

## **CXC CARIBBEAN HISTORY NOTES**

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**THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE EUROPEANS**

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## **THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE EUROPEANS**

### **The Indigenous Peoples of the Americas**

#### **Migration to the New World**

The first people to inhabit the Caribbean region were the Indigenous Peoples or the Pre-Columbian Indians as they are also called. The Indigenous Peoples migrated from Asia and settled in the Americas and the Caribbean and established a way of life in these regions.

Most people believe that the first inhabitants came to the Americas from Asia between 15-20 000 years ago. This was during the Fourth Ice Age when large parts of the earth were covered with ice and the oceans and lakes were frozen. All this time, the Bering Strait (the narrow stretch of water which separating Alaska from the coast of Siberia in north-eastern Asia) was said to be forming an "Ice Bridge".

Early man depended on animals for food and clothing especially since the Ice Age had caused fruits and herbs to become scarce. These hunters were nomadic so they travelled from place to place in search of food and shelter. These hunters were following herds of animals like mammoths, deer and caribou without knowing that they were crossing from one continent to another. These Asian migrants are usually referred to as Mongoloids since they came from Mongolia in Central Asia.

#### **Settlement Patterns in the Americas**

The Asian migrants settled in North America and continued to hunt. As time passed, these people developed a way of life and also many languages. They lived in small family units and made their homes from the skins of the animals they hunted. Their homes are called tents. During the next thousands of years, they wandered in many directions. Those who occupied the same area, spoke the same language, and shared a common language are said to belong to a tribe. Some Amerindians lived in Eastern Canada (Mohawk) while some occupied the bleak and barren Arctic regions. They were known as Eskimos. In North America, the Amerindians settled in areas such as the Florida Peninsula and Alaska. Some also settled in the Prairies of the Great Plains. The Incas settled in countries such as Chile, Argentina, Nicaragua, and Peru. The Aztecs settled in Mexico while the Maya settled in the Yucatan Peninsula, Guatemala, Honduras, parts of Belize, El Salvador, and Southern Mexico. The Mayas, Incas and Aztecs each developed civilizations which flourished and they are known as Mesoamericans.

### **Settlement Patterns in the Caribbean**

The first group of Amerindians to arrive in the Caribbean were the Ciboney who settled mainly in Cuba. They migrated northwards from Suriname, Eastern Venezuela and Guyana in South America. Archaeologists have not found much evidence in order to describe what they were like or how they lived. This is because they left few artefacts behind. Sometime afterwards, the Ciboney were followed by the Tainos (Arawaks) and Kalinagos (Caribs). The Tainos' original homeland was in the forest between the Orinoco and Amazon Rivers in South America. They travelled in large canoes and usually settled on each island they encountered. Then after a few years, some would move onto another island. The Arawaks were divided into two principle tribes which are the Lucayos in the Bahamas and the Tainos in the Greater Antilles. The Kalinagos followed the Tainos into the Caribbean. They lived further south in the jungles around the Orinoco. They also moved from island to island. At each one, they fought the Tainos and pushed them out and established themselves on the island.

The Tainos fleeing from their enemies, the Kalinagos, crossed into Trinidad and continued to move further up the island chain. By the time the Europeans arrived in the Caribbean in 1492, the Tainos occupied mainly the islands of the Greater Antilles which are Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hispaniola and Jamaica. They also occupied the Bahamas and Barbados. The Kalinagos occupied mainly the islands of the Lesser Antilles such as Trinidad, Dominica and St. Vincent. Trinidad and Puerto Rico were occupied by both the Tainos and Kalinagos. The Tainos and Kalinagos in the Caribbean did not develop great civilizations like the Maya or Inca, rather they have been labelled as "primitive" in terms of culture. The Amerindians dominated the region up until the arrival of the Europeans in 1492. The coming of the Europeans saw drastic changes in the way of life of the Amerindians and ensured their near-extinction.

# The Tainos/Arawaks

## Physical Appearance

The Tainos were short to medium height, well-shaped, but slightly built, except in Hispaniola where they were plump. According to Christopher Columbus, their skin colour was "olive", that is smooth and brown. Their heads were flattened at the forehead by the use of boards or bandages when they were babies. The Tainos had broad noses and nostrils probably flared wide. Their hair was black and straight, but coarse, and was usually worn long.

## Economic Organization

The Tainos fished, hunted and grew just enough food for themselves and their families. This is known as **subsistence living**. There was little or no extra food produced for storing or trading. The forest was cleared by burning trees and bushes and then planting crops. This method of clearing the forest is known as the **slash-and-burn** technique. **Manioc** or cassava was their main crop. They also cultivated other crops such as maize or corn, sweet potato, cotton, groundnuts, and tobacco. Since **manioc** could be harmful, they squeezed the juices out of it before making flour. The flour was then used to make thin, flat cakes or cassava bread.

The Tainos practiced farming and gathering along with fishing and hunting. They caught and ate various types of fish, crabs, lobsters, turtles, shellfish, and manatee (sea cow). The coral reefs around the islands were filled with these animals which were easily caught by harpoon, or by hand. Turtles were caught by tying a remora (sucker-fish) that was caught on a long line to a canoe. The remora would dive for the turtle and attach itself to the back with its sucker. The turtle would then be pulled into the canoe by the fishermen.

Hunting on land was more difficult as there were few large animals to put in a stew. The iguana, agouti and the Indian coney gave the most meat. Birds such as parrots, doves and wild ducks were also hunted and caught by slipping a noose over their heads. The method of catching ducks showed a lot of cunning. First, they floated gourds downstream until the ducks became used to seeing gourds, and then the hunter himself would drift downstream with a gourd over his head, breathing through a hole and seeing through eye-slits. When he came upon a bird he would pull it under water by its legs and drown it! There was only one type of domestic animal called an **alcos** (a small barkless dog). These small dogs were used to help the Tainos hunt.

The Taino food was carefully prepared by stewing, baking, roasting and barbecuing. Iguana meat was stewed, cassava cakes were baked, and fish was roasted. Seasoning with salt and pepper was common. There was a special sauce called **cassareep**, made of salt, pepper and cassava juice. The favourite dish of the Tainos was pepperpot, a great stew into which went meat, vegetables, nuts, and of course pepper. A good pepperpot lasted for weeks. Its flavour was changed as some meat was added. Intoxicating drinks were made up of cassava and maize. In addition, there were also a variety of fruits and vegetables available. These included, pineapples, star apples, mammy apples, hog plums, guavas, and paw-paw. The Tainos therefore enjoyed a varied and well-balanced diet and food was plentiful.

### **Method of how cassava juice was extracted from cassava**

The women grated the cassava on a board covered with small pebbles or rough coral until it formed a paste. This was put into a wicker tube, one end of which was hung from a branch, while a weight was attached to the other end. This caused the tube to contract, and forced the poisonous liquid out through the wicker. The paste which remained was left to dry and then pounded into flour using a mortar and pestle. The flour was formed into flat cakes and baked on a griddle until the cakes were hard and dry. In this way they could keep for some time.

### **Social Organization**

Taino communities were small, although a few had more than a thousand houses that could be classed as large villages. The villages were scattered along the coast and near rivers. They often chose sites on top of hills as a precaution against surprise attack. Their houses were not built as permanent structures since every few years they moved to new areas for farming. Their houses were strongly built to withstand fierce hurricanes. Some of the villages were quite large. They were well planned, usually circular in shape, with a ball court or ceremonial plaza as their central feature. The chief's hut was built next to the plaza. Not only was each village well planned, but Taino settlements were highly organized.

The Tainos had two sorts of houses. The **bohio** (chief's house) and the **caneye** (family house). In recognition of his status, the chief's house should have been rectangular but the Tainos found it difficult to build and so he was often given a round house. The usual Taino house was round and constructed in the following way: wooden posts were put in the ground in a circle and canes were woven between them and tied creepers. The roof was thatched in a conical shape and a hole left in the top through which smoke could escape. There were no windows and only one opening for a door.

They had little furniture expect for hammocks made of cotton in which they slept. There were a few highly polished clay pots for cooking and other food vessels. Sometimes stools, or even tables were found but these were very rare. Tools were small and made of stone. They were well shaped and highly polished. There would always be a small statue of a **zemi** made of wood, stone or cotton, or a basket of bones serving as a **zemi**, and cradles for children.

### **Duties of the Taino Men**

The Taino men hunted for food and cleared the lands for cultivation. They also did the fishing. The men also built the houses and were the ones who went to war during war time. The boys helped the men to build the canoes.

### **Duties of the Taino Women and Children**

The Taino women grew the crops (reaped). They mostly did the cooking, washing and cleaning. They also wove baskets and hammocks and took care of the children. The children took part in the reaping of crops, scaring away of birds and animals. They also caught the water to be used by the household. The girls helped their mothers weave.

### **Political Organization**

The **cacique** or chief was the head of a Taino society. **Cacique** was a hereditary title which was passed from father to son. It was unlikely that a **cacique** would have no heirs as he was allowed many wives, although the Tainos were monogamous by custom. If he died without an heir, the title was passed to the eldest son of his eldest sister.

**(Also included are the *duties of the cacique and his privileges*)**

The **cacique** was more of a ceremonial leader than a lawmaker. He dealt with the distribution of land, the ordering of labour on the land, and the planting and distribution of the crops. He made the decisions of peace and war and was the leader in war but he made few laws and keeping the law and order was a matter for the individual. For example, if someone stole property it was up to the injured party to inflict punishment. His house was the largest and it was also built for him. His canoe was built by his tribesmen. He had a special stool called a **duho** and he was also buried in a marked grave and some of his wives were also buried with him. He was also given the best food and it was carried in a litter. His wives could also wear longer skirts than other women.

As a religious leader, the **cacique** fixed the day of worship and led the ceremonies playing a wooden gong. He had his own **zemis** and they were felt to be stronger than others and thus he commanded additional respect and obedience.

While the **Cacique** did have much power, he had advisors. Nobles called **Mitaynos** assisted the chief. These men had to be the eldest men in society because they knew the Kingdom's boundaries of the past and recent years. They remembered the past of their kingdom and other arguments with other kingdoms. Decisions occurred in a council meeting with the **cacique** and higher ranking persons in Taino society such as the nobles. The older noble men had songs and dances which they taught the young villagers their history and laws.

### **Religion**

Religious beliefs of the Tainos included the belief of the sky-god and earth-goddess and they made **zemis** to represent the forces controlled by these gods, like rain, wind, hurricanes and fire, or like fertility in the case of the earth-goddess's **zemi**. They also worshipped their ancestors and made **zemis** for them, often out of the bones of these ancestors. The Tainos had a creation story which said that the first man escaped from a cave with the sun when the keeper of the cave forgot to close it. They believed in life after death in **coyaba** (said to be a peaceful place where they could meet their ancestors and be free of natural calamities like sickness and hurricanes). Other religious practices besides making **zemis** out of bones of their ancestors include, avoiding eye-contact with the sun (to avoid being turned into plants and animals) and burning a tribesman with his most valuable possessions to accompany him in **coyaba**.

### **Taino Religious Ceremony**

In religious ceremonies, the priests often used tobacco or **cohoba** (powdered tobacco) which they inhaled directly into their nostrils to induce unconsciousness, the best state for communication with the **zemis**. If the priest failed to have his prayer answered by the **zemi**, it was felt that its power was too strong. For an

important religious ceremony, the village would be summoned by blowing a conch shell and the **cacique** would lead a procession of the whole village. The priests would make themselves vomit by tickling their throats to clear away all impurity before communicating with the **zemis**.

### **Importance of Canoes to the Tainos and How They Were Built**

The canoes were vital to the Tainos in their trading between certain islands. It was their only means of transportation. They used the canoes to fish, raid, travel and trade. They traded cloth, tools, weapons, furniture, tobacco, certain fruits, and gold. The Tainos built long canoes that could fit up to 80 people. They did not use metal tools to carve out the canoes from trees. They would use a silk cotton that was first ringed and burnt off at the base. They would then chip the other side then slowly burn out the interior. Then they would wet the hallowed trunk and insert wooden wedges of different lengths to widen it in the middle and tape it at the end, to shape the canoe. The canoe was then buried in damp sand to cure the canoe before being dried out in the sun.

### **Village Customs:**

- It was customary for the Tainos to flatten their babies' foreheads. It was thought that a flat forehead was a mark of beauty and that it created a stronger skull and made it easier for boys to aim bows up into tree tops. They flattened the babies' foreheads by playing their heads between two boards.
- The Tainos practiced subsistence farming, growing food for mainly themselves and their families.
- Painting the body in black, white, red and other colour dyes was a common custom. They painted their faces, eyes, noses, and parts of their heads. The dye was often obtained from tree bark and certain fruits.
- As a sign of rank, married women wore straight strips of cotton cloth hanging from their waist like a small apron.
- Colourful parrot feathers were worn in their hair.
- Bits of gold and copper hammered together to form a metal called **guanin** and jewellery made from this was worn by those of higher rank.
- The wives of the chief wore the longest cotton apron as a sign of their position.
- The Tainos used conch shells to make tools and musical instruments, even jewellery.
- The chief wore a coat of feathers, string of beads and semi-precious stones such as jasper and jade.

### **Dress**

Taino men were usually naked except for special occasions, when they might wear decorative loincloths. They painted their bodies and wore sometimes wore decorations or jewellery. The chief wore a long apron, a coat of feathers, and jewellery or ornaments. The women usually wore a piece of cloth over their loins. The chief's wives would wear the longest cotton apron as a sign of their position. Sometimes the Tainos wore colourful feathers in their hair. They also painted their bodies.

## **Leisure time Activities**

The Tainos had ample leisure time which they occupied with singing and dancing, called **areytos**. The men and women usually danced separately, however, they would come together on special occasions in which the pleasure of drinking was added. They also had a ball game known as **batos**, which was played on a market field (**batey**), with two teams trying to hit the ball with any part of their body into their opponent's goal line, a game somewhere between volleyball and football.

Smoking was the most well-known Taino pleasure. With the plant called **cohiba**, and **tobacco** referred to the pipe in which the leaves were smoked, the Tainos liked it for peace, contentment and helping them meditate. They made cigars, chewed tobacco and, most enjoyed of all, smoked it in pipes.

The Tainos also made craft. They made pottery, basketry, weaving, feather craft, and jewellery. Painting their bodies was also a leisure time activity along with a custom.

## **Contribution of Tainos to the Caribbean and the wider world**

The Tainos made a few contributions to the world, including the fruits and crops they grew like cassava, sweet potato, pineapples, and groundnuts which are used worldwide and has become part of the Caribbean diet. Taino words such as "hurricane", "barbecue", "buccaneer", and "canoe" have all become part of the English Language and are frequently used. Barbecuing has become popular throughout the world and this was a Taino practice. Pepperpot is a dish still prepared by Caribbean people today.

## **The Kalinagos/Caribs**

### **Physical Appearance**

The Kalinagos were taller than the Tainos, but still only of medium height. They were described as being strong and built due to the emphasis placed on training for fighting. Their skin was brown and usually went naked. The women painted their bodies with **roucou** (a red dye) and made fantastic decorations in many colours. The men would also paint their bodies would wear headdresses and jewellery. Very rarely you would also find them wearing cotton clothes around their waist. They had short heads and, like the Tainos, they flattened the foreheads of babies. They had a complete absence of body hair.

### **Political Organization**

The Tainos had no such organization as the Tainos with their **caciques**. In peacetime they had only few laws, only those made by the **tiubutuli hauthe** (village headman) who was the head of the family since each family lived in a separate village. However, in war the Kalinagos became more strictly organized. Each **piraga** (canoe) was captained by its owner and one of the captains was chosen as **Ubutu** or **Ouboutou** (commander-in-chief). If the raid was successful, he would keep this title for the rest of his life. The **ouboutou** planned the raids, chose the captains and distributed the prizes. He was greatly feared among his men for his power.

The **ouboutou** became chief either by right of birth or through being an outstanding warrior. The village men along with the chief made plans for fishing, trading and war or for organizing the settlement.

Kalinago men lived together in a large, rectangular house called ***carbet***, because they were undergoing warrior training. The women carried food to the ***carbet*** but otherwise lived separately. The Kalinagos slept in hammocks, but they also had a kind of bed called ***amais***. Their utensils were not so well made or polished as those of the Tainos.

### **Social Organization**

The Kalinagos' social organization was quite loose as their culture emphasized physical prowess and individualism. A Kalinago village was made up of a small number of houses, with a ***karbay*** or big meeting house as the central building. The ***karbay*** was where the men assembled, but the only way in was through a small door. There were many stout posts supporting the roof, and from these posts the hammocks were slung. The roof was thatched with palm fronds or ***cachibou*** leaves, which were tied down by ***mahoe***, or rope, or cords. These cords were made from the bark of ***mahoe*** trees.

The houses which surrounded the ***karbay*** were oval in shape and much smaller. The walls were made of reeds. There was only one room for the family, which included the father, wives and unmarried children. There were however, separate huts for cooking and storing precious objects such as hammocks, bows and arrows. In the kitchen, there were utensils such as pottery and calabashes, or ***couris***. The rest of the furniture consisted of cotton hammocks, small stools and four-legged tables of basket-work called ***matoutou***.

### **Duties of Kalinago men**

The men cleared the forests to prepare gardens, they built houses and collected the palms for thatching the roofs, and cut trees to build canoes. Most of this work was done in the dry season and so this was the men's time during the first part of the year. Throughout the year they secured food for the community.

### **Duties of Kalinago women**

The women prepared and cooked the food. When the rainy season had commenced, it was the women's duty to plant crops. This is because it was women who attended births and it was thought that all things that need fertility to grow must come from women's hands. The women also spun thread, wove hammocks and made clay pots for holding food and liquid.

### **Economic Organization**

Warfare was the Kalinago's major interest. Internal conflicts were common; there was no important chief, military organization, or hierarchical structure. The men strove to be individualistic warriors and boasted of their heroic exploits.

The Kalinagos produced several crops. Cassava or ***manioc*** was their main crop just like the Tainos. They also grew yam, sweet potato and maize or corn. They grew tobacco and cotton which they spun and wove into small strips of cloth. They also made strings for fishing lines and nets for making hammocks. With the islands free for all the tribe, the Kalinagos planted crops wherever they pleased. Usually they made farming plots from the village. The men cleared the lands using the ***slash-and-burn*** technique, while the women planted the crops and tended them.

The Kalinagos hunted with bows and arrows, not just to get food but also for sport. For this they used arrows made from slender reeds with tips made of sharp wooden heads.

Fish were caught in many ways. The Kalinagos used bows and arrows to shoot fish which came close to the surface. They also used nets, traps and fishing lines with hooks made of shells. Lobsters were caught in the reefs with harpoons. Conch and other shellfish were easily caught. The shells were used to make tools. Many of the islands on which they Kalinago lived on had streams full of fish. The Kalinagos knew how to poison the rivers by pounding the leaves of certain plants and mixing them into the water. This would stun the fish, which could then easily be caught by hand.

The Tainos were much better farmers than the Kalinagos, but the Kalinagos were better fishermen and hunters than the Tainos. The Kalinagos had more protein in their diet than the Tainos due to them consuming more meat and fish than the Tainos. The Tainos did not hunt or fish as much as the Kalinagos.

### **Importance of canoes to the Kalinagos and how they were made**

The Kalinagos were always travelling back and forth among the islands, and were excellent seamen. The Kalinagos used their canoes to travel from island to island, fish, trade, hunt, and go on raids. They made two different types of canoes, and they were not very different from the canoes made by the Tainos.

The smaller craft, the **couliana**, was at most about twenty feet long and was pointed at both ends. This type was used for fishing close to the shore and could only hold a few people.

The bigger boat was called **canoua**, the word we still use today. The largest of these were up to fifty feet long and could carry thirty to forty people. These vessels were dug out of logs and stretched by fire and soaked with water to make the wood expand. It was in these larger canoes that the Kalinago went to attack other islands or to make long fishing and trading trips.

The canoes were rowed with flat paddles shaped like spades. A long pole was used to guide the craft carefully over reefs. The bark of the **mahoe** tree was used to tie the large stone archer. Rafts were also made from trunks of light forest trees.

### **Religious Beliefs and Practices**

The Kalinagos were polytheistic. They also believed in many gods. They believed in evil spirits known as **maboya**. The priest had the power to pray to the gods to turn back evil.

They believed

- In the forces of evil.
- In life after death.
- In the existence of Heaven and hell.
- That there is punishment and reward in the afterlife.
- That those who were brave warriors went to a place where they were waited on by Tainos slaves.

- That the souls of cowards went to a dreary desert where they became slaves to Tainos masters.
- The priest or **boyez** was the only one who could communicate with the gods.
- In offering sacrifices to the gods especially when they went to sea.
- In using tobacco (incense) in the process of communicating with the gods.
- In having festivals and celebrations in honour of the gods.
- In keeping the gods happy (appeasing the gods).
- In offering prayers to the gods for bravery.

Both the Tainos and the Kalinagos believed in nature and ancestor worship.

### **Village Customs**

1. Men and women lived separately.
2. Painting of the body to look fierce especially when going on raids.
3. They did not eat turtle. They thought it would make them slow and stupid.
4. They ate a lot of pepper. It was believed that this would make them fierce.
5. They flattened their foreheads from an early age. This was to make the arrow bounce off should they get hit in the forehead during battle.
6. They often hung the skull and or bones of their victims in their houses like trophy.
7. All boys were required to undergo initiation test when they reached puberty.
8. They were scratched with an agouti claw and pepper rubbed in the wound. If they bore it without flinching, they were chosen to be a warrior. If they flinched, they would be numbered among the priests.

### **The Maya**

The Maya were the first group of Amerindians to develop a very high level of culture called a civilization unlike the Tainos and Kalinagos who had a simple way of life which did not develop beyond their family village settlement stage. The Maya are known as Mesoamericans. The Maya made outstanding advancements in Astronomy and Mathematics, and developed an accurately yearly calendar. They were one of the first people to develop an advanced form of writing. The areas

where the Maya settled are Guatemala, the Yucatan Peninsula, Honduras, El Salvador, parts of Belize, and Southern Mexico. The magnificent civilization they developed in Southern Mexico was the most impressive of all the empires in the Americas and it flourished for at least 600 years from A.D. 250 to 900. This time period is known as the Classic Period of the Maya civilization.

### **Social Organization**

Mayan society was strictly divided into rigid classes. Each social class had its own rights and duties. They were even guidelines considering the clothing and personal adornment worn by different social classes. At the top of the social pyramid was the **Hulach Uinic** who was both a High Priest and a Great Lord. Members of this upper class group included the Priests, other Lords, Nobles, the **Batabs** or **Batabobs**, and **Nacoms** or war chiefs. After the rulers and nobles were the majority of the people known as the working class. They were mainly farmers and artisans (craftsmen). They provided the tax system of crops and labour which supported the officials and priests. They also built magnificent stone cities, fine bridges, aqueducts (water path), and roads. There was also an independent merchant class. The **Ppolms** or merchants played an important role in the society. They had their own gods and lived according to their own laws. They did not have to pay taxes or give any personal service in agricultural labour road building. They did however perform a very important role in foreign affairs, for they frequently acted as spies especially during war time. The slaves were the lowest class in the society. Most slaves were people from neighbouring tribes who were captured during war time. They were used as servants for the upper class people and also as human sacrifices to Mayan gods.

### **Economic Organization**

Most of the Maya people were farmers. They worked the land collectively as one community. The land was first cleared by burning and cutting forest trees. Next, the ground was broken with digging sticks called **woa** and the grains of corn were planted. Corn or **maize** was the most important crop. When it was harvested, the farmers had to give portions to the priests and noblemen as a form of tax. Large underground storerooms or granaries called **chultunes** were built for storing the grain. Other crops such as pumpkin, squash, cassava, potato, and cotton were also cultivated. Huge reservoirs were built to store water. Wells or **cenotes** were also dug and from these water was carried to the fields. The Maya built roadways to encourage trade between their various cities. Trading also took place outside the Maya Empire. People came together to trade in large market places which were part of the city in their district. Trading was carried out by merchants (**ppolms**). As they travelled between city states and areas outside the Maya Empire, they were able to carry out their duties as spies for the **Hulach Uinic**. They did not have the wheel or any beasts of burden, such as horses and oxen. They carried most of their goods on their backs or on rivers in dugout canoes.

The Maya were the only American Indians who carried on trading by sea as well as land. There is evidence to suggest that their canoes had contact with Cuba and Dominica. The Lowland Mayas handcrafted forest and sea products. The Highland group sold jade, volcanic glass, and quetzal feathers. The Yucatan Maya traded salt and finely decorated cotton. Cocoa beans were used as a medium of exchange. Sometimes small copper bells or red shells/strings were also used as a medium of exchange. The Maya practiced surplus farming unlike the Tainos and Kalinagos who practiced subsistence living.

### **Political Organization**

Of the three groups, the Maya were the most advanced. They built vast empires and independent city states. As such, they had a fairly elaborate and rigid system of government. Each independent city state was ruled by a **Halach Uinic**. This was a hereditary position. It was passed down from father to son only. His powers were wide. He was almost an absolute ruler. He had the final say in all matters. He had various civil, military and religious duties to perform.

He designed all domestic policies and foreign affairs. Remember that we are dealing with a very large area when compared to the Caribbean region occupied by the Tainos and Kalinagos. Belize alone is twice the size of Jamaica.

The states were divided into villages which were ruled by **batabs**. There were all chosen from the noble class so this post was also hereditary. They were to see to it that the laws and policies were enforced.

Because the Maya were constantly engaged in defending themselves from neighbouring invaders, the war chiefs or **nacoms** were also an important part of the government. They were however elected for three years. During their term of office, they were not allowed to drink any strong drink. They were responsible for providing and training soldiers.

### **Religious Beliefs and Practices**

The Maya were polytheistic. They believed in as many as 166 gods! They had too had a number of myths to explain the mysteries of life including earth and the creation of man.

They believed in:

- The forces of good and evil.
- Life after death.
- Heaven and hell.
- The underworld.
- There is punishment in the afterlife for those who lived an evil life.
- There is reward in the afterlife for those who lived a good life.
- Confessing to the priest on one's death bed.
- Offering human sacrifices to the gods, especially slaves.
- Using incense in the process of communicating with the gods.

- Having birthday festivals and celebrations in honour of the gods.
- Keeping the gods happy (appeasing the gods).

### **Gender Relations**

- In Mayan society, the women played a subservient role. Mayan women were not allowed to drink at functions.
- They could not hold public office. Their main functions were child bearers and home makers. In fact, a Mayan man could divorce his wife if she did not bear him any children.
- They were also given specific roles. They worked to pay the tribute tax. Weaving and pottery were done exclusively by the women.
- There were more recreational activities that the men were allowed to participate in. for example there was only one dance in which the men and women were allowed to dance together. All other dances were done by the men together. The men also participated in bow and arrow contests.

### **How did they manage to earn the title of the most advanced civilization?**

#### **Technology**

**1.** We will do **engineering and architecture** as a separate item since this was a very important part of Mayan religion and society. Using their limestone and mortar, the Maya constructed the following to create their magnificent empires:

- Corbelled arch.
- Roads and bridges.
- Causeways.
- Massive temples with staircases for worship.
- Entire cities with huge pyramids were constructed of stones, for example, Chichen Itza and Tikal.
- Large public buildings made of limestone and mortar.
- Stone stelae with their history depicted on them.

- 2.** They were skilled in **Mathematics**.
- 3.** They practiced a form of **writing** known as **hieroglyphics**.
- 4.** They had **books** made from the bark of trees.
- 5.** They created a **Calendar** very similar to ours with 365 days in a year and leap as well.
- 6.** They practiced **astrology**. They observed the stars and planets and used these to determine the “right” time to plant, reap and even marry.
- 7.** They had **three farming techniques** to include the **slash-and-burn** method.

was used for

-They had a form of currency. Cocoa beans

money.

-They used irrigation methods.

-They used dams and wells to ensure water supply.

-They knew and used the art of dyeing.

## **THE EUROPEANS**

### **Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> century**

#### **INFLUENCE OF CATHOLICISM**

The spiritual powers of the Roman Catholic Church permeated every aspect of life and made the Church the dominant institution in Western Europe. It fostered the desire to spread Christianity in foreign lands. The Pope became the arbitrator of political disputes, particularly those involving the discovery of new lands. Yet new political and religious ideas began to undermine the predominance of Christendom.

#### **POLITICAL**

The archaic feudal system had practically disappeared with the establishment of new city-states and nation-states, namely England, France, Spain, Portugal, and the Italian city-states. Though they retained monarchical systems of government as in feudal period, nationalism replaced the old ideas of an overruling Christian Empire.

**SPAIN:** The marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile completed the unification of Spain and founded Europe's most absolute and Catholic monarchy.

**PORTUGAL:** Under the rule of Prince Henry the Navigator and others Portugal took the lead in nautical exploration for new trade routes.

To consolidate the economic basis of their power and to rival each other's progress, monarchies of the nation-states sought new sources of wealth through overseas trade and colonization.

#### **SOCIAL**

Because of the Renaissance and the decay of feudalism, the serfs, society's lowliest and largest class of manual labourers, were unshackled from the semi-slavery of serfdom; personal enquiry and personal enterprise became the hallmarks of society. A new middle class of merchants and tradesmen came into existence, and above them was the nobility, forming the ruling class.

## **TRADE**

A lucrative commerce had developed between Europe and the Far East with Venice, Genoa and Florence as the most important trading cities. European articles such as wine, salted fish, furs, woollen goods, and linen cloth were exchanged for silk, muslin, velvets, cotton, dyestuffs, spices, jewels, ivory, and gold in the Orient. These luxuries and exotic items were then transported overland to Europe where they were in great demand by the wealthy and the affluent. But further expansion of the European Oriental trade was hindered by: the dangers and difficulties of the overland route; Venetian and Genoese monopoly of the spice trade; the limited amount of produce transported by pack; the capture of Constantinople by Turks closing one of the best trade routes. The easiest way to overcome all of these difficulties and satisfy demands for Oriental products was to find a new route to the East.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Scientific advancement during the Renaissance resulted in wide range of inventions and improvements in ship design which aided maritime exploration: invention of the compass, astrolabe, quadrant, hour glass, sundial, and windlass; the design of ocean going carracks and caravels; the development of printing which spread new information to all levels of society. Learned men believed that the world was a sphere, not a rectangle, and it was therefore possible to reach the EAST by sailing WEST across the Atlantic. One such learned person was Don Cristobal Colon of Genoa.

### **Reasons why Europeans did not travel long distances before the late 15<sup>th</sup> century**

- The Europeans thought that the world was flat. They believed that after you reached the end of the world, you would drop off.
- The Europeans believed that there were horrible sea creatures in the sea so they did not travel long distances.
- The ships the Europeans owned needed much improvements so they were not suitable for travelling long distances.
- The European seas were dangerous as there were various conflicts between them and the Muslims so they did not travel long distances.

## **Reasons for European Exploration in the 15<sup>th</sup> century- “Gold, God, Glory”**

1. Europe was divided into a number of kingdoms whose rulers were absolute monarchs. This meant that they had the authority to make whatever decisions they liked. Their subjects (people under their rule) had to accept the king's decision as final.
2. The Kings of Europe frequently waged war against each other, so as to capture more territories. Each King wanted to be more powerful than each other and they believed that power depended on the amount of land under their control. These Kings were even willing to finance voyages of exploration in order to get more land. They also hoped to find gold which could be used to finance war for their own personal purposes.
3. The discovery of new land therefore meant more space for citizens, land for the landless and job opportunities for the unemployed.
4. The Europeans wanted to find a new sea route to the east. European merchants travelled frequently to places like China, India and North Africa in order to trade.
5. Travel at that time was very dangerous but these merchants still went to distant lands to sell the things they made and to get things they could not grow for themselves. From India, the merchants obtained gold, tea and spices. From Africa: gold, ivory and slaves. From China: silk, spices and tea. The European merchants were able to sell cotton, knives, cutlasses, hoes, and glass beads.
6. The merchants from Venice began to monopolize the trade to the East. They would not let the other European merchants pass through their port. The merchants from Venice became so rich that it aroused the jealousy of the other European merchants. The Spaniards and Portuguese became more determined to find another route to the east.

## **The Renaissance (Period of rebirth of revival of Greek and Roman knowledge)**

During the period when the Turks controlled some parts of Europe, life was difficult for the people who lived in those parts. Some of them were even captured as slaves.

Progress at that time slowed almost to a halt. Knowledge gained in previous time almost disappeared as few people went to school. Some people referred to this time as the dark ages. Between 1400 and 1700, the old ideas in art, science, and mathematics started to spread again from Italy to the rest of Europe. The Renaissance was a rebirth of knowledge and learning which resulted in new inventions. Two famous scientists of the period were Galileo Galilei who invented the telescope and Sir Isaac Newton who first explained the force of gravity.

The desire for adventure and knowledge was stirred even in sailors, who were now interested in making voyages of exploration. Some of the famous explorers were Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and Bartholomew Diaz.

### **Technological Improvements**

Prince Henry the Navigator was the son of King John of Portugal. In 1419, he founded a navigation school which trained many of Europe's sailors. These sailors were now prepared to make long voyages.

Sailors learned about cartography which is the skill of mapmaking. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, improvements were made in this area so that one of the maps made was a map of the world (Ptolemy's map of the world).

### **Christopher Columbus and the “Enterprise of the Indies”**

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa Italy between 1450 and 1451 and practiced mapmaking along with his two brothers. Columbus showed a keen interest in exploration. To get ships and men to embark on voyages, Christopher Columbus had to find a monarch who was willing to risk money and men for such an expedition. He began to persuade the court of Portugal to support his venture. Columbus' main point was that he could get to the East by sailing West. By sailing across the Atlantic he claimed that he could reach Cipangu, Marco Polo's name for Japan. He called this bold adventure “Enterprise of the Indies”. The Portuguese refused to accept his explanation/his point of view. They were sure that Japan was more than 10 000 miles away. They stated that the plan could not work and that it was too risky.

Columbus crossed the border and presented his plans to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. The Spanish King and Queen were at this time fighting the

Moors, a group of Muslims, from North Africa who had colonized a part of the Spanish Empire. They did not have the money to support Columbus. For seven years he tried to get the Spanish Monarