stephen in the Colonial Office maintained a steady campaign against slavery which he considered to be a monstrous institution continually perpetrating "every species of oppression that has elsewhere existed under the sun."² It is no exaggeration to say that the constant pressure upon Parliament by the Colonial Office in the last stages of the fight for abolition was vital to its enactment and the establishment of the apprenticeship system in the years 1833-34.³

There was considerable debate over the whole question of how the emancipated slave was to use his freedom. Generally speaking there were


three main alternatives. Firstly the general attitude of the British Government and the English public favoured the Negro becoming a regular wage worker similar to his English counterpart. The Jamaican planters, however, felt that the traditional planter-slave relationships established in the past had to be retained to ensure the continued success of the plantation system and they sought to achieve this by devising numerous procedures to make the Negroes dependent upon the plantation for their livelihood. Quite at variance with either of these solutions was the policy generally adopted by the missionaries in Jamaica. They encouraged the complete removal of the freedmen from the plantation environment and their establishment as independent cultivators on their own freeholds or rented land.¹

The position of the Colonial Office was a difficult one. Since it had little confidence in the impartiality of the Jamaican Assembly it was forced to maintain a strict control over all legislation concerning the Negro masses. Complete domination was, however, out of the question if the world was to regard the emancipation of the West Indian Negro a success. Apprenticeship was considered an admirable system to provide a transitional period during which both the slaves and planters could adjust themselves to their new situation.⁵


Prior to the Cabinet crisis during the Melbourne Government in 1838-39, the role of the British Government was one of initiating the legislation for the liberation of the slaves to be carried out by the colonial legislature. When these measures were not enacted in the spirit of the Abolition Act the Colonial Office intervened directly through the medium of the colonial governors. The Imperial government sought to regulate relations between the planters and the apprentices with the establishment of special magistrates directly responsible to the colonial governor. In general, however, apprenticeship was not a success and once again the home government intervened to abolish the system despite the protests of the planter.

Before considering the reasons for the early establishment of complete emancipation of the Negro apprentices by the British Government and the crisis created in the United Kingdom over the question of Jamaica's future form of government, it is necessary to review the reaction in Jamaica to the apprenticeship system and the extent to which it was a success. Apparently the white planters regarded it as part of the compensation due them for the loss of their property and endeavoured to exact all the work possible out of the apprentices before the system was due to end in the early forties. Not only was there


8 The St. Jago de la Vega Gazette (Jamaica), Vol. LXXVII, No. 11,
real anxiety in Jamaica among the whites about a possible uprising of the black masses, but there also existed the widespread belief on the plantations that the Negro would refuse to work on the plantations and that a general breakdown of the plantation system would follow.\(^9\) One contemporary observer stated that the planters had set their hearts on ruin and they would have been disappointed had they not been able to tell their critics that the 'inevitable' had happened.\(^10\) The attitude of the Jamaican planters to apprenticeship was one of passive resistance rather than open rebellion.\(^11\) The missionaries were divided as to the best methods of creating a new society. In one respect they were just as concerned as the planters that the Negro should not desert the plantations and disrupt the economic system if only for the purpose of proving the success of free labour to the other areas still utilizing slave labour.\(^12\) They regarded

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12 Ibid., p. 105; J. J. Gurney, A Winter in the West Indies (London: John Murray, 1940), p. 239.
apprenticeship as an opportunity to guide the ex-slave along the path of social and economic improvement and at first fought the attempts of the planters to evict the apprentices from the plantations. When they saw that this policy of eviction was merely designed to make the Negro more dependent upon employment on the plantation under conditions resembling slavery, the missionaries realized that compromise with the planters was impossible. It was then that the alternative of independent peasant communities appeared to offer a more attractive future for the Negro masses, especially after the planters continued to oppose the missionaries' proselytizing activities on the estates, and these settlements promised to give the missionaries a greater degree of control over the Negro.

Despite the prognostications of the pessimists and enemies of freedom for the Negro slave, the behavior of the apprentices was a tribute to the faith in them shown by the groups working for their liberation. At midnight on July 31, 1834, over 600,000 West Indian slaves, more than half of whom were in Jamaica, quietly accepted their new status as apprentices obligated to work for their former masters.

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15 Burns, op. cit., p. 629; Gurney, op. cit., pp. 102, 117; Burn, op. cit., pp. 174-75.
There were examples of apprentices refusing to work and it was evident that all the blame for the failure of the apprenticeship system lay not with the planters alone" but in general it was the policy of the estate owners and their Jamaican allies which caused the breakdown. They were largely responsible for the wide gap which subsequently developed between the plantation with its European cultural influences and the isolated Negro peasant communities in the interior. This is evident from an examination of the apprenticeship system itself and the conditions of the Negro apprentices in the years 1834-38.

Fearful of the consequences of emancipation and resentful of the policy of the imperial government, the planters set out to exploit the Negroes and disrupt the work of those stipendiary magistrates who were either impartial or pro-Negro. This frustration of the estate owners and managers was manifested in a whole series of measures designed to intimidate and force the Negro to observe the social and economic customs built up under slavery.\(^\text{17}\) Many planters agreed on a uniform low wage rate to be paid to the apprentices, very often less than the rents they were being charged for their cottages on the estates. Frequently when the latter showed reluctance to work, their provisions grounds were destroyed, their houses unroofed, or they were evicted from the plantations.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{16}\) Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 225; Burn, op. cit., p. 179.

\(^{17}\) H. Paget, op. cit., p. 8; Olivier, op. cit., p. 109; Gardner, op. cit., p. 395.

Using their majority in the Assembly, the planters passed legislation designed to subdue the apprentices' desires for economic independence. During slavery the tax on imported corn, which formed a vital part of the Negro's diet, was a mere three pennies, but during apprenticeship it was raised to three shillings. The taxes on rice, salt fish, and pork were increased by 300 per cent all with the view to making the Negro work for wages, while taxes on many materials used by the planters were reduced. Of course there were a number of intelligent planters who, as humanitarians or for reasons of enlightened self interest, paid adequate wages regularly, charged fair rents, or sought to encourage a measure of independence for the Negro. Yet many planters continued to accuse the Negro of refusing to work regardless of the wages offered him.

Obviously the Colonial Office miscalculated badly when it set up the stipendiary magistrate system in the belief that it would be adequate to handle the planter-apprentice relations and supervise the general implementation of the Abolition Act. Quite apart from having little or no training for their responsible positions, the magistrates were often favorable to the planter interests, and in any case their independence of action was greatly debilitated by the fact that they

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21 Gurney, op. cit., pp. 95, 117-40; Burn, op. cit., pp. 270-71.
had to work in conjunction with the local justice system dominated as it was by the local whites and a few of the wealthier coloureds. 22

The fact that local justices and magistrates, who in the past had all been favourable to planter interests, were replaced by men capable of some degree of impartiality rankled the planters and they tended to consider most of the stipendiary magistrates as their enemies and as friends of the missionaries and the Negroes. 23

Despite the generally good behaviour of the Negroes they were disappointed with their new status as apprentices, since it resembled too closely their former condition as slaves. 24 In "most respects the inauguration of the apprenticeship system in 1834 did not greatly change the existing social and economic relations of the slave." 25 There can be little doubt that had the Negro, who was willing enough to work for wages, been paid adequate compensation with decent conditions the system would have worked a good deal more smoothly. The prospects for advancement were, however, too meager and too slow. 26 When the planters and their allies among the stipendiary magistrates used cruelty to coerce

22 Gurney, op. cit., pp. 95, 117-40; Burn, op. cit., pp. 270-71.

23 CS 102/11, No. 8, Charles Metcalfe to Normanby, 16th October, 1839, pp. 278-79.


26 Burn, op. cit., p. 107.
the apprentices there was danger of a general explosion.  

In any evaluation of apprenticeship one has to be aware of the writings of those persons who expected too much of the system, handicapped as it was by inadequate supervision and lack of real interest by the imperial government, and who were too quick to express disillusionment.  

Many missionaries were disappointed that the Negroes did not display more gratitude towards them and the British Government for their part in abolition. The Reverend W. P. Livingstone in his book *Black Jamaica* states that the black man on the eve of emancipation was a child—ignorant, helpless, irresponsible, his mind full of blind prejudices and impulses of fear and superstition—and concludes that emancipation was an "illogical and perilous experiment." Ernest Payne in his study on the Baptist Missionary Society says of abolition that "if ever a law was generous in its motive and foolish in its method it was the law that made Jamaica a free country."

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27. [Ibid., p. 116; J. M. Phillippo reported that in a two-year period some 60,000 apprentices received 250,000 lashes and 50,000 punishments such as the treadmill and the chain gang. *Op. cit.*, pp. 171-72.]


30. [W. P. Livingstone, *Black Jamaica: A Study in Evolution* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., 1911), pp. 31-32. It should be remembered that this view was probably coloured by the extreme disillusionment felt by the missionary interests later in the nineteenth century.]

Disappointment and disapproval of the Negro's performance during apprenticeship is also evident in the twentieth century works of the historians W. L. Mathieson, and to a less extent in those of W. L. Burn and Lowell J. Ragatz. Although Mathieson was apparently trying to be fair his obvious racial prejudice has undermined the value of his studies.

There were other forces and influences within the United Kingdom and Jamaica that were concerned with the larger issues of free trade and world slavery or the more particularized problems of Jamaican development which had some degree of impact on colonial policy. Quite apart from their direct or indirect influence on policy-making in the mother country, they frequently intervened directly in Jamaica, as was the case with the missionary interests. Before considering these factors in relation to Jamaican problems, it will be advantageous to review the general lines of British colonial policy in the years 1838-65.

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32 W. L. Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, 1848-66 (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1936), pp. 2, 31. See also Preface, p. vi; Burn, op. cit., p. 179. L. J. Ragatz in his study of the fall of the planter class in the Caribbean shows a certain amount of racial prejudice when he refers to the West Indian Negro during this period as having all the "characteristics of his race [in that] he stole, he lied, he was simple, suspicious, inefficient, irresponsible, lazy, superstitious, and loose in his sex relations." See L. J. Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763-1833: A Study in Social and Economic History (New York: The Century Company, 1928), p. 27.

In general policy was formulated by four permanent employees of the Colonial Office who were often subjected to outside pressures. These officials were under-secretaries Sir James Stephen (1836-47), Herman Merivale (1847-59), Sir Frederick Rogers (1859-71), and Sir Henry Taylor who, although he refused the job of under-secretary in 1847, continued, as a lesser official and personal friend of Stephen, to wield considerable influence throughout this period. Without doubt Stephen and Taylor were practically makers of policy at this time. Taylor was considered the protege of Stephen, and when the latter finally gave up advising the office in the 1850's the general pattern established by Stephen was maintained by Taylor through his influence with Rogers.

Throughout the apprenticeship period and to a less extent in the years following the attempt to abolish the Jamaican Constitution, the Colonial Office regarded the local Assembly with suspicion and tended to exercise a close supervision over its legislation. In 1841 Stephen defended this policy in the following terms:

There can be no doubt that since the commencement of the anti-slavery controversy ... the practice of this office had been to regard Jamaican legislation with jealousy and distrust on every subject. ... Such jealousies may have

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been carried too far, but that they were justified and required by the former state of society in Jamaica . . . appears to me an incontrovertible. 37

Basically policy aimed at ensuring economic stability, an effective judicial system, and the avoidance of an open clash between the various racial groups. 38

Other aims have been claimed for British colonial policy. Lord Elgin, while governor of Jamaica, wrote that Britain's role was to raise the emancipated slave morally and intellectually in addition to obliterating the animosities which the distinctions of race had imprinted on the minds of Jamaicans of all colours during slavery. 39

G. R. Mellor, a British historian and student of imperial affairs, states that the doctrine of trusteeship, which was kept alive by the evangelical elements in England, did not content itself merely with the role of policeman but also undertook the job of welfare officer. 40

What Professor Mellor seems to have overlooked is that there was considerable difference between the stated policy of the Colonial Office and the governors, and what was actually done. No doubt the missionary influence played an important part in the Colonial Office decision on

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39 Simmons, op. cit., p. 127.

humanitarian grounds to annex New Zealand and several of the more important islands in the Pacific during the period 1840-70, but in general idealism as a political force had by this time spent itself.⁴¹

Colonial policy tended to regard the plantation system as the most natural economic order for the island. During the time the great mass of the population was moving away from the estates, the Colonial Office sought to prevent the planters using force to stop the exodus, but it did not, until the end of the nineteenth century, attempt to aid the establishment of peasant farms. The decision to Europeanize the island was merely a tacit assumption of the whites and coloured ruling class supported by the Colonial Office and British public opinion while it was naively assumed that the plantation would be the best civilizing agent.⁴² Towards the end of the period under consideration there was a short-lived tendency to favor a greater degree of self-government for Jamaica.⁴³ Yet faith in the possibility of establishing a workable democracy in the island was never strong.

Before the revival of imperialist sentiment in the 1870's, the idea of empire was not popular with the mid-Victorians and an air of

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⁴⁴ Long, op. cit., p. 51.
pessimism generally discouraged colonization and imperial adventure.\(^{45}\)

The lack of parliamentary interest in colonial affairs meant that the ideas of the independent pressure groups and the Colonial Office officials had a greater bearing on colonial policy than otherwise would have been the case had parliament exercised its right to discuss and formulate the course of colonial development. It was only when matters so vital to the interests of the mother country, such as the reduction of the West Indian sugar preferences or the foreign slave trade were under consideration that we find the West Indian problems debated in the British Parliament with any degree of seriousness.\(^{46}\)

It is not entirely true as is sometimes alleged that once the British commercial interests had achieved their goal of destroying British West Indian slavery there was no further interest in the welfare of the Caribbean colonies.\(^{47}\) If such had been the case then presumably the British Government would have abolished the sugar duties in 1833 as well, and let the area fend for itself. The whole question of the sugar duties was nonetheless tied up with the issue of 'protection' for British agriculture, so it is conceivable that the West Indian problem by itself


\(^{47}\) Williams, *op. cit.*, passim.
was not of any major importance in British eyes. It was inevitable that the Colonial Office would have to follow the prevailing spirit of the era which was that of the Manchester School with its ideas of free movement of trade and the proscription of coercive measures in government. The Colonial Office disallowed colonial legislation that involved the use of compulsion or intimidation, but it was eventually obliged to observe the same principles in its relations with the colonial Assembly of Jamaica by abstaining as much as possible from direct interference.

There is little doubt that the missionary and humanitarian influence on the Colonial Office has been overrated by the apologists of British imperialism, but it would be a mistake to discount its impression entirely. Through Stephen at least it was able to affect policy decisions, especially with respect to anti-slavery questions. It is interesting to notice, however, the declining interest in foreign slavery following abolition in the British Empire together with the apparent readiness of the former anti-slavery groups to accept the importation of slave-grown sugar and cotton provided they were either

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50 Williams, op. cit., Chapters 11 and 12; Morrell, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

cheaper than similar goods produced within the empire, or served to increase British overseas trade. The missionary interest, although not absent, was relatively weak by the end of this period.52

The West India Committee was throughout these years an important pressure group working to influence colonial policy in favor of the Caribbean planters and their economic interests. Every effort was made to keep the press constantly informed of its plans and aspirations particularly with regard to immigration and indentured labor needs.53 Strangely enough it favoured the establishment of Crown Colony government and in this respect it was at variance with the planters resident in the Caribbean.54 At first the Colonial Office regarded the planters' demands for foreign labor as a subtle method of reintroducing 'slavery' but later endorsed it as the best method of keeping the plantation system going.55

By far the most powerful and influential ally of the planter interests was the London Times. It was extremely critical of the humanitarians and the obvious impact of their philosophy on colonial policy

52Williams, op. cit., Chapter 11, especially pp. 186-88. See also Rita Hinden, Empire and After: Study of British Imperial Attitudes (London: Essential Books, Ltd., 1949), passim.


55Burn, The British West Indies, p. 130.
during the last years of slavery and throughout the period of apprenticeship. Most of its information on the West Indies was derived from correspondence—that is, the nationally indulged-in habit of "writing to the Times." Most of the correspondents were Jamaican whites whose viewpoints gave the paper a decided bias. Having a marked tendency towards political conservatism it naturally criticized abolition as a rash measure and the establishment of free trade as the ruination of the West Indian planters. During the years 1841-78 the editor, John Delane, who was an arch conservative, became a mighty influence in British politics. Although not considered an "imperialist" per se he was strongly against abandoning the West Indian sugar interests.

It may have appeared that the colonial reformers, who favoured greater self-government for the colonies, were dedicated to the transformation of the whole empire but what they had in mind was the extension of self-government to the 'colonies of settlement' or the future 'white' dominions. They were not concerned with the West Indies although their ideas had an impact to a certain extent on the immigration policies. While the humanitarians were allegedly concerning them-


58 The History of the Times, pp. 1-2, 521. See also introduction.

selves with the conditions of the backward races—which were often under attack and in danger of extermination by Europeans in the colonies of white settlement—and Britain's responsibility to carry Christian civilization to the underdeveloped regions of the world, the colonial reformers pursued the more mundane and utilitarian goal of finding outlets for Britain's surplus capital and population. Jamaica did not receive the attention of these precursors of the revived interest in colonial affairs which was to develop in the 1870's.

Within the Colonial Office itself many of the permanent personnel developed their own theories about the West Indies and Jamaica in particular. Sometimes they were forced to modify their projects in order to arrive at a suitable compromise plan but almost always their ideas were of consequence. Their influence will be seen as each of the major problems facing the island colony are considered. The problems can be summarized as follows:

1) Political development in a multi-racial society.
2) Foreign slavery and the success of emancipation in Jamaica.
3) Free trade and the sugar duties.
4) Jamaica's plantation economy and its basic needs.
5) Immigration and indentured labor.

115; Hinden, op. cit., p. 43; C. A. Bodelson, Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism (London: No publishing house given, 1924), pp. 43-50.

60 Morrell, op. cit., pp. 21-22; Rita Henden, op. cit., p. 49.
61 Jeffries, op. cit., p. 15.
6) The peasant economy and society.
7) Social and cultural divergences and the lack of basic social services.

Both Stephen and Taylor had their misgivings about trying to transfer British political institutions to Jamaica where they felt that without outside control either the white oligarchy or the black masses would eventually dominate. On this question they were in disagreement with Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies (1846-52), because he initially favoured the advancement of all the colonies to responsible government as advocated by Lord Durham. Stephen, too, was a champion of colonial self-government, but only for the areas with a predominantly white population. His experience with the intransigent Jamaican Assembly had destroyed his faith in the possibility of establishing a democracy in a multi-racial society so that in order to enforce the principles of human rights in the West Indies he had to limit self-government. Despite his aversion to miscegenation, Stephen was no racist in the accepted sense of the world. Yet he certainly did

feel that the cultural gap between the European and the Negro in the West Indies was too great to allow a harmonious working of the democratic system.  

There is little doubt that colonial autonomy was the expressed objective of British colonial policy in the years 1840-71.  

It is difficult, nonetheless, to determine the extent to which the colonies with large coloured minorities were also considered eligible for political independence. Although Sir Frederick Rogers, while Undersecretary for the Colonies, continued to consider self-government one of the principal goals for the colonies as late as the seventies and the Colonial Office tried to introduce a measure of responsible government in Jamaica in 1854, in general the fundamental sentiments expressed in the Taylor memorandum of 1839 formed the basis of policy towards Jamaica.

Political Development in a Multi-Racial Society

The constitutional crisis of 1838 was provoked by the Imperial government's insistence on the establishment of full political freedom for the Jamaican Negroes and the refusal of the planter dominated Assembly to accept it. Once again the Jamaican Assembly protested about

66 Simmons, op. cit., pp. 21, 139.
the usurpation of their ancient prerogatives by the home government and played the aggrieved party. They succeeded in obscuring the real issue—namely the conflict between the Colonial Office and the Jamaican whites concerning the Negro's future—and in doing so elicited the parliamentary aid of many radicals who saw the controversy in terms of local autonomy versus autocratic central control. 68

The Taylor Memorandum must be considered one of the most important colonial documents of the nineteenth century, not only with respect to Jamaica but also to the whole dependent colonial empire. 69 The degree of political representation was a vexing problem, with its two-fold danger of either 'black' anarchy or 'white' oligarchy. At least this was how Taylor viewed it when he pronounced against the partially representative Jamaican Assembly and called for a greater measure of Colonial Office control through the Crown Colony type of government with its all-powerful executive, the colonial governor. 70

Race was the prime difficulty for Taylor. Jamaica appeared to him to be a society in which the mass of the population was composed of ignorant Negroes, culturally backward and with little respect for the white minority, and where the coloured and white minorities used their

68 Bell and Morrell, op. cit., p. 405; Curtin, op. cit., pp. 81, 96-97, 180.

69 Gocking, op. cit., p. 118.

relatively advantageous position to exploit the masses. He saw little use, therefore, with such a high degree of incompatibility between the various colour groups, in attempting to make the system work democratically.\textsuperscript{71}

While Taylor lamented the white's domination of the Negro, he appeared to be more concerned with the possibility of the blacks or coloureds acquiring political control.\textsuperscript{72} He fully admitted that the whites would have rebelled against the mother country had not their fear of the masses been greater than their hatred of imperial policy.\textsuperscript{73} Yet Taylor seems to have been satisfied with the political status quo:

So long as the Assembly was white and populace black, and coloured, the Crown could quarrel with the Assembly and take the part of the black and coloured classes without any fear of any other consequences.\textsuperscript{74}

When there seemed to be a possibility of the coloureds and blacks acquiring the political balance of power in the Assembly, he feared that the British government would not be able to protect the interests of the white minority without inciting a general uprising of the masses. The memorandum called for some form of constitution that would thwart the separate coloured, black, and white interests while guaranteeing good administration and equality under the law, and also prevent the development of oppressive local government which unquestionably would


\textsuperscript{74}Gocking, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 120.
spark a racial war.  

Taylor claims that his suggestions were generally accepted by all the personnel of the Colonial Office, although many persons interested in the Jamaica question—such as Herman Merivale who later became Taylor's superior in his capacity as undersecretary of state—expressed doubts about taking such drastic action. Merivale favoured a policy of non-intervention where possible and was known to be sympathetic to the ideas of the colonial reformers. It was not that he was unconcerned about the subject but he did feel that it was the responsibility of the 'native' to assimilate the culture of the dominant white group or perish. In this respect he favoured racial intermixture as facilitating the termination of racial strife and the establishment of a uniform culture.

Laissez faire was gaining strength as a political philosophy so it was natural that it should have dominated most aspects of colonial policy throughout the remainder of this period. The Taylor Memorandum was defeated, but not without causing both the Jamaican Assembly and the Colonial Office a good deal of embarrassment. Without any clear idea of the best policy to follow, the Colonial Office let the island

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75 Ibid., p. 121.
76 Taylor, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 204-16.
77 Merivale, op. cit., pp. 150-57, 179-80.
78 Ibid., pp. 315-16.
79 Knapland, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy, pp. 10-11.
The colony worked out its own problems within the limits allowed by the home government.

In the years following emancipation and before the Morant Bay riots, the whites continued to dominate the island politics. Slowly but surely the coloureds began to challenge their supremacy so that by the end of the fifties the white oligarchy was forced to share part of their political power in the Assembly with the rising middle stratum of Jamaican society. As will be seen later, the coloureds in the House split. One faction attached itself to the increasingly restless and still largely unrepresented Negro masses while the other numerically larger group, although generally hostile to the dominant whites, was forced to choose between them and the blacks. Undoubtedly the relatively advantageous socio-economic position of the coloured bourgeoisie explains the action of the overwhelming majority of the coloureds in siding with the panicky whites to resist the apparent danger of a revolution from below. Since the whites were equally anxious to exclude the coloureds from participation in the government of the island, they finally came to regard the establishment of Crown Colony government as

80 Morrell, op. cit., p. 152; Curtin, op. cit., p. 98.

81 The odd planter class bitterly opposed the entry of all non-whites into the Assembly. See H. G. de Lisser, Twentieth Century Jamaica (Kingston: The Jamaica Times, Ltd., 1913), p. 163.


the only remaining method of keeping both the coloureds and the blacks from exercising political power. 84

For one reason or another, the newly emancipated slaves gave the impression of being contented with having received their personal freedom, because they did not make any significant effort before the 1860's to extend the benefits acquired under the Abolition Act or to secure the election of blacks to the Assembly. 85 It is difficult to determine whether this was a result of genuine apathy or of the restrictive franchise, which was undoubtedly of prime importance in maintaining the white and coloured ascendency in the insular politics, or the bitter disillusionment and resignation born of years of oppression.

In all probability the masses were neither apathetic nor markedly concerned with Jamaican politics per se if only for the reason that they were vitally interested in the more immediate problems of establishing their subsistence farms and their peasant society. There was also the possibility that the apparent disinterestedness of the black was merely a manifestation of his hatred of white domination which could best be expressed by his adopting a policy of withdrawal and passive resistance. Once the pressure became too great a segment of the black population sought to alleviate its frustration by supporting the radical coloured minority in the Assembly with the objective of securing reforms, but

when this failed, it resorted to direct action.

The nature of the franchise was in great part responsible for the type of political party which developed in the years following the emancipation of the slaves, especially since the Negro was virtually excluded from influencing the major decisions affecting the fortunes of the island. In 1835, some four years after the Jamaican Assembly conceded equal rights to the coloureds and the Jews, three coloured members, including Jordon and Osborne, were elected to the island legislature. Later they joined Richard Hill and several other prominent Jamaican coloureds, together with a handful of whites, to form the Town Party which largely represented the urban interests and the coloured middle class. Most of the planters and a minority of the merchants combined as the Country Party to oppose both the increasing power of the other party and to fight interference by the mother country. 86

Every effort was made by the Country Party to restrict the vote to the minority it represented. Although the rural areas were over-represented, giving the planters a disproportionate voice in island affairs, the franchise was not restrictive enough to prevent the representation of different interests in the Assembly, nor did it prevent the secular decline of the Country Party as the dominant group in the Legislature. 87

An attempt was made in the 1840's by the Baptist missionaries to extend the suffrage to include the small settlers, but this merely roused the ire of the whites, who reacted by further restricting the suffrage, and it drew heavy criticism from Governor Metcalfe. This trend towards greater restriction was later reversed when the Town Party, in order to increase its strength among the middle classes by a limited increase of the vote, forced the passage of the Franchise Act of 1858 against the wishes of the majority of the whites. In 1850 the Assembly comprised some 10-12 coloureds. But a decade later the number had increased to seventeen out of some 47 members sitting in the legislature. Just prior to the disturbances of 1865, Jamaica had a population of over half a million, although the Assembly represented only about 1,900 electors. It has been estimated that around 50,000 freeholders possessed the necessary annual income qualifications of six pounds to permit them to exercise the franchise, but the ten shillings registration fee was undoubtedly a factor in keeping down the number of eligible voters.

The coloureds were aided by the fact that fewer whites were offering themselves for election as time went on. In general the mission-

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89 Curtin, op. cit., pp. 186-88.
92 Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 177.
aries supported the Town Party while the Anglican church was solidly behind the Country Party. Both parties had the support of influential daily newspapers but the Town Party had a decided advantage in the fact that most of its important members lived in Spanish Town or Kingston where they were available on short notice, whereas the Country Party members, being mostly planters and attorneys, could not usually absent themselves from the estates during the cane harvesting season.

Concerning the relations between the imperial government and the Jamaican Assembly three events stand out from all others as being worthy of special consideration, namely; the crisis caused by the decision of the Peel ministry in 1846 to abolish the preferential duties on West Indian sugar; an attempt by the home government to introduce a measure of semi-responsible government in 1854; and lastly the deteriorating relations which developed between Governor Eyre and the majority in the Assembly after 1863 and which were in many ways a contributory factor to the Morant Bay riots of 1865. The first will be considered in greater detail when attention is paid to the effect on the island of the sugar duties controversy and the last will be examined as one of the events leading up to the Morant Bay explosion.

Immediately following the arrival of Governor Metcalfe in 1839 the relations between the Colonial Office and the local Assembly improved and remained reasonably good until the beginning of 1846. The

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93 Abrahams, op. cit., p. 90.
94 Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, p. 150; Curtin, op. cit., pp. 263-64.
forties began with a renewed air of confidence in the island's future despite the tendency of the local legislature, which was strongly resisted by the Colonial Office, to usurp the functions of the executive.

The situation changed dramatically in 1846 when the parliamentary battle for free trade began. As soon as the Jamaican Assembly learned of the imminent loss of its privileged position in the imperial economy it adopted an attitude of sullen hostility by refusing to vote supplies, which it dramatized by its message to the Queen claiming that all losses and difficulties in past years had been a result of the capricious policy of the imperial parliament. During the following seven years retrenchment was the battle cry of the Assembly.

A complete breakdown in the relations between the legislature and the governor, however, was avoided by the realization on both sides that some reform of the constitution was needed. Finally a compromise plan was arranged in the form of a financial loan to Jamaica in return for the establishment of semi-responsible government.

95 Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 23.
Foreign Slavery and the Success of Emancipation in Jamaica

Following the abolition of slavery in the British Empire the activities of foreign slavers increased rather than declined with the result that the West Indians and their allies in the United Kingdom felt that the British producers of sugar faced unfair competition from areas such as Brazil and Cuba. This feeling of frustration was compounded after the British government permitted the entry of slave-grown sugar under the same conditions enjoyed by growers in the empire. 99

The whole issue was heatedly debated in Jamaica and the United Kingdom, in terms of both morality and economic expediency. With respect to the former a small minority of Englishmen--backed now by the Jamaican planters--argued that justice had to be carried out by guaranteeing the Caribbean planters of sugar conditions under which they could compete with foreign producers. 100

In Jamaica it was now the turn of the West Indian planters to raise the torch of 'humanitarianism.' After having maintained in 1817 that the abolition of the slave trade would destroy the economic prosperity of the West Indian sugar industry, they were now the most vocal critics of the foreign slave trade. A mass movement composed of Jamaicans


100The Times (London), 12 February 1848, p. 8.
of all classes and races was launched in Kingston in 1849 with the expressed purpose of stepping up the agitation for the abolition of foreign slavery. Although the Negroes and missionaries enthusiastically supported the campaign there is reason to believe that the planters sought to capture the movement in order to air their grievances and to rally support for immigration and indentured labour schemes.

The remarks of G. Solomon, a Kingston merchant, in a pamphlet titled Population and Prosperity: or Free Versus Slave Production were probably typical of the views of the Jamaican whites and many of the coloured middle class during this period. Solomon writes that Britain was obviously keen to buy slave-grown sugar on account of its cheapness, despite the tacit understanding that the West Indies would be compensated for their losses incurred through abolition by continuing to enjoy a protected market in the mother country. He also complained bitterly about the changed attitudes of the British Anti-Slavery Society following the successful termination of slavery in the British Empire.

Although certain attempts were made by Britain to end the foreign trade, which some writers have interpreted as herculean efforts to eradicate the sinister traffic, even at the risk of war, British public


102 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

103 G. Solomon, Population and Prosperity: Or Free Versus Slave Production (Kingston: No publishing house given, 1859), pp. 5-7.
opinion had in general lost interest in the slavery issue by the mid-nineteenth century. Not only had apathy set in but there was now outright opposition to an energetic suppression of the slave trade for fear of offending the United States, Brazil, Spain, and many other buyers of British manufactured goods that had to pay for their purchases with slave-grown raw materials such as sugar and cotton. In general the views of the laissez faire school, which rationalized its greater interest in the economics involved in the slavery issue by advancing the belief that an increased volume of international trade would eventually destroy slavery, came to dominate British thinking.

Free Trade and the Sugar Duties

West Indian planters reacted with fury and despair to the decision to abolish tariff protection, but their protests were largely unheeded except by the protectionists and such sympathizers of the sugar planters as Bentinck, Disraeli, and Stanley. The retrenchment crisis was caused by the Assembly's refusal to cooperate with the Colonial

105 Williams, op. cit., pp. 172-95.
106 Ibid., pp. 172, 190-91. See also Knapland, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy, pp. 24-5.
107 Morrell, op. cit., pp. 244-46; Burn, The British West Indies, p. 129; Williams, op. cit., p. 140. The London Times also took up the cause of the West Indian planters but it may have been motivated primarily by a desire to attack the humanitarian interests in England rather than by sympathy for the Caribbean whites. See Denman, op. cit., pp. 4-6.
governor in response to what it called the cowardly and unnatural policy of abandonment pursued by the imperial government. Evidently an air of hopeless resignation pervaded planter thinking, and it was widely believed in Jamaican political circles that the ruinous decline of Jamaica, which was the result of shortsighted colonial policy, could only be arrested by the re-introduction of protection for Jamaican and West Indian sugars.

Thus the Assembly held out against the governor and colonial office interference for five years in the hope of forcing the home government to accept their viewpoint. Nothing constructive resulted. Rather five valuable years were wasted that could have been profitably used in the development of the colonies.

There was little hope of achieving success against the strong current of opinion in favour of free trade. Not only were the British capitalists justifying their importation of Brazilian slave-grown sugar in terms of "Britain must trade to live"; but the British public was reluctant to support the West Indians by means of the tariff protection in what they considered to be greater material comfort than that enjoyed by their own working classes. Both Merivale and Earl Grey were staunch
advocates of free trade and judged its relative merits on the basis of what it signified for the mother country.\textsuperscript{113}

The relatively healthy position of the sugar colonies in the Spanish Caribbean can be attributed to a number of factors. Slavery was not the most important advantage, as was maintained by most of the British West Indian planters. It was never of any great importance in Puerto Rico, although the island government was largely successful in its policy of coercing the mountain settlers (Jibaros) to work on the plantations under conditions that differed little from those of the Negro slaves working along side of them.\textsuperscript{114} At the same time that the Jamaican Negro was enjoying greater personal freedom and the white planter was complaining about his lack of control over plantation workers, the Puerto Rican and Cuban hacendado was increasing his control over local labor.\textsuperscript{115}

It is true that Cuba benefitted from a large-scale importation of African slaves before the abolition of slavery in 1866, but obviously the Cuban sugar industry had its problems as well. Most of the hundred thousand odd Chinese indentured labourers brought into Cuba to meet

\textsuperscript{113}Merivale, op. cit., pp. 198-202, 238. See also Simmons, op. cit., pp. 147-48.


labor shortages, arrived before the end of slavery, while there was also the factor that most of the island plantations were, like those of Jamaica, heavily mortgaged to foreign investors.

One decided advantage enjoyed by Cuba and to a less extent Puerto Rico was the fertility of the soil. Not only were these areas entering the market at a time when their main competitors were suffering from soil exhaustion or revolutionary conditions (Jamaica and Haiti qualified on both counts), but they enjoyed the confidence of foreign investors and benefitted from the paternalistic policy of Spain, which lavished special attention on the remaining parts of her once enormous American empire.

There is little question that the abolition of the West India preference was a blow to the Jamaican economy by forcing competition

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116 Eric Williams, "The Negro Slave Trade in Anglo-Spanish Relations," The Caribbean Historical Review, No. 1, December 1950, p. 22. The failure of the Cuban slave trade and the subsequent abolition of slavery was in part due to British pressure, but it also should be remembered that many Spanish Creoles like Antonio Saco were strongly opposed to an 'inundation' of African slaves. Ibid., p. 23. See also Jose Antonio Saco, Historia de la Esclavitud de la Raza Negra en el Nuevo Mundo y en especial en los Países Americo-Hispanos (4 vols. Habana: Cultural S. A., 1938), Vol. 1, prologue.

117 Trollope, op. cit., p. 130.

118 Williams, "The Negro Slave Trade in Anglo-Spanish Relations," p. 22; Mintz, op. cit., pp. 277, 283. Although Cuba has been cited as being a natural habitat for cane sugar, Fernando Ortiz in a brilliant study of Cuban socio-economic development has bitterly attacked this notion. He claims sugar has become the bete noir of Cuba by perverting its historical destiny as a society of middle class cultivators and agriculturists. Fernando Ortiz, Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar, trans. by Harriet de Onis. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947). See introduction by H. Portell Vila.
with sugar producing areas enjoying decided advantages, but its importance was greatly exaggerated by the West Indian planters and their apologists. Jamaica’s declining economic fortunes were not simply the result of official neglect and unfair competition caused by the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and the establishment of free trade. Many of the causes were due to inherent weaknesses in the plantation system itself and Jamaican society as a whole.

Jamaica’s Plantation Economy and Its Basic Needs

Jamaica’s plantation system, in addition to its still vital role in the insular economy, continued to play a significant part in the development of race relations in the colony not only by influencing the attitudes of the local whites and the Colonial Office but to a large extent it was also responsible for the development of the independent peasant economy and society of the Jamaican Negro masses. It still produced most of the island’s exports.

The plantation economy, however, was not prosperous. Throughout the period 1833-1865 there was a continued decline in sugar production and the value of Jamaica as a colony specializing in the export of

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120 Curtin, "The British Sugar Duties and West Indian Decline," pp. 157-59. The London Times claimed that emancipation had already damaged the West Indian sugar industry but warned that free trade would kill it. The Times (London), 1 February 1848, pp. 6-7.

121 Curtin, Two Jamacias, passim.
staple goods. Its impact on the colony was offset to some extent by the spectacular development of peasant agriculture. Yet with few exceptions the contribution of the Negro peasant was not acknowledged, and his increasing economic independence became the subject of bitter criticism by planter and colonial servant alike, who regarded it as one of the principal handicaps to the colony's social and economic development.

Generally speaking the problems besetting the plantation can be summarized under the heading of economic and social factors. Quite apart from the unfavourable effects of free trade and foreign competition upon a sustained output of cane sugar there were several other difficulties of a technical nature which served to prevent efficient production and to slow down improvement and expansion.

Perhaps most important of the economic limitations was the serious shortage of capital created by the exodus of planters from Jamaica and the lack of confidence shown by both domestic and foreign investors in the island's economic future. As most estates were heavily in


124 Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 40; Mintz, op. cit., p. 283.
debt, their owners claimed they could not afford to pay the high wages necessary to attract a sufficient supply of workers.

Falling sugar prices justified to some extent this plea of the planters, but the poor competitive position of the Jamaican sugar industry and particularly the chronic shortage of labour was largely a result of their own shortcomings. The Jamaican planters were their own worst enemies. Their attitudes towards the Negro and his role in island society largely determined the supply and demand of local labour. They continued to regard pre-abolition days with nostalgia and they consistently refused to adapt themselves to their new economic and social environment.

For many years the Jamaican planter remained smug in his belief that the imperial government would always protect the West Indian sugar interests, with the result that he never really tried to resolve the difficulties that plagued the plantation economy. There were a

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125 Bigelow, op. cit., p. 89; Sewell, op. cit., pp. 239-40.
126 Curtin, Two Jamaicas, p. 107. See also comment by Elsa Goveia, in Mintz, op. cit., p. 282; Bigelow, op. cit., pp. 124-25.
127 Sewell, op. cit., pp. 239-40; Curtin says the situation was worsened by the fact that Jamaica was a relatively high cost area. Curtin, "The British Sugar Duties and West Indian Decline," p. 159.
128 Curtin, Two Jamaicas, passim, particularly pp. 13, 117-22.
129 Bigelow, op. cit., p. 93; Evans, op. cit., p. 20.
130 Henriques, op. cit., p. 113; Sewell, op. cit., p. 241.
number of notable exceptions. Some planters were earnestly seeking a
solution to their problems by offering incentives to their labourers
to stay in their employ or by trying to improve their methods of cul-
tivation with a view to cutting costs and economizing on their labour
needs.  

As the fortunes of the white planters sank lower and each of the
panaceas, such as indentured labor or the campaign for the re-establish-
ment of protection, proved ineffective, a scapegoat was needed. It was
inevitable that the newly emancipated Negro should fill this role.  
There is ample justification for the view that the stereotyping of
the Negro by the white both in Jamaica and in the United Kingdom as
being lazy and fit only for manual labour, together with the treatment
afforded plantation labourers by the average island planter, caused a
strong reaction in the black which in part accounts for his reluctance
to do hard physical work for whites on the estates, and helps to ex-
plain the attraction that independent peasant cultivation held for
him.  

and Writings on West Indian Questions (Glasgow: John Smith and Son,
Ltd., 1912), pp. 18-19, 108. Lamont says that many of the techniques
used in Jamaica at the beginning of the twentieth century differed
little from those employed by early nineteenth century West Indian
planters. Ibid., p. 19.

132 Curtin, Two Jamaica, p. 122; Hall, Free Jamaica, pp. 50,
75, 102.

133 Curtin, Two Jamaica, p. 145; Olivier, Jamaica, p. 169.

134 The reaction of the Negro will be viewed more fully when
the peasant society is considered.
As has been suggested, the average planter argued that the Negro was best suited to the role of a manual labourer, working for wages although some apparently saw fit to criticize the system of free labour at every opportunity, revealing their regret at having lost the absolute control over their workers which they enjoyed under slavery. In some cases it was evident that the Jamaican white still considered the Negro inferior by nature and born to the servile condition.

These ideas were not at this time held with the same conviction by the majority of Englishmen interested in the West Indian question. Certain prominent individuals, including Colonial Office personnel and leading members of parliament, nonetheless paid considerable attention to the West Indian labour problem and tended to support the views of the sugar growers.

As secretary of state for the colonies in 1833, Earl Grey devised a scheme of taxing the Negro peasants' land with the object of inducing them to work for wages. Although it was not acted upon at the time, Grey continued to advocate a system of economic incentives that would encourage the Negro to acquire a taste for the habits and comforts of

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136 Underhill, op. cit., p. 183; Olivier, Jamaica, p. 169. "Poverty may not have humbled their pride or changed their belief in the 'divine right' of the white man to enslave the black for . . . whenever the opportunity offers they [the planters] wage under different guises the old war against free labor." See Sewell, op. cit., p. 230.

137 Sturge and Harvey, op. cit., p. 155; Evans, op. cit., p. 27.
civilized life, and he agreed with Taylor that emancipation had "placed the Negroes within the danger of larger access of sudden prosperity than human nature can well bear." ¹³⁸ Like Taylor he felt that the habits of industry had to be cultivated. ¹³⁹

Herman Merivale, while supporting free trade and laissez faire, accepted the argument that in tropical colonies artificial manipulation of labour was necessary if the role of plantation colonies of exploitation was to be fulfilled. ¹⁴⁰ Sir Robert Peel also accepted this view,¹⁴¹ while the most vociferous advocate in political circles of plantation labour for the Negro and assistance for the planter was Lord Stanley.¹⁴² When in 1865 the peasants of St. Ann's Parish petitioned the Queen for access to Crown lands for the purpose of settlement, Cardwell, the secretary of state for the colonies, replied that the "prosperity of the labouring classes depended upon their working for wages not uncertainly but steadily."¹⁴³

Thomas Carlyle and Anthony Trollope both considered the Negro's reluctance to work entirely immoral. Trollope's view that the Negro

¹³⁸ Grey, op. cit., pp. 54-56, 239-41.
¹⁴⁰ Goveia, Historiography of the British West Indies, p. 142.
¹⁴¹ Simey, op. cit., p. 59.
¹⁴² Bigelow, op. cit., pp. 81-87.
¹⁴³ Curtin, Two Jamaicas, p. 119.
forfeited the right to any consideration by his refusal to work was the basic argument taken by Carlyle in what was perhaps the most scurrilous and irresponsible diatribe ever directed at the West Indian Negro. Although Carlyle had no personal knowledge of the West Indies he repeated quite uncritically the planters major complaints with a vehemence that is astounding. There is reason to believe that his Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question (1853) was merely an indirect way of voicing his disgust at the demands of the English Chartists and Irish labourers, but it was to have a tremendous impact on English thinking. Coercion seemed to him to be the only successful way of inducing the Negro to work and he was not really antagonistic to the idea of reestablishing slavery.

It has been claimed by a recent writer on Jamaican peasant problems that had the planters really set their minds to retaining the labourers on the estates, they could have prevented the Negro exodus to the hills. Yet when they discovered that they were unable to

144 Trollope, op. cit., pp. 89-90.
146 Ibid., passim and particularly pp. 20-21, 25, 40, 46.
147 Ibid., pp. 11-12. Carlyle wrote that if the Negro would not be induced to recognize his duty to labour and allow himself to be 'emancipated' from indolence then he should be compelled "to do the work he is fit for." Ibid.
148 Ibid., pp. 45-46.
149 Paget, op. cit., p. 10.
hold the Negro in economic bondage they criticized him as being lazy, and their treatment of the blacks reflected their resentment.

The planter wanted continuous labour so he was normally opposed to the Negro working in his provision grounds. He usually adopted, however, a policy calculated to aggravate rather than relieve the situation. Several practices were resorted to besides the usual eviction or the charging of high rents. Payments of wages were often in arrears or were stopped arbitrarily for 'unsatisfactory' work, while the removal of Negro villages from one part of the estate to another also had the effect of humiliating the labourers. When protesting to the magistrates, the Negroes frequently found them to be sympathetic to the planters, and in several cases cited by Dr. Underhill of the Baptist Missionary Society the labourers were beaten when they went to collect their arrears in pay.

It was relatively common for the conditions of the estate labourers to be worse than those of the poorest peasants, especially in areas where unused land was not readily accessible. Dr. Underhill

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150 Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 169.
151 Simmons, op. cit., pp. 127-28; Bell and Morrell, op. cit., p. 424; Olivier, Jamaica, p. 113.
wrote that the nearer he approached the plantations the more degraded he found the population. Yet those planters who made an effort to treat their labourers decently usually had few labour problems and feelings between employer and employee were invariably good. There was also little apparent shortage of labour in the road gangs where the labourers were paid regularly and received comparatively good wages.

It was scarcely surprising in view of the "obstinate determination of the planters to pursue the old system of management, to regard their labourers as serfs in whom every spark of ambition is to be quenched, and to refuse to cooperate with the people that no longer admitted his patriarchal authority, that the Negro reacted the way he did. Jamaica's chronic labour shortage on the plantations following the abolition of slavery, like that of Brazil, created serious economic problems, but like his South American counterpart the Jamaican planter sought to alleviate the situation by demanding indentured labour rather than by reforms which would surely have followed a critical evaluation of his own attitudes and methods of production.

Immigration and Indentured Labour

A number of factors governing the supply and demand of Negro

155 Underhill, op. cit., pp. 259-449.
156 Paget, op. cit., p. 10.
158 T. Lynn Smith, Brazil: People and Institutions (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1947), Chapter X; Pierre Denis, Brazil, trans. by B. Miall (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1926), pp. 23, 181-84.
labour have already been considered in a discussion of the treatment of workers on the estates, but there were also considerations of internal and overseas migration influencing the relative numbers of labourers available. Many Jamaicans moved to areas where there were better incentives for manual labour, such as the Isthmus of Panama, or to other jobs that offered more regular employment. In some parts of the island the planters and the independent cultivators were able to harmonize their interests by the use of a work schedule that permitted both labouring on the estates and the cultivation of provisions in the hill communities, especially if the latter were close to the plantations. All too often, however, the planter could offer only part-time work to the peasants and frequently it conflicted with the peasants' harvesting and marketing of produce. The result was a serious labour shortage for the Jamaican plantation economy.

In both the United Kingdom and Jamaica this labour shortage was the subject of some debate and argument, but in most cases immigration and indentured labour schemes were considered to be the most logical methods of saving the island's economy from ruin. In many ways it was considered a cure-all for the ills of the plantation.

At first the missionary interests in Britain looked upon the recruiting of overseas labour for the Jamaican plantations as the es-


160 Burn, The British West Indies, p. 135.
tablishment of a system that differed little from the African slave trade, especially since it appeared to them that the island already had an adequate supply of workers. They claimed that the planters were using coolie labour as a means of depressing wages further and intimidating the Negro labourers still working on the estates. The argument was also advanced that the East Indians, being of an alien culture and religion, would corrupt their Negro converts. 161

Opinion in Jamaica was divided about the relative merits of indentured labour. Although the small settlers were quite happy to see the Indian and Chinese labourers take over the unpleasant task of labouring on the plantations, they were concerned lest indentured labour be used to reduce the level of wages. The middle classes and the Kingston merchants were not opposed to it in principle but they were not prepared to contribute financially to its operation, whereas the planters felt that the whole community should be taxed to support the cost of bringing in foreign labour. The upshot of this lack of unity was the failure of the Jamaican legislature to pass suitable legislation to ensure the success of an unlimited supply of labour sufficient to meet all the demands of the sugar estates. 162

At first the Colonial Office, like the missionaries, appeared to consider the indentured labour schemes as an attempt to establish a new


162 Curtin, Two Jamaicas, p. 138; Long, op. cit., p. 80; Burns, op. cit., p. 669.
a new form of slavery. Although he was later overruled by others, Stephen continued to demand safeguards for both the indentured labour and the emancipated Negroes. Merivale on the other hand was strongly in favour of indentured labour for Jamaica and the West Indies as a means of enabling them to maintain their superiority in the production of tropical wealth. He was definitely opposed to an abandonment of the plantation system and in this he was supported by Earl Grey.

Earl Grey nonetheless favoured the adoption of schemes designed to exploit the existing supplies of labour. The overwhelming majority of the Jamaican governors and officials of the Colonial Office apparently favored indenture, quite possibly as a result of the popularity of the Wakefield plan for systematic colonization, with its plea for an adequate supply of labour regulated to meet the supply and demand of land and capital in the colonies. This influence should not be exaggerated since the interest of the colonial reformers lay with the areas of white settlement, and Merival and Stephen considered Jamaica

167 Bell and Morrell, op. cit., p. 441; Long, op. cit., p. 49.
unsuitable to settlement by Europeans. Indeed the relative importance of Jamaica at this time was probably measured in terms of the numbers of white settlers living in the colony.

Attempts were made, nonetheless, to encourage white settlement before the period of Asiatic immigration began in earnest in the late forties. Even before the termination of apprenticeship, the Assembly had a plan to establish colonies of white immigrants in each of the three main political divisions of the island, with a view to keeping up the number of white inhabitants. Largely as a result of bad treatment and poor planning European immigration as a whole was highly unsuccessful and was abandoned by the end of the forties. Those who did not leave the island for areas of greater opportunity usually remained to form pockets of endogamous poor whites which, like their counterparts in Barbados and the Virgin Islands, became enclaves of economic stagnation and cultural regression.


171 Sturge and Harvey, op. cit., p. 321; Evans, op. cit., p. 42.

After mid-century it appears that all hope of encouraging white immigration had been abandoned.\textsuperscript{173} While James Froude was reconciled to the fact that the whites in Jamaica could not be encouraged to remain in the island and provide the necessary leadership, he felt that the ethnic contribution of the Anglo-Saxon race to the blood of the mulattos made them the natural leaders of the future. In this respect he probably differed little from Antonio Saco who wanted to whiten Cuba by European migration and who greatly feared Cuba's overwhelmingly Negroid neighbors—Haiti and Jamaica. Like Saco he supported mestizag

Before the 1860's, when East Indian indentured labour was to become the only really important source of immigration, a number of liberated African slaves and Chinese were brought into the island. The first group of Africans arrived in 1840, after their liberation from a slaver bound for Brazil. Owing to charges made by the missionaries that Great Britain was taking advantage of the slave trade this

\textsuperscript{173}Various efforts were made during the 1850's to attract Portuguese from the Madeiras, but although considered good workers they too abandoned the plantations for other livelihoods, usually business. See Sires, "Sir Henry Barkley and the Labor Problems in Jamaica," pp. 223, 224-25; Evans, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 30; \textit{The Times} (London), 11 October 1852, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{174}Trollope, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 82; Saco, \textit{op. cit.}, p. xxxi of the Introduction; Eric Williams, "The Contemporary Pattern of Race Relations in the Caribbean," \textit{Phylon}, Vol. XVI, No. 2, October-December 1955, p. 377. Interestingly enough the Puerto Ricans Dr. Betances and Eugenio Maria de Hostos were true Caribbeanists who thought in terms of a United Antilles embracing all the racial groups and who were prepared to acknowledge the leadership of the Negro due to his preponderance in the area. See Thomas Mathews, "The Project for a Confederation of the Greater Antilles," \textit{The Caribbean Quarterly}, Nos. 3-4, December 1954, pp. 80, 86-87.
source never became very important. Unsuccessful attempts were also made in the late fifties to attract free Negroes from the United States before the abolition of American slavery, in the belief that their habits of work were superior to those of the local workers. The great majority of the Negro labourers, however, arrived during the forties, before the termination of the Brazilian slave trade, so that Jamaica apparently did not receive many of the slaves bound for Cuban ports during the height of the Cuban slave trade in the fifties.

It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the presence of these Africans modified the local culture. Outside of a few areas, particularly in the eastern end of the island where they fitted in better with the local blacks and where today there is still evidence of their influence, it was probably not great. All told, over 10,000 were introduced into Jamaica, before the scheme ended in 1865.

Most of the 250,000 Chinese that entered the Americas as indentured labour in the period 1847-74 were sent to Cuba or Peru, with less than 10 per cent going to the West Indies. Very few Chinese

178 LePage, op. cit., pp. 94-95.
entered Jamaica in this category but many who had served indentures in Trinidad and British Guiana later emigrated to Jamaica as free immigrants. Since no return passages were provided for, only a small number left the island when their indentures were complete. 179

Although there were isolated reports of the Chinese being good workers, they were not generally regarded with favour, with the result that after the initial introduction in 1854 of about 500 labourers from Panama the experiment was not repeated again until 1884. 180 Many Chinese resented the treatment that they received on the plantations and on occasion clashed with both the Indians and the Negroes. Frequently they had been kidnapped in China to labour in the Western world while most of those who had worked in Panama were sickly as a result of exploitation or the climate and were unable to withstand the rigours of plantation labour. 181

When it was realized that for political reasons the British government would not permit a large-scale immigration of Africans into Jamaica, 182 India was considered the most logical source of new labourers.


It was not until 1845, however, that the first group arrived in the island, and this traffic remained sporadic throughout the period. The system, which was terminated two years later after a mere 4,550 Indians had been conscripted, was resumed again in the years 1858-63.183

Any unfavourable reports of the Indian coolie system obviously alarmed the planters and the government. With this in mind the planters in 1858 permitted the establishment of a fairly strict code of regulations governing the conditions of indentured labour to be administered by the local justice system.184 Despite the claim that the moment the contract labourer arrived in Jamaica he was protected by special agents of the government, there were many complaints about the conduct of the agents and the system in general, especially from the missionary interests.185

The editor of the County Union (Montego Bay) wrote that the planters had little respect for the coolies regarding them as 'so much carrion' and treated them accordingly.186 Just a year earlier in October 1862, the Reverend Henry Clarke had written a letter to a prominent Kingston paper charging the planters and the immigration agents with ill-treatment of the Indians.187 Governor Eyre's immediate

183 Ibid., pp. 114-17.
184 Curtin, Two Jamai cas, p. 140.
185 Emery, op. cit., p. 23.
186 Quoted in Harvey and Brewin, op. cit., p. 20.
187 CS 102/21 No. 97, Eyre to Newcastle, 24 October 1862, p. 64.
reaction was one of hostility and disbelief as he reported to the Secretary of State, "they [the charges] were sure to be made use of by the opponents of immigration at home. . . ." 183 Although the indictments were largely substantiated by a petty sessions court Eyre still considered the conduct of the clergyman to be irresponsible. 189

The Indian was credited with regular work habits which some hoped would provide a good example for the creole worker. 190 Governors Grey (1843) and Barkly (1850) both complimented the Indians on their behavior and willingness to work 191 while a committee of the Assembly in 1845 described them as efficient and of good character. 192

On the other hand the Indian was not considered as good a plantation labourer as the indentured African or the creole black in terms of hard manual labour, with the result that most planters resorted to coolie labour only when they could not keep up their supply of local labour. 193 There was also some friction between the Indians and the

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183 CS 102/21 No. 106, Eyre to Newcastle, 8 November 1862, p. 73. Clarke reported that the coolies were being "Cheated, starved, flogged and murdered." Eyre suggested that he be prosecuted for libel. See CS 102/21 No. 117, Eyre to Newcastle, 24 November 1862, pp. 91-92.

189 CS 102/21 No. 56, Eyre to Newcastle, 27 February 1863, p. 170.

190 The Times (London), 20 October 1859, p. 5; Roberts, The Population of Jamaica, p. 124.

191 CS 102/13 No. 26, Charles Grey to Earl Grey, 6 March 1843, p. 203.

192 Hill, Free Jamaica, p. 54.

blacks on the estates which one writer attributed to the antipathy which had been implanted by the missionaries in the African for oriental religion. The Indian however was not blameless. His disdain for the Negro, whom he considered inferior, and his refusal to associate with him, certainly helped to maintain the cultural gap that existed.

Generally speaking the system was not a success before 1865. Only 9,199 Indians had entered the colony and many of them had returned to India at the end of their indentures or had followed the example of the Negro peasants by setting up their own independent farming communities away from the plantations.

The Peasant Economy and Society

In response to his poor treatment and limited opportunities, the Negro left the plantation in vast numbers to seek an economic livelihood in an environment over which he had a greater measure of control and which was the first step toward establishing a new society. While

194 Evans, op. cit., p. 40.
195 Emery, op. cit., p. 21.
197 The Times (London), 1 February 1848, p. 8; Roberts, The Population of Jamaica, pp. 128, 334.
199 Paget, op. cit., p. 12.
the whites continued to struggle with the plantation system, utilizing much the same methods as they had in the past, the Negro peasant began to create his own world in the hills. 200

The greatest movement of persons took place in the years 1838 - 1844, when some 19,000 freedmen and their families resettled in free villages established either by their own efforts or through the good offices of the missionaries. 201 By the end of the forties over 100 peasant communities had been established under missionary leadership following the pioneering efforts of William Knibb to exhort the blacks to fight the planters. 202

Yet initially the process of peasant settlement had a curiously unpremeditated and unplanned character. Even the missionaries expected the slaves to work as wage workers on the estates, but when the Negroes began to move into the interior they were forced to follow in order to retain their influence over them. When the missionaries saw the futility of compromise with the majority of the planters they eagerly backed the village settlements. 203


The dream of William Knibb to establish a society of small settlers had largely been realized by the end of the fifties when it was estimated that approximately two-thirds of the former estate population, in removing themselves from the plantations after emancipation, had contributed to the formation of an estimated 50,000 peasant freeholds. There was no cause for the missionaries to rejoice, however, for they were to a large extent incapable of competing with the native Baptists and other sects which were under black leadership.

Generally speaking the three main economic activities of the blacks after emancipation were either as small free-hold farmers independent of the plantation system and often employing their own labor; or as small farmers partially dependent on the plantations for seasonal employment; or as labourers still working on the estates. Although the plantation worker's economic situation was not enviable, he was able to force some concessions from the planter, such as renting provision grounds. Apparently a large number merely worked on the plantations with a view to earning money for the purchase of their own land.

Opposition to the establishment of a peasant society came principally from the planters who naturally viewed it as a threat to their position. Besides their claims that the ruination of the plantation


205 Burn, The British West Indies, p. 121.

206 Hall, Free Jamaica, pp. 158-59.
system would adversely affect Jamaican as well as imperial interest, they were quick to seize upon other arguments to justify their position. According to their standards peasant cultivation was a failure because it was not geared to producing a surplus for export. Inevitably charges were made that the Negroes would culturally regress into barbarism if they were permitted to remove themselves from European influence.

In the United Kingdom the establishment of the peasant society was usually viewed with alarm. Merivale opposed the abandonment of the plantation system for the establishment of an independent yeomanry of the coloureds in the belief that such a development would duplicate the conditions in Haiti, where in his opinion the Negro had already sunk into indolence and barbarism. Although Earl Grey's views were similar, he did finally reconcile himself to the inevitability of events in the West Indies—especially after his projects had been defeated--

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207 Olivier, Jamaica, p. 82; Curtin, Two Jamaica, p. 119. In 1836 the West Indian governors were instructed to restrict the amount of land made available to the peasant obviously with a view to ending the establishment of the independent peasantry. Ibid., p. 137.

208 Curtin, Two Jamaica, p. 120; Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 182.

209 Evans, op. cit., pp. 21-27; "The march back to barbarism was thus a bogey that appeared immediately after the abolition of slavery in 1838," but one which is still heard today from some writers and historians who oppose the view that the increase in Jamaican prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century was due to the rise of an independent peasantry. See Simey, op. cit., pp. 56, 61. See also Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, pp. 22-31; A. P. Newton, A Hundred Years of British Empire (London: Duckworth, 1940), pp. 193-99; Sewell, op. cit., p. 178.
and supported the establishment of small cane farms which he hoped would sell to the big sugar mills being constructed. 211

Although the success of the plantation system as a capitalistic enterprise was perhaps the most important consideration influencing British opinion, the alleged cultural inferiority of the black was also used to berate the Negro's desire to establish his own society in the hills. 212

Governors Metcalfe 213 and Barkley 214 defended the Negro against his worst critics. Others like Governors Elgin, Darling, and Eyre expressed dismay at the decline in the agricultural position of the colony or what they considered to be the increasing demoralization of the peasant class. Elgin, in supporting the plantation system, advocated an educational program designed to encourage a stronger desire for material benefits in the Negro so as to render the subsistence level of living in the peasant society completely unattractive to him. 215

It was with this purpose in mind that he supported the establishment of

211 Morrell, op. cit., p. 268; Grey, op. cit., pp. 239-41.
212 Simey, op. cit., p. 59.
213 *C.S. 102/11 No. 8, Metcalfe to Normanby, 16 October 1839, p. 274. Metcalfe also opposed schemes designed to coerce the Negro to work for wages. See C.S. 102/11, No. 50, Metcalfe to Russell, 30 March 1840, p. 346. Metcalfe was nonetheless pro-planter and did not sympathize with the underdog. He felt that if the Negro was not held in check anarchy would result. See Edward J. Thompson, The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1937), pp. 350-51.
214 Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 35.
215 Simmons, op. cit., p. 129.
a white middle class farmer in Jamaica, but when his plans did not materialize he reported that the Negro, particularly the mountain peasant, was falling rather than rising in the scale of civilization.216

While Darling was prepared to admit that the Negro had demonstrated his capacity to exploit his new-found freedom he was still concerned about the decline in agricultural production for export.217 He also justified the government's refusal to grant contract laborers to the small settlers on the basis that the Negro farmers were "not sufficiently imbued with a sense of their moral obligation to justify the assignment to them as contract laborers of emigrants of a different race."218 Eyre likewise opposed the position of the peasant settlers.

Although a large number of blacks appeared to accept their inferior socio-economic position in the plantation system by remaining in the employ of the planters and outwardly accommodating themselves to their behaviour and attitudes, this was not the typical reaction of the emancipated slaves. Most of them had an exaggerated sense of personal liberty that was in many ways reaction to their condition under slavery. They were prepared to sacrifice material comforts and economic security to achieve their independence of the whites.

Without question physical mobility acquired a special significance for the black during slavery so that in the years to follow any

216Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, p. 114.
217Curtin, Two Jamaica, p. 119.
218C.S. 102/18 No. 109, Darling to Newcastle, 6 August 1860, p. 183.
employer who attempted to fix rigid conditions of employment and residence was suspect. Any attempt to use coercion was interpreted as an effort to reintroduce the conditions of slavery. The general desire to acquire land to set up an independent existence in the hills was therefore to be expected, but the extent to which this was merely a logical result of the plantation system is difficult to determine since many of the slaves may have retained their traditional African love of soil cultivation.

To many whites the Negro appeared to be lethargic and devoid of any sense of vindictiveness arising out of his years as a slave. One visitor to Jamaica in 1850 stated that "it is perfectly obvious that the Negroes are of a peaceful, unvengeful disposition." Many blacks, however, showed an increasing awareness of their disadvantageous position in the island society which was one of relative physical freedom but which still involved mental bondage. They were conscious of their past conditions as slaves and resented being called Negroes.

Taxation was a sore point with them in that they distrusted the

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219Goveia, An Introduction to the Federation Day Exhibition, pp. 30-31; Bigelow, op. cit., pp. 115-16.
221Root, op. cit., p. 18; King, op. cit., pp. 35-36; The John Connu dance was one example where the suppressed hatred of the white was allowed a certain amount of expression—particularly in the Anancy stories recited during the procession. See F. Pilkington, Daybreak in Jamaica (London: Epworth Press, 1950), p. 44.
222King, op. cit., p. 5.
planters and regarded their efforts to impose taxation on the small holding and its work animals as attempts to reestablish the conditions of labor that existed in the past. In 1848 a mob of over 500 peasants demonstrated against the collection of taxes in St. Mary's Parish with such purpose that it was only broken up by the combined efforts of the local police and troops brought in from Spanish Town. On at least one occasion serious unrest was created by rumours that slavery was to be reestablished in Jamaica.

Leisure acquired a special significance for the Negro while he was still a slave. After emancipation hard manual labour on the estates brought little added reward so it was natural enough that he should have revolted from the degrading regime of service on the plantation. Unlike the planters and the majority of the Colonial Office personnel, who thought that Jamaica's future economic development lay through his working for wages, the Negro's greatest interest lay in his 'freedom' from planter control and the expansion of his own independent cultivation so that wage labour on the plantation came to be regarded as the badge of social inferiority among the Negro masses.

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223 Curtin, Two Jamaica, pp. 131-32; Emery, op. cit., p. 30.
224 The Times (London), 6 October 1848, p. 3.
226 Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 255; Bigelow, op. cit., pp. 113-14.
As we have seen, the whites regarded the Negroes' withdrawal from the states with alarm and rationalized the whole process in terms of the innate laziness of the Negro and his incapacity for appreciating a higher material level of living which in turn mitigated against his ever acquiring a taste for civilization. If the cultural gap between the peasant society and the rest of Jamaica did widen during the years of the establishment of the peasant society, it was probably due to the lack of interest shown by the government in their development once they had successfully removed themselves from the plantation. This assumes of course that the independent peasant was not openly hostile to acculturation by the dominant white civilization. Most sympathetic observers of Jamaican peasant society in the nineteenth century assumed that the black was keen to be 'civilized' but that he had fallen short of complete cultural assimilation for reasons largely beyond his control.

A number of problems involving the welfare of the peasant eventuated, however, showing the extent to which he was divorced from the main

228 Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 255; Curtin, Two Jamicaes, p. 143. See also Evans, op. cit., pp. 9, 27.
230 Professor Mintz believes that ideological or social isolation may have persisted even where geographical isolation had declined and added that certain kinds of contacts with outside cultural influences may have strengthened existing peasant patterns rather than weakened them. See "Historical Sociology of Jamaican Church-founded Free Village System," p. 61.
231 Olivier, Jamaica, passim; Candler, op. cit., passim; Underhill, op. cit., pp. 413, 458-59; Phillippo, op. cit., p. 219.
path of development being pursued by the dominant whites and coloureds in Jamaica. To a certain extent these difficulties were caused by the refusal of the whites and coloureds to consider the independent peasant a full member of Jamaican society while he continued to resist their attempts to draw him back to plantation labour, with the result that most legislation passed by the Assembly was detrimental to or ignored his interests.232

On the other hand, there is evidence that the peasant made a conscious effort to protect certain values inherent in his society, especially the cult religions, by openly refusing to cooperate with either the planters, the government, or the missionaries. This too created friction between the two diverging Jamaicas so that the apparent failure of the Negro peasant to be assimilated by the dominant European culture cannot be explained entirely in terms of the ruling classes' intention of keeping him in a basically inferior position perpetuated by a wide social and cultural distinction for which they were responsible.233

232 These problems can be summarized as follows:
   a) The peasant lacked proper marketing facilities.
   b) Although he paid taxes the back roads were deplorable thus making transportation of produce extremely difficult.
   c) A continuous state of conflict and anxiety existed between the peasant and the planter class over the question of land sales and land tenure.
   d) In most cases wages and prices for produce were low while the prices of certain imported necessities were extremely high.


233 Hall, Free Jamaica, p. 259; Curtin, Two Jamaicas, passim.
Social and Cultural Divergencies and the Lack of Basic Social Services

With the exception of labour relations and the clash of economic interests between planter and peasant, the religious conflict between the blacks on the one hand and the coloureds and whites on the other was perhaps the most serious area of controversy in Jamaica during the nineteenth century. This was basically a struggle between the orthodox Christian religions and the religious practices of the black masses. Many planters participated in the clash of religious interests alongside the orthodox Christians not because they were religious per se but rather because they wished to suppress any facet of peasant culture which served to bolster his spirit of independence. In this they were supported to an increasing extent by the missionaries who felt the pinch of growing competition with black religious leaders. Like the planter, the missionary bitterly opposed the native religious cults on the grounds that they signalled a return to African paganism. 234

Dr. Curtin says that it was in religious matters that the European worked hardest to influence Negro culture. Ironically enough he picked a field in which for a number of reasons he was least likely to succeed. 235

Firstly there was evidence of a growing distrust of the white missionary and his motivation which not even the good reputation of the missionary built up during the abolition struggle could counteract. In most cases the parent churches in the United Kingdom were disinclined to

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234 Curtin, Two Jamaiicas, pp. 28-29.
235 Ibid., p. 163.
support their missionaries in Jamaica adequately since at that time there appeared to be greater scope for proselitizing in the virgin continent of Africa. This lack of adequate financial support coupled with the growing isolation of many inland communities meant a greatly diminished influence over the peasant--particularly the new generation born as freedmen.  

The most important reason however was the greater functional appeal of the native cults which resulted from their departure from the religious orthodoxy of the Christian missionaries. They allowed a greater measure of group participation and provided a more effective avenue for the recognition and release of basic frustrations. 

Although the missionaries were often successful in combating the infiltration of Africanisms into their churches, there were occasions when religious revivals--originally encouraged by the missionaries--turned African, demonstrating the persistence of such religious beliefs in island society. In fact one writer has claimed that Myal--
ism might have died out had it not been for the unconscious aid given it by the emotional revivalism of the Methodists and Baptists in the years before 1865.  

Every effort was made to stamp out those religious groups which had obviously retained a high proportion of African religious practices. The outbreak of Myalism in 1842 was eventually curbed by the imposition of heavy fines and the imprisonment of its leaders, followed by legislation designed to suppress all the popular religious practices.  

Perhaps the most graphic illustration of the bad relations between the orthodox Christians and the nativist groups was the clash that occurred between the municipal authorities of Kingston and members of a John Connu procession during the Christmas season of 1842. The Catholic Mayor had prohibited the Negroes from celebrating in their traditional manner and had armed special bands of volunteer policemen. When two persons were arrested on charges of disorder, a crowd gathered. The police, in breaking it up, fired indiscriminately, killing four persons including two innocent women pedestrians. 

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239 J. J. Williams, *The Psychic Phenomena of Jamaica* (New York: Dial Press, Inc., 1934), p. 99. Also this movement was probably influenced by the introduction of African labourers in the 1940's. Waddell, *op. cit.*, p. 188.  


To some extent the deteriorating relations between many of the missionaries and their congregations were a measure of the increasing cultural distance that was developing between the peasant society and the culture of the Europeanized Jamaicans. Many missionaries were disillusioned about the moral conditions of the Negroes, which immediately following slavery began improving rapidly, but which later appeared to deteriorate. When illegitimacy continued to be the legal status of most of the newborn, and the incidence of praedial larceny increased, the feeling was created in missionary circles that the blacks had failed them.

The conflict between the Baptist missionaries and the planters continued for sometime after emancipation. In 1841 the Baptists' efforts to arouse the blacks' political consciousness might have succeeded had not Governor Metcalfe thrown his influence behind the planters and opposed their campaign. Metcalfe regarded the Baptists as one of the principal obstacles to his plan to conciliate the planters and foster a spirit of mutual cooperation in Jamaica. In 1840 he reported to the Secretary of State that they were attempting "to blacken nearly the whole of the European community" while claiming to

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243 Curtin, Two Jamaicas, p. 162.
244 Gurney, op. cit., pp. 151-52; Phillippo, op. cit., p. 232.
246 Curtin, Two Jamaicas, p. 172.
be acting in the interests of the Negro.248

Metcalf, in his fight with the Baptists, naturally had the support of the Church of England which he had previously defended as the established church of the colonies,249 but he also unexpectedly received a good deal of backing from the other Protestant missionary elements that had grown conservative after abolition, and which resented the success of the Baptists with the black masses.250 Both the Methodists and the Wesleyan-Methodists, a splinter group, appealed to a different strata. Their greatest following came from the coloureds and the urban classes who were naturally opposed to the political aspirations of the country blacks and who stressed the Christian orthodoxy of their religious services.251

Although the Baptists had generally been excluded from the white community in the 1830's, they were definitely considered part of it by

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248 C. S. 102/11, No. 50, Metcalfe to Russell, 27 March 1840, pp. 257-58. It should be remembered that the Baptists had set their hearts on breaking the alliance between the planters and the established church and chose the extension of the suffrage as the best method of expediting their plan. See Curtin, Two Jamaicas, p. 164; Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, pp. 110-11; Long, op. cit., p. 47.

249 Long, op. cit., p. 53.

250 Thompson, op. cit., p. 352; Curtin, Two Jamaicas, pp. 164-65. While the Baptists were trying to adapt themselves to compete more successfully with the Native Baptists the other churches such as the Methodist and Wesleyan were very consciously avoiding any compromise with religious Africanisms. Ibid.

251 Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, p. 111; Abrahams, op. cit., pp. 102-103; Curtin, Two Jamaicas, pp. 35-36, 165-66.
the 1860's. This was symptomatic of their growing estrangement from the blacks and their values. They had emerged from the emancipation period with a store of good will with which to continue their missionary activities, but this was largely exhausted when they attempted to prohibit drumming, concubinage, dancing and Christmas festivities which rated highly with the peasants. 252

Both the Anglican and the Presbyterian churches continued to be basically of the upper classes. The insistence of the established church in denying the sacraments to persons born illegitimate meant automatic exclusion of about 70 per cent of the population from its membership. 253

Some effort was made on the part of the Anglican churchmen to win over converts from the black masses, but the extent to which this was sincere is difficult to estimate. The major argument used to defend the privileged position of the Anglicans was that disestablishment of the Church of England might weaken the institution and hence hinder the moral advancement of the colony.

In general it was the responsibility of organized religion, particularly the established Church, to provide the main social services of the colonies and to bring the emancipated Negro into the framework

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252 Curtin, Two Jamaica's, pp. 169-172; Abrahams, op. cit., p. 100. During slavery the missionaries had of necessity tolerated illegitimacy but after abolition they made a concerted attack on the practice of rearing families out of wedlock. Ibid.

253 Curtin, Two Jamaica's, pp. 35, 169.
of European society. Yet for a number of reasons an adequate policy of educational and welfare services was not developed.

During slavery there had been little real interest in education, and those planters who desired a schooling for their children sent them to the mother country. Later the situation did not basically improve because education was generally considered to be the responsibility of the established church. Moreover the Baptists strongly opposed government intervention in educational matters on the basis that it would naturally take the side of the Anglican church against the non-conformists, with the result that in 1861 only 13 per cent of Jamaica's population was literate.

Governor Elgin raised quite a controversy with his proposal to sponsor technical education in the colony. Although Earl Grey enthusiastically supported the idea, it was eventually defeated by the missionaries and the Negroes who felt that it was a subtle attempt to keep

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254 Curtin, Two Jamaica's, p. 162; Burn, The British West Indies, p. 121; Olivier, Jamaica, p. 85.


257 Mathieson, The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre, p. 3; Simey, op. cit., p. 67.

the black in servility. To the Negro education signified an avenue of escape from the druggery of manual labour and one of the few means of raising his social status.  

Public health was another field which needed governmental action. Following abolition the planters showed less interest in looking after the health of the plantation labourers since they were no longer their personal property, by discontinuing the practice of hiring doctors to administer to their medical needs. Many doctors were forced to leave the colony, with the result that by 1854 it was estimated that only about 100 remained.

In part the opposition to a public health system came from the planters who used their influence in the Assembly to kill such a scheme, but on occasions the masses were also antagonistic to such legislation. An attempt in 1845 to extend medical services to the needy in rural areas was frustrated by the peasants' basic suspicion of European interference and their preference for the magico-religious medicine developed under slavery.

259 Mellor, op. cit., pp. 147-50; Morrell, op. cit., p. 164; Long, op. cit., pp. 75-76; Simmons, op. cit., pp. 131-32.

260 Curtin, Two Jamaica, p. 160; Long, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

261 In 1862 a bill to make provision for the extension of vaccination and the increase of doctors in rural districts was opposed by the Country Party in the Assembly under the leadership of Dr. Boverbank. See C.S. 102/20, No. 37, Darling to Newcastle, 7 February 1862, p. 149. Typical of people in their social position, the planters often rationalized the dreadful conditions of the masses—many of whom were dying from mal-nutrition and lack of medical care—by blaming them on the mental attitudes and idleness of the lower orders. Curtin, Two Jamaica, p. 160.

The lack of social services and the clash of religious interests had little adverse effect upon the emergence of the coloured middle class which was one of the most notable developments of this period, but it did continue, together with the other sources of friction between the peasant society and the Europeanized segment, to add to the growing sense of frustration in the ranks of the black masses. This general current of unrest was to have disastrous effects in 1865.

\[263\] Sewell, op. cit., p. 244; Trollope, op. cit., p. 73.
Although Bogie and the followers issued a proclamation justifying their action by law in the area and sent troops to gc. Troops to suppress the rebellion as soon as word reached Kingdon Governor Braye deceased mercantile

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- Some extent the absence of any coordinated plan to exterminate the population
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- The crowd began attacking the volunteers and the white volunteers

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- It was ordered to break up the mob without any hesitation.

- Thousands of white volunteers from the courthouse
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- Thousands of white volunteers from the courthouse
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- Thousands of white volunteers from the courthouse

On October 16th, 1662 under the leadership of Paul Bogue, a

The Disturbances at Newport Bay and Their Causes:

I. RIOT INCIDENT AND EARLY LEGISLATIVE CONSEQUENCES
II. NARRAGANSETT RIOT AND THE RISE OF THE NEW IMPERIALISM OF THE

CHAPTER III
action and making a call to arms they had little chance of success, with such poor weapons and without general support throughout the island, against the well-equipped soldiers and militia of the island government.  

The repression by the government authorities was brutal and more than matched the alleged barbarism of the blacks in their attacks on the whites. As the Royal Commission which was subsequently appointed to investigate the causes of the disturbances and the conduct of the colonial government reported, the whole operation had been marked by excesses, both by the military and the government. Considerable evidence given at the hearings of the Royal Commission showed that panic-stricken whites had indiscriminately shot blacks merely because they ran away on being challenged and that of the total number of the Negroes killed during the period of martial law a high proportion had been arbitrarily tried. Not only did many of the local whites in the militia enjoy the spectacle of humbling the black but several members of the


3 Burns, op. cit., p. 672. Both coloreds and blacks serving with the volunteers or the West India regiment were also involved in atrocities and the cruelty of the Maroons, who were invited by Governor Eyre to aid in the suppression of the 'rebellion', was extreme. Ibid., p. 673. See also Olivier, op. cit., p. 262; Harry Johnstone, The Negro in the New World (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), p. 260.
British army had also been guilty of atrocities. General O'Connor had reprimanded a junior officer for taking so many prisoners, while one soldier commenting upon the obvious enthusiasm of many of his comrades in terrorizing the blacks wrote:

This is the picture of martial law. The soldiers enjoy it: the inhabitants here dread it. If they run on their [the soldiers'] approach, they are shot for running away.

By far the most serious indictment of the measures used by the civil and military authorities was their failure to distinguish between the guilty and the innocent. This was illustrated by the actions

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5Henry Bleby, The Reign of Terror: A Narrative of Facts Concerning Ex-Governor Eyre, G. W. Gordon, and the Jamaica Atrocities (London: No publishing house given, 1868), passim, particularly pp. 1, 63-64; Justin McCarthy, A History of Our Own Times, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1897), pp. 307-308. Long after repressive measures were necessary, terror was used merely to satisfy the vindictiveness of the whites in the colony. See W. F. Finlason, Justice to a Colonial Governor (London: Chapman and Hall, 1869), p. 94; S. D. Scott, To Jamaica and Back (London: Chapman and Hall, 1876), p. 205. One observer wrote: "I adopted a plan which has struck immense terror into these wretched men, far more than death; which is, I caused them to hang each other. They entertain me to be shot to avoid this, which appears to me a far more dreadful ordeal to them than death," Scott, op. cit., p. 206. Another wrote the "H... is doing splendid service with his men, shooting every black man who cannot account for himself." Ibid. A British army colonel who wanted to make an example of the dead strung the bodies up in the trees after they were shot. Later he admitted to members of the Royal Commission that he had not even known their names. Bleby, op. cit., pp. 59-60.


7Olivier, op. cit., p. 203; T. Harvey and W. Brewin, Jamaica in 1866 (London: A. W. Bennett, 1867), p. 12; Finlason, op. cit., p. 94. Underhill reported that the special court set up to administer the trials sentenced 189 persons to be hanged of which only 25 were convicted of murder. All the others were convicted of rebellion despite the fact that
of Provost Marshall Ramsay in putting to death several people without adequate trial—some of whom were completely innocent—and the high-handed manner in which William Gordon, the alleged leader of the disturbances, was tried under military justice, accused of complicity and executed.

Governor Eyre reported that there had been danger of a general uprising in the colony which was only averted by the sternest measures and the punishment of the ringleaders. He claimed that the atrocities committed by the blacks had only been exceeded by those perpetrated in the Indian Mutiny and that William Gordon was guilty of planning an uprising that would have followed the precedent established in Haiti at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Royal Commission, however, found that while the promptness of Eyre's action was commendable, the punishments had been too severe and the wanton destruction of over a thousand peasant homes inexcusable.


8 Johnstone, op. cit., p. 263. A coloured resident of Morant Bay who did not have a pass in his possession from the Provost Marshall and who was suspected of carrying stolen goods was tied to a gun wheel and flogged. When he grimaced Ramsay ordered him hanged without further ado. See Underhill, op. cit., pp. 193-94.


11 Underhill, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
Eyre convinced the assembly that in the interests of security the island ought to give up its constitution and allow the Colonial Office to establish a greater measure of control in the colony. In November the Jamaican ruling classes, with a few notable exceptions, relinquished the political control they had enjoyed in the belief that the Colonial Office could now protect their interests better than they.  

Although the disturbances of Morant Bay did not affect the whole island and the danger of a general uprising was greatly exaggerated at the time, they were nonetheless very important in showing the degree to which representative government had failed to operate under the conditions that existed in the colony following emancipation.  

The riots—indicative of general unrest in Jamaica—were the result of a number of factors which may be considered under the following headings:

a. Social relations between the various racial groupings.
b. Political issues in the assembly.
c. Religion and the Great Revival.
d. Economic decline and depression.
e. Planter oppression and problems of land, justice and civil authority.

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f. Increasing disillusionment of the black masses.
g. The role of Governor Eyre and William Gordon.
h. The failure of colonial policy.

a) Social Relations Between the Various Racial Groupings:

To some observers it appeared that racial feeling had declined in Jamaica and that the colony was on the way to establishing a social democracy. The Reverend David King who visited the island in 1850 felt that racial discrimination was definitely declining owing to the numerous instances of whites and blacks fraternizing in the houses of God and because it appeared to him that a new spirit of cooperation existed between the various racial groupings in the island.¹⁴ Sir Charles Grey while Governor of Jamaica in the 1850's wrote that:

There is no place in the world, perhaps, where there is less tenacity than in Jamaica of those distinctions which in so marked a manner [are used] ... to keep the African, the mixed and the European races separate.¹⁵

Dr. Underhill after visiting the colony in 1861 commended the progress


made by reporting that "there now exists no legal obstacle to the attainement of the highest offices of state by men of any class."¹⁶

The coloureds had certainly made great advances since their political enfranchisement in the 1830's. Many now occupied positions of prominence in government or business and to a large extent they had earned political equality with the whites which before the development of the radical wing of the Town party under Gordon and Osborne in the 1860's was probably greater than the antipathy that existed between the whites and the blacks. The coloureds were still not socially acceptable to the whites and their growing political and social ambitions alarmed the old ruling class.¹⁸ Dr. Underhill mentioned a growing tendency of the coloureds to refer to the whites as outsiders, which was indicative


¹⁷Ibid., p. 223. Richard Hill who had slowly earned the respect of the whites was offered the governorship of St. Lucia. See Gurney, op. cit., p. 113; W. L. Burn, Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the West Indies (London: Jonathon Cape, 1937), p. 202. Many of the leading business establishments in Kingston belonged to coloureds. See J. A. Thome and H. Kimball, Emancipation in the West Indies: A Six Months Tour in Antigua, Barbados and Jamaica (New York: The American Anti-slavery Society, 1839), p. 283. Most of the prominent Jamaicans of this period who were known outside the island were coloureds. In addition to Richard Hill there was Edward Jordon who had served as Mayor of Kingston and Island Secretary; and Heslop, attorney general during the time of Eyre; Osborn, leader of the radical faction of the Town Party; and Moncrieff, a leading barrister and member of the assembly. See King, op. cit., p. 63; W. Adolphe Roberts, Six Great Jamaicans: Biographical Sketches (Kingston: The Pioneer Press, 1952), pp. 19-24, 123; Sydney Olivier, Jamaica: The Blessed Island (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1936), p. 179.

of their increasing self-confidence and awareness of their own position in society. In forcing themselves forward they were often aided by the government policy of utilizing their services against the recalcitrant whites. 

Although friction between the whites and coloureds added to the general air of instability that existed in the sixties, the fundamental differences between the blacks and the coloured and whites was the basic cause of the explosion at Morant Bay. The attitudes of the coloureds towards the blacks also contributed to the resentment of the masses in that the rising middle class sought at every turn to disassociate itself from them. While the coloureds resented the superiority complex of the whites towards themselves they treated the Negroes with the utmost disdain. 

After mid-century the old alliance of the mulattoes with the blacks which had been utilized by the former as a means of weakening


21 Curtin, op. cit., pp. 45-46, 175; Trollope, op. cit., p. 78-79; Bigelow, op. cit., pp. 25-26. In Bahia (Brazil) one student of race relations has stated that most of the mulattoes were marginal men in that they had a foot in both worlds, but in attempting to identify themselves with the more prestigious upper strata, they had "developed an emphatic Aryanism and became the champion of white against black." See Donald Pierson, Negroes in Brazil (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 175.
the domination of the whites broke down after most coloureds realized that the rising aspirations of the blacks now presented the greatest threat to their position. Slowly they were forced to ally themselves with the whites, although the latter still continued to act as if they were born to dominate the coloureds and the Negro masses. As the frustration of the whites grew greater the coercive measures they adopted became more pronounced, so that in many ways they welcomed the uprising at Morant Bay as an opportunity to teach the blacks a lesson. By 1865 the situation was explosive.

22 Abrahams, op. cit., pp. 105-106. Apparently the Jamaican coloureds were reminded of the plight of the mulattoes in Haiti after the death of their leader Boyer, by the presence in the British colony of large numbers of exiled Haitians fleeing the republic after the success of the black army generals in securing domination over the browns. Although the elite eventually accommodated itself to living under black leaders, most of the Jamaican coloureds greatly feared a similar occurrence in Jamaica. See Bigelow, op. cit., pp. 27, 193; Trollope, op. cit., pp. 111-13; James, op. cit., p. 140. See also S. Rodman, Haiti: The Black Republic (New York: The Dovin-Adair Co., 1954), p. 39.

23 Bigelow, op. cit., p. 160; C. S. Roundall, England and Her Subject Races with Special Reference to Jamaica (London: Macmillan and Co., 1866), pp. 18-24. Roundall, who was secretary to the Royal Commission of 1866, wrote that the whites showed an absolute disregard for an inferior and that "any attempt to improve his condition is warring against an immutable law of nature." Ibid., pp. 19-21.

24 Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 129; Curtin, op. cit., pp. 102, 195, 205. A Jamaican missionary in 1865 wrote that although the rebellion was over the planters continued to apply the oppressive measures of the past which had so alienated the peasants. See The Times (London), 5 December 1865, p. 9. Roundall speaks of the deplorable spirit of militarism which developed after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and which was manifested in the "red anarchy of Jamaican martial law." He said the Jamaican revolt was regarded as a personal insult and provoked the most brutal retributions from the whites. Roundall, op. cit., pp. 18-19.
b) Political Issues in the Assembly

After the retrenchment crisis of 1854 had subsided the Town party set out to secure control of the Assembly by means of establishing a broader representation while the Country party sought on numerous occasions to limit the franchise.²⁵ Curtin says that prior to the riots there were three main solutions to the problem of which interest group was to dominate the assembly. There was the extended franchise which would give the blacks an increasing voice in the destiny of the island; a more limited electorate retaining oligarchic control by the ruling order; or the delegation of all political power to the Colonial Office.²⁶

When Darling attempted to give the majority in the Assembly responsibility the Country party, because of the relatively strong position of the political opposition, took fright and opposed the move as one that would turn political control over to the coloureds and eventually to the radical wing of the Town party. This was marked after the success of the Town party in the election of 1864. Even some of the coloureds began to fear the longterm consequences of their victory²⁷ so that it


²⁶ Curtin, op. cit., p. 201.

was not long before the majority of the Town party adopted the position advocated by the Falmouth Post—namely that of an alliance with the whites against the common foe, the blacks.28

At first the radical minority—which seldom constituted more than half a dozen members—was content to work within the Town party, but its identification with small settlers became more marked after the majority of the coloureds identified themselves with the ruling caste. As the leading coloureds composed their differences with their former enemies, the radicals were driven to an extreme position of championing the cause of the disenfranchised masses.29

Differences existed within the radical faction. Osborn, who had been suspended from public office by Governor Eyre after criticizing the Colonial government for ignoring the interests of the masses, was really a Jamaican nationalist who felt that the browns had sold out to the whites and thrown away their one chance to establish a government amenable to their own interests. He strongly criticized the 'bastard brown men' who had postponed the advent of local government and the eventual transference of political power to the black majority.30

by the Colonial Office, only one concerned the welfare of the masses. Johnstone, op. cit., p. 256.


29 Curtin, op. cit., p. 82. T. Constantine Burke who was also a member of the radicals referred to the remainder of the Assembly as the forty thieves. See Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, p. 4.

30 C. S. 102/20, No. 130, Darlington Newcastle, 17 September 1861, pp. 46, 51; Curtin, op. cit., p. 176.
Gordon was also a nationalist, but his primary motivation was not clear. It may have been his desire to see the peasant farmer get fairer treatment, although his hatred of the Established Church and Governor Eyre was undoubtedly important. The political clash between Eyre and Gordon was certainly a factor contributing to the latter's position.

Jordan, who had been leader of the Town party, became increasingly more conservative. He appeared to lose the political fire that had made him an outstanding leader of the coloureds in their earlier fight against the white monopoly of power, and during the time of Eyre he virtually became the agent of the governor. Eyre and his friends such as the Custos of Kingston, Dr. Bowerbank, and Baron Ketelhodt, the Custos of St. Thomas-in-the-East, were undoubtedly reassured by the reply of the local officials and clergy to the governor's request for comments on the religious meetings of the peasants held to protest against conditions in the colony. Most of the reports which were highly critical of the blacks were submitted by coloureds and indicated to some extent the growing sense of identification of that class with the regime.

As the old differences between the two political parties diminished

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31Curtin, op. cit., p. 184.
32Roberts, op. cit., pp. 20-21; C. S. 102/20, No. 140, Darling to Newcastle, 30 September 1861, p. 64.
33Price, op. cit., pp. 120-21.
the frustration of the radicals became greater. This was parti-
cularly the case with regard to Gordon who finally realized that the
only remaining chance of securing fair treatment for the blacks would
be through a direct appeal to the Colonial Office in the name of the
Jamaican masses.

c) Religion and the Great Revival

In 1860 Jamaica experienced the 'Great Revival.' Although it
was initiated by the Moravians it soon became known as the 'Great
Baptist Revival' because the Baptist missionaries in trying to use it
as a means of re-establishing their influence with the black masses
had promoted revivals throughout Jamaica. During its height, thousands
of peasants left their homes and roamed through the country, greatly
adding to the insecurity and hardship of these years. Slowly, how-
ever, the missionaries lost control of the movement to the Native
Baptists and other religious cults.

After the Morant Bay riots the Established Church and the whites
criticized the Baptists for their alleged role in encouraging the blacks
to rebel against authority. The Royal Commission, however, absolved the
Baptists of any direct involvement in the disturbances. In any case,

34 The willingness of a handful of wealthy Jamaicans to offer
leadership to the masses proved to be offensive to the oligarchy because
the Baptists and the small settlers without proper direction could do
very little in the political realm. See Curtin, op. cit., p. 184.

35 Ernest Payne, Freedom in Jamaica: Some Chapters in the Story
most of the Baptists were by this time thoroughly disillusioned with the blacks and were only too ready to disassociate themselves from the Native Baptist cults—especially after one such group under the leadership of Bogle had participated in the attack on the court house in Morant Bay. 36 One notable exception was the secretary of the Baptist Society who continued to believe that blacks needed missionary aid and counsel to reach a higher level of civilization. 37

It must also be remembered that the Baptist missionaries were never influential in St. Thomas because of the opposition of the planters and the local magistrates and the growing suspicion of the Native Baptists, who were increasingly jealous of the interference by the missionaries. Myalism and to a less extent Obeahism were recovering their influence among the black masses during this period, probably as a result of their dedicated opposition to constituted authority, and of the declining influence of the European missionaries. 38

36 Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, p. 180; Curtin, op. cit., p. 199. Most of the local clergy including one prominent Baptist missionary (the Reverend Samuel Oughton), praised the action of the governor in quickly repressing the 'rebellion'. Ibid., pp. 199-200.

37 Underhill, The West Indies, page v of the preface.

It has been claimed that, despite the depressed condition of the Jamaican economy by the end of the fifties, the revival was not caused by economic hardship, because it began in an area where there was a relatively prosperous peasantry and few large plantations. The religious enthusiasm was probably symptomatic of an awakening of social and political consciousness of the masses that expressed itself through the most available medium.

Whether this was the case or not one thing is certain—the revival compounded the economic difficulties of the peasants and the planters. Thousands of wandering blacks signified abandoned crops and lower incomes, while the spectacle of 'idle blacks' parading around the island at a time when the planters badly needed labour confirmed their notions of Negro irresponsibility and caused a further deterioration in the relations between the two groups.

d) Economic Decline and Depression

Economic conditions in the island colony had by the 1860's become depressed due to a number of causes. Jamaica suffered from a chronic decline in the production of sugar. This decline was reflected in falling planter incomes and the increasing failure of the estate owners because of their unwillingness to grapple with the problems of the sugar

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39 Hall, op. cit., p. 237.
40 Oliver, Jamaica, p. 152.
41 Hall, op. cit., pp. 196, 238-39; Payne, op. cit., p. 89.
Although large numbers of blacks were by this time securely established on peasant holdings, the government did nothing to encourage the marketing of their produce, nor was there sufficient land made available to meet the heavy demand of the more recent settlers. Land hunger was without question one of the major causes of friction between the peasants and the authorities.  

As a result of the American Civil War many foodstuffs became scarce or else their price increase was such as to put them beyond the incomes of the blacks. In the years 1863-65 the island suffered from a severe drought. There was increased taxation on the peasants, who in general were receiving lower cash incomes, increasing friction between the planter and the peasant economy, and a marked decline in the peasants' faith in the justice system.

e) Planter Oppression and Problems of Land, Justice and Civil Authority

The planters' continued use of coercion to force the blacks to labor on the plantations together with their policy of frustrating the settlement of Negroes on the marginal lands was perhaps the major cause

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45 Ibid. Burns, op. cit., p. 670; Hall, op. cit., p. 240. One contemporary observer said that hunger was one of the prime causes of the inflamatory conditions in 1865. Ibid., p. 197.

46 Hall, op. cit., pp. 203-204, 240.
of the disturbances. Estate owners continued to complain that the creole could not be induced to work for love or money, and that their idleness was the main cause of the decline of the colony. In this view they were supported by Darling, Eyre, and a faction in the Colonial Office.47

As a result of their failure to control the supply of labor the planters adopted a number of measures to force the issue. The Reverend Henry Clarke, who was one of the few members of the Anglican Church to defend the blacks, wrote that much of the poverty and economic suffering that existed in the sixties was the result of a deliberate planter policy to destroy the economic independence of the Negroes. Typical of the tactics used in his area was the practice of removing the laborers' dwellings without notice.48

Clarke was quite emphatic in attributing the riots to planter tyranny. Considering the wrongs done he felt that it was not surprising that the blacks had rebelled, but rather that they had endured the

47 Livingstone, op. cit., p. 70; Comments by W. G. Sewell in the New York Times, 30 June 1860, p. 2; Sewell, op. cit., pp. 317-18. Eyre went to great pains to have the so-called 'Queen's Letter' distributed throughout the island to support his contention that the blacks should be content to work for wages and accept contracts when offered them. See Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 144-46, 151-52.

48 Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, p. 113. Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 125. It is interesting to note that statistical studies of the correlation of cotton prices with the number of lynchings that occurred in the South following the Civil War have shown that an increasing number of outrages against the Negro invariably followed a decline in prices of the staple. See Naomi Goldstein, The Roots of Prejudice Against the Negro in the United States (Boston: Boston University Press, 1943), p. 54.
yoke for so long. The question of wages and planter oppression—held by many to be crucial in exacerbating relations between planter and labourer—was not adequately studied by the Commission, but its findings supported the charges made by Dr. Underhill of the Baptist Missionary Society that a great deal of suffering existed in Jamaica as a result of planter tyranny and the failure of the authorities to understand the problems of the peasants.

While the planter and the authorities felt that the blacks should be taxed to make them work on the estates, the peasants were equally adamant about their right to occupy vacant Crown lands in the interior which they felt would be made available to them if they could only present their case to the Queen. Thus in 1865 a group of peasants in St. Ann's parish petitioned the imperial government for permission to

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49 Hall, op. cit., pp. 243-44; Curtin, op. cit., p. 200; Harvey and Brewin, op. cit., p. 18; Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 138-40. Considerable friction between the peasants and the planters was caused by the trespassing of estate cattle on the settlers' provision grounds. When the latter sought relief from the governor, Eyre advised them to fence their properties. Ibid., p. 150.


51 Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, p. xviii, introduction; Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 122. While the peasants derived few benefits from the administration he had to pay relatively high taxes on his mules, horses and drays. Ibid., pp. 122-23. Hall states that many of the taxes levied by the Assembly hit the peasants and not the planters but he attributes this more to lack of understanding of peasant society and its problems on the part of the legislature than to a deliberate policy of coercing the black. Hall, op. cit., p. 214.
move onto vacant lands which had been denied them in the past by the machinations of the whites. 52

By this time most peasants felt that it was useless to seek justice through the local channels of law and authority. 53 Even Governor Eyre, in a report to the Colonial Office, admitted that the charges of abuse in the local justice system were partly true. 54 Publically, however, he denied criticism that the Negro was a victim of the local judiciary system by saying that the tribunals of justice and political rights were equally available to whites, coloureds, and blacks. 55

In actual fact there was little hope of securing impartial judgments from the magistrates as a great many of them were either planters or closely associated with the estate interests. In St. Thomas a number of magistrates were estate overseers. Often they sat in judgment of labourers employed by themselves, so the whole system tended to become "the law of terror and oppression." 56

52Harvey and Brewin, op. cit., pp. 18-19; Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 175; Burns, op. cit., p. 761.

53Harvey and Brewin, op. cit., p. 21; Cumper, "Labour Demand and Supply in the Jamaican Sugar Industry," p. 54; Editorial comment in the New York Times, 1 September 1867, p. 4. Both Jackson, who had been a stipendiary magistrate in St. Thomas before his removal by Governor Eyre, and Heslop, the Attorney-General, reported that the blacks were greatly dissatisfied with the system of local justice. See Olivier, Jamaica, pp. 172-73, 179; Clinton V. Black, History of Jamaica (London: Collins Clear Type Press, 1956), p. 177.

54C. S. 102/21, No. 88, Eyre to Newcastle, 9 October 1862, pp. 57-58.

55Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 123.

56Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, pp. 108-109. The Reverend Henry Clarke stated that the legal system tended to justify the actions of the planters. Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 129. See also
By 1865 a very dangerous situation had developed. Already the peasant had come to consider the whole legal and political structure as one created to maintain the interests of the ruling classes. The secretary of the Royal Commission wrote that it was generally recognized in the colony that one standard of justice existed for whites and another for blacks. Such being the case many Negroes—despite their alleged love of litigation—sought to avoid contact with the law which they dubbed "bukra laws" by establishing their own system of redressing injustices.

The blacks' one remaining hope was direct appeal to the Crown. Although they were disinclined to believe the "Queen's letter," the Negroes were greatly disillusioned by their failure to interest the imperial government in studying their grievances. The feeling of despair which set in provided the inflammable material for the explosion which

Curtin, op. cit., p. 74; as the friction between planter and black mounted, the convictions in the local courts for praedial larceny increased. Ibid., p. 162.


58 Roundall, op. cit., p. 41. Underhill claimed that due to the high court costs the common Jamaican was often effectively barred from seeking justice. See Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, p. 7.


followed a few months later.

f) Increasing Disillusionment of the Black Masses

In the decade before Morant Bay a number of minor peasant disturbances occurred which, together with several meetings held to protest their grievances, indicated the growing sense of restlessness among the Negro masses. Riots occurred in Westmorland after a planter had shot "trespassers" who were using a waterhole, the ownership of which was then under litigation, while in 1859 there were two quite serious disturbances in Westmorland and Trelawny. In the first instance mobs stormed some toll gates in Westmorland and later attacked the local prison to rescue supporters who had been arrested during the first attack. A little later, subsequent to a dispute over land ownership in the parish of Trelawny when some sixty peasants were arrested, an armed mob attacked the courthouse and became involved in a bloody clash with the police.

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61Burns, op. cit., p. 671.

62 For evidence of the number of meetings that were held see Finlason, op. cit., pp. 90-91; Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 143-200; Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, p. 97; Mathieson, op. cit., pp. 191-92. In addition to the so-called "Underhill meetings" organized by the Baptist missionaries, Gordon took steps to organize his own meetings of protest. On May 3rd, 1865, he presided over a large meeting at the Kingston Tabernacle in which resolutions were passed calling upon the "Descendents of Africa in every parish throughout the island to form themselves into societies and hold public meetings and cooperate for the purpose of setting forth their grievances." See Roberts, op. cit., p. 37.

63 Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 154-55.

64 Hall, op. cit., pp. 248-249. Hall does not believe that Governor Eyre was justified in reporting that "general unrest" was widespread. Ibid., p. 248.
There is little doubt that many blacks were conscious of their degraded position in island society. They were completely unrepresented in the Assembly, excluded from public offices, and unable to secure justice under the existing legal system. Slowly they were coming around to the idea of by-passing the legal authorities to secure justice from the British government.

The Queen's letter, however, was a severe blow to their faith in the impartiality of Her Majesty's Government, since many felt that it virtually constituted a re-establishment of slavery. These fears were accentuated by the reactionary talk of many of the planters who were

65 Although the whites constituted only one in 32 of all the Jamaicans they had a monopoly of political power. See Johnstone, op. cit., p. 255. George Price himself a member of the Assembly wrote that after the election of 1864 only 10 of the 47-member Assembly were coloured and of these, seven were very light skinned mulattoes. He also stated that only three blacks had been elected in the previous thirty-year period. Price, op. cit., p. 118. Price's use of the term black was probably unjustified. Most students of the progress of the Negro after emancipation believe that the first black did not enter the Assembly before the end of the nineteenth century.

66 Mathieson, op. cit., p. 182; Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 142. Gordon had written to a friend of his in St. Thomas before the outbreak that since Governor Eyre was such an incompetent and evil official "we shall have to go before parliament with a strong petition and attack the whole colonial system." See Roberts, op. cit., p. 40. Paul Bogle had headed a deputation to Kingston with the purpose of presenting the peasants' grievances to the governor but Eyre had refused to see them. Ibid., p. 41. The idea of appealing directly to the United Kingdom was also encouraged by Dr. Underhill. See A Letter to the Right Honorable E. Cardwell with Illustrative Documents on the Condition of Jamaica, p. 14.

67 Mathieson, op. cit., p. 83; Livingstone, op. cit., p. 66; Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 152. It should be noted, however, that as late as September 5 some forty persons in St. Thomas had petitioned the Queen about conditions on the plantations and the corruption in the local magistracy. Ibid., p. 200.
gratified to learn that the Colonial Office was now more inclined to see their point of view, and by the governor's removal of Mr. Jackson, one of the few stipendiary magistrates that had actively supported the peasants' protests, from his post in St. Thomas-in-the-East.

Although Gordon reacted strongly to the Queen's letter, calling it "Cardwell's very indiscreet dispatch" and telling the people of St. Thomas that they had allowed themselves to be "ground down" too long and deceived by the "Jesuitical priesthoods," neither he nor Bogle, who had stated that although the blacks had endured oppression under the law for twenty-seven years they could no longer tolerate the system, had counted on a full-scale rebellion. It is difficult to determine, because of conflicting information, the exact motivation for the riots or if there was any extended plan for overthrowing British control. A number of students of this period place major emphasis on the failure of the Colonial policy, the bad labor-planter relations, and the corrupt judicial system. They are inclined to discredit the possibility of a concerted effort to expel the whites from Jamaica.

68 Livingstone, op. cit., p. 61; Ayearst, op. cit., p. 28.
69 Olivier, Jamaica, pp. 172-73; Black, op. cit., p. 177.
71 Olivier, Jamaica, p. 186.
72 Price, op. cit., passim; Hall, op. cit., p. 250; Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, passim, especially pp. 171, 182, 225, 231; Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, passim, especially pp. 97-98; Gocking, op. cit., pp. 129-30. A number, however, accept the thesis that the blacks were planning a general uprising and that they were in contact
At the time of the riots most of the whites and the coloureds were convinced that the blacks were starting a race war.\textsuperscript{73} Probably as the situation became more desperate the racial conflict came out into the open and was exploited by both sides.\textsuperscript{74} Dr. Douglas Hall in his recent study of post-emancipation Jamaica denies that the St. Thomas disturbances were the result of a colour conflict,\textsuperscript{75} although Dr. Curtin, while not specifically supporting the idea of a general uprising, at least outside of St. Thomas, believed that racial antipathy was an important factor not only during the Morant Bay crisis but in every major issue in the years following abolition.\textsuperscript{76}

The Royal Commission took a middle position on the issue. It reported that there had been a danger of the "rebellion" spreading with Haitians to procure arms. See Mathieson, \textit{The Sugar Colonies and Governor Eyre}, p. 191; Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 193, 196; Finlason, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 90-91.

\textsuperscript{73} Many whites who began to suspect the blacks of secretly preparing for an uprising armed themselves. See Curtin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 174. Dr. Bowerbank, the Custos of Kingston, kept warning the governor of an imminent uprising. Eyre apparently believed him, because he told the legislature in November 1865 that "there is scarcely a district or parish in the island where disloyalty, sedition and murderous intentions are not widely disseminated and in many instances widely expressed. . . . There is a daring and determined intention to make Jamaica a second Haiti." See Olivier, \textit{The Myth of Governor Eyre}, pp. 134, 245, 249. See also Finlason, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 27. A Jamaican missionary wrote that Gordon had conceived the diabolical idea of exterminating the "whites and respectable and influential browns or [to] drive them out and hand over the island to the blacks." \textit{The Times} (London), 5 December 1865, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{74} Olivier, \textit{The Myth of Governor Eyre}, p. 166. Yet Olivier says "race hatred was not an acute social irritant or even generally active," and he doubts if more than one peasant in twenty had ever heard of Haiti. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 166, 171.

\textsuperscript{75} Hall, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 250.

\textsuperscript{76} Curtin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 172, 175, 197.
throughout the island and that "the disturbances had their immediate origin in a planned resistance to lawful authority . . ." which some wanted to see used to expel the whites from the island, but it concluded that there had been no general island-wide conspiracy against British or white rule.

It should be remembered, nonetheless, that St. Thomas was an area where the Jamaican Negro had been highly successful in establishing his independence and where African cultural survivals were strongest, so that this parish may have experienced what might be called, for want of a better term, Negro nationalism. So far it has not been

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77 Finlason, op. cit., p. 28.

78 Jamaica, The Report of the Jamaica Royal Commission, 1866, and the Dispatch of the Right Honourable Edward Cardwell (Kingston, Jamaica: no publishing house given, 1866), p. 27. The Commission listed the three main causes of the rebellion as problems of rent, lack of confidence in the law, and feelings of hostility towards certain persons which in some cases was the basis of the desire to expel the whites from the island. Ibid.


81 Curtin talks of the Jamaican peasant culture as being more typically Jamaican than that of the upper class whites and browns due to the fact that while it has been strongly influenced by African forms it has not been in constant contact with the source (Africa), whereas the mores of the Europeanized Jamaicans were constantly being attuned to English cultural values by the repeated movement of persons between the British Isles and the colony. Peasant culture was an amalgam of retentions of Africanisms from a previous era and the acculturation of certain Europeanisms from its immediate contact with the island whites, and as such was quite different from that of the ruling order. See Curtin, op. cit., pp. 24-25.
satisfactorily established whether this was the result of artificial stimulation by the radicals such as Gordon and Osborne, or of a grass-roots movement to expel the hated whites and preserve peasant society.

Certainly strong anti-white feelings were manifested by Paul Bogle and his followers. Evidence given before the Commission showed that many blacks during the period of unrest were using slogans such as "Colour for Colour," "We must humble Buckra man before us," and "Don't burn the houses because we want to live in them afterwards." 82

The coloureds also became targets for the black rioters. Attorney-General Heslop, a coloured Jamaican, stated before the Commission that much of the racial discontentment existed among the lower classes, expressing itself in terms of dislike for a certain person because he was white or coloured. 83 Several whites, however, who were on good terms with the peasants either as medical practitioners or enlightened employers were spared their lives. 84

There can be little doubt that racial feeling was acute during the disturbances. The whites certainly displayed it and it would be naive to assume, just because we have little first-hand evidence as to

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82 See Report of the Jamaica Royal Commission, 1866, p. 8; see also Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 228.

83 Olivier, Jamaica, p. 180. Even Charles Price, a black magistrate, was killed by Bogle's men because he had identified himself with the white man's justice. See Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 224; The Times (London), 17 November 1865, p. 9; Gardner, op. cit., p. 480.

what the peasants were really thinking, that the blacks were without strong racial feeling towards the whites.

g) Role of Governor Eyre and William Gordon

Governor Eyre was convinced that Gordon, without any justifiable reason, had instigated the Morant Bay affair and in this he was supported by many Jamaican whites and coloureds. Almost a year later, when leaving the colony, he reiterated his charge by saying that:

Mr. Gordon was the proximate occasion of the insurrection and of the cruel massacre of particular individuals who he regarded as his personal enemies [and that he therefore] suffered justly.

Eyre's accusation was the result of a bitter feud which had developed between the two men largely as a result of their widely different political positions and their conflicting personalities. They

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85 Curtin, op. cit., p. 175.
86 The Reverend Henry Clarke of Westmoreland Parish reported that "Not only have the Negroes no antipathy to the white race but they have a natural respect and liking for them." See Olivier, Jamaica, p. 182.
89 Burns, op. cit., p. 673. Many of the Jamaican upper classes continued to accuse Gordon of complicity. Even Frank Cundall, an eminent Jamaican historical researcher refers to him as 'ringleader' of the 'Morant Rebellion.' See Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 8-9. The Commissioners, however, felt that there had been insufficient evidence to convict him (see Gardner, op. cit., p. 487). Even W. L. Mathieson and Adolphe Roberts, who feel that Gordon was prepared to use Bogle as a political lever, doubt whether he had a planned general uprising. See Mathieson, op. cit., p. 224; Roberts, op. cit., pp. 39-40.
clashed on practically every important issue that faced the colony in the period 1862-65.

Gordon was an emotional orator who, as a land-owner in St. Thomas, a politician representing the parish in the Assembly, and a recent convert to the Native Baptist cult from the Presbyterian faith, became interested in the cause of the small peasant producer. It was natural, therefore, that he should have come into conflict with the Anglican Church and the planters, especially since he was the illegitimate offspring of a Scottish planter and his Negro slave concubine.\(^0\) As early as 1850 he acted as spokesman for the peasants, but his clash with Eyre in 1863 after the acting governor tried to introduce a bill to provide flogging for praedial larceny, and the increasing frustration he encountered in later years drove him into an extreme position.\(^2\) By 1865 Gordon

\(^0\) Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 96-97; Abrahams, op. cit., pp. 89, 99; Roberts, op. cit., pp. 25-42. Gordon's repeated criticism of his fellow politicians of the Town party—even coloureds—eventually alienated all but a few of its members. See Gardner, op. cit., p. 476. Friction between the Anglican church and Gordon was marked. He accused the established church of widespread corruption while his position as church warden for the parish was disputed by the Custos because he was not a member of the establishment. Price, op. cit., p. 123.

\(^1\) Roberts, op. cit., pp. 29, 34. Gordon in criticizing the measures of the governor said he had "never seen such a monster who was so voracious for power and cruelty." Ibid., p. 36.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 34-46. Roberts, himself a twentieth-century Jamaican nationalist, refers to Gordon as a nationalist leader appealing to the masses. Ibid., p. 32. Yet Gordon could not have been anti-white per se since he was happily married to a white girl from a prominent Kingston family. See Abrahams, op. cit., p. 98. Olivier says that Eyre's policy forced Gordon into the role of the demagogue. See The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 95.
had few supporters among the whites and coloureds of Jamaica.\(^93\)

The Colonial Office made an unfortunate choice in selecting Eyre to succeed Darling. He was hypersensitive to criticism and this flaw in his character resulted in clashes not only with Gordon but with many other Jamaican political leaders.\(^94\) He reported to the Colonial Secretary that:

I believe Mr. Gordon to be a most mischievous person and one likely to do a great deal of harm amongst uneducated and excitable persons such as are the lower classes of this country. His object appears not to be to rectify evils where they exist but rather to impress the peasantry with the idea that they labour under many grievances and that their welfare and interests are not cared for by those in authority.\(^95\)

Despite his reported interest in safeguarding the "backward races," Eyre was a Negrophobe and a great admirer of Thomas Carlyle.\(^96\) He had repeatedly made reference to the deterioration in the character of the Negroses whom he saw through the eyes of the planter and the Anglican

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\(^93\) Some clergymen continued to support Gordon, especially the Reverend Duncan Fletcher, but the majority were strongly critical, calling his religious fervor a sham and referring to him as an agitator whose contributions were negative. See Duncan Fletcher, Personal Recollections of the Honourable George W. Gordon, Late Jamaica (London: Eliot Stock, 1867), passim, especially pp. 129-145; see also series of letters criticizing Gordon published in The Times (London), 16 December 1865, p. 9.

\(^94\) Hall, op. cit., p. 241. Eyre was aware of his unpopularity and sought at all costs to nullify criticism of his administration by calling adversaries either liars or nonentities. Ibid., pp. 241-42; Mathieson, op. cit., pp. 235-36.

\(^95\) C.S. 102/21, No. 56, Eyre to Newcastle, 7 August 1862, p. 24. Contrary to Gordon, Eyre showed complete confidence in the local magistracy of St. Thomas. C.S. 102/21, No. 41, Eyre to Newcastle, 8 July 1862, pp. 25-26.

\(^96\) A. W. Tilby, Britain in the Tropics, 1527-1910, Vol. IV, English People Overseas Series (London: Constable and Co., 1912), p. 35; Mathieson,
church, and he claimed that "indolence, apathy, improvidence, profligacy and crime which characterize the mass of the people [the Negroes], were the fundamental causes of all their difficulties."

To a certain extent the events of the sixties were beyond Eyre's control—the abolition of the constitution was perhaps inevitable—but the governor's lack of political acumen and his outright prejudices were crucial factors in the development of political instability in the Assembly and the breakdown of general confidence in his administration. Eyre's refusal to regard the "Underhill meetings" as anything more than seditious attempts to discredit his administration was perhaps his greatest error.

h) Failure of Colonial Policy

A large share of the responsibility for Morant Bay lay with the Colonial Office, not only because it refused to make an inquiry into conditions in the colony when all the danger signals were present and supported Eyre right or wrong, but also as a result of its failure

op. cit., p. 235. Eyre's sister wrote that he had "all his life been a consistent advocate of the coloured race." See The Times (London), 6 December 1865.


98Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 125.

99Curtin thinks it was only a matter of time—the Morant episode merely advanced the date. See Curtin, op. cit., p. 191.

100Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, pp. 143-144.

101Hall, op. cit., pp. 243, 250. George Price, a white assemblyman,
after emancipation to develop a constructive policy for the solution of Jamaica's difficulties.

Many historians of the period have strongly attacked the lethargic attitude of the Colonial Office towards such problems as justice, land tenure, education, and political representation. Even Henry Taylor and Earl Grey lamented that more was not done to achieve the full-scale integration of the emancipated Negro into the social and economic life of the colony. Both men felt that the years following emancipation had largely been wasted because the Colonial Office was prevented from doing all it wished by the political deadlock in the colony, and by its fear of antagonizing Parliament. They favored a more paternalistic

resigned his post on the executive committee and went to England to present his case against the governor, but the Colonial Secretary, Cardwell, blocked the move by stating that the complaint had to go through channels. See Price, op. cit., pp. 61-63.

102 The Colonial Office lacked far-sighted policies of development for the colonies. The absence of effective control over some of the local legislatures and pressure groups such as the West India Committee rendered much of its work nugatory. See Morrell, op. cit., p. 37. In most respects the Colonial Office never really addressed itself to solving the problems. See Olivier, Jamaica, pp. 156-57; Livingstone, op. cit., p. 77; Burn, The British West Indies, p. 125; Gocking, op. cit., p. 130.


103 Taylor, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 217. Taylor wrote that the "welfare of one million Negroes was sacrificed for a term of about twenty-six years because they were not given sufficient protection and direction by the authorities." Ibid. Grey wrote that years had been allowed to slip away without anything effective being done to make the Negro masses better citizens. See Earl Grey, The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1853), Vol. I, p. 190.

See also Gocking, op. cit., pp. 130-31.
form of government that found support in some quarters.

Allowing for the prevailing philosophy of *laissez faire* and the increasing disillusionment at the progress of the West Indian Negro expressed by its personnel, the Colonial Office could, nonetheless, have done more to guide the colony along the path of orderly development. James Stephen erred in thinking that the evils in the justice system which were so marked during apprenticeship had been rectified in his time, and the Colonial Office's failure to support the blacks' desire for land and to guarantee him a measure of security once he established himself as a small producer was disastrous.

Indecision was perhaps fatal. Jamaicans of all colours had a stake in the future of the island, but the balance of power was in the hands of the upper classes and the Colonial Office. There were two courses of action—the establishment of a society where the masses would hold the balance of power and where their values were dominant, or the orientation of the island populace towards the culture of Europe. The failure of Jamaica to move rapidly towards the last alternative was attributable to all classes, but major responsibility lay with the Colonial

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104 Livingston, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32. John S. Mill felt that as a result of the clash of the races, Jamaica should have a "benevolent despotism." See Roundall, *op. cit.*, p. 31.


108 Curtin, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
Office. Morant Bay was a measure of this failure.

The Reaction in Jamaica and the United Kingdom

The nature of the repressive measures used against the rioters in Morant Bay and against any other persons who appeared ready to criticize the authorities indicated the determination of the government to assert its position at all costs. In this it was joined by the majority of the whites and the coloureds who felt that the blacks had to be taught a lesson, and the reigns of government be removed as far as possible from their reach. 109 Although several leading members of the Country Party who still felt reluctant to give up their political power initially sided with the radicals, all but ten of the Assembly finally voted approval of the suspension of the constitution. 110

Opposition to the government's measures came from either the Assembly radicals like Robert Osborn and Constantine Burke and a few oligarchs such as Wellesley Burke, 111 or from a handful of liberal-

109 The Times (London), 6 December 1865, p. 5 and 13 February 1866, p. 9; P. E. Shephard, The West Indies and Confederation (No facts of publication), p. 277. Later when Eyre was under severe criticism for his role in the 'judicial murder' of William Gordon, a group of prominent Jamaicans raised a fund to help his defense. See The New York Times, 30 April 1866, p. 1.


111 Curtin, op. cit., p. 202; Roberts, op. cit., p. 49; Gocking, op. cit., p. 131. George Price was one of the few whites to support the position of the radicals--namely that the constitution must be preserved for the day when the blacks would be capable of coming forward to govern themselves. Price, op. cit., passim, particularly the Preface and p. 137.
minded citizens of all walks of life who registered their disapproval despite considerable intimidation.112

Many blacks, in spite of the terrible humiliation wrought by the authorities, accepted the guarantees of the commissioners that all witnesses would be protected, and came to Kingston to give evidence before the Royal Commission. As they had always distinguished between the Queen and her officials, the establishment of an investigating body in her name revived to some extent the faith they had always had in her impartiality.113 Yet J. M. Phillippo, after visiting Morant Bay on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, reported that they were still suspicious and discouraged.114 They were probably willing to accept the paternalism offered by the new form of government.

The reaction in the Colonial Office to Governor Eyre's actions varied from mild criticism to one of outright approval, but the riots

112 A number of persons who were critical of the government were indicted on charges of conspiracy although the Commissioners later cleared them. See the New York Times, 17 November 1865, p. 5, and 26 December 1865, p. 1, and 25 February 1866, p. 6. See also The Times (London), 17 March 1866, p. 10. It was reported from Jamaica that after the appointment of the new governor (Grant) many whites and coloureds felt that they could at last speak out more plainly about the excesses against the blacks. Ibid., 9 February 1866, p. 7. See also Harvey and Brewin, op. cit., p. 15.

113 The Times (London), 13 February 1866, p. 9, and 17 March 1866, p. 10. It has been claimed that since the Royal Commission was hostile to Eyre and sympathetic to the blacks, many obeahmen boasted of their influence as witnesses during the proceedings and this gave them increased influence with the black masses. See J. J. Williams, Voodooos and Obeahs: Phases of West Indian Witchcraft (New York: Dial Press Inc., 1932), pp. 194-95.

were welcomed as a chance to set up crown colony government. Although Taylor had by the sixties been more disposed to give the representative system a trial, he and most of his colleagues were aware that the semi-responsible system introduced in 1854 left much to be desired. Taylor himself accepted Eyre's version of the riots and the notion that the blacks in Jamaica were planning a second Haiti. He felt that Eyre's swift and decisive actions had averted serious trouble in the island. Even Sir Frederick Rogers, who did not approve of the harsh methods used by the authorities, felt that Eyre had been justified in considering the riots to be serious. The Colonial Secretary, Cardwell, also defended the island authorities.


116 Cocking, op. cit., pp. 121, 123.

117 Taylor, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 221-22. Taylor felt that such steps were necessary to demoralize the rebels who he felt were bent on overturning the island. He said that the "insurrection was of infinite service to the colony [in that] the assembly was frightened out of its life." Ibid., p. 222.


119 Finlason, op. cit., p. 28; Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay, p. 186.
Public opinion in England was divided on the Morant Bay issue with the majority favouring the policy of Governor Eyre. Disillusionment and lack of concern about West Indian problems was already marked by the 1860's. Morant Bay confirmed English racial prejudices that the native peoples of the empire did not appreciate the advantages of British rule, and the whole question of whether Eyre was justified in doing what he did to ensure law and order or whether he had violated the civil rights of the colonial citizens became a public issue.

Many defenders of Eyre's position believed that the Negro was no ordinary British subject and that he had to be summarily handled to make him behave. At least two writers, in emphasizing the supposed


122 Delane, The Times (London), 3 January 1866, p. 8. Thomas Carlyle was the leader of a group of literary figures formed to defend Eyre and was aided by Charles Kingsley, John Ruskin and Lord Tennyson. See McCarthy, op. cit., p. 319.

123 Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre, p. 342. Delane, The Times, editor, strongly criticized the 'Negro barbarity' (see The Times (London) November 1865, p. 6) and called on "all the bravery as well as all the intelligence of the superior race (white) to import confidence or security to 50,000 whites surrounded in a Negro insurrection by 300,000 blacks." Ibid., 21 November 1865, p. 6. He also criticized the Negro's yearning for equality (Ibid., 20 November 1865, p. 8) and claimed that "immediate justice is the best mercy in the long run for the lower class
barbaric ferocity of the Negro and his intention to exterminate the white minority, stated that the authorities should be unrestricted in their choice of measures.\textsuperscript{124}

A group of liberal Englishmen who were dubbed the Jamaica Committee and which included John Stuart Mill, Professor Huxley, Herbert Spencer, Charles Buxton, and John Bright, called for an investigation of the Jamaican government's action on the grounds that the national honor had to be redeemed by showing that any British subject could obtain redress of injustice.\textsuperscript{125} Mill stated that "there was much more at stake than only justice to the Negroes, imperative as was that consideration." To him the main question was whether British colonies were to live under military license or a government of law.\textsuperscript{126}

Mill was greatly aided by the judgment of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn criticizing the widely-held official view that martial law

of minds as death loses nearly all its terrors if it is seen at a considerable interval." \textit{Ibid.}, 18 November 1865, p. 8. The editor of the New York Times attacked Delane for his inconsistency in justifying the action of the British troops while criticizing the atrocities of Russian troops in Poland. See New York \textit{Times}, 13 December 1865, p. 4 and 8 July 1866, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{124}Bedford Pirn, \textit{The Negro and the Jamaica Rebellion} (London: Trubner and Co., 1866), passim; Finlason, op. cit., passim. Finlason, a British magistrate, wrote: "To compare an insurrection of Negroes in a colony once a slave colony with a rebellion of men of British blood or of any other European race would be mere pedantry." \textit{Ibid.}, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{125}Burns, op. cit., p. 576; McCarthy, op. cit., p. 319; Underhill, \textit{The Tragedy of Morant Bay}, p. 199.

gave the colonial governor unlimited discretion,\(^{127}\) and was able to force Lord John Russell's government to take up the issue in parliament.\(^{128}\) Yet both the government and the parliamentary opposition accepted the abolition of the Jamaica constitution and refused to indict Eyre, while a majority in parliament in 1872 voted a sum of money to reimburse Eyre for the costs of his defense in a trial initiated by the Jamaica Committee.\(^{129}\)

The Rise of the New Imperialism - 1872-1919

Morant Bay aroused a short-lived interest in the West Indian area\(^{130}\) which soon gave way to apathy and outright neglect. All this happened during a period when interest in imperial affairs was at its height. The new imperialism, which dominated British thinking in the period 1872-1919, had become so strong by the end of the nineteenth century that Lord Salisbury warned that the British people were in a mood to fight with anyone who disagreed with them.\(^{131}\)

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\(^{127}\) Ibid., p. 299; both Henry Taylor and Frederick Rogers disagreed with Cockburn. See Taylor, op. cit., pp. 216-18; Marindin, op. cit., pp. 271-72.

\(^{128}\) Burns, op. cit., p. 674. See also New York Times, 19 December 1865, p. 4; The Times (London), 1 December 1865, p. 8.


\(^{130}\) The Times (London), 12 December 1865, p. 8.

West Indies, however, failed to excite the interest of the mother country for a number of reasons. These will be better understood after briefly examining the motives and the character of the "new imperialism."

Imperialism has usually been associated with economic motives. Certainly there is ample justification for this view, which received its greatest intellectual impetus from the English writer J. A. Hobson in his classic study of 1902. Not only did his work help to clarify the Marxists' claim that imperialism was an outgrowth of the capitalist system, but it subsequently influenced a whole generation of students of imperialism. The major spokesmen of the new imperialism were representatives of economic interests who were ready to admit the economic advantages of expansionism. Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and Cecil Rhodes were all anxious to prove the economic advantages of empire. Rhodes expressed the motives of his contemporaries


134 Godard, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
well when he stated that "her majesty's flag is the greatest commercial asset in the world." Despite many apologists for British imperialism were loath to admit the economic motivation, Professor Thornton maintained that the adoption of a system of imperial tariffs indicated beyond all doubt the economic advantages of empire.

Yet Professor Joseph Schumpeter, while conceding the economic factor in imperialism, believed that its basic drive was the "objectless disposition on the part of a state to unlimited forcible expansion," and the universal tendency of the strong to dominate the weak. Most liberal-bourgeois writers deny there is any real correlation between imperialism and capitalism.

Be that as it may, militarism and the glorification of force based on supposed racial and cultural supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon became hallmarks of British imperialism during this period. Whether

\[135 \text{Ibid.; Hobson, op. cit., p. 61.}
\[136 \text{Thornton, op. cit., p. 104. Attempts to discredit the validity of the economic argument by saying that the empire never paid found little support in England. See Winslow, op. cit., p. 74. Even Lord Lugard, the originator of the concept of the Dual Mandate, often referred to as a more sophisticated version of the 'white man's burden', admitted that in addition to reasons of humanitarianism and the desire to suppress the African slave trade, Britain was forced by economic considerations to participate in the scramble for Africa. See F. D. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1928), p. 4. See also Leonard Bernes, Empire or Democracy: A Study of the Colonial Question (London: Victor Gollanz, Ltd., 1939), pp. 189-90.}
\[137 \text{Schumpeter, op. cit., pp. 6-7; Winslow, op. cit., pp. 748-49. Much the same attitude is adopted by Lewis Hanke in his Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World (London: Hollis and Carter, 1959), pp. 103-104.}
\[138 \text{Langer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 68.}
these were rationalizations of the economic drive or were legitimate forces which were influencing British national character independently of the materialistic motives is debatable, but irrelevant. It is important, however, to measure the impact of social Darwinism, militarism, and racism upon English thought during this period and their possible impact on colonial policy throughout the empire, especially the dependent empire.

During the later part of the Victorian era a strong anti-democratic sentiment developed which greatly aided the imperialist movement. In part it was born of disillusionment with middle class democracy and the failure of the "noble savage" to live up to the expectations of the earlier romantics. The foremost leaders of this movement were Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, William Morris, J. F. Stephens, Henry Maine, William Lecky, and Anthony Trollope. Since they all felt that laissez faire liberalism would lead to disorder and the destruction of private property they advocated authoritarian rule. Carlyle bitterly criticized the humanitarian movement and with Trollope and others moved to defend slavery as a civilizing force for the "backward" races of the world.

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141 Lippencott, op. cit., p. 9; Fim, op. cit., pp. 16-20; Froude,
Authoritarianism received aid not only from Carlyle and Nietzsche who both idolized the use of force and lauded the individual who was capable of turning it to his own use, but also from the social Darwinist who saw conflict as a natural outcome of the selective process. The use of force was deified and the idea that continuous struggle was necessary for progress, that the superior race would triumph and that the individual would reign supreme was widely held. Peace was regarded as stagnation in which inferior peoples would drag the superior races down to their level. It was only natural that these ideas would be turned to defend imperialism—already characterized by rugged individualism and coercion. One British historical writes that Victorian expansionists of very diverse characteristics shared two common qualities—courage and violent individualism—and adds that:

op. cit., pp. 235, 246-47. With regard to the West Indies Froude wrote: "slavery is gone... but it will be an evil day for mankind if no one is to be compelled any more to obey those who are wiser than himself." Ibid., p. 235.


Rarely has a nation so patently led the march of progress, never before had any master race imposed itself by the action of individuals who went their way without the least reliance upon government support.\textsuperscript{144}

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the forces supporting imperialism were of late nineteenth century origin. Racial antagonism had a long tradition in western Europe from the expansion of Europe and the establishment of African slavery in the New World.\textsuperscript{145} Toynbee claims that Protestantism and its concept of a chosen race proved of great value to colonists who wanted to justify their advantageous position and who greatly feared that some day the tables would be turned.\textsuperscript{146}

While racism and aversion to intermarriage with coloured peoples has always been relatively strong among the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic peoples\textsuperscript{147} it was not entirely absent among the Latins. The decision of the Spanish crown to adopt a paternalistic policy towards the Indian was bitterly resisted by the enemies of las Casas and his supporters, who felt that the Indian represented an inferior being.\textsuperscript{148}

\textsuperscript{144}C. E. Carrington, An Exposition of Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), pp. 48-49.

\textsuperscript{145}Earl of Cromer, Ancient and Modern Imperialism (London: John Murray, 1910), pp. 4-7, 136, 139-42; Hertz, op. cit., p. 8.

\textsuperscript{146}Toynbee, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 210-12, 247-50.

\textsuperscript{147}Hertz, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

\textsuperscript{148}See Lewis Hanke, The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), passim, particularly pp. 11, 47-48; Silvia Zavala, La Filosofía Política en la Conquista de América (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1947), Chapter III.
It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that racial antipathy was exploited to suit the needs of nationalism and empire. Thus social Darwinism and the racial theories developed by the Frenchman Artur de Gobineau and the Anglo-German Houston Chamberlain proved to be valuable assets to the imperialists who realized that Britain had to rule a vast multi-racial empire with a few white officials.

In the 1890's British imperialist sentiments were greatly encouraged by a rapprochement with the United States which was itself going through a similar era of imperialist and racist sentiment. Apologists from both countries stressed their common Anglo-Saxon backgrounds and proposed a division of the world between the superior civilizations. The North which had hitherto regarded the Southern Negro


150 See Artur de Gobineau, The Inequality of Human Races, trans. Adrian Collins (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), passim, especially the preface and chapters VII, XIII, and XVI. Gobineau claimed that miscegenation signified the degeneration of a nation and its ultimate fall from leadership. Ibid., p. 24. See also Houston S. Chamberlain, England and Germany (no facts of publication), passim, particularly pp. 4-6.


with a friendly paternalism adopted the racial attitudes of the South
to guide the nation in its new role as a colonial power. Even in
France the traditional assimilationist policy used in the colonial em-
pire was being challenged by a small but vocal group of imperialists
who denied the possibility of assimilating the 'inferior' races of the
new empire.

British imperialism developed an elaborate ideology to win sup-
port from the British public and to justify itself in the world at
large. It was widely believed that the Anglo-Saxon had a divine man-
date to spread civilization and establish the rule of Pax Britanica
throughout the world. The Englishman was depicted as the epitome
of good manners, good character, and special ability to handle the
backward races of the world. Lord Acton of Oxford University wrote
in the 1880's that the Empire did not exist merely for the selfish ends
of the United Kingdom but was intended to be a "sacred trust for the

215, 324.

155 Raymond F. Betts, "The Problem of French Colonial Doctrine,
1890-1914: Assimilation and Association," unpublished doctoral disserta-
tion presented at Columbia University, 1958, p. 860.

156 Lippencott, op. cit., p. 142, 225; Lugard, op. cit., p. 608;
Rita Hinden, Empire and After: A Study of British Imperialist Attitudes
of the introduction.

157 Lugard, op. cit., pp. 131-33; Rene Maunier, The Sociology of
Colonies: An Introduction to the Study of Race Contact, trans. E. O.
(New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1897), p. 205.
benefit of humanity."  

Joseph Chamberlain, who served as Colonial Secretary, expressed similar sentiments when he stated:

We have to carry civilization, British justice, British law, religion and Christianity to millions and millions, to people who until our advent had lived in ignorance, in bitter conflict, and whose territories have fallen to us to develop. That is our duty.  

Dr. Rita Hinden, a Fabian socialist who has made a number of studies of imperialism, believed that the "moral and emotional fervour which had previously found an outlet in religion, now sought new channels in nationalism and imperialism." One might go even further and say that organized religion actively supported imperialism.  

Certainly religious fervor was present. The Bishop of Durham in defending imperialism stated:

We have at length realised the nature of the struggle [obligations of empire] in which we are engaged...we have learnt and are still learning that the sign of Empire is not self-assertion, but self-sacrifice.

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158 R. Acton, Our Colonial Empire, 2d Ed. (London: Cassell, Peter Galpin and Co., 1882), p. 28. It should be remembered that Acton was considered a leading nineteenth century liberal.


160 Hinden, op. cit., p. 71.

161 Toynbee, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 211-12, 215-16; Godard, op. cit., pp. 154-55, 213. Professor Carrington reports that British missionaries by the end of the nineteenth century were spending about 4 million pounds annually abroad and adds that the same forces that motivated British expansion activated the missionary drive. Carrington, op. cit., p. 12.

One student of imperialist affairs suggested that Britain would retain her position as a leading power as long as she continued to use Christian principles in her role as an imperialist nation and provided she continued to "receive the superintending Providence which has aided in the rearing of this Empire and has for some wise purposes watched over its progress." 163

Paralleling this was a fervent belief that the British empire was extending the benefits of democracy throughout the world. Sir Charles Dilke and Sir John Seeley, leading 19th century apologists for the new imperialism, believed that only the Anglo-Saxon civilization could save the world from Universal anarchy. 164 Their ideas had a great impact upon later imperialists such as Chamberlain, Cecil Rhodes, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Rosebery who likewise supported the racial arguments proposed the observance of an 'imperial Christianity' designed to promote the alleged goodness of the Empire. See Hobson, op. cit., p. 234.

163 R. M. Martin, British Possessions in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1847), pp. 57-58. Jawaharlal Nehru maintains that there was something of a religious temper about the Englishman's attitude to the Empire and adds that "like the inquisitors of old, they were bent on saving us regardless of our desires in the matter." Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography: With Musings on Recent Events in India (London: John Lane, 1936), p. 428.

164 John R. Seeley, The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1911), pp. 8-13; Charles W. Dilke, Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English Speaking Countries, 1866-67 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869), Preface. Sir Charles Lucas, who was closely associated with West Indian sugar interests in the United Kingdom, wrote that the empire was the 'greatest engine of democracy' the world has ever known since it had "infected the whole world with liberty and democracy." Quoted in Lugard, op. cit., p. 608.
that the Anglo-Saxon was destined to control the world.\textsuperscript{165} Even Gilbert Murray, who denied that the British possessed the special qualities referred to by the racists, felt that it was natural that the white would sweep the coloured man before him.\textsuperscript{166}

Besides Dilke and Seeley, whose books were widely read,\textsuperscript{167} numerous social scientists, intellectuals, novelists and poets succumbed to the allure of colonial expansion based on the racial superiority of the Anglo-Saxon. The British "Diffusionist School of Anthropology" tried to trace British civilization back to the Egyptians obviously with the idea of proving its superiority,\textsuperscript{168} while the sociologist, Benjamin Kidd, published several works--one of which sold over 250,000 copies in six years--justifying the innate superiority of the whites as a result of evolution.\textsuperscript{169} Professor Karl Pearson in his \textit{National Life from the


\textsuperscript{166}Gilbert Murray et al., \textit{Liberalism and Empire} (London: R. Brimley Johnson, 1900), pp. 55, 155.

\textsuperscript{167}Langer, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. I, p. 71. Within two years Seeley's book sold 80,000 copies and in 1894 he was knighted for his services to the imperialist cause. See C. A. Bodelson, \textit{Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism} (London: No publishing house given, 1924), pp. 151, 175.

\textsuperscript{168}Toynbee, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. I, p. 221. See also Dr. James Hunt's address before the Royal Anthropological Society titled "The Negro's Place in Nature," quoted in Pim, \textit{op. cit.}, preface.

\textsuperscript{169}See Social Evolution (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1894), passim, particularly pp. 315-16, and \textit{Principles of Western Civilization} (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1902), passim; Strauss, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 118. Although Kidd did not believe the white could live in the tropics without degenerating he claimed that since regional products are vital
Standpoint of Science (1901) and Professor J. A. Cramb in a series of lectures on the "Destiny of Imperial Britain" both justified the forcible subjugation of the colonial peoples in terms of the superior Anglo-Saxon race having to defend itself from the decay that would inevitably result from inaction and miscegination.¹⁷⁰

The most vociferous and intolerant advocate of empire symbolizing all the major forces supporting imperialism was the poet Rudyard Kipling. His thinking incorporated the notion of a divine trust for the dependent peoples whom he depicted as incurably inefficient and inferior and who he felt should be forced if necessary to accept the benefits of English culture.¹⁷¹ While his jingoism appears ridiculous today, Marriot wrote:

... it is questionable whether any poet has ever succeeded in interpreting with greater precision and in expressing with such majestic force the prevailing but inarticulate feeling of an entire nation.¹⁷²

Kipling spearheaded the literatus of imperialism. They included a large group of novelists popularizing colonialism and
to civilization and progress they had to be exploited by the more 'socially efficient' English speaking peoples. See Benjamin Kidd, The Control of the Tropics (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1898), pp. 17, 98.


militarism, and a whole generation of poets lauding the virtues of English seapower and empire. In the 1880's the yellow press joined the crusade, and not to be outdone, the conservative Times (London) finally sang the praises of the new imperialism.

Imperialism appealed emotionally to the masses, particularly after the enfranchisement of the upper working class in 1867, and has been likened to the nationalist movements of Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism. Certainly it had powerful spokesmen in every segment of British society including the universities. Thomas Carlyle and Lord Rosebery became rectors of the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow respectively while James Froude and Lord Acton in their capacities as professors of history at Oxford and Cambridge influenced a whole generation of undergraduates.

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173 Susanne Howe, Novels of Empire (New York: Columbia University Press, n.d.), p. 163. See also Langer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 82. Professor Langer says that by the 1880's the public was demanding literature on England's colonial heroes and her 'sporting wars.' Ibid.


175 Ibid.; Strauss, op. cit., p. 120.


178 EBC, op. cit., p. 328.

179 Godard, op. cit., p. 4; Eric Williams, "The Contemporary
It should not be assumed, however, that expansionism was without its critics. On the contrary a small but articulate group of intellectuals launched a concerted attack, but since the appeal of empire was largely psychological their arguments were of little consequence until after World War I. Their protest does show up, however, the inconsistencies between the expressed goals of imperialism and the practice.

One has to recognize the tremendous difference in treatment accorded the areas where the white colonists predominated and those where the subject peoples were in the majority. Most of the great claims for constitutional advancement were related to the former, largely as a result of their refusal to permit the centralizing policy being pursued in the 1880's by the imperialists and also because the...
Caucasian, unlike the coloured colonial, was believed to possess special rights by virtue of his being white. In fact it was only in the white dominions that there was any real concern about the condition of the colonial populace. They were the only areas by the 1920's to possess any real measure of political autonomy and self-government. The colonial whites were affected by the pan-racial movement of the late nineteenth century, but they all demanded local autonomy with full partnership alongside the United Kingdom in the Free Commonwealth.

Hobson bitterly attacked the notion of a sacred trust in imperialism as a deception to lull the public into a state of self-complacency because he claimed that nowhere was the civilization of the lower races the real aim of the British government. L. T. Hobhouse also attacked the idea of stewardship on the grounds that imperialism ruled the coloured races by substituting authoritarian precepts for democratic principles on the grounds that they are not applicable to non-whites. Both he and John Godard, a leading

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183Knapland, Britain, Commonwealth and Empire, p. 62; Carrington, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

184Seeley, op. cit., pp. 1-9, 63; Godard, op. cit., p. 8; Hobson, op. cit., p. 27; Bodelsen, op. cit., p. 168; Simmons, op. cit., p. 27.


critic during the heyday of expansionism, lamented its harmful effects upon domestic politics.\textsuperscript{188}

Hobhouse and several other persons including Herbert Spencer, G. B. Shaw, Ramsay Macdonald, and Leonard Barnes (who had been an employee of the Colonial Office), argued that British imperialism lacked principle and had created anarchy and confusion rather than the much vaunted Pax Britanica.\textsuperscript{189} Hobson claimed that most Britishers were against genuinely representative government in the colonies since it was conceived to be "incompatible with the economic and social authority of the superior race."\textsuperscript{190} In fact the whole European occupation of Africa including that of Britain was characterized by a policy of forcing the Negro to work.\textsuperscript{191}

During the period under review several British writers supported the need for dependable labour by using the concept of Negro inferiority

\textsuperscript{188}Kaufman, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 325, 353; Godard, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 16-17.


\textsuperscript{190}Hobson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 122.

and his fitness for manual labour. Kipling's imperialism lacked the civilizing mission which was characteristic of earlier nineteenth century expansionism and sought to maintain the subjugation of the "inferior" races.

The weakness of the political and intellectual opposition to the new imperialism signified to some extent the degree to which the English people had accepted it and had abandoned their earlier ideals of freedom and equality for the colonial peoples. At first the Labour Party was preoccupied with domestic issues and adopted a "Little England" attitude toward imperialism. Later its criticism was directed at the lack of imperial principle and the absence of adequate protec-


tion for the subject races.\textsuperscript{194} The Labour Party, in attempting to develop a liberal program for the empire, was faced with the dilemma of working through institutions set up to achieve opposite ends.\textsuperscript{195}

There is little doubt that the prevailing attitudes of imperialism and racism of the years 1872-1919 influenced British colonial policy. Whether this was due to the lack of a fixed colonial policy based on the concept of trust,\textsuperscript{196} or the result of a conscious effort to run the empire for the vested interests in the mother country,\textsuperscript{197} one thing is certain—there was an element of Aristotelian theory in colonial policy which maintained that some men are born for superior occupations and for that leisure which provides the basis for an advanced civilization.\textsuperscript{198}


\textsuperscript{195}Godard, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 81-82.


\textsuperscript{197}Kidd, \textit{The Control of the Tropics}, p. 33.

CHAPTER IV
CROWN COLONY GOVERNMENT, 1866-1938: A STUDY OF NEGLECT

A) Political Developments After Morant Bay, 1865-1938

The constitutional change after Morant Bay ushered in a period of paternalistic control by the Colonial Office which was to last until radical changes were carried out following the riots of the late nineteen thirties. Crown Colony government in its pure form lasted only until 1884, but the Colonial Office never lost its absolute control during the entire period due to the commanding position of its official and nominated members.

Although Governor Grant was dictatorial, his reasonably impartial administration did bring a large measure of justice to the Negro peasants. His thorough reforms touched many neglected aspects of Jamaican life. The Church of England was disestablished despite the opposition of many influential locals and Sir Henry Taylor in the Colonial Office; the system of local government was abolished in favour of a system of municipal boards nominated by the governor; and he overhauled the local court system and the police force, setting up new courts on the model of the English county courts to deal with cases of civil law.


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Grant was also interested in educational reform. In 1870 it was provided that in cases where there was insufficient school accommodation the local school boards under the direction of the Department of Education should raise money from local rates for new buildings and pay the fees of poor students. Later education was made compulsory and free for children up to the age of 14. The colonial government also supported the parochial schools which comprised the majority of the secondary schools and in 1892 attempted to enforce compulsory education. This policy was not highly successful, however, as school attendance in 1940 was still below 60 per cent of the children of school age. Yet illiteracy did decrease from 74 per cent in 1894 to 50 per cent in 1942.


Carley, op. cit., p. 9. Another report indicated that in 1938 only about 29 per cent of school age children were in regular attendance. See J. M. Davis, The Church in the New Jamaica: A Study of the Economic and Social Basis of the Evangelical Church in Jamaica (New York: International Missionary Council, 1942), p. 37. Government action in the educational field was still frustrated by denominational jealousies and by the current attitudes of employers that education ruined the Negroes as labourers. See Olivier, Jamaica, pp. 248-367.
One of the most notable reforms carried out under the Crown Colony regime was the program of land distribution initiated by Governor Grant and greatly expanded by Governors Blake and Olivier in the years 1895-1913. This expansion of peasant proprietorship was greatly facilitated by the construction of roads in the mountainous areas to aid the marketing of the peasant produce and by the favourable opinions expressed by the two Royal Commissions of 1897 and 1930 which influenced Colonial Office thinking. Considerable pressure had been brought to bear on the government authorities to prevent the sale of crown lands to Negro peasants, particularly by the sugar interests, which had effective spokesmen in the Jamaican Legislative Council. By the 1930's, however, a considerable expansion in the number of small peasant holdings had taken place. In 1895 the number of holdings under ten acres numbered 81,900 but by 1930 the figure was 169,000, representing a 107 per cent increase during a time when the population had increased by some 50 per cent.

5 Olivier, The Myth of Governor Eyre (London: The Hogarth Press, 1933), pp. 149, 179; Livingstone, op. cit., p. 126; Olivier, Jamaica, pp. 134, 251-58. The Norman Commission (1897), reported that Jamaican sugar accounted for only 18 per cent of West Indian exports. During the same period the small settler was producing 70 per cent of the island's exports, mostly in the form of bananas and other tropical fruits. Ibid., p. 255; Sydney Olivier, "A Key to the Colour Question," Contemporary Review, Vol. CXLVIII, December 1935, p. 669.


7 Olivier, Jamaica, pp. 273-74. See also O. Rutter, If Crab No Walk: A Traveller in the West Indies (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1933), p. 164.
The government also attempted to aid small settler agriculture by sponsoring the Jamaican Agricultural Society. To a large extent the Negro was suspicious of this 'bukra foolishness' especially when the government accepted the Legislative Council's measure of 1901 to introduce corporal punishment for persons suspected of praedial larceny and later authorized the society to license persons to arrest anyone carrying provisions that they had not themselves grown. 8

The immediate effect of the abolition of the old constitution was the loss of political opportunity for the coloureds. 9 In 1869 a former member of the Assembly who was coloured said to a newly appointed member of the Legislative Council: "You and I have been equals, but what will be the respective position of our children? Yours will hardly speak to mine." 10

For fifty years after Morant Bay the higher ranks of the public service became the preserve of local whites or Colonial Office personnel so that one of the paths used by the coloureds to attain social acceptance among the whites was effectively closed. There were a number of notable exceptions but the situation did not begin to change until the

8 The Times (London), 24 September 1901, p. 4; Olivier, Jamaica, pp. 325-27. By 1935 there were some 2,600 such persons operating on behalf of the society. Ibid., p. 327.


administration of Governor Olivier (1907-1913). While many whites retired from politics to "the estates and were never heard again with the same authority," this group was able for a number of years to recapture some of its former political power before the significant changes of the twentieth century terminated its importance in island politics.

The blacks, while still not directly represented in the Crown Colony form of government, apparently preferred its paternalism to the corruption of the representative government that existed before 1865. Many whites and prominent coloureds who had recovered from the immediate fear of another 'Negro uprising' and supported by one or two former members of the Assembly who had opposed its abolition in 1865 began to demand a greater measure of local participation in the island government.


12 Livingstone, op. cit., p. 87.


As early as 1877 the Jamaica Association was formed to work towards constitutional advancement. It sternly criticized Crown Colony government as dictatorial and neglectful of the interests of the citizens. Its members tried to picture the movement as one representing all sections of the Jamaican population but neither Governors Grey and Musgrave nor the majority of the blacks were convinced of its sincerity. Musgrave reported to the Colonial Office that the political opposition to the colonial government was irresponsible.

In evidence given before the commission appointed in 1882 to investigate the prospects of constitutional advancement for the island, Mr. Kelly Smith and several other Negroes indicated that the black masses were opposed to the introduction of any elected element in the Legislative Council since they feared it would signify a return to the conditions existing prior to Morant Bay. They felt that the blacks, who were a homogeneous section of the population, would again be the victims of a coloured-white alliance. Although many


18 C.S. 102/32, No. 41, Musgrave to Derby, 29 January 1883.

coloureds were resentful of the monopoly of government positions by the whites, and some undertook to improve their social status and self respect by giving leadership to the black masses in the twentieth century, the great majority sought to identify themselves with the existing political order.  

There was continued friction between the colonial executive and the elected coloured and white members of the Legislative Council until the 1930's, but the twentieth century brought a growing restlessness among the blacks. Although at first confined to a few articulate Negro leaders, by the 1930's it was strong enough to bring radical changes in the character of the island's political representatives.

Many whites and prominent coloureds like Herbert de Lisser, who was for many years editor of the Daily Gleaner, initially criticized the existing form of government, but by the 1930's they were generally apprehensive about universal suffrage and constitutional advancement. Lisser felt that the political apathy in Jamaica after the turn of the twentieth century was indicative of a general satisfaction with the system. In June 1938 following the Westmorland labour disturbances

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22W. A. Roberts, Six Great Jamaicans: Biographical Sketches
he wrote:

From complete self-government for Jamaica, Good Lord deliver us. ... An advanced constitution, particularly self-government, is entirely out of the question when but a few weeks ago the capital of Jamaica was threatened by mob rule.  

The first significant step towards securing adequate political representation for the blacks came with the campaign of Dr. Robert Love and his associates in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Love was a Bahamian who had come to Jamaica by way of the United States and Haiti. He sought to counteract the isolation inherent in the position taken by Kelly Smith by founding a newspaper called the Jamaica Advocate in which he exhorted the Negro to step forward to claim his rights. Although he lost the election of 1896 his backing of Dixon, another full-blooded Negro, resulted in the election of the first black candidate in the Legislative Council. 

During the election Dixon's white opponent reminded Love that his black ancestors had been the slaves of Calder's forebears, to which Love replied that the shame of

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slavery was on the white and not the Negro since "man was never made to be the property of man." Seven years later Love won a seat on the Legislative Council also against a white candidate, in the predominantly white area of St. Andrews.25

Slowly the racial composition of the Legislative Council changed so that by the 1920's the majority were Negroes. They did not, however, as a rule become spokesmen of their race. Rather they allied themselves with the ruling interests, which in some measure accounts for the political apathy of the masses.26

Marcus Garvey, who was destined to become Jamaica's outstanding Negro leader of the twentieth century, was greatly incensed by this 'desertion of the colour' by the successful blacks.27 For a number of years his presence loomed large on both the Jamaican and to a less extent the United States scene. Garvey, like Love, attempted to arouse

25 Abrahams, op. cit., p. 163.

26 W. A. Roberts, Jamaica: The Portrait of an Island (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1955), p. 115; Roberts, Six Great Jamaicans, pp. 79, 83-84; Roberts claims that although the black members of the Legislative Council were neutralists, they did in a negative fashion prepare the way for democracy in the 1940's. Ibid., p. 84; Sires, "Experience of Jamaica with Modified Crown Colony Government," p. 158.

the Jamaican masses from their deep sense of inferiority to an awareness of their relative strength, but his greatest impact in Jamaica was to be felt after he left the island for the last time in the 1930's.  

Garvey's solution for the Negro in the New World was radical, and during his time it was considered entirely visionary by the majority of the coloureds and the blacks. He was convinced that since the Negro in the New World would never receive justice from the white or his brown ally, the only reasonable alternative would be a rejection of European culture and repatriation to Africa to build his own civilization. While in the United States he repudiated entirely the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People which he said was trying to destroy the Negro race. The Universal Negro Improvement Association founded by Garvey in 1914 sought to persuade the New World Negro to abandon the hope of assimilation.

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28 Len S. Nembhard, Trials and Triumphs of Marcus Garvey (Kingston: The Gleaner Company, Ltd., 1940), pp. 16, 127. Garvey called on the Negro to know himself and to throw off the inferiority he had himself invited. Ibid., pp. 127-28. See also Cronon, op. cit., p. 4.

29 Nembhard, op. cit., p. 15; Marcus Garvey, "The Negro's Greatest Enemy," Current History, Vol. XVIII, No. 6, September 1923, pp. 953-54; Cronon, op. cit., pp. 73, 171, 221-22. Garvey aroused the coloureds' opposition by his repeated attacks on them both in the United States and Jamaica as tools of the whites. Ibid., pp. 37-38. See also Amy Jacques-Garvey, Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey: Or Africa for the Africans (New York: The Universal Publishing House, 1926), p. 34. Garvey also staunchly opposed miscegenation. Ibid., pp. 62, 81.


31 Jacques-Garvey, op. cit., pp. 58-59. Garvey was in agreement
Yet despite this rejection of western culture he was prepared to work within its framework to secure the redemption of the blacks. After a sojourn in the United States, where he eventually encountered strong opposition from the authorities and the majority of Negroid Americans, Garvey returned to Jamaica to continue his struggle by running for political office.

At one time coloured opposition to Garvey was so strong that he accepted aid from a number of whites who were friendly to his aims, but by the time he ran for the Legislative Council in 1929 the whites were antagonistic. They accused him of stirring up trouble among the black masses. Certainly Garvey exploited race in his electoral campaigns. He accused the members of the Legislative Council of passing with the work of Booker T. Washington. See Nembhard, op. cit., p. 5; Cronon, op. cit., p. 16.

32Abrahams, op. cit., p. 64; Cronon, op. cit., pp. 65, 191-93, 221-22; It is interesting to note that while Garvey was in England (1912-14) he was greatly influenced by an Egyptian nationalist, Duse Mohammed Ali. Garvey used the Ethiopian hymn "Ethiopia thou land of our fathers" as the anthem of the U.N.I.A. Ibid., p. 64. See also Nembhard, op. cit., pp. 11, 104.

33Nembhard, op. cit., p. 103; Cronon, op. cit., p. 144.

34Garvey, op. cit., p. 954; Cronon, op. cit., p. 19.

class legislation for the preceding ninety years and stated that the Jamaican blacks needed a black representative who would be true to his race and protect their interests.\(^{36}\)

Garvey, however, lost the election and was also convicted of contempt of court after he accused the judges of conniving with lawyers and business interests to deprive other Jamaicans of their rights. A few years later he left Jamaica for the United Kingdom where he hoped to continue to organize his movement on a world-wide basis.\(^{37}\) Although Garvey undoubtedly erred when he considered the Jamaican Negro an African rather than a Jamaican,\(^{38}\) his statement that he was "only the fore-runner of an awakened Africa that shall never go back to sleep," was prophetic enough.\(^{39}\) Although most Jamaican nationalists preferred to find their solution without resorting to African repatriation, Garvey, nonetheless, did father "a great psychological emancipation without which there could be no physical emancipation."\(^{40}\)

In response to rumours that Canada or the United States would annex the West Indies\(^{41}\) a number of persons of all colours—particularly

\(^{36}\) Nembhard, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-98.


\(^{39}\) Cronon, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

\(^{40}\) Abrahams, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

non-whites—expressed dismay at the thought of being subjected to American control and racial practices. Many whites used the Jamaican Negro's awareness of Jim Crow to criticize the pro-annexation argument which they opposed for other reasons—mainly because of their own pro-British imperialist sentiments.\(^4\)

Dr. L. S. Meikle, a Negro graduate of Howard University in Washington, D. C., while decrying the undemocratic nature of the insular government and the opposition of the local whites to a confederation of the West Indian islands, which he favoured as a step towards self-government, realized the relative advantages of maintaining the British connection.\(^5\)

Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century many Jamaicans served in the West India Regiment in West Africa and later in Europe during the First World War.\(^6\) There was a good deal of opposition in some quarters to the use of Negroes in 1914-18 as it was


\(^5\)L. S. Meikle, Confederation of the British West Indies Versus Annexation to the United States of America (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., n.d.), passim, particularly pp. 39, 49, 250-51. Support for confederation also came from C. S. Salmon, a white official in Nevis. (See C. S. Salmon, The Caribbean Confederation: A Plan for the Union of the Fifteen British West Indian Colonies (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., n.d.), preface. In general, however, throughout the West Indies, the whites were afraid of relinquishing their control over local politics. See Ayearst, op. cit., p. 29.

feared that military service would arouse a sense of dissatisfaction in them after their return to the island. Their war experiences did serve to awaken many Negroes to their position in island society and there were a number of disturbances after their discharge. Many coloureds and blacks deeply resented the refusal of the British to accept the non-whites as officers.  

Apart from the influence of overseas military service upon many Jamaicans, thousands who returned to Jamaica from employment and residence overseas also brought new ideas with them. This was particularly the case with Jamaicans who had spent time in Harlem. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 also served to arouse a sense of Negro consciousness which aided the growth of Negro nationalism in the Caribbean and gave rise to a number of sects which rejected the Christianity of the orthodox churches.

Following the First World War it is interesting to note also that there was a growing rejection of European culture in the writings of Caribbean intellectuals and a growing sense of pride in things

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African, both of which had an impact upon the development of local
nationalism. 48 Although the British West Indies were perhaps less
affected by this trend it was nonetheless influential in developing
a race pride that resulted in an increasing number of Jamaican Negroes
and coloured stepping forward to defend their race against criticism
and demanding political and social advancement for the black masses. 49
Some like the Reverend C. A. Wilson preached a social gospel similar
to that of Josiah Strong; 50 Others attacked the paternalism towards
the blacks by persons who claimed to be acting in their interests, 51
while the most important section demanded self-government and universal
suffrage.

In 1936 the Jamaica Progress League was founded in New York to
work towards self-government based upon universal suffrage and the
abolition of political qualifications for candidates for public

tion of European Culture as a Theme in Caribbean Literature," Carib-
bean Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 4, passim; R. G. Coulthard, Raza y Color
en la Literatura Antillana (Sevilla: No publishing house given, 1953),
passim, especially p. 41.

49 John Henderson, Jamaica (London: Adam and Charles Black,
XIII, No. 2, April-June, 1953, passim; Adolphe W. Roberts, "British
552; C. L. R. James, Case for West Indian Self-Government (London:
Leonard and Virginia Woolf, 1933), passim.

50 C. A. Wilson, Men with Backbone: And Other Plans for Progress
(Kingston: The Educational Supply Company, 1913), passim.

51 W. G. Bretton and J. Johnson, The Black Man at Home (Liverpool:
Members of the league worked independently of the Negro members of the Legislative Council who were in a majority by 1935 but who still showed no great desire to establish a truly representative constitution. In fact the elected members introduced a resolution to revive the constitution that existed under the old representative system.

Strong as the organized opposition was to Crown Colony government and the political stagnation in Jamaica, it was not the immediate cause of the reforms carried out by the Colonial Office in the 1940's. Rather it was a spontaneous protest of the unemployed masses at the deplorable economic conditions that existed in the island by the late 1930's.

B. The Colour Groupings and Their Development

In the years following Morant Bay it has been claimed that the Negro made considerable advances thus facilitating a reintegration of

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54 Murray, op. cit., p. 138; Sires, "Experience of Jamaica with Modified Crown Colony Government," pp. 159-60. See also the comment of Jamaican nationalist Adolphe W. Roberts in The Daily Gleaner, 4 May 1958, p. 10.
Jamaican society. Sydney Olivier wrote in 1935 that the physical separation that existed between the mountain peasants and the Europeanized sections of Jamaica's population:

... far from promoting a tendency to segregation in a sense in which that ideal is contemplated in America or South Africa has favoured and promoted a continuously progressive integration and general fusion of the racial elements of the community, because it has given greater freedom of adaptation to all sections—black, white, and coloured—in all matters in which they have either common interests or no practical grounds for antagonism and aloofness.

Lacking established political leaders the Negro masses tended to regard public life with indifference. Those blacks who were successful soon disassociated themselves with the lower orders by adopting the outlook of the coloured middle classes. To a large extent the Negro peasant accommodated himself but the extent to which this was so is difficult to determine. Certainly there was little sense of cooperation among the masses and this tended to militate against any concerted effort on their part to agitate for better conditions. Wages continued to be low not only on the plantations but also in the urban areas.

Thousands of Jamaicans emigrated from Jamaica to the United States, Panama, and Cuba in search of better working conditions or left the

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56 Olivier, "A Key to the Colour Question," p. 672.

country districts to seek employment in the urban areas of Kingston and Morant Bay. Yet the worst economic and social conditions to be found in Jamaica were the slum areas of Kingston, especially after thousands of unemployed Jamaicans began to return from overseas.  

Some members of the lower classes tried to organize for better conditions after labour unions were legalized in 1919, but initially their efforts were effectively frustrated by the authorities who proscribed peaceful picketing and strikes. The peasant was able to secure a certain degree of expression through bodies such as the Banana Producers Association. In general, however, the Negro had to resolve his problems on an individual basis.

By 1910 the small farms were of considerably more importance economically and socially than the large estates although the latter continued to be the largest employers of labour. Increased efficiency and mechanization of the plantations resulted in an improved production of sugar per acre from 0.9 tons in 1897 to 2.9 tons in 1943. Unfortu-

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60 Olivier, "A Key to the Colour Question," p. 672.

nately, however, this resulted in a decreased demand for labour, with the result that after 1911 there emerged a large landless working class. The situation was further aggravated by the falling number of women employed in domestic service, although this section of the population had always been extremely depressed economically.

As the number of estates declined so did the local market for the peasant producer, but he was able to develop banana cultivation for the export trade in addition to growing produce for the urban centers. The prevailing sentiment among the ruling classes, however, was to de-ride the unscientific peasant cultivation. Plantation labour was still considered to be the true function of the Negro despite the favourable attitude towards peasant cultivation by some of the island governors.

As late as 1935 W. M. Macmillan, a student of colonial affairs, wrote after visiting the West Indies:

> Our faith is still in the gentleman farmer, who at his best may be both an excellent agriculturist and a valuable humanizing educative influence. But inevitably the interests of the indigenous inhabitants take a hopelessly subordinate second place so long as the first concern is to induce or 'encourage' them to supply cheap labour.

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cheap and abundant enough to meet the needs of the principal producers—the larger part of the native population being relegated to the neglected reserves. 64

Despite the advances made in plantation technology, housing, and living conditions for the labourers on the estates continued to be unsatisfactory. 65 Indolence was still considered to be a basic Negro trait by the majority of the whites and the coloureds, although a few voices were raised in his defence. Most of his critics attributed his apparent unwillingness to work under conditions that some persons definitely considered unreasonable a result of his inferior mental capabilities, his lack of incentives for a higher level of living, or to the debilitating effect of the climate. 66

Yet many persons clearly saw the harmful effect upon the blacks of the old established attitudes of the employer class. They also recognized that many Negroes worked extremely hard on their own lands

64 Macmillan, op. cit., p. 16.


or else in public works both in Jamaica and overseas. The important factor of malnutrition which reached serious proportions in times of economic hardship was likewise stressed.67

It is difficult to know just how the black masses were reacting to this hostile environment imposed upon them by the ruling classes. There is much conflicting information about the attitudes of the Negroes toward their social superiors,68 and certainly there was little opportunity for the latter to know and understand Negro feelings, since the Negroes did not choose to express themselves openly throughout the period 1865-1938.69 As one sympathetic Negro parson stated in 1919:

The Colonial Office cannot do anything of special value for us [the mass of Jamaicans], spontaneously off their

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67Livingstone, op. cit., p. 177; Macmillan, op. cit., p. 119; Ayearst, op. cit., p. 25; Scott, op. cit., p. 231; De Lisser, In Jamaica and Cuba, pp. 95-96; The Times (London), 11 April 1877, pp. 6 and 14 April 1877, p. 6. Beachey, op. cit., p. 109; Cumpe, "Labour Supply and Demand in the Jamaican Sugar Industry," p. 69. One observer of rural Jamaica reported in the 1880's that at least 75 per cent of the deaths were caused by the lack of proper food. Quoted in Salmon, op. cit., p. 86.

68Olivier claims there was no innate feeling of hostility against the white. Yet he says the peasant was still basically suspicious of the white's motives. See Sydney Olivier, White Capital and Coloured Labour (London: The Hogarth Press, 1929), p. 337, and Jamaica, p. 103. Livingstone and Martha Beckworth claim that the peasants had a great respect for the whites although Livingstone agrees with Olivier that they were highly suspicious of them. Livingstone, op. cit., p. 173. See also Martha W. Beckworth, Black Roadways: A Study of Jamaican Folk Life (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929), p. viii of introduction.

69One long term white resident of Jamaica wrote, "When I had been here twenty years I thought I understood the Negroes. Now that I have been here over thirty I am sure that I do not understand them at all." Quoted in Verill, op. cit., p. 151.
own bat. They do not really know us and know nothing of what we really want. By the silence of our speech it does not appear that we ourselves know what we really want. . . .70

The Reverend McLarty also felt that as a people the Jamaicans indulged in talk that was aimless and purposeless, which he attributed to the existence of strong feelings of individualism and the hypocritical semblance of friendship among the various classes.71 Certainly fear and malice were not confined to the upper classes but ran through the whole fabric of Jamaican life.72

To a certain extent the blacks' true feelings of resentment were manifested in their antipathy towards the police and their lack of confidence in the impartiality of the judicial system.73 In a number of cases the police, when called out to restore public order, clashed violently with Negro demonstrators. This was particularly the case in the Montego Bay disturbances of 1902.74 Police action was not only

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71 Ibid., preface. Livingstone claimed that the Negro was effectively prevented from using the cry 'colour for colour' by his deep sense of racial inferiority. Op. cit., p. 195.
72 Froudfoot, op. cit., p. 73.
brutal, but it completely demoralized the opposition formed to protest against the payment of taxes. Although a commission of inquiry reported that economic hardship and hatred of the police had been contributory causes it commended the police on their action and recommended an increase in the force.75

Confronted with this concerted effort on the part of the authorities to maintain 'law and order' at any cost—as if Morant Bay had occurred the previous week—many Negroes sought to avoid contact with the more aggressive organs of the upper classes whenever possible.76 In the case of the Maroons physical isolation was a relatively simple matter despite friction with the island authorities over land questions in 1898.77

For the majority of the Negroes ideological or psychological isolation and peace of mind were not so readily attainable. Religion to some extent sublimated their most acute frustrations—particularly

76 De Lisser, *In Jamaica and Cuba*, p. 113. With obvious reference to the Morant Bay suppression, De Lisser wrote that the fears of renewed Negro violence were groundless since they have learnt the wisdom of obedience. Ibid. See also Comitas, op. cit., p. 813.
among the cult groups of the urban areas. In this regard they served to accommodate the Negro to his role in island society and averted the danger of open racial conflict. On the other hand many of the cult groups not only tried to carry on practices proscribed by the ruling classes which frequently led to further antagonism, but they also increased the black's antipathy towards the whites by advocating black racism. 78

It has been seen that the functions of Myalism were taken over by Revivalism during the nineteenth century, so much so that many believed that Revivalism merely adapted outward Christian practices to avoid the persecution of the law. 79 Others claimed that African religious survivals were dying out. 80 Usually a rise in social status resulted in the adoption of the more orthodox Christian religions but the degree to which Obeah and the Afro-Christian cults were losing their appeal is difficult to ascertain due to their secretive nature. 81 Often the revivalist cults adopted a Myalist role by day and that of Obeahism by night so that many members of the lower classes turned to

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80 Beckworth, op. cit., pp. 107, 223.

81 De Lisser, Twentieth Century Jamaica, p. 137; Williams, Psychic Phenomena of Jamaica, pp. 4-5. Claude McKay, who became a prominent
orthodox Christianity in order to combat Obeah. Thus to some extent orthodox Christianity with its greater prestige was itself fulfilling a Myalist role. 82

The Bedwardite movement of the 1890's has been regarded as a recrudescence of Afro-revivalist tendencies following the increase of Obeahism reported after the Morant Bay disturbances. Yet the significance of this movement was its basically anti-white sentiment and its messianic appeal to the black masses to prepare themselves for their redemption. It was one of the more overt denunciations of white exploitation and prejudice during this period. 83 Bedward, who had been in Panama, admonished a large group of his black followers in the following terms:

Brethren, hell will be your portion if you do not rise up and crush the white man. The time is coming. There is a white wall and there is a black wall, but now the black wall is getting bigger than the white and we must knock the white wall down. The white wall has exploited us for years. Now we must oppress the white wall. . . . Let them remember the Morant War. 84

Despite his religious mysticism—Bedward declared he would ascend into heaven to destroy white rule 85—that eventually offended

[footnotes]

84 Roberts, Six Great Jamaicans, p. 76.
85 Beckworth, op. cit., p. 168.
Dr. Love and drove him into open opposition, it was the political ferment in his revivalism that greatly alarmed the whites and the coloureds. Bedward was tried on charges of treason-felony "against the Queen, her crown and her dignity," but was declared insane by the jury. The authorities in their haste to prevent his influence spreading had him committed to an insane asylum without the requisite medical opinion. He was later released but by that time his following had dropped from several thousands to a little over a thousand, according to census figures.

Bedward nonetheless suffered from a sense of colour inferiority. In a conversation with American anthropologist Martha Beckworth in the 1920's he explained that in the world to come his hands would be as white as hers.

The Ras Tafarians, however, who first came into prominence in the 1930's were relatively free of this complex. Rather they stressed the innate superiority of the Negroid peoples over the Caucasian and advocated a more practical solution to the Negro's problems in his relationships with the white. Their basic belief that the black could never live on terms of equality with the white and hence should return to his forebears in Africa was undoubtedly influenced by Garvey's

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87 New York Times, 10 December 1895, p. 16.


89 Beckworth, op. cit., p. 169.
philosophy. Most Rastas openly acknowledged Garvey as a precursor of their organization.  

Yet at least one of the founders, L. P. Howell, had been in Africa so that this may also have influenced the formulation of the doctrines of his sect. Later in the thirties the Rastas affiliated with the Pan African movements overseas including the Ethiopian World Federation sponsored by Emperor Haile Sellassie.  

If anything, the Rastas' view of the white man was more radical than that of Garvey. It resembles that of the Black Muslem in the United States in that it regards the white as innately evil and his ways of life essentially bad for the Negro.  

Although the coloureds lost heavily by the change of government in 1865 they offered little concerted opposition to the white domination of Jamaica that envisaged a unified movement of all coloureds. This was only natural considering the great gulf that existed between the blacks and the whites.  


91 M. G. Smith, Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford, The Ras Tafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica (Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1960), pp. 9, 11, 13. Apparently Garvey accused Haile Sellassie, while both were in England, of being prejudiced against Negroes and claimed that the Emperor was "the ruler of a country where black men are chained and flogged." See Cronon, op. cit., p. 162.  

on the one hand and the middle and upper classes on the other.\(^93\)

The coloured was essentially a conformist, anxious to preserve the status quo from which he derived a great deal of satisfaction as well as frustration. Fear of being associated with the lower classes and their Africanisms also drove him into a position of attempting to assimilate and imitate the mores of the upper whites.\(^94\) One coloured American visitor to Jamaica described how the 'Jamaican whites'—often referred to as the census whites—were greatly offended when the president of a university for coloured students in Georgia, when opening his address to an audience in the Myrtle Bank Hotel (Kingston) used the words 'we Negroes.'\(^95\) While the blacks were producing leaders of substance during the early years of the twentieth century, the majority of coloureds were still identifying themselves with the 'mother country.' They opposed efforts by local artists to use Jamaican models in their work and refused to consider a radical step forward in either the social or political sphere.\(^96\) One West Indian intellectual in 1933 wrote that


\(^{96}\) Murray, op. cit., pp. 135-36; McKay, op. cit., p. 142; Hurston, op. cit., p. 21. All too often the light coloured members of a family continued to discriminate against their darker relatives. Ibid., p. 19. See also James, *The Case for West Indian Self-Government*, p. 8.
when the fair-skinned Negroes realize that they can command respect only when they respect themselves, only then will the day of domination of the coloured by the white man be over.  

Until the First World War many thousands of East Indians, Chinese, and Syrians entered Jamaica, giving the island a truly multi-racial character. These groups were the subject of much discrimination at the hands of the other three major groupings in the island, and their adjustment to the Jamaican environment was of varied success. Most of the Jewish element in the island had by this time successfully assimilated with the whites or the coloureds, and had adopted Christianity. Apparently there was no strong feeling against them despite their success in business circles.

It was the economic success of the Chinese and the Syrians, on the other hand, that was in great part responsible for their bad relations with the blacks, the coloureds, and to a less extent the whites. In 1884 680 indentured Chinese arrived in Jamaica, but the greatest influx occurred during the years 1891-1911, when several thousand free immigrants arrived. Usually they avoided agricultural labour by

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97 James, The Case for West Indian Self-Government, pp. 22-23.
98 McKay, op. cit., p. 143; De Lisser, Twentieth Century Jamaica, pp. 49-50. As late as 1883, however, the Jews of Portuguese and Spanish origin had their own synagogue. See CS 102/32, No. 63, Musgrave to Derby, 11 February 1883, no page given. Note also that in the election campaign of 1884 candidate George Solomon was greeted with cries of "Down with the Jew." See Sires, "The Jamaica Constitution of 1884," p. 78.
setting themselves up as small shop keepers. It was not long before there were cries of unfair competition and attempts to restrict the immigration of the Chinese and the Syrians.\textsuperscript{100}

The latter arrived destitute but were soon able to set up profitable retail business by means of extending credit to their buyers.\textsuperscript{101} Most Chinese were able to take advantage of the deplorably poor services offered by the country plantation-controlled stores. Being new to the community the Chinese were able to assume the role of impersonal businessmen.\textsuperscript{102} They were charged, however, with declaring false bankruptcy and with using sharp practices. The result was that anti-Chinese feeling, which at first was on a personal basis, later expressed itself in a general feeling against the 'Chinese menace' in a series of mob beatings and the looting of their shops. Until the Second World War they tended to maintain a separate existence, and it was not unusual to find second and third generation Chinese still speaking Mandarin and Cantonese.\textsuperscript{103}


\textsuperscript{101} De Lisser, Twentieth Century Jamaica, pp. 105-106; Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16-17.


Even most Chinese-Negro crosses were considered Chinese.  

The East Indians as a group did not advance economically as rapidly as the other immigrants, as most of them remained as agricultural labourers or small peasant producers. Nor was the feeling against them so strong, although they too tended to avoid undue contact with the Negroes, and were the subject of a great deal of criticism—as especially as labourers—from all sections of the island population.  

Owing to their relatively small numbers in the total population and their class position they were unable to resist cultural assimilation to the degree that was possible by the East Indians in Fiji and to a less extent in Trinidad and British Guiana.

Initially missionary activities among the East Indians had proved unsuccessful due largely to language difficulties, but by 1910 over a thousand had been baptized into the Presbyterian church alone. By the

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Cousins, op. cit., p. 19. Japanese immigrants in Brazil showed a similar aversion to plantation labour and a tendency to resist assimilation, but unlike the Jamaican Chinese, they became mostly middle class farmers. See T. Lynn Smith, Brazil: People and Institutions (Baton Rouge:Louisiana State University Press, 1954), p. 68.


1930's few East Indians had retained their knowledge of Hindustani or Urdu.\textsuperscript{107}

Although the Indians likewise showed a propensity to leave the plantation when feasible—in 1912 only some 3,000 out of a total population of over 20,000 were employed as coolie labourers—their reliability as plantation workers continued to be their major asset as far as the planter was concerned. This willingness to accept contract labour aroused the ire of the creole labourers, who referred to the Indian as a slave coolie, but it was the principal reason for the continuation of the indentured system until public opinion in India called a halt in 1917.\textsuperscript{108}

The resident whites continued to exercise considerable influence in Jamaican affairs throughout this period, although they were slowly losing ground after the turn of the century. Lisser wrote in 1913 that the coloureds were driving the whites out of the island. To an increasing extent the non-white Jamaicans began to consider the Caucasians as outsiders.\textsuperscript{109} Unlike the Bahama Islands, where the whites retained a tight control of the legislative council,\textsuperscript{110} the Jamaican whites were


\textsuperscript{110}\textsuperscript{110}\textit{H. Wrong, Government of the West Indies} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 89-93; Paul Blanshard, \textit{Empire and Democracy in the
forced to share their political power with the coloureds and those blacks who had succeeded in rising above the masses. Yet since most of the non-white members of the Legislative Council were all inclined to support the status quo to preserve their own gains, they tacitly accepted the dominant position of the whites even though this dominance was more real than apparent. White control of Jamaican affairs was indirect, through Jamaica's commitment to the imperial system and the control of the island's sugar industry by absentee interests. 111

To a certain extent the whites continued to set the tone of society due to their position at the top of the social hierarchy. One of the notable changes of this period, however, was the fall in status of the poor whites. Although the poor whites remained to some extent endogamous, they gradually came to be recognized as the social equals of the Negroes, probably because they failed to measure up to the Negroes' stereotyped view of the white role. 112


For the most part the attitudes of the whites towards the coloureds and the Negroes remained unchanged throughout these years. Several realists did acknowledge the inevitability of political control passing to the black masses.\textsuperscript{113} The most outstanding example was T. H. MacDermott, a prominent literary figure, who counselled the whites and the coloureds in the following terms:

Today we lead, tomorrow we advise, and on the following day we are coworkers with our black countrymen.\textsuperscript{114}

The great majority of whites in Jamaica, however, manifested strong feelings of race superiority and prejudice towards the Negro\textsuperscript{115} especially after living a few years in the island. Newcomers, in assuming the prejudices of the resident planters, inevitably tended to become very truculent toward servants and employees.\textsuperscript{116} Macmillan stated in 1935 that:

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\textsuperscript{113} Livingstone, \textit{Black Jamaica}, p. 241; Salmon, \textit{op. cit.}, preface.

\textsuperscript{114} MacDermott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 504. See also Abrahams, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 202; Roberts, \textit{Six Great Jamaicans}, pp. 93-94.


\textsuperscript{116} Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 233; Livingstone, \textit{Black Jamaica}, pp. 165-68; Henderson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 36; Rampini, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 80.
Whites display a dignity and assurance towards the coloured people [particularly the blacks] with sudden almost brutal bursts of self-assertion born of many generations of being fetched and carried for by hosts of slaves and of exercising unquestioned authority over them.  

A number of whites denied the existence of strong feelings of colour in Jamaica while they themselves clearly manifested race prejudice. Inspector Thomas stated that Jamaicans were justified when they took great pride in telling visitors from the United States that "We have no race problem." Yet he interpreted any attempt by the Negro to move ahead in the political field as a conspiracy to stir up racial strife. Even the paternalistic attitude of W. P. Livingstone towards the Negro, who he claimed showed a capacity for cultural improvement, was overlaid with racist sentiments. He claimed that it would be impossible for a member of the white race to understand the motives of William Gordan during the Morant riots since to comprehend them one would have to possess that "strange nature which a mixture of black and white blood creates."  

The latent racism of most whites was clearly manifested by their claim that the Negro was incapable of progress by his own

117 Macmillan, op. cit., p. 42.  
119 Thomas, op. cit., pp. 22, 373-75.  
120 Livingstone, Black Jamaica, pp. 171-72, 286.  
121 Ibid., p. 67.
efforts. At the same time many were extremely hostile to education for the blacks. Consequently the schools served in general the interests of the middle and upper classes.\textsuperscript{123}

Owing to the fact that fear of another uprising by the blacks was very real with many whites, they considered the immediate suppression of any disturbance involving the black masses the only effective guarantee against a race war.\textsuperscript{124} Even as late as 1937-38, during the Westmorland riots, numerous whites openly expressed admiration with the manner in which the disturbances of 1865 had been handled by Governor Eyre. One visiting English newspaperman reported that many 'charming upper class women' were advocating a policy of military force against the rioters because they felt it was the only way of dealing with the blacks.\textsuperscript{125}

In most of the religious denominations there was progress in the integration of the clergy and the congregations. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Archbishop Nutall of the Anglican church favoured a policy of using black clergy in an otherwise all-white


\textsuperscript{123}Fox, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 186; Macmillan, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 143-45.


\textsuperscript{125}Makin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 53-78.
priesthood and yet there was evidence throughout the period of subtle attempts by the whites to maintain segregated congregations by means of renting the front pews of the church or their complete boycott of services attended by Negroes. Lisser regarded this as indicative of 'cash' rather than colour preference. While the Anglican church was able to some extent to live down the reproach of having opposed the emancipation, education, and the advancement of the Negro it still stopped short of the material responsibilities of the populace, and continued to be the church of the privileged orders.

In many quarters the Negro was still considered incapable of assimilating and practicing the ethics of Christianity. One minister claimed that the high rates of illegitimacy—in the years 1918-1936 the average percentage of illegitimate births was over 68 per cent—were the result of colour preferences of the blacks and coloureds.


128 Beckworth, op. cit., p. 224; Olivier, Jamaica, p. 102. The Catholic church which grew rapidly after 1860 was likewise disposed to cater for the needs of the upper and middle classes. See Johnstone, The Negro in the New World, p. 268.

129 Pullen-Burry, op. cit., pp. 142-43; Caine-Hall, op. cit., p. 105.

130 R. Dingwell, Jamaica's Greatest Need (no facts of publication), pp. 27-28; Henriques, op. cit., p. 84.
The commission appointed by the Jamaican government in 1904 to investigate the low incidence of marriage and the degraded situation of many estate labourers, however, reported that the high rate of consensual unions resulting in illegitimacy was due to a variety of factors which it listed as inherited causes, the temperament of the people, ignorance and poverty of the lower classes, and the failure to segregate the sexes on the estates.\(^{131}\) With the churches concentrating upon more formal religious functions after 1870 there was a decided decline in their influence on the masses.\(^{132}\)

With the exception of two rather serious clashes between whites and blacks in 1894 and 1933\(^{133}\) overt manifestations of white antipathy towards the non-whites decreased. To a less extent the coloureds also improved their relations with the blacks.\(^{134}\) Jamaica lacked an official colour bar\(^{135}\) and this fact impressed a number of liberal visitors to island. Even Claude McKay, the Negro Jamaican who made such an important impact in the United States with his denunciation of the

\(^{131}\) *The Times* (London), 18 August 1904, p. 4. The report of 1877 on the condition of the rural populace employed on the estates was very unfavourable. See Olivier, *Jamaica*, pp. 201-10.


injustices which the Negro Americans had to undergo, believed that race antipathy was a minor consideration in Jamaica. He wrote:

In spite of its poverty, Jamaica was like a beautiful garden in its human relationships.¹³⁶

Yet by 1932 Jamaican race relations were on the threshold of significant changes. The day when the black masses would voice their grievances had arrived and it was seen that what had appeared to be their acquiescence to the old order had been little more than forced accommodation if not passive resistance to the oligarchy of the whites and the coloureds.

CHAPTER V

JAMAICA IN TRANSITION, 1938-58: JAMAICAN NATIONALISM AND THE "NEW BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY"

a) The Westmorland Riots and the Awakening of the Masses:

In May, 1938, serious labour disturbances took place on the Frome sugar estates of Tate and Iyle, a large British sugar combine with interests throughout the West Indies, involving the death of nine persons and injury to over fifty others. These disturbances were part of a series of riots that occurred throughout the West Indies in the period 1934-38. A year before, a number of ex-servicemen had demonstrated in Kingston and had called on the governor to alleviate unemployment by a scheme of land settlement.

Generally speaking the deplorable economic conditions of the area which had been aggravated by the great depression and the declining market in the United States for West Indian sugar following the Ottawa Agreement of 1932, have been cited as the principal causes of the disturbances. Certainly the economic factor was important. Most

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of the export revenue was again dependent upon the sale of sugar from
large estates following the failure of the banana industry, but still
the upper income brackets paid few direct taxes. Absenteeism continued
to debilitate economic development. In short the margin between the
depressed sections of Jamaica's population and the rich minority who
were usually resident whites or absentee owners increased, thus cre-
ating a dangerous situation in the island. Economically speaking the
West Indies remained, as Lloyd George had put it, "the slums of the
Empire," with little real material improvement for the masses since
the days of slavery.

It has been maintained that the political element was of little
importance in the riots. It was, however, of considerable significance,

1055. It should be noted that the situation was aggravated by the de-
cline of employment opportunities overseas and the virtual cessation of
payments from overseas relatives during the thirties. See Eric Williams,
Folk Education, 1942), p. 43.

5L. and S. Martin, "Outpost No. 2: The West Indies," Harper's Maga-
zine, Vol. CLXXXII, March 1942, p. 361; C. E. Chardon, "Caribbean Island
James, "Administrative Institutions and Social Change in Jamaica, British
West Indies: A Study in Cultural Adaptation," unpublished doctoral dis-
sertation presented at Columbia University, 1955, p. 154; O. W. Phelps,
"The Rise of the Labour Movement in Jamaica," Social and Economic Studies,
Vol. IX, no. 4 (n.d.), p. 417; Eric Williams, Education in the West In-
dies (no facts of publication), p. 122.

6G. A. Hughes, "Semi-Responsible Government in the British West
339.

7W. M. Macmillan, Warning from the West Indies (London: Faber and
Faber, Ltd., 1935), p. 47.

8W. A. Roberts, "Nationalist Liberalism," The Daily Gleaner, 4
539-40.
not so much as a direct cause of the riots but in that the frustration of the masses with the political system and Crown Colony government was definitely an underlying cause. Labour and sections of the lower class, although inarticulate and still badly organized, were conscious of their deplorable position and of the possibility of resolving it through political action. This was especially true after two coloured Jamaicans of the middle class, Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley, identified themselves with the masses and offered them political leadership. Despite the long struggle by elements of the coloured middle class and the upper whites to secure an extension of political control for the benefit of their interests, it was the voice of the masses that finally forced political progress for the island colony.

Few coloureds and whites wanted to see an extension of the franchise or an improvement in the general conditions of the masses, but events forced their hand. Many coloureds now outwardly supported

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the cause of the black masses and increased their criticism of the role of the metropolitan Englishmen and the Colonial Office in Jamaica, because in doing so they could see that their more immediate goals of national independence with an increase in employment opportunity for the middle classes would be more readily obtained. Certainly their resentment against the whites' attitudes and their monopoly of the higher governmental positions was justified, but since most of the middle class (including its black members) greatly feared the demands for reform by the hungry masses, its action in supporting the economic, political and social agitation of the masses was largely opportunistic.

Although it has been claimed that racial antipathy was not a factor in the Westmorland riots the black's feeling against the whites founded by middle-class Jamaicans first thought universal suffrage and national independence too radical, but after the riots it adopted both as its party platform. Ibid., p. 71.


14 Ayearst, op. cit., p. 39. See also the statement by R. L. M. Kirkwood, a rich white planter, who was connected by marriage with the Tate and Iyle sugar interests, which can be taken as representative of the expressed opinions of the majority of whites. R. L. M. Kirkwood, "This Colour Business," The New Republic, Vol. CX, 10 January, 1944, p. 54.
and coloureds was clearly present. During the riots no one was killed with the exception of rioters shot by the police, but there were numerous reports indicating considerable feeling against the whites and coloureds in the areas of disturbances. The government certainly took more than adequate precautions against what appeared to be another serious manifestation of lower-class dissatisfaction, while the resident whites secretly nursed their fears of another black uprising. Once again, the police resorted to unnecessary brutality in maintaining order.

The riots were rather ineffective in themselves but they finally shook the lethargy and self-complacency of the Colonial Office, awakening them to the plain fact that throughout the West Indies the black masses, particularly the labourers, as distinct from the coloured middle-class intellectuals, were demonstrating a heretofore unforeseen solidarity throughout the Caribbean and demanding action. Until the riots, "the home government had not appreciated the seriousness of the situation.


18 Cumper, op. cit., p. 81; Jones, op. cit., p. 256.
and the labouring classes had not realized their own strength." It
appeared that the violence of the masses had been necessary to secure
the redress of their grievances. One student of political develop-
ment has stated that:

It cannot be known if these political moves [demands of
the Jamaican nationalists] would ever have achieved
tangible results had not the labor disturbances in Jamaica
and other West Indian colonies already brought the seriousness
of the situation to the attention of the Imperial
Government.  

One thing is certain. The masses were aware of their plight and the
Colonial Office following the inquiry of the Royal Commission (1938-39)
realized the significance of the formidable combination of the black
masses and the coloured middle-class nationalists now unified in their
demand for drastic reforms. This factor was to have a radical effect
upon the policies of the Colonial Office.

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19 Blanshard, op. cit., p. 94.

20 G. F. Timpson, Jamaican Interlude (London: Ed. J. Burrow and

21 R. V. Sires, "Experience of Jamaica with Modified Crown Colony
pp. 159-60.

22 Great Britain, Colonial Office, West India Royal Commission
Report, Cmd. 6607 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1945),
passim, especially pp. 8, 58-61. (Hereafter cited for the second time
as Cmd-papers by command). See also R. W. Thompson, Black Caribbean
Sherlock, A Short History of the West Indies (London: Macmillan and
b) The Failure of Crown Colony Government and the "New Colonial Policy":

The attitude of Britain towards her colonial empire underwent gradual transformation in the years after the First World War, but it was not generally felt in the West Indies until the end of the thirties. Generally speaking colonial policy in Jamaica followed a uniform pattern in the years 1866-1938. As a result of the widespread disturbances in the African and West Indian colonies in the late 1930's and the pressure of the Second World War, a more profound change occurred in the 1940's, and this had important consequences for Jamaica and the other British West Indian colonies. 23

Attention will now be paid to the failings and inconsistencies of colonial policy throughout the empire and in particular with respect to Jamaica prior to the Second World War. To a large extent the Colonial Office was responsible for the deplorable social and economic conditions in Jamaica revealed to the world by the Royal Commission of 1938-39, and for the failure of Jamaica to maintain a constant political development under Crown Colony tutelage.

There was widespread evidence that the old racist concepts of the innate superiority of the caucasian and the hopeless backwardness of the Negro in particular had been weakened to some extent by the world war,

and the disillusionment that was its aftermath. One British authority on imperialism recently wrote that:

After 1919 the British Empire never regained the sense of unconscious security it had enjoyed in the past. Victory, made possible by the sacrifices of an Empire united as never before, brought with it neither a lasting settlement in Europe nor protection against the impact of ideas which had been so greatly stimulated in war. By these ideas the conception of imperialism was directly challenged. ... there had to be a definition and this was undertaken with the greatest reluctance.

It was realized in many quarters—even by Colonial Office personnel—that tremendous differences existed between the expressed concepts of trusteeship and the practice. The main attack came from the political left although both the British Labour Party and the Communists disfavoured a policy of immediate independence for the colonies or 'abandonment' as they called it. They were caught between their rejection of imperialist control with its economic exploitation and their awareness of the need to develop the dependent peoples for independence.

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27 Hinden, op. cit., pp. 94-95; Thornton, op. cit., Introduction and p. 300.
This desire to make use of the paternalistic concepts of trusteeship to advance colonial development had the effect of strengthening the appeal of empire and unconsciously aided the conservatives who were decidedly against relinquishing the empire under any circumstances. British imperialists nonetheless disliked the idea of acknowledging the mandates of the League of Nations and the intrusion of moralism into the affairs of empire. They were quick to seize upon the difficulties in the way of self-determination for the colonies, often acknowledged even by persons favouring colonial advancement, to frustrate colonial nationalism. In the case of plural societies it was widely believed that a democratic process would not work and that it was necessary to protect the white minorities in the empire by preventing the establishment of a wide franchise or by means of nominating members to the colonial legislature who would be responsible to the executive.

28 Mansergh, op. cit., p. 5; Thornton, op. cit., introduction.
late as 1938 the franchise in Jamaica was restricted by a property qualification to less than 10 per cent of the population and the majority of the appointed members of the Legislative Council were whites or light coloureds.32

The older concept of a unified empire developed in the mid-nineteenth century was dropped in favour of a policy of non-assimilation owing to the multi-racial character of the new empire. In its place arose the concept of stewardship by the Colonial Office with eventual self-determination for the colonial peoples.33

Yet with the possible exception of India the Colonial Office was reluctant to train the colonial peoples for positions of authority apparently because of its lack of confidence in the non-Anglo-Saxon races, particularly the Negro.34 This was still evident in British Colonial policy as late as the late thirties. A study group of the Royal Institute of International Affairs reported that many officials regarded themselves as born to lead the 'backward' races,35 while in


1938 the Colonial Office was still recruiting only "persons of European descent" for its overseas services. 36

In Jamaica this policy caused the resignation of the Negro mayor of Kingston, Dr. O. E. Anderson, M. D., in protest against an advertisement in the British Medical Journal calling for a medical officer of "European descent" to fill a post in Jamaica. 37 The Reverend Ethelred Brown of the Jamaica Progressive League wrote a bitter criticism in 1937 of the Colonial Office practice of reserving the highest positions in the civil service for Englishmen. He also criticized the policy of always having an Englishman at the head of the police department, and the payment in 1933 of 60,000 pounds sterling by Jamaica towards the pensions of retired Colonial Office personnel when only 157,000 pounds was spent in the same year for island education. 38

Apparently the white colonial servant was at his best when dealing with the so-called primitive peoples of the empire. 39 Dr. T. S.

36 Ayearst, op. cit., p. 150; James, "Administrative Institutions and Social Change in Jamaica," p. 46.


39 Lord Hailey, Britain and Her Dependencies (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1943), p. 36. Hailey refers to the estrangement between the administrators and the colonial peoples once the latter show signs of advancement. Ibid. This was also the experience of the
Simey, a sociologist working for the Colonial Office in Jamaica and the West Indies, reported that although the English civil servant lived among West Indians he was certainly not a member of West Indian society and this fact often gave him an acute sense of failure and frustration, no matter how good his intentions.\footnote{40} To a large extent this was due to a lack of understanding and sympathy of the dependent people's problems shown by the Colonial Office personnel that resulted from their establishing a social colour bar throughout the empire.\footnote{41} In part this was also the result of the average Englishman's natural reserve and his desire to remain impartial in his work, but this aspect has been exaggerated.\footnote{42}

All too frequently the officials took over the attitudes of the resident whites and in the eyes of many colonials they became identified with the interests of the local whites.\footnote{43} In several areas of the

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\footnote{40} Simey, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 110-11.


empire—Southern Rhodesia, Bermuda, the Bahama Islands and Kenya—the Colonial Office treated the local white minority with special favour, often allowing it to impose its particular viewpoint upon the coloured majority.  

Despite official statements of policy in 1923 concerning the predominant interest of the African in Kenya, regarded as a test case for the Empire, Colonial Office policy continued to permit white supremacy in the colonies.  

As late as 1935 an Englishman wrote that the Jamaican whites were a troublesome and powerful group, capable of ridding themselves of any governor who showed "legislative sympathies towards the blacks...".

The Colonial Office was often too susceptible to the pleas of the vested economic interests throughout the empire and unfortunately

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did little to curb their activities, despite the claim that it was maintaining a just balance between the natives and the capitalistic groups. This was particularly the case in Kenya where leading members of the white community were closely interrelated with leading British politicians, and in Jamaica and the West Indies where the sugar interests were considered vital to the economy of the area.

Jamaica was still regarded as an area unsuitable for white settlement but one which should continue to serve the economic interests of empire. Even the policy of land distribution to the peasants reflected this view, and came to be regarded as a panacea for all the ills of the island long after it ceased to alleviate the economic conditions of the masses.

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By far the worst failure of the Colonial Office in Jamaica and the empire prior to 1940 was its lack of a dynamic policy towards the underdeveloped colonies. This is hardly surprising when it is considered that laissez faire continued to be the basic philosophy of the Colonial Office and the majority of Englishmen throughout this period. The major role of the Colonial Office appeared to be that of policeman, and in the words of the editor of the London Times, it "gave the people of the West Indies their physical freedom, secured them internal peace, guaranteed them impartial justice, and left the rest to them." Another critic wrote that in 1939 Jamaica was still exhibiting the same kind of unprogressive reaction to its social problems that was typical of all West Indian islands in that after the riots the major governmental expenditures were allocated to maintaining order.

In the economic sphere the official attitude was that each colony had to pay its own expenses of government and this was considered a vital requisite for political independence.


54 The Times (London), 29 October 1943, p. 5. The editor of The Times also criticized the nature of the colonial governors who had been steeped in the old ideas of empire. Ibid.

55 Fox, op. cit., p. 104.

56 Ibid., p. 11; Evans, op. cit., pp. 76-77.
There was neither concern for the vast numbers of unemployed persons that arose as a result of the colonial monopolies and the lack of economic opportunity;\(^57\) nor was there any real effort made to prepare the people for political advancement by increasing their education.\(^58\) The Wood Report of 1922 informed the Colonial Office that there was "no physical distress among the poorer sections of the community,"\(^59\) and that West Indian Federation was not feasible due to the apathy of the West Indian masses.

Allowing for the appeal of laissez faire doctrines colonial policy was nonetheless characterized by a certain degree of complacency, apathy and even ignorance. Livingstone indicated that following abolition the argument had frequently been used to show that the Negro was better off in Jamaica than he had been Africa and that this attitude lamentably killed any sense of responsibility towards him by the Colonial Office. It was also widely accepted at all levels that

\(^{57}\)Barnes, op. cit., p. 278; Manley, op. cit., pp. 17-18; Henriques, op. cit., p. 166.

\(^{58}\)Blanshard, op. cit., pp. 16-17; Walker, Colonies, p. 79; Barnes, op. cit., p. 125.

\(^{59}\)Hinden, Empire and After, pp. 134-35.


British genius for governing backward peoples could do little wrong.  

Not only was there general ignorance of the empire and its problems at all levels—in a post-World War II survey of public attitudes towards colonies some 3 per cent questioned believed the United States was still a British colony and over 51 per cent could not name even one British colony—but it even extended to members of the Colonial Office and the British parliament. The latter, although ostensibly responsible for alerting the public to the needs of the Empire, left the Colonial Office to govern its charges with very meagre resources.

As a result, Crown Colony government did not provide a political tutelage for Jamaica. When drastic political changes took place after 1940 the masses were in many ways unprepared. In the eyes of the lower classes the island government had always been identified with the land-owning class or the colonial officials so that they felt themselves to be less than full citizens due to their feeling of

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64 Ayearest, op. cit., p. 141; Livingstone, op. cit., pp. 3-4.


estrangement and the lack of machinery through which they could influence the course of events. Although the struggle between the nominated and elected members of the Legislative Council was recognized as a problem, it was the divorce of the black masses from the political superstructure of Crown Colony government that attracted the attention of the Royal Commission in 1939 and helped prepare the way for Colonial Office reforms.

The findings and recommendations of the 1938-39 Royal Commission can be summarized as follows: It admitted the failure of *laissez faire* and the basic policy in the past of evaluating every measure on the basis of its cost. Discrimination against the use of colonials in local administration and governmental services, and the failure to provide for education and general welfare also came under fire. The Commissioners advocated the establishment of a special governmental

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70 Cmd. 6607, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

agency financed by outside funds to remedy the deplorably low levels of health, nutrition, education, and general welfare, together with the formulation of a policy favourable to gradual constitutional progress with an ultimate goal of responsible government based on universal suffrage and the possible formation of a Caribbean Federation of British West Indian colonies. Blessing was also given to the formation of democratic labour unions, a policy of encouraging diversification in agriculture, and the adoption of family planning.

Generally speaking these ideas were accepted by the Colonial Office and an attempt was made to carry out its promise to help the colonial peoples towards responsible government within the Commonwealth. Labour Party officials also endorsed the proposals accepted by a Conservative government when they came to power in 1945, although they showed no particular haste in advancing the political development of the West Indies.

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72 Cmd. 6607, op. cit., p. 429; Cmd. 6656, op. cit., p. 4.


75 Jeffries, op. cit., p. 191.

76 See also Ayerst, The British West Indies, pp. 135-56; Hinden, Empire and After, pp. 5, 142.
Almost immediately the Colonial Office began implementing the more important suggestions of the Commission. In 1940 the Colonial Development and Welfare Act established the Development and Welfare Agency in the West Indies with an original grant of one million pounds annually to ameliorate the worst social and economic abuses of the area. In 1945 the amount was increased and in the years 1946-50 over ten million pounds were spent on agriculture and water resources, communications and welfare.

The new colonial policy was directed at alleviating the worst results of poverty and bad health rather than towards concerted re-organization of society through economic planning and development. Attempts were made to start social security schemes but once again success was hampered by the reluctance of the Colonial Office to underwrite the cost. Educational advance was similarly handicapped although the government did provide a number of scholarships for overseas university study in addition to establishing the University College of

77 New York Times, 21 February 1940, p. 9; Hinden, Empire and After, pp. 5, 142.
79 Cmd. 8575, op. cit., p. 4; Simey, op. cit., p. 125.
the West Indies in Jamaica in 1948. Sir Frank Stockdale, who was the first comptroller for development and welfare, stated that:

... while the West Indies need much greater provision for education, so that every child may benefit and every community grow in resources and self-responsibility, the recurrent annual cost would be such that, so far as can be seen, permanent financial aid from the United Kingdom would be necessary to the prejudice of that growth in self-responsibility for which education is needed and towards [that] self-government [which] is the expressed object of British colonial policy and the proper ambition of the colonial peoples themselves.

There was also opposition to industrialization in the West Indian area because it was felt that the area lacked a skilled labour supply and adequate raw materials, although a relatively large sum of money was devoted to agricultural improvement.

Despite the abandoning of laissez-faire principles the new colonial policy in the West Indies was not very impressive in terms of expenditure. This was largely a result of the Colonial Office's expressed reluctance to frustrate the development of self-reliance in the colonies and hence ultimately their ability, after achieving independence, to

\[81\] Cmd. 8575, op. cit., pp. 55, 74-76.


maintain the level of social services established by the Colonial Office. In 1955 the British people were spending only a very meagre proportion of their gross national product of 16 billion pounds to aid colonial advancement.

Without question the most spectacular achievements of the Colonial Office in Jamaica were in the political realm and here a good deal of the credit must also go to the island nationalists who were impatient with what appeared to them to be a deliberate policy of the Colonial Office to find excuses to delay progress. In 1941 Norman Manley, as leader of the People's National Party, called for rapid political advancement, claiming that "what is good for the British is good for the Jamaican." He derided the fear of some persons who believed that Jamaica would be unable to manage its own affairs if it achieved self-government. "What evidence was there that the colonial administration which Jamaica had had managed its affairs well?" he asked.

Out of the disturbances of 1938 came the demand for universal suffrage, and despite the opposition of the upper classes and many of


87 Hinden, Empire and After, pp. 141-42.
the black legislators it was finally accepted by the Colonial Office. The next step was constitutional reform but here the Colonial Office opposed both the suggestion of J. A. G. Smith, a longtime member of the Legislative Council, that the old oligarchic constitution of 1865 be established, and that of the People's National Party under Norman Manley which called for an end to the governor's right to vote legislation.

The Smith constitution was anything but democratic since its author, "while black in physical colour was white in social values," and the group that he represented did not appear to be at all concerned about the serious economic problems of the island.

The Colonial Office produced a constitution of its own and attempted to force it on the island, but without success. Finally a compromise measure granting limited responsible government based on universal suffrage was established in 1944. From 1944 until the FNP came to power in 1955 there was little further progress owing to the conservative nature of Bustamante and his lack of faith in self-government for Jamaica.

88 Ayerst, "A Note on Some Characteristics of West Indian Political Parties," p. 187. Bustamante referred to the elected members of the Legislative Council as the black royal family of Jamaica. See Makin, op. cit., p. 46.


90 Sires, op. cit., p. 161.

91 Ibid., p. 162; Ayerst, The British West Indies, pp. 72-73.
A good deal of friction existed between the FNP members and the governor owing to the failure of the 1944 constitution to define the responsibilities of the ministers and to the feeling of inadequacy of the members caused by constitutional limitations and the presence of nominated members in the Executive Council. In 1955 Manley initiated a policy of calling a 'minister's conference' before attending the Executive Council meetings. Governor Foot permitted the practice. Eventually in 1957 the Colonial Office replaced the Executive Council with the Council of Ministers composed of the majority party, thus giving Jamaica full internal self-government.

Colonial policy after 1945 was decidedly in favour of a federation of the West Indian colonies and sought to nurture the latent sense of West Indian nationalism that existed among the middle classes. To a great extent the changed conditions of the post-war world had made a pro-federation policy necessary. In fact the rapid transformation of colonial policy beginning in 1948 can be attributed largely to a number of factors which received impetus either from the war or its aftermath.

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Obviously one of the most important pressures on Britain to adopt a more liberal policy towards her dependent peoples after 1939 was the need to present a unified effort against Fascism. During the Second World War it was necessary to tell the colonials that they were fighting against the evils of the Axis powers in order to preserve democracy. The ideological position of the allied powers was set forth in the Atlantic Charter although Prime Minister Churchill was initially reluctant to apply these principles to the British Empire. In reply to a question in 1941 at a meeting of the Royal Empire Society as to whether Britain ought to develop the coloured colonies apart from those of the Caucasian race, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Moyne, replied that such a policy would be entirely against the principles for which the United Kingdom was fighting. In short the Atlantic Charter constituted an indirect attack on colonialism.

Of no less importance was the rising tide of anti-colonialism among the colonials themselves. Previously this had been confined to

99 Huxley, op. cit., p. 43.
a relatively small number of intellectuals who had been fortunate enough to study overseas, but by the end of World War II thousands of British subjects from the colonies had served overseas and were generally strongly in favour of national independence for their countries. Besides having seen the progressive weakening of the material power and prestige of the imperial nations they were well aware that a strong sentiment hostile to colonialism—itselitself a reaction to the war, coercion, and exploitation—was making itself felt in the international councils of the world.¹⁰⁰ Lord Hailey in an address at Princeton University in 1943 stated that although it was not considered necessary in the past to account for colonialism, the imperial powers had come to respect the importance of world opinion in recent years.¹⁰¹

Many of the methods of controlling the empire were also under fire from the colonials. In Africa the doctrine of 'indirect rule' had made no provision for the new westernized colonial nationalists who regarded it as a subtle system devised by the Colonial Office to frustrate the development and modernization of the colonies by an alliance with

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the reactionary tribal interests.\textsuperscript{102} Trusteeship itself was also regarded with the greatest suspicion.\textsuperscript{103} In Jamaica Norman Manley not only attacked the "ideas of the Colonial Office that it will take two or three hundred years to bring the colonials up to the stage of self-government,"\textsuperscript{104} but he also rejected the notion that there could be no political independence without economic independence since there were, as he pointed out, a number of independent nations already receiving foreign economic aid.\textsuperscript{105}

There were a number of other forces influencing Britain's policy towards her colonies. During the war many leading Americans, including Wendell Wilkie and Franklin D. Roosevelt made it clear to the British that they were not fighting a war to reestablish Britain's imperial supremacy and would support the independence claims of the colonials.\textsuperscript{106}


\textsuperscript{103} Hinden, Empire and After, p. 147.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., pp. 170-71.

\textsuperscript{105} Ayest, The British West Indies, pp. 156-57.

\textsuperscript{106} Hinden, Empire and After, p. 146. Roosevelt was suspicious of the British intentions towards their post-war empire. President Truman also threw his weight behind self-determination for the colonial peoples in 1946. See United States, Department of State, Report of the West Indian Conference, Second Session, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, United States, February 21 to March 13, 1946. Publication 2615 (Washington, D. C.: Department of State, 1946), p. 63.
The Labour Party needed no convincing as it had already adopted constructive measures to aid colonial independence and declared its intention of establishing the partnership principle within the Commonwealth. Many labourites considered imperialism a natural ally of the reactionary forces in England which they believed could best be weakened by granting the colonial nationalists control of their own areas.107

Within a few years of the end of the war Britain, under Labour leadership, was honouring her promise to grant independence to her more advanced colonies and to invite them to join British Commonwealth of Nations as equal partners. British Commonwealth citizens, including those of the dependent empire, began to participate on terms of equality within the councils of the British family of nations and other international bodies such as the United Nations.108 In the late 1940's a coloured West Indian from Barbados represented Great Britain at a session of the United Nations in Paris.109


International communism and the emergence of the Soviet Union as a world power after World War II was, however, perhaps the greatest factor making for radical changes in British colonial policy in recent years. In the ideological conflict which developed between the blocs, it has been vital for Britain as a member of the Western sphere to put her house in order.  

There were many critics, however, of the "new colonial policy" who thought in terms of retaining an empire and who sought to frustrate the early independence of new emerging nations of the Commonwealth. To a certain extent they were the vested interests who tended to benefit economically from the colonies as areas of investment and white settlement, markets for British goods, or as areas providing raw materials. Although it was generally thought that imperialistic sentiment as a political force had spent itself by 1945, the British invasion of Suez in 1956—supported as it was even by working class elements—served to remind the world, and in particular the colonial peoples within the empire, that this was not entirely the case.

A major argument of the apologists of post-war imperialism was that Britain needed an empire to maintain her position as a major world

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110 Gann, op. cit., p. 34; Murray, "The Road Back—Jamaica After 1866," pp. 139-40.


112 Thornton, op. cit., pp. 267, 350.
power. \(^{113}\) The Conservative Party in one of its publications in 1949 stated that, "We believe that if the British Empire were to break up, Britain would become a third-class power unable to feed or defend herself." \(^{114}\) It added that the party believed in empire, regarding it as the "supreme achievement of the British people." Naturally enough the conditions of the times forced major concessions from the conservatives in the form of the outward recognition of the multi-racial commonwealth and the free movement of British subjects within it, including Great Britain. \(^{115}\) Although Winston Churchill himself never became reconciled to the Commonwealth ideal, the Conservative Party stated that, despite its primary interest in overseas migration of British Isles' residents to those colonies climatically suited to their needs, it would also welcome "those who come from the Dominions and the colonies to live and work with us in Britain." \(^{116}\)

In the case of the West Indies the economic argument in favour of retaining the area in a dependent status was doubtlessly offset by the fact that in the post-war years it had become an economic liability.

\(^{113}\) H. V. Hodson, Twentieth Century Empire (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1948), pp. 30-31; Fox, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19.

\(^{114}\) Conservative Party, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 1.

\(^{115}\) Ibid. See also Great Britain, Central Office of Information, Progress in the Colonies: British Policy in Action, 1954 (No facts of publication), p. 1.

It has been suggested that this, together with the desire to check West Indian migration to the United Kingdom, gave impetus to the efforts of the Colonial Office to federate the West Indies and grant it independence. Whether this was the case or not, the rate of political advancement was to a large extent beyond the control of the Colonial Office owing to the rising and persistent demands of the West Indian nationalists for political independence.

The Development of Island Political Parties and the Role of Jamaican and West Indian Nationalism

A minimum requisite for the success of a political party in Jamaica in recent years has been an outward association at least with the interests of the black masses—even to the extent of establishing a trade union wing—as well as an overtly hostile attitude to control by the Colonial Office. Both the Jamaican Labour Party under Alexander Bustamante, and to a less extent the People's National Party under Manley, rode to political power with the support of the lower classes.

The success of the FNP was slower because of its emphasis in the early years of its formation upon political independence and doc-

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117 Curry, op. cit., pp. 283-84. After considerable discussion in the British Parliament, press and journals since 1956, Britain finally decided to impose limitations on immigration from the Commonwealth to the United Kingdom (February 1961).

trinaire socialism. To a large extent the latter was beyond the com-
prehension of the masses, and merely antagonized the propertied 
classes. On the other hand the wild and emotional promises of Busta-
mante, which in the long run proved to be little more than political 
maneuverings, initially caught the imagination of the masses, and cer-
tainly that of the vested interests who were quick to appreciate the 
basically conservative viewpoints of the Jamaican Labour Party 
leader.  

Bustamante was basically unsympathetic towards the nationalist 
cause. Despite his outward denunciations of British tyranny, he was a 
great admirer of British institutions if not of Britain's colonial 
administration of Jamaica. It has been claimed that Bustamante 
had stated before the Royal Commission of 1939 that the Jamaican black 
was unfitted to accept a post of responsibility. Apparently he 
also recommended that the higher ranks of the police force employ only 
whites.

119 Chapman, op. cit., p. 47. There was an active group of crypto-
communists associated with the FNP until they were expelled by Manley in 
1951. See Ayearst, The British West Indies, p. 211.

120 Abrahams, Jamaica, p. 184; Blanshard, Empire and Democracy 
in the Caribbean, p. 97. Adolphe Roberts and W. A. Domingo, both 
Jamaican nationalists, had very little regard for 'Busta', whom they 
considered an opportunist without concrete political goals. Ibid. See 
also A. W. Roberts, "Future of the British Caribbean," Survey Graphic, 
Vol. XXX, April 1941, p. 232.

121 Fox, op. cit., p. 259; Thompson, op. cit., pp. 235-36; Chap-
man, op. cit., p. 22.

122 Makin, op. cit., p. 91.

Bustamante used every tactic to maintain his political supremacy. Despite his aversion to black nationalism he accepted ex-Garveyites in his movement and was not averse himself to the use of racism for political ends. In 1945 he stated:

I am going to start a war of race hatred. If I have got to be a dictator or a Hitler in Jamaica I am going to crush every Jew in Jamaica or compel them to leave the island.

Nonetheless his party was closely allied with white capitalist interests throughout Jamaica and the Jewish and Syrian business interests in Kingston.

The Jamaican Labour Party also declared itself in favour of self-government for Jamaica, but lacked any concrete proposals on how it was to be achieved. Bustamante and most of his followers opposed Jamaica's entry into the West Indies Federation, which for many seemed to be the most practical way of establishing independence, because the claimed it was a measure designed to maintain Jamaica and the other colonies in a state of perpetual bondage.

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125 Fox, op. cit., p. 258.

126 Macmillan, The Land of Look Behind, p. 178; Blashard, Empire and Democracy in the Caribbean, p. 97.

There can be little doubt that Manley and his followers were genuinely trying to secure Jamaican independence. They worked to create a nationalist spirit, and later sought to integrate with that of the new West Indian Federation which came into being in 1958. In its formative years the FNP had adopted what seemed to many a policy of arousing the racial consciousness of the black masses against the ruling order. A number of Garvey's followers including his widow, a former editor of his paper, and W. A. Domingo, of the Jamaica Progressive League, who had also been a member of the U.N.I.A., were associated with the FNP, and their Negro nationalism undoubtedly influenced party policy in that direction. The FNP was also accused of intimidating the Chinese.

By the election of 1955 the FNP, despite a large working class following, moderated its socialistic demands in order to make a greater appeal to the middle classes. With the exception of a vocal minority of the Jamaican middle class and some island intellectuals—including Adolphe Roberts and W. A. Domingo—whose Jamaican nationalism was stronger than any desire to see the island merged in a


West Indian national unity, greatest enthusiasm for federation came from the bourgeois elements, especially the professionals and intellectuals. They stood to gain most from federation in the way of increased career opportunities in government administration and politics or through expanded business operations resulting from economic integration.

The struggle for political independence was accompanied by an increased consciousness of the need for a West Indian culture. Certainly great strides were made in this direction by a small but articulate group of artists, writers, and intellectuals throughout the West Indies, but particularly in Jamaica which had the advantage of the University College of the West Indies as a cultural center. In part their contribution was creative, but more significant was their discovery of West Indian forms—such as music, dance or folklore—which had hitherto been ignored or overlooked. Many sought to establish their cultural identity by rejecting many aspects of West Indian life that had followed too closely the English model, while others found pride in being West Indians.

133 Wiseman, A Short History of the British West Indies, p. 121; Goveia, op. cit., p. 38.
134 Abrahams, Jamaica, p. 209.
Two of Jamaica's leading literary figures, Claude McKay and Roger Mais, addressed themselves to the problem of obtaining self-esteem for the Jamaican Negro and control of his own political destiny. McKay, obviously optimistic about the Negro's future, wrote: "Happily as I move on, I see the adventure changing for those who will come after me. For this is the century of the Coloured World." He also felt that the Jamaican Negro would make a significant political contribution to this development.

In 1944, Roger Mais, who was also a leading Jamaican nationalist, attacked the Colonial Office record in Jamaica in the following terms:

We have been asked by the British Empire to fight to defend the system so

... that the sun may never set upon aggression and inequality and human degradation ... upon repressions and human exploitation. ... upon urchins in rags and old men and women in rags ... upon insolence and arrogance of one race towards others ... [upon] the great ideas of democracy which relegates all 'niggers' of whatever race to their proper place.

The Negro renaissance in the British Caribbean, unlike that of

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137 Ibid., p. 143. Norman Manley in 1945 stated that the success of West Indian Federation would have a salutary effect upon the status of the Negro the world over. See New York Times, 11 October 1945, p. 10.

138 Quoted in Ayearst, The British West Indies, p. 68.
the Spanish-speaking Antilles, was comparatively free of the benevolent yet self-conscious attitudes of the Cuban and Puerto Rican intellectuals who, in attempting to recognize the contribution of the Negro, dwelt upon his physical attributes. Most of the British West Indian intellectuals were not condescending in their attitudes. Rather their well-balanced viewpoint considered the Negro to be equal in all respects to the other races of mankind.139

There has been evidence in recent years that the coloured middle class has shown some willingness to cooperate and integrate itself with the black masses in the emerging Jamaican nation. To some extent it has realized the futility of the absorption of the majority into the way of life of the minority140 but this new outlook must not be exaggerated. Unfortunately, the failure of the West Indian Federation and the absence even of a unified Jamaican nationalist feeling with general support from all sections of the population is indicative of fundamental social and racial differences that continue to divide Jamaican society.

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140 Simey, op. cit., p. 105; Springer, op. cit., p. 182.
CHAPTER VI

JAMAICAN SOCIETY AT MID-CENTURY

The basic purpose of this chapter will be to give an outline of Jamaican society during the decade of the fifties prior to Jamaica's short lived participation in the West Indian Federation and her complete independence which is scheduled for the fall of 1962. Attention will be paid to the basic class structure with special reference to its racial composition, and the opportunities that exist for social mobility. Today the lack of mobility, particularly for the lower classes, is the result of a number of factors which continue to divide Jamaican society. In part these disnomic agents are the consequence of present day economic, social and political conditions, but they are also the legacy of conditions that existed under slavery or of the clash of cultures that is by no means at an end. The causes of a divided Jamaican society will form the second part of this chapter.

Jamaican Social Structure

Broadly speaking, it is convenient to recognize three major classes that closely follow racial or colour lines.¹ Colour, although

¹Professor Ayerst uses a four division schema for the West Indies as a whole in which he divided the middle class into upper middle and lower middle class sections. In the former he includes whites of lesser wealth and representatives of overseas firms together with wealthy coloureds. The bulk of the clerical and civil service employees together with coloured and Negro artisans and the more affluent peasant proprietors form his lower middle class. See M. Ayerst, The British West Indies: The Search for Self-Government (New York: New York University Press, 1960), p. 56.
it is by no means the only criterium of social status, is still very important. A sociologist at the University College of the West Indies writes that:

At no time in the history of Jamaica was there an absolutely equal relationship between colour and social status. ... but there is absolutely no doubt that in the scale of values held by every section of Jamaican society, "whiteness" was associated with high status and "blackness" with low status. ²

By far the most important section measured in terms of total contribution to Jamaican national life is the mass of the population which is concentrated in the lower class. It also includes small groups of poor whites and East Indians as well as a number of coloureds although they do not constitute an important proportion.

Lower class mores are quite distinct from those of the middle or upper classes and may be considered as belonging to a folk culture of the lower class with relatively few points in common with that of the middle or upper classes. The fundamental gap between the black masses of the lower class and the coloureds and whites of the upper strata that existed under slavery still persists.³

²Quoted in Mona Macmillan, The Land of Look Behind (London: Faber and Faber, n.d.), p. 40. This is generally true throughout the Caribbean including the French West Indies which are often thought to be an area where racial factors played a relatively small part in the socio-economic structure. See Charles Wagley and M. Harris, Minorities in the New World: Six Case Studies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 106, 115-17.

Most Jamaican blacks are agricultural labourers, subsistence farmers, urban labourers or members of a large unemployed urban proletariat. While sections of the Jamaican peasantry continue to be stable and are still regarded by some to be the backbone of Jamaican life, there has been considerable division of peasant holdings in recent years. This has added to the urban migration already responsible for drawing a number of marginal peasant farmers to the towns in quest of greater opportunity.

With few exceptions the East Indians have been well assimilated into the lower class culture of Jamaica, evidenced to some extent by their high illiteracy rate and their comparative failure to improve their socio-economic position as the other immigrant groups have done. Like the blacks the Indians tend to regard the employment of their ancestors on the estates as a form of slavery, and there is evidence that, while some conflict between the Indians and the blacks exists over the concept of marriage and concubinage, the eastern ethic is dying out.

4 Comments to the author by Dr. Cyril Rogers, a social psychologist from the University of the Central African Federation who was employed by the University College of the West Indies during 1961 on a survey of public opinion. Dr. Rogers had considerable contact with the rural elements in several areas of the island.


Although the middle class is made up largely of the coloureds, there is an increasingly large number of blacks who have been moving into the middle class stratum in recent years. Most of the Chinese and Syrians are also found in this class along with a small number of whites who are the employees of foreign companies and a few Indians who have entered the professions.

Most middle class Jamaicans are very conscious of their class position. They attempt to isolate themselves as much as possible from the masses, about whom they have very little knowledge, and are oriented entirely to following the social and cultural patterns of the of the upper class. Within the group, however, there is a tendency for the Chinese and the Syrians to segregate themselves and to confine their efforts to specific occupations. Retailing attracts most

was highest among the East Indians (48 per cent) while the blacks had a relatively low rage of 28 per cent. See P. Abrahams, Jamaica: An Island Mosaic (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957), p. 182. It is interesting to note that while there is no political communalism among Jamaican Indians, over 20,000 Indians paraded through the streets of Kingston in 1947 to mark the Independence of the Republic of India. See Lowenthal, op. cit., p. 82; New York Times, 16 August, 1947, p. 3; Ayearst, op. cit., p. 65.

7 Education has proved to be the most effective method for the lower class individual to raise his socio-economic position by opening careers in school teaching or in the professions. In recent years the development of a petty bourgeois class of gas station operators and mechanics has also created opportunities for the blacks. See E. James, "Administrative Institutions and Social Change in Jamaica, British West Indies: A Study in Cultural Adaptation," unpublished doctoral dissertation presented at Columbia University, 1955, pp. 52, 54; Macmillan, op. cit., p. 39.

of the Syrians and Chinese although the latter are often the owners
of small industries. Many Chinese are now increasingly seeking em-
ployment in the clerical pursuits, especially as bank clerks.9

The rural middle class is composed of small businessmen, sub-
stantial farmers and professionals. Outside the urban areas of King-
ston and Montego Bay, colour tends to play a smaller part in determining
the membership of this class.10

Membership of the upper class is generally confined to a small
white community of prosperous businessmen and planters; the near-whites
of very light colouring who belong to the old established families with
many decades of association with Jamaican economic and political life;
and a newer group of prosperous businessmen of Jewish or Syrian origin
who comprise some of the richest men on the island.11 Many whites are
itinerant in the sense that they represent foreign economic interests
and do not identify themselves with Jamaica. In recent years a number
of whites, particularly those of the older families, have been trying

9 L. Broom in Social and Cultural Pluralisms in the Caribbean, O.
883-84; Henriques, op. cit., pp. 40, 93; M. H. Fried (ed.), Colloquium
on Overseas Chinese (New York: International Secretariat, Institute of
Pacific Relations, 1958), p. 53; A. Lind, "Adjustment Patterns Among the

10 Smith and Kruijer, op. cit., pp. 43-44. See also R. A. Ellis,
"Color and Class in a Jamaican Market Town," Sociology and Social Re-
search, Vol. XII, No. 5, May-June 1957, passim.

11 W. J. Brown, The Land of Look Behind (London: Latimer House,
Ltd., 1949), p. 139; Macmillan, op. cit., p. 193. The small group of
Colonial Office personnel had become relatively unimportant by the
fifties. Ibid.
to live down their past association with England by demanding that their rights as Jamaicans be recognized.12

The older ideas of maintaining the supremacy of the whites are still prevalent among the members of the upper class, but are generally suppressed in public.13 A recent example of the persistence of these ideas occurred when a white member of the Jamaican Legislative Council who was a member of a well-known Jamaican family lost his temper in the legislative chamber and declared that in politics he had to deal with the sort of men his fathers had imported into the islands as slaves.14

Several attempts have been made in recent years by local whites to maintain their influence in the political sphere by the formation of new parties, but all have proved unsuccessful.15 Despite the elec-


13 Abrahams, op. cit., p. 127. In general the planter interests throughout the colonial Caribbean have shown little interest in the long-term development of the area. Their reactionary views, although often obscured, are manifested by their sullen withdrawal from practical politics. In the French West Indies the upper-class white, who is invariably a racist, belongs to a political creed that is pre-revolutionary (1789). See Sylvia Martin, "Three Months in the Sun," The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CXC, October, 1952, p. 109; Russel W. Howe, "West Indies: A Political Tour," The Nation, Vol. CLXXXIV, No. I, 5 January, 1957.

14 Macmillan, op. cit., p. 193. On several occasions the author of this paper, during four months' residence in Jamaica, encountered similar viewpoints expressed by both Jamaican whites and itinerant Englishmen. On one occasion an informant castigated the Colonial Office for abandoning the local whites to the corruption and demagoguery of the Negroes.

15 Ayearst, op. cit., pp. 60-61; New York Times, 14 January 1951, p. 66; W. Steele, Engulfed by the Color Tide (New Britain, Pa.: W. Steele,
tion of two Jamaican whites in the federal elections of 1958 to repre-
sent Jamaica at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, the whites have been progres-
sively losing their influence in Jamaican political affairs. In the
words of one observer the white now "belongs to a ruling class without
a people to rule." In the rural areas some economically successful blacks are often
considered members of the upper class, but this is not the case in the
capital city. Many fair-coloured persons that would automatically be
considered members of the upper class in the country occupy the upper
layers of the middle class in Kingston or Montego Bay. This is due to
the concentration of the whites in the urban centers and their denial--
particularly the near whites--of any connection with the Negro and the
slave past.

1954), p. 7; Macmillan, op. cit., p. 193; W. A. Roberts, Jamaica: The
137.

16 Newday, Vol. II, No. 11, November 1958, p. 8. They were the
first whites to be elected to public office in Jamaica since the adop-
tion of universal suffrage in 1944, and this has been interpreted as a
sign of the final abolition of the ugly colour myth in Jamaican politi-

17 Ruck, op. cit., p. 26. See also comments of E. A. Hoyt in The

18 Madeline Kerr, "Some Areas in Transition," Phylon. Reprint of
article from Phylon, no facts of publication.

152-53. It should be noted that in the British West Indies, the Portu-
guese and Syrians are not considered white. To a less extent this is
true in Jamaica, although within the University College of the West In-
dies the tendency is to consider them apart. This may be due to the
large number of British Guianese and Trinidadian students enrolled. See
Upward social mobility is extremely difficult if not impossible for some members of Jamaican society. To some extent this has resulted in the large scale urban and overseas migration in recent years, particularly by the upper ranks of the lower class who find the economic frustrations in the rural areas too severe. In the case of mobility from the lower class to the bourgeoisie, colour is now less important since educational and economic restrictions are perhaps greater impediments, but for non-whites attempting to move into the upper classes, colour is still the all-important criterion.

To an increasing degree wealth can offset the "bad" effects of colour and there is also an increasing tendency to classify persons by the colour of the company they keep. This associational colour is perhaps best demonstrated by the lower class position the Jamaican poor whites occupy at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Like the black masses, they are victims of poverty and the lack of education, and their mode of living indistinguishable from that of the black peasants, largely cancels whatever advantage they may have enjoyed by virtue of being white.


21 Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, pp. 146-47. The Jamaican upper class to some extent follows the endogamous pattern of the upper whites in Martinique by avoiding marriage with persons of colour. See Wagley and Harris, op. cit., p. 113; David Lowenthal in Whitlock, op. cit., p. 791.

22 Henriques, Jamaica, p. 132; Lowenthal, The West Indies Federation, p. 75.

23 Smith and Kruijer, op. cit., p. 35.
Whatever the criteria, however, be it colour, family background, education, cultural orientation, or wealth, social mobility in Jamaica is still a very difficult process for black members of the lower class. The lack of opportunity for its members to improve their social standing in the community coupled with the treatment accorded by the other two classes effectively divides Jamaica into two societies. Jamaica might almost be considered a plural society in the sense that fundamental cultural and racial differences that still exist between the masses and the privileged orders are greater than those features common to all classes.

Disnomic and Divisive Factors in Jamaican Society

The forces responsible for the current class divisions and the relative lack of unified national outlook will be examined under the following headings:

a. Poverty and the Economic Cleavage
b. Social and Racial Friction
c. The Cultural Clash
d. Contemporary Political Outlook

A. Poverty and the Economic Cleavage

Despite the increasing social mobility the bulk of the wealth is concentrated in the hands of a group of whites and near-whites, while

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25Jamaica is not usually considered a good example of a plural society. See comments by Professor Charles Wagley and David Lowenthal in Whitlock, op. cit., pp. 780, 786-87.
the blacks are for the most part destitute. For a Jamaican to say he is poor is tantamount to saying he is black. One of the most striking features of Jamaican society today is the widespread poverty.\footnote{Lowenthal, The West Indies Federation, pp. 75-76; Simey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 91; Smith and Kruijer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 36. On many of the sugar estates a close correlation between colour and occupational status is noticeable. See statements of G. Cumper in \textit{Plantation Systems of the New World: Papers and Discussion Summaries of the Seminar Held in San Juan, Puerto Rico} (Washington, D. C., Pan American Union, 1959), p. 150.}

Economic hardship and malnutrition are not confined to the rural areas where a number of marginal cultivators pursue out-moded methods of agriculture and are handicapped by lack of suitable marketing facilities,\footnote{M. F. Katz, "The Jamaican Country Higgler," \textit{Social and Economic Studies}, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (n.d.), passim.} but is also very prevalent in the urban areas, especially West Kingston. Thousands of lower-class Jamaicans subsist in the slums of Smith Village and Back o' Wall on the very fringes of society, making a living as best they can. Prostitution and robbery of necessity become the avocations of many of the unemployed or under-employed.\footnote{Pilkington, \textit{Daybreak in Jamaica} (London: Epworth Press, 1950), p. 130.}

For those fortunate enough to have a job, wages remain deplorably low and inadequate. One has only to talk to the average member of the middle class about wages and conditions of domestic servants to gain an insight into labour conditions in the island. Low wages continue to depress consumption levels, retard economic growth and reduce
aspirational levels of the masses, but the attitudes of the more privileged classes towards improving the conditions of the labouring class is definitely antagonistic.29

The lower classes are expected to be deferential towards the upper strata of society. Any attempt to agitate for better conditions or to establish their economic independence is regarded with the greatest hostility and criticism.30 In a system where economic advancement is so difficult for the black masses, it is hardly surprising that they should attempt to find relief in non-economic terms. Thus what appears to the upper classes to be the inherent laziness and basic irresponsibility of the Negro is merely his accommodation to a hostile system imposed by the upper classes in which he attempts to create social values designed to compensate for economic deprivation and to minimize economic competition no matter how difficult this may be.31

Many upper- and middle-class Jamaicans cannot understand how a Jamaican migrant labourer, who has proved to be a reluctant worker in


30 Knowles, op. cit., pp. 573, 575; Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 157; Ruck, op. cit., p. 28.

the island, can be regarded as such a good labourer even in areas such as the southern part of the United States where he undoubtedly encounters considerable social frustration. The answer in part lies in the greater material incentives offered him. Despite the considerable improvement in labour relations over the past few years—particularly in fields where labour unions have been organized—the 'authoritarian complex' is still all too apparent in Jamaican life.

Poverty is still largely self-perpetuating in Jamaican society. Those persons born of poor black parents invariably receive little or no education. In the 1940s, for every 100 illiterates registered, 86 were Negroes, while the next largest group was the coloureds with nine illiterates. Child labour practices have also continued to deprive many working-class children of the right to an education.

35Smith and Kruijer, op. cit., p. 36.
36Eric Williams, Education in the West Indies (no facts of publication), p. 37. While 29 per cent of the white population had high school education, only 1 per cent of the blacks had finished all grades of high school. Ibid., p. 38.
where opportunities for education exist, many high school graduates in Jamaica find it difficult to find suitable employment and this is reflected in the large proportion of Jamaicans with several years of schooling who have emigrated to the United Kingdom since the end of World War II. 38

A large number of young high school graduates who have been frustrated by the lack of vocational opportunity in Jamaica have begun to associate themselves with radical protest movements such as the Ras Tafarians. This points up one of the fundamental problems of modern Jamaica in that the educational panacea without sufficient parallel economic and social progress will only create additional friction within the society. 39 Certainly Jamaica has made great strides in raising her per capita income over the last decade. 40

One economist at the University College of the West Indies has expressed the belief that barring unforeseen difficulties, a continued rate of national economic growth will ensure a rising level of living in the years to come. 41 Nonetheless, there are danger signals that

38 Maunder, op. cit., p. 48.
39 Fox, op. cit., p. 142.
40 Jamaican per capita income rose during the years 1950-55 by 73 per cent compared with a 41 per cent increase in the United Kingdom and a 23 per cent rise in Trinidad in the same period. Both Puerto Rico and Trinidad have higher levels of living than Jamaica, but the gap has been narrowed considerably. See Ruck, op. cit., pp. 10-11, 14.
41 Statements by Dr. George Cumper quoted in Lowenthal, The West Indies Federation, p. 10.
the economic margin between the unemployed masses and the more fortunate sectors of the society is widening at an alarming rate.\textsuperscript{42}

B. Social and Racial Friction

Jamaica does not have a caste system in the same way that the Union of South Africa or the southern United States does, and it has probably less overt racial discrimination than other British West Indian areas, but colour is still a vital issue in Jamaican life.\textsuperscript{43} A number of studies suggest that it is definitely of declining importance in human relations, particularly in the rural areas of the island,\textsuperscript{44} while a number of recent observers have reported a great improvement in the over-all race relations.\textsuperscript{45} Some have even been bold enough to claim that colour distinction has vanished in all except the narrowest social sphere.\textsuperscript{46} Norman Manley in reference to the new West Indian Federation stated that racial differences had almost ceased to matter, adding that the West Indies was "well along the road to establishing a society in which [racial] prejudice ceases to be of any consequence, a

\textsuperscript{42}Based on discussions with Jamaicans of all walks of life.

\textsuperscript{43}Henriques, Jamaica, p. 141; Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 57; Ruck, op. cit., p. 24; Simey, op. cit., p. 98.


society in which race is no longer dominant—no longer a consideration of any import.  

Similar optimism was expressed by a coloured South African writer who visited the island during the fifties and who has since returned as a permanent resident. Peter Abrahams wrote in 1957:

In Jamaica I had seen the solution of the race problem. The Jamaicans had lived out the multi-racial problem and were now reaching a stage where race and colour did not matter, only a person's worth as a person.

The truth of the matter, however, is that racial discrimination has not ceased to be a crucial point. Despite the decline in the practice of overt racial discrimination, an effective colour bar still persists in the tourist hotels on the North coast and in the private clubs of Kingston, Montego Bay and Mandeville. Little reference is made to racial matters in the press and visitors will be told by the local whites and coloureds that racial prejudice is not a problem in modern-day Jamaica, but race, which is never far below the surface, frequently erupts into prominence that even the press cannot ignore.

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51 Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, pp. 69-60.
In 1960 a white South African manager of the local Kingston bus company was reported to have castigated a black employee by stating that in South Africa he could buy several of his kind for a mere pittance. The incident became a matter of heated discussion throughout the island.\(^{52}\)

Since for years Europeans formed the dominant class in Jamaican society, whiteness became a synonym for superiority or goodness. This preference has come to be known as the 'white bias'\(^{53}\) and in the opinion of one social scientist the darker sections of Jamaica's population are held in its subjection to the advantage of the lighter members of island society. Consciously or unconsciously, most Jamaicans are caught up in a process of trying to improve their 'colour' by planning favourable marriages or judicious associations with persons who are lighter.\(^{54}\) Even some people who are consciously in rebellion against the system find that they are often themselves the unconscious victims of its mandates.\(^{55}\) So ingrained is the white bias that one might say it has become institutionalized.\(^{56}\) Jamaicans of mixed ancestry who may show

\(^{52}\)A medical student of white extraction at the University informed the author that during the incident he had almost been thrown off the bus at Papine but was permitted to stay on at the last minute because one of his ex-patients recognized him and told other passengers that he was a conscientious doctor interested in helping black people.


\(^{54}\)Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, pp. 50-51, 62-63.

\(^{55}\)Ibid., p. 169.

\(^{56}\)See statement by Dr. Meyer Fortes, ibid., p. 4.
the strongest antipathy against the white for his role in island society are, nonetheless, very proud of their caucasian blood.

The very ambivalence of the attitudes of the coloureds and many blacks makes it difficult to measure the total impact of the racial bias, but the fact that they pay it some deference does serve to perpetuate the legacy of slavery and human inequality. Unfortunately, the strong feelings of inferiority held by all too many blacks—the very persons who stand to suffer most from the white bias—are in great part responsible for its continued existence. In the words of Dr. Henriques: "There is magic in the possession of a white skin in Jamaica, but it is a magic which can only work if everyone believes in it, white and non-white alike."

Skin colour is only one of three factors involved in determining the white bias—it also includes physical features and hair texture. The so-called 'bad' features or 'poor' hair refers to the possession of marked African features or Negroid hair. To some extent the disadvantage of dark colouring can be offset by having 'good' or European features and straight hair.

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57 Henriques, Jamaica, p. 128; Kerr, Personality and Conflict in Jamaica, p. x of the introduction and p. 96; Williams, Education in the West Indies, pp. 7-8; Steele, op. cit., p.9.

58 Ellis, op. cit., p. 358; Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 56.

59 Henriques, Jamaica, p. 128. See also statements by Helen Chin-see in The Daily Gleaner, 2 March 1955, p. 8.

60 Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, pp. 47, 168.
Without question the white bias has its strongest influence in marital and social relationships. With respect to the former, marriage to a light-skinned woman is the mark of economic success for the darker male, even though he may have had the opportunity to marrying a better educated woman of his own complexion. There is also the desire of the father to raise the colour of his children by choosing a lighter mate. Many dark women who are well educated are thus condemned to a spinster’s life, and many black parents who are themselves married, would rather see their daughter become the mistress or concubine of a white or a light coloured person than marry a dark male.  

Light coloured children are encouraged by their parents to play with their counterparts. A light coloured member of a family tends to ignore the darker relatives if he consummates a 'successful' marriage because he will then be moving in a different social circle.  

Unlike the situation in Brazil and to a less extent Puerto Rico, Jamaican family loyalties and ties are less frequently able to alleviate the friction caused by colour differences within the family.  

Marriage outside the colour groupings is now relatively common in Jamaica and excites little overt criticism.  

61 Ibid., pp. 50, 90; Simey, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
62 Ibid., p. 68. See also Henriques, Jamaica, p. 132.
64 Cargill, op. cit., p. 662.
Christiana region, Dr. Ellis found that some 33 per cent of the marriages did not follow the usual endogamous pattern but involved persons of different shadings. 65

Although miscegenation is continuing at a relatively rapid rate in Jamaica—unlike some other multi-racial societies such as Guatemala where intermarriage between the Ladinos (creoles and mestizos) and the Indians has declined considerably 66—it should not be regarded as an infallible index of improving race relations. Unlike Brazil or Mexico, there is not as yet in Jamaica any idealization of the mixed-blood. 67 In any case the desire of the dark male to gain personal satisfaction by consummating a successful marriage may obscure the existence of his deep-rooted racial antipathy towards all lighter coloured people. 68

Socially the white bias is still very real. A successful black politician or professional may meet lighter coloured associates on terms of perfect equality at work but he is not usually invited to their private social functions. Invariably the rich black will be stereotyped with members of the lower class in that it is expected that he will not know how to behave himself. 69

65 Ellis, op. cit., p. 357.

66 University of Puerto Rico and the American Assembly of Columbia University, The United States and Latin America (no facts of publication), p. 15.

67 See Pierson, op. cit., pp. 123-24. Jamaica has had no Jose Vasconcelos or Jose Bonéfacio de Andrada. See also Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 63.


69 Henriques, Jamaica, pp. 132-34.
The white bias still exerts considerable influence in the economic sphere. Although colour is apparently of less significance in applying for a job in the civil service, it is still a vital factor in private enterprise, especially if the candidate is a full-blooded Negro or is extremely dark.\(^70\) In recent years, whites employed in the government have complained that their promotion is frustrated by the existence of Negro prejudice against them.\(^71\) Yet in private establishments—particularly banking—the light coloureds and the Chinese have a virtual monopoly of the best jobs. In Kingston the leading banks avoid employing dark-skinned persons in any positions other than the maintenance staff, while in the leading stores most of the personnel employed in serving the public are decidedly light-coloured.\(^72\) It is extremely rare to see a black secretary assigned to a white-skinned executive.\(^73\)

In the past the lack of suitably trained dark personnel may in part have explained their relative absence from such employment, but

\(^70\) Macmillan, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Ruck, *op. cit.*, p. 23.


\(^72\) Henriches, *Family and Colour in Jamaica*, p. 55; Simey, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99; Williams, "The Contemporary Pattern of Race Relations in the Caribbean," p. 368; Henriches, *Jamaica*, p. 132. The worst offenders have been the airline offices—possibly in deference to the tourist trade. See *Spotlight*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, March 1961, p. 3. Last summer (1961) however the author noticed that at least one overseas bank had departed from the practice of refusing employment to all dark skinned Jamaicans. It should be noted that the employment of Puerto Ricans of marked Negroid ancestry by banks in Puerto Rico is also very unusual.

\(^73\) Henriches, *Family and Colour in Jamaica*, p. 52.
this is hardly the case today. To an increasing extent black Jamai-
cans are becoming aware of their disadvantageous position and are begin-
ing to react strongly against the white bias, so much so that there is
evidence of a growing degree of inverted racial prejudice among many
Negroes.

This is due in some degree to the long-established hostility in
lower-class Jamaicans towards the slavery connection and its concommit-
tant system of racial discrimination, which is now being given expres-
sion in the growing self-confidence of the blacks that has resulted from
the recent political changes in the island. Despite the fact that many
Negroes may not like to be reminded of slavery they are aware that their
race has been misused, and that their discomforts of today are in large
measure a legacy of the past. This feeling reaches its most extreme
form in the viewpoint of the Ras Tafarians that the white world is
morally bankrupt and has distorted the recorded history of the Negro
world to suit its own ends. There is for instance a strong sentiment
among them that the destruction of slavery in Jamaica was largely a

74 Ibid., p. 56.

75 Davis, op. cit., p. 58; Henriques, Jamaica, p. 139; Alan Burns,
Colour Prejudice: With Particular Reference to the Relationships Between

76 Lloyd Braithwaite, "Sociology and Demographic Research in the
British Caribbean," Social and Economic Studies, Vol. VI, No. 4, Decem-
ber 1957, p. 527; Ruck, op. cit., p. 26; Henriques, Family and Colour in
Jamaica, pp. 51-52; Ellis, op. cit., p. 359.

77 Simey, op. cit., pp. 19, 53; Proudfoot, op. cit., pp. 67-68;
result of the concerted efforts of the black slaves to win their freedom. 78

Increasing resentment in many blacks is also aroused by interracial fraternization and marriage involving the Negress because they feel she has already been the object of considerable sexual exploitation by the white man. This feeling is reinforced by the growing racial pride felt throughout the Negro world which at times pictures the 'straightforward' black woman as being the victim of the neurotic white male, and also the idea among many black nationalists that the 'bleaching process,' which is the inevitable consequence of intermarriage, really signifies race suicide for the Negro. 79

Attempts by the authorities to encourage birth control among the lower classes encounter the inevitable criticism that it is a plan to produce a differential fertility rate favourable to the lighter segments of the population. One can see signs painted on the street walls of Kingston rejecting 'birth control' as a 'plan to kill the Negro.' 80

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80 Back and Stycos, op. cit., pp. 4, 6-7. In the summer of 1961 one such sign could be seen in Slique Road in downtown Kingston.
Nonetheless the failure of schemes to disseminate knowledge of birth control among the masses has been due to other factors as well. These will be seen as the problems of the divergent social mores surrounding marriage and illegitimacy as held by the lower classes on the one hand, and the middle and upper classes on the other, are considered.

Jamaican society is still characterized by a relatively low marriage rate and a high percentage of illegitimate births. The upper and middle classes for the most part follow the Christian monogamous marriage pattern, while in the lower class, common law marriage and concubinage is very common. Although the non-legal unions are capable of being reasonably stable, they are not usually so. Many children are deprived of the necessary parental care and grow up in a hostile environment where they have to fend for themselves at an early age. This weakness of marital relationships debilitates social cohesiveness and tends to set the lower class off from the other two classes.

Despite the fact that there is little agreement among those social scientists who have studied the Jamaican situation as to whether or not the ideal of the male centered Christian marriage is widely held in the lower class, the fact remains that great differences between lower class mores and those of the middle and upper classes do exist and are the

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81 Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 105; Simey, op. cit., pp. 18, 82-84.

82 Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, p. 162.

83 Simey, op. cit., p. 90; Ruck, op. cit., pp. 30, 37.
source of considerable friction between the two groups. Attempts made by the authorities or middle class organizations to change the ways of the lower class are invariably met with hostility. The question arises—why do such differences exist?

Lower class attitudes towards sex are somewhat more liberal since sexual experience before marriage is considered normal. There is also little apparent stigma attached to illegitimacy, while birth control is frequently regarded as unnatural or dangerous.

Conceivably African marital forms, which may have influenced peasant mores during slavery, have continued to the present day, but it is more likely that slavery itself was the greater influence. What is often forgotten, however, is the fact that the present lower class forms, while rooted in the plantation era, have been sustained over the years


85 Back and Stycos, op. cit., pp. 6-7; Statement by M. G. Smith quoted in Ayearst, op. cit., p. 58.


87 Simey, op. cit., p. 88; Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, pp. 163-64. While promiscuity is often accepted in the lower class it is considered a heinous crime in the middle and upper classes. Ibid., p. 95. See also Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 546; J. D. Davis, "Family Structure in Jamaica: The Social Context of Reproduction," unpublished doctoral dissertation presented at Columbia University, 1951, p. 177.

88 Smith and Kruijer, op. cit., p. 59. One idea widely held by the lower class throughout the West Indies is that a woman will 'get sick' if she doesn't have her quota of children. See Barbados Family Planning Association, Which One (Bridgeton, Barbados: The Advocate Co., Ltd., n.d.), p. 9.
by the existence of harsh economic conditions for the black masses. Today there is a marked correlation between poverty and marital instability. The lower classes tend to identify marriage with greater economic security and a higher class status than they can hope to attain. In fact their greater sexual freedom may provide a means of expression which is denied them in other spheres.

Thus common-law or consensual unions in the lower class serve their needs and it is unrealistic for the other classes to criticize them without realizing their functional role. The more they attempt to force change on the basis of Christian and class ethics, the less likely they are going to succeed.

C. The Cultural Clash

It has been seen that there exists what amounts to a cultural clash between the masses and the middle and upper classes over the question of economic and social goals, especially the role of marriage. The conflict is perhaps clearer, however, in the spheres of religion, education and public order.

Outward manifestations of religious sentiment are to be found in every sphere of Jamaican life. Moralistic issues are frequently raised.

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90 Simey, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

91 Back and Stycos, op. cit., pp. 6-7; Simpson, "Jamaican Revivalist Cults," pp. 408-409; Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 546.
during political campaigns and it is generally assumed by observers that Jamaica is a thoroughly Christianized area. While Christian forms are evident in every religious grouping, there is a wide disparity between the beliefs and practices of each section. Many churchmen of the orthodox churches recognize the failure of their organizations to reach the masses and maintain control over their beliefs. They realize that the so-called Christianity of many Jamaicans merely obscures African cult practices.

A close correlation still exists between class status and religious preferences. Most members of the upper classes are nominal members of the Anglican or the Catholic churches; the middle class tends to be Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist, and the lower class usually belongs to the more fundamentalist Christian faiths such as the Baptist, the Church of Christ, or a wide variety of quasi-Christian cults ranging from the Revivalists to the Cumina cult of Morant Bay. The latter contains the highest retention of African religious


93 King, op. cit., p. 83; Webb, op. cit., p. 22; Davis, The Church in the New Jamaica, pp. 6, 41. In 1961 a prominent member of the hierarchy of the Anglican Church in Jamaica strongly criticized the role of his church as one catering to class interests.

forms. In general the orthodox Christians regard the cult religions with marked antipathy and have on frequent occasions accused them of fomenting religious discord and civil disobedience to the government by urging their members not to pay their taxes.

One thing is certain--there is a relatively high degree of African religious practices retained in the religious cults of Jamaica. Usually these are overlaid by a veneer of orthodox Christian beliefs which results in a type of syncretic or acculturative type of religion that is often highly unstable.

Syncretism has also occurred in the field of magic where there is apparently little conflict between the European forms and the practices brought from Africa, but it should be remembered that European magical practices are freely adopted by Jamaican obeahmen and many leaders of the religious cults. Unlike orthodox Christian values, however, which the authorities try to enforce, all forms of magic are still the subject of considerable official persecution.

In most cases Christian forms

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98 Moore and Simpson, op. cit.; p. 85; Bradley, op. cit.; pp. 385-386; M. G. Smith, A Framework for Caribbean Studies (Mona, Jamaica: The Extra
have become more pronounced but in the case of the Ras Tafarian cult—which admittedly is distinctive in that it has strong undertones of political action—the trend may be in the opposite direction since they criticize the Christianity practiced in Jamaica as a while man's religion, used in the past to enslave the black man. They are more than likely to accept the idea expounded by some radical black nationalists that Christ was a black man.

Despite the diversity among the cults which often results in inter-group hostility, most of them serve a functional role in alleviating the frustrations of the lower class caused by the inhospitable environment. Even the Ras Tafarian belief that life in Jamaica is impossible and without hope accepts in part the withdrawal theme and offers its followers considerable psychological relief through membership in an organization with a very strong in-group feeling. Other cults rely more on the emotional theme.

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Simpson, "The Ras Tafari Movement in Jamaica: A Study in Race and Class Conflict," passim, especially p. 168. The Rastas say that the Christian churches in Jamaica rob the black of his mentality and teach him to concentrate on death rather than life. Ibid.

Ibid., p. 169. Recent indications show that the Ras Tafari movement itself is split into thirteen different factions.

The cults are also functional in that they offer the black escape to an environment free from the domination and intrusion of the white man, or else the rejection of the world of orthodox religion where many whites continue to resist accepting blacks as equals even when they are members of the hierarchy of their church. In recent years whites have boycotted the religious services conducted by non-white clergymen. 102

Due to the lack of institutions through which the black could express himself in the political sphere, the cult religions have also played a significant role in reducing tensions. Usually they have operated as a substitute for political action, but the Ras Tafarian cult, which can be described as a rational nativistic movement, has taken an increasing interest in politics.

It is in the economic sphere however that popular religion has its greatest appeal, by substituting non-material goals as compensation for unemployment and depressed living conditions. Naturally enough the most depressed areas of Kingston, Morant Bay and Montego Bay are the areas of greatest cult activities. 105

102 Henriques, Jamaica, pp. 135-36; Webb, op. cit., p. 22. In some cases organized religion will overcome racial prejudices, but this has not been the case with the Anglican Church in Jamaica. See L.P. Edwards, "Religious Sectarianism and Race Prejudice," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XII, No. 1, July 1935, p. 167.


Education is another sphere in which there is conflict since it often tends to widen the gap between the illiterate and under-educated masses and those persons who have completed high school education and who are invariably members of the upper strata of society. Emphasis in the past has been on those subjects which would prepare an individual for a professional career, with the result that the system has tended to reinforce the social structure. Hundreds of Jamaicans who have been educated abroad frequently adopt a way of life that is basically different from that of the average Jamaican. Not only do they divorce themselves from the lower classes (and especially from their 'vulgar' mode of speech), but often they become dissatisfied with the island life and yearn for residence in the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom.

Quite apart from the fact that thousands of Jamaican children do not attend school for economic reasons, many lower class children drop out because they are unable to grasp the fundamentals of formal education.

106 Lovelthal, The West Indies Federation, pp. 89-93. Dr. Raymond Smith of the University College of the West Indies writes that "It has always been a popular myth that education and contact with the civilizing European influences would gradually transform the people of Jamaica into a harmonious group with uniform customs and social values." Quoted in Macmillan, op. cit., p. 215. See Whitlock, op. cit., pp. 813-14.

107 Loventhal, The West Indies Federation, p. 93. In 1961 the West Indian University had 1,000 students enrolled while over 3,000 West Indians were studying overseas. The Daily Gleaner, 5 July 1961, p. 10.

108 Many parents are ashamed to send their children to school inadequately dressed. At times they are needed to work on the cultivation plots of their parents.
English. Even the most conservative survey has found over 400 words of West African origin in daily use in Jamaican English. Although the problem merits further study, there is reason to believe that the existence of 'dialect English' often called Jamaican Creole, serves to maintain the social and cultural gap between the black masses and the upper classes. Interestingly enough the poor whites also speak Jamaican Creole.109

In recent years there has been a real effort by West Indian intellectuals to develop a more functional education to serve the needs of West Indian life.110 Nevertheless there is the danger that education still serves to deprive the lower classes of potential leadership and "blocks the growth of a fully integrated society . . . [without] the present schisms."111

Widely divergent attitudes towards the police and public order are held by the masses and the middle and upper classes. Attempts by

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the police to stamp out obeah and the cultivation of ganja—considered a dangerous drug by the authorities—creates suspicion and hostility among the lower classes. 112 The coloureds and the whites, however, regard a strong and efficient police force as vital to the preservation of their interests.

Frequently it is difficult for a white investigator to gain any information from blacks other than that which they believe he wants to hear. 113 Thus village customs are often at odds with the mandates of the law. Many lower class Jamaicans have little basic respect for the legal system which they regard as an alien institution to be avoided whenever possible. 114 Many Rastas who attribute religious significance to ganja smoking are considerably antagonized by the efforts of the police to destroy its cultivation, so that official persecution serves to draw the members of the cult together. 115

The cultural clash together with the economic and social conflict are responsible for a society in which the following characteristics


113 Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, pp. 45-46; Back and Stycos, op. cit., pp. 4, 6-7.


are marked: Firstly Jamaica lacks a unified culture to which all segments of the population can subscribe. Its cultural mores are syncretic with a strong preference on the part of the coloureds and whites for the culture of Western Europe, and at best, a duality of values for the black masses. Jamaica has no carnival which in other multi-racial societies tends to draw all the elements together during the festival period. Even efforts to built up a liking for calypso music have encountered the problem of middle class snobbery or lower class apathy. In the case of the former it was too African while the Jamaican masses have not had time to develop a liking for what was originally Trinidadian music.

Secondly, considerable psychological tension and frustration is imposed upon the black and to a less extent upon the coloured by the twin burdens of colour and poverty. The victim of such pressures may react in a number of ways—either by withdrawal and its overt manifestations of apathy, inferiority complex and an outwardly peaceful disposition; passive resistance with its accompanying veiled hostility and non-cooperation; or by aggression where the individual may seek to alleviate his present position by directing his frustrations against

116 Simey, op. cit., p. 35; Henriques, Jamaica, p. 128; Rodman, op. cit., pp. 447-48; Davis, The Church in the New Jamaica, p. 32.

the source of his difficulties. 118

While apathy, which is based on withdrawal, is very prevalent in Jamaica it belies the existence of considerable frustration which in turn is responsible for social tension, acute individualism, lack of cooperation and a certain degree of irresponsibility. 119 These factors have an important bearing on the political outlook of Jamaicans at the present time—particularly the black masses.

4. Contemporary Political Outlook

Most lower class Jamaicans, particularly the rural masses, have a nominal interest in the political life of the country. All too often they are thoroughly bewildered by the machinations of the political parties whose leadership is dominated by the middle classes. Their confusion was reflected recently in the very low percentage of the eligible voters that participated in the election concerning the future of the West Indies Federation. Like their Haitian counterparts, they have found that politics is too involved to merit their continued participation and that the politicians seldom honour their election promises. 120 The individualism of the peasant also mitigates against


120 Macmillan, op. cit., pp. 178-192. Numerous informants told Dr. Cyril Rogers that because they seldom saw the politicians before the
effective unified political action.  

This political apathy is certainly understandable. Recently a Jamaican politician warned that federation would lead to communism while a Trinidadian political leader indicated that the failure of federation would result in Jamaica going pro-Castro. The confidence of the voter is further undermined by the personalistic attacks of many political leaders. In July of 1961 Sir Alexander Bustamante referred to Dr. Eric Williams, the Premier of Trinidad, as 'a hideous person.'  

Apathy is not so marked in the urban proletariat. Most town workers are unionized, thus belonging to one of the two main political groups. Also, in recent years there has been a marked growth of acute dissatisfaction among the unemployed and underprivileged classes. This is particularly noticeable among the Ras Tafarians who have been taking an increasing interest in political events. Their disillusionment with the political situation has been manifested over the past few years in a series of clashes with police and their violent denunciations of the elections they never knew how to vote. See also S. Rodman, Haiti: The Black Republic (New York: The Dovin-Adair Company, 1954), p. 34. Until recently mixed blood was virtually a requisite for political leadership in Jamaica. See Ayearst, op. cit., p. 201. See also Ruck, op. cit., p. 26. In a photograph of Premier Manley's cabinet published in 1959, some five members could be described as being mainly Negro, but the other seven were light coloureds. See Newday, Vol. III, No. 8, August 1959, p. 19.

121 Ayearst, op. cit., p. 54.
122 Both incidents were reported on Radio Jamaica during 1961.
political leadership of Jamaica. They have claimed Ethiopian citizenship and demanded that the government seek a positive solution to their desire to migrate to Africa. During a serious clash between the authorities and the Rastas in 1960, the government discovered that the Black Muslim movement in the United States had been aiding the cult considerably.

To some extent the dissatisfied urban elements have associated themselves with a new political party, the People's Political Party, which has a platform of bringing social and economic justice to the black masses. Its leader is a light coloured Negro lawyer with overseas experience in the United States, Britain and West Africa, and most of its members—which includes a number of Ras Tafarians—are lower class Jamaicans.

The PPP has concentrated on attacking the economic discrimination in employment, the injustice of selection only coloured girls to

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compete in Jamaican beauty contests, and the foreign and Chinese-Syrian control of Jamaican economy. The immigrant groups have been referred to as economic parasites unwilling to integrate themselves into Jamaican life, and there is a growing resentment among many Jamaicans against the growing absentee economic control of the Jamaican economy by the tourist interests on the north coast.

Considerable criticism of the brown middle class has also been voiced by the new radical elements. The middle classes in turn have reacted strongly and accused the People's Political Party of reviving black racism and denounced its leaders as a group of opportunists and malcontents trying to sabotage Jamaican independence by sowing seeds of dissention. Although the PPP represents a revival of Garveyism and in this respect it has much in common with the Ras Tafarian cults, it does not seek African repatriation per se but rather seeks to reform Jamaican society. The coloured elements cannot see why the blacks


129 At least two Jamaicans informed the author that Montego Bay had corrupted the entire northwestern area of the island. There is evidence of the growth of the same kind of resentment that characterized the Cuban protest against the tourist influence in Havana.

130 Based on author's conversations with middle class persons. One upper class Jamaican said he felt there was no discrimination against blacks and he couldn't see why the 'damned fools' would not work to develop Jamaica.

131 Johnson, *op. cit.*, passim. During one political meeting of the PPP at Half Way Tree (Kingston), in 1961, which the author attended, Johnson said he would like to see Jamaica become a colony of West Africa. His statement indicated his desire to line up Jamaica with the new dynamic African nationalism.
are not satisfied with their political revolution against colonial domination by Britain.\textsuperscript{132}

It is interesting to consider the reactions of Premier Manley to the disturbances between the authorities and the Ras Tafarians in 1959-60. In a party speech in November, 1960, he listed four major problems facing Jamaica in which he included the 'back-to-Africa' movement and racialism. With respect to the first he lamented the adverse effect of the movement on the 'good name' of Jamaica overseas and he strongly attacked the growth of racialism which he described as the work of black racists who were preaching race hatred and jeopardizing the work that the FNP had achieved over the preceding two decades.\textsuperscript{133}

In view of Manley's warning to party followers in 1938, that they must overcome their apathy towards the terrible living conditions of the masses and fight the oppressive measures of the Colonial Office, his statement in 1960, following the report by the University team on the Ras Tafari movement, was indicative of the real concern of the People's Political Party in recent years. The report indicated that the Rastas had many genuine grievances and that the living conditions in the Kingston slums were a disgrace to the island. It also stated that the Rastas were unnecessarily persecuted by the police. Yet Manley replied that he had not been aware that such conditions existed, indicating to some extent that the political problems of securing Jamaican independence

\textsuperscript{132} Lewis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{The Daily Gleaner}, 22 November 1960, p. 1.
within the West Indian Federation had occupied too much of his time.\textsuperscript{134} Many whites are also disgruntled with Jamaican politics and tend to criticize every mistake as evidence of political corruption. Yet there is reason to believe that they themselves are resorting to corruption by attempting to bribe politicians and influence their decisions in non-political ways.\textsuperscript{135} Also the wealthy business interests in Jamaica are beginning to invest their money outside the Caribbean for political reasons.\textsuperscript{136}

Since 1958 there have been three significant developments in Jamaica involving the attitudes of the populace towards the over-all political development of the island. Firstly there has been virtually a revolution in the ideas and viewpoints concerning Africa since "the march towards independence" began with Ghana.\textsuperscript{137} Secondly, although not sufficiently strong to retain Jamaica's participation in the Federation, there has been a marked increase in the so-called West Indian

\textsuperscript{134}N. Manley, This Jamaica (Kingston: PNP Publication, 1938), passim. See also Smith, Augier and Nettleford, \textit{op. cit.}, passim, and especially p. 38.


\textsuperscript{136}Based on a conversation with a highly placed government official.

\textsuperscript{137}It is interesting to note that both Dr. W. E. B. duBois and the Reverend Martin Luther King have criticized the Negro American's earlier lack of interest in African affairs. Dr. King uses the analogy of Rip van Winkle in describing how the North American Negro "slept through a revolution"--based on lectures given by Dr. du Bois and Dr. King at Allen and Benedict Universities in Columbia, South Carolina in 1956 and the University of Puerto Rico in February, 1962 respectively.
nationalism. Lastly, a growing disillusionment with the British connection has developed as a result of the imposition of immigration restrictions against commonwealth citizens following the earlier race riots, and the new economic policy of favouring the Common Market.

With respect to Africa's spectacular achievement of political independence and its growing voice in the councils of the world, it will suffice to say that Jamaicans are showing a growing sense of pride in these developments. They are aware of the contribution of two West Indians to African nationalism—namely Marcus Garvey and Nkrumah's special adviser on Pan-African affairs, George Padmore, and feel that the destiny of the West Indies is in many ways tied up with the future of West Africa.

The growth of West Indian nationalism has been more spectacular but in many ways less profound. It appears to have been an artificial creation, which was cultivated by middle class intellectuals on the one hand, and which developed as the result of West Indian antipathy towards an unpopular colonialism on the other. Unfortu-

140 Lowenthal, The West Indies Federation, pp. 71-72; Williams, Education in the British West Indies, p. 110.
141 Hansard Society, Problems of Parliamentary Government in the Colonies (London: Hansard Society, 1953), pp. 9-10. With respect to Curazao, a Dutch sociologist refers to what might be termed a 'negative' or temporary national feeling which grew out of a desire of all sections of the population, despite their strong inter-group tensions, to achieve political advancement. The same might be said of Jamaican or West Indian nationalism. See H. Hoetink, "Curazao Como Sociedad Segmentada," Revista de Ciencias Sociales (U.P.R.) Vol. IV, No. 1, Marzo, 1960, p. 192.
nately when put to the test it has proved to be without secure foundations. In many ways West Indian nationalism was 'still-born.' It received great impetus from the reaction to British domination but was never able to overcome its natural enemies of parochialism and inter-island jealousy.\(^{142}\)

Although more difficult to assess, the growing disillusionment with the role of Britain towards the commonwealth and especially the West Indies, has been profound with all Jamaicans, but particularly the non-whites. For a number of years England has been pictured in the popular mind as a land of economic opportunity where race prejudice was relatively unimportant.\(^{143}\) Since World War II Jamaicans and West Indians—although enjoying many advantages over other commonwealth immigrants in that they have little language or cultural barrier to overcome and are willing to be assimilated into English life—have discovered that their presence in England has aroused considerable opposition.\(^{144}\)

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\(^{142}\) Lowenthal, The West Indies Federation, pp. 60, 74; Taper, op. cit., pp. 34-35. Only 30 per cent of the electorate went to the polls throughout the West Indies to vote on the federation issue in 1958. Ibid. Many Jamaican blacks suspected the Federation of being the 'step-child' of the Colonial Office.


Despite the fact that English attitudes as a whole are still flexible—a factor which in itself is the cause of considerable anxiety on the part of the West Indian immigrant about how the white will react in a given situation—there is evidence of a hardening of white racial sentiments in recent years. A number of groups preaching white supremacy and the maintenance of a white commonwealth have emerged. Most Englishmen, however, regard the coloured colonial with an outmoded paternalism through which they attempt to maintain the distance between themselves and the Negro. Miscegenation is strongly criticized, and while the West Indian is praised for his performance on the cricket field, he is unlikely to be accepted as an equal in other spheres of English life.

Owing to the increasing disillusionment with the responsibilities of empire, Britain has showed a desire to 'dump' the commonwealth and

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join the Common Market. Despite years of propaganda by the Colonial Office that Britain was obligated to guarantee the economic development and political independence of her empire within a multi-racial commonwealth, the United Kingdom has increasingly forgotten about the economic responsibilities of the colonies, and has recently (February 1962) adopted legislation restricting immigration into the country.

Most West Indians feel that immigration restrictions have not been established to prevent the alleged economic competition of immigrant West Indians in the United Kingdom, but are a consequence of growing race prejudice among the British people. They also feel that Britain has exploited the West Indies in the past but now shows very little interest in its future. Many believe that she backed federation to rid herself of an unwelcome economic burden.

150 Statements made by Peter Abrahams in radio broadcast from Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation, 5 June 1961. See also Taper, op. cit., p. 50.
CONCLUSION

In many respects Jamaican society has undergone significant changes since the abolition of slavery. The rigid class divisions based upon colour have been eased so that now it is possible for a talented person of any colour to improve his socio-economic position, while the monopoly of economic and political power by the whites has been ended. Perhaps the most spectacular transformation has been in the political sphere with the development of political independence.

Jamaica has developed a going society which, despite its present lack of cohesion, has succeeded in overcoming many of the problems that plague other multi-racial areas. This success justifies to some extent Jamaica's claim to leadership in the field of human relations. There are, however, certain features of Jamaican life that have not been greatly modified and which today are indicative of the need for continued change and at a more rapid pace than has been the case in the past.

In general, it can be said that the clash of the blacks with the whites and coloureds has been more significant than any conflict between the whites and coloureds. The differences in outlook between the two major groupings have mainly revolved around the following points:

a. The goals of island society, especially the ideas concerning economic development and attitudes towards work.

b. Religion and the Christian ethic in marriage.

c. Law and order.

Throughout the 125 years of development following abolition, the insistence of the upper classes on economic success based on black
labour has created a deep-seated resentment among the lower classes that has shown itself in a number of ways. In reply to the blacks' attempts to avoid the necessity of exposing himself to this exacting regime of hard work, racial injustice and meager material compensation, the whites and the coloureds have sought to explain the great divergence in outlook in terms of Negro 'backwardness' and innate laziness.

While the upper classes were seeking to force the masses to accept their goals, the Negro peasant developed a frame of reference that was markedly different. Economic success was not measured in terms of the accumulation of material goods but rather in the ability to free oneself from the dependence on these goods. Subsistence peasant agriculture and the cult religions were of great importance in providing relief for the black masses. Some lower class Jamaicans, however, did not give up all hope for material progress, and migrated overseas in large numbers.

Since the middle and upper classes were aware of the 'functional' or accommodative role of peasant agriculture and the cult religions, they waged a constant campaign of opposition and intimidation in the name of assimilation. Basically they would have been content to leave the black where he was, but his success in creating his independence aroused their opposition and frustrated their desire to establish an obedient labour force. Thus in their attempts to exterminate the religio-magical practices of the peasants by the use of police coercion supported by a legal system entirely hostile to peasant culture, the ruling classes only widened the gap between themselves and the peasants.
Many visitors to Jamaica, who felt that any mention of African survivals would only downgrade the Negro—already the victim of considerable prejudice—and who wanted to prove the success of the Negro in assimilating the culture of his former masters, reported that the mass of Jamaicans had accepted Christianity and the cultural mores of Western Europe. To a large extent this was true, but the persistence of Africanisms pointed up the failure of colonial government and those elements of the Jamaican population committed to European values to integrate the blacks into the official culture of the island.

The question arises—why did the Negro show such apparent unwillingness to adopt the cultural values of the upper classes? It may have been due to the strength of African survivals. Certainly this was the case in the eastern part of the island which had repeated infusions of African influences in the nineteenth century. On the other hand the culture of the upper strata carried prestige even with the hostile elements of the lower classes. This suggests that there were very practical obstacles in the way of complete assimilation, namely the hostility of whites and coloureds to the social mobility of the blacks, and the extreme difficulty experienced by a lower class Jamaican in improving his economic and educational status. Thus the sub-culture of the masses, reinforced by certain identifiable African survivals such as magic, West African religious practices, and subsistence agriculture, was highly functional. By providing a set of values that would largely compensate for the economic and social frustration of the Jamaican Negro, it was able to compete successfully, if clandestinely, with the official culture.
As a result of the fundamental division in Jamaican society, few institutions were developed that catered to the interests of all Jamaicans and cut across class and race lines. The lack of accord on marital mores is just one example in which a great disparity exists between the mode of living of the middle and upper classes on the one hand and that of the great majority of the Negroes on the other. Although African forms may have influenced the conjugal relationships of the slaves, and slavery itself certainly had a momentous impact, the prevailing pattern of illegitimacy and loose marriages in lower class living is largely the result of chronic economic hardship and frequent migration in quest of employment.

Accommodation to his unfriendly environment has been the characteristic reaction of the Jamaican Negro. Yet there have been occasions when the Negro's resentment and frustration have burst through the controls established by the authorities for the purpose of preserving public order and facilitating the interests of the dominant classes, and have also overcome his apparent apathy, which is largely the result of self-imposed limits designed to avoid undue friction with the ruling classes.

In 1865 the resentment of the Morant Bay blacks at the efforts of the Jamaican Legislature and the planter magistrates to destroy their economic independence and make them more tractable labourers, expressed itself briefly through political channels, but when all hope of success in this sphere vanished, it took a more direct form. During the events of Morant Bay, the Negro peasants of St. Thomas, aided by the large
number of liberated Africans living in their midst, developed a form of Negro racism or black nationalism. This however was still-born as a political force due to the severe retributions carried out by the coloureds and the whites. The repression effectively drove the black protest back into religious channels where it was later exploited by Bedward.

Marcus Garvey tried to reawaken the racial and political consciousness of the black. He was largely unsuccessful in his own lifetime, but his example rekindled a radical black resentment against the Jamaican environment. Prior to 1938 this protest found its major expression in the politico-religious Ras Tafari movement and the Pan-African organizations such as the World Ethiopian Federation, which saw little hope of resolving the race problem within the Jamaican context.

In 1938 the withdrawal theme gave way in part to a more positive manifestation of Negro dissatisfaction. The Westmorland riots, although usually considered indicative of serious economic unrest, were really expressing something much more fundamental. Since the blacks had learned the need to voice their resentment at white and coloured domination through other channels, the racial factor was not at first obvious. As a result of the events of 1937-38, however, both the blacks and the coloureds realized the immediate advantage of a political alliance to rid Jamaica of alien white control.

For a number of years the Negro masses were content to let the middle classes lead Jamaica towards national independence. Recently,
however, the growing restlessness of the lower classes, which has received great impetus from the success of African nationalism, has encouraged a number of radical elements to seek a thorough-going transformation of Jamaican society entailing more than the mere political and constitutional advancement so dear to the coloureds. They seek social and economic progress free from the white bias which has favoured the lighter sections of the Jamaican population in the past, and which, if allowed to continue, will perpetuate the miserable conditions of the Negro masses.

Africa has become the model for these radical elements. Thus the cultural conflict within Jamaica has been intensified, since the cultural mores of the upper and middle classes are largely rooted in their British heritage. Black racism, particularly in the urban areas, has also been intensified, while the fear and hostility of the coloureds and whites towards the blacks may even have increased in the last decade, despite the growing prestige of the Negro in the contemporary world.

With respect to the role of the Colonial Office in its handling of Jamaican race relations and its attitudes towards the future development of the Negro in the colony, there is little doubt that colonial policy was greatly influenced by the major trends of thought and opinion in the United Kingdom—particularly after mid-nineteenth century. Viewpoints, which were themselves subject to economic and social developments within Britain and the empire as a whole, underwent
considerable changes in the course of the 125 years, 1833-1958.

Generally speaking the anti-slavery sentiments of the missionary and commercial groups had a strong bearing upon colonial life until the 1850's. As a result, the Colonial Office adopted a paternalistic attitude towards the emancipated slave coupled with the desire to make the plantation system an economic success.

It was not long, however, before disillusionment with the West Indian Negro developed in Colonial Office circles. In part it was a consequence of an earlier romanticism embittered by the failure to raise the emancipated slave above the cultural levels that had existed under slavery. On the other hand, the development of the new imperialism with its desire to consolidate the economic prowess of the United Kingdom through the establishment of protected colonial markets and sources of raw materials, was undoubtedly of greater import.

Since the new imperialistic ethic relied heavily upon the doctrines of the racial supremacy of the caucasian, it was only natural that the Colonial Office would eventually follow suit. In fact Jamaica anticipated later developments within the non-white colonial empire. The establishment of Crown Colony government in 1865 with absolute control vested in the governor and his white advisors served notice that the Colonial Office harbored a good deal of scepticism of the ability of the non-caucasian races to govern themselves and concern about the desirability of relinquishing direct control over the dependent empire.
Ostensibly the Colonial Office was committed to a policy of maintaining a just balance between the whites, coloureds and blacks, but after Morant Bay and the advent of Chamberlain's economic imperialism, Jamaica was expected to contribute to the security of the empire as a sugar-producing colony. Thus colonial policy tended to favour the planter interests in their struggle with the Negro peasantry. It could hardly have been otherwise when prevailing opinion within Britain regarding the Negro as fitted only for a role of manual labour under adequate white supervision. The climate theory, which was also in vogue, absolved the white of the responsibility for doing physical labour in the tropics, but he was expected to use his superior organizational abilities to administer the 'backward races' and guarantee the economic success of empire.

As a result of these influences and the relatively small economic value of Jamaica compared to her other imperial possessions, Britain did very little to develop the island economy or to prepare the masses for eventual self-government. Throughout the Crown Colony period, the Colonial Office followed a policy that might be termed paternalistic in the sense that it maintained peace and order, but negative in that it tended to support the social and economic status quo. The early ideal of assimilating the Negro was largely ignored.

Although a significant change took place in British thinking and in colonial policy after the First World War, it was not until after the West Indian riots that their impact was felt in Jamaica. Once the Second
World War began, however, British colonial policy underwent revolutionary changes. Official policy now abandoned racism by advocating the employment of non-whites in the colonial service and the establishment of a multi-racial commonwealth. It promised economic aid to the more underdeveloped areas of the empire in preparation for political autonomy, and declared its willingness to work for the complete political independence of all the colonies as equal members of a new British Commonwealth of Nations.

In 1940 the Colonial Office began to combat the stagnation of the previous seventy-five years by adopting a dynamic policy of preparing Jamaica for universal suffrage and constitutional advancement. Economic development, however, was largely ignored, and the Colonial Office sought to avoid its obligations in this sphere by claiming that the expenditure of vast sums of British capital in Jamaica would only prejudice the possibility of early national independence.

Without question British socialism and other anticolonial movements have played an important role in the formulation of the new colonial policy, but what is often overlooked is the motive of enlightened self interest which is now becoming clear. In recent years the growth of a good deal of disillusionment with the empire has been the result of the generally thankless task of setting the colonies on the road to freedom. This, coupled with a somewhat cynical realization that the imperial connection is now a mixed blessing in the sense that its economic advantages are debatable, and that it is no longer able to sustain Britain in her role as a leading world power, has resulted
in a tough-minded desire to renounce the responsibilities of the multi-racial commonwealth in favour of a new and more economically secure role in the European Common Market.

To some extent the Colonial Office has lived down the failings of its Jamaican policy in the years prior to 1940. Yet the weaknesses of today’s society are largely a legacy of its refusal to take the Jamaican situation seriously.

Nonetheless the responsibility for future development of harmonious race relations and an integrated society in Jamaica now lies with the Jamaicans themselves. It will not serve their purpose to continue blaming the present state of affairs upon the Colonial Office, no matter how justifiable the charges may be. To some extent this is still the attitude of the coloured middle class although the radical black elements have now selected the ruling classes of Jamaica as the ‘villain of the piece.’

Jamaicans must develop a local culture that will demand and retain the loyalty of all sections of its population. In order to achieve this a number of changes will be necessary:

a. Those whites who consider themselves Jamaicans must be prepared to integrate themselves into the new society.

b. Many coloureds must give up their slavish and uncritical attachment to European culture and at the same time they must reject their morbid fear of Africanisms and adopt a more objective attitude to Negro culture.

c. All blacks that harbor blind racial hatreds and suspicion of whites and coloureds must learn to overcome their disposition to discriminate against all non-blacks and be prepared to cooperate with the more progressive elements among the middle and upper classes.
d. Jamaicans of all colours must realize that neither European nor African cultural mores should dominate to the exclusion of the other. What is needed is a central position between the extreme attitudes of the Ras Tafarians on the one hand and the 'British Council' on the other.

e. Racial discrimination and its associated values such as the white bias must be reduced if not entirely eliminated.

f. While the present disparity between the rich and the poor continues, the upper strata must adopt a more responsible attitude towards the lower classes. It must accept the challenge of alleviating if not eliminating the economic misery of the underprivileged Jamaicans. Until a beginning is made in this direction, there can be little hope that the black masses will overcome their sense of alienation from the main course of Jamaican development being pursued by the more fortunate sections of the population, and will adopt a more constructive attitude towards the over-all advancement of Jamaica.

There can be little doubt that race relations have made considerable progress since the abolition of slavery. In part the credit lies with the Jamaicans themselves, but the fairly enlightened colonial policy of recent years and the rising prestige of the Negro throughout the world have been vital in the transformation. Jamaica has much to be proud of in the field of race relations but the present situation does not warrant complacency.
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**TABLE I**

**POPULATION GROWTH**

<table>
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<th>Year of Census</th>
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<th>Intercensal Increase</th>
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VITA

A. J. Graham Knox was born in New Zealand in October, 1931, and lived in the Fiji Islands during most of his childhood. He attended Southwell Preparatory School and King's College in New Zealand before gaining the B. A. degree from the University of New Zealand in 1955. In 1956 he began work on the master's degree in international relations at the University of South Carolina before transferring to the School of Inter-American Studies at the University of Florida for graduate studies in the Latin American field. Since 1959 he has been on the faculty of the University of Puerto Rico.
This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of that committee. It was submitted to the Director of the School of Inter-American Studies, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and to the Graduate Council, and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June 11, 1962

[Signatures]

Director, School of Inter-American Studies
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Dean, Graduate School

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]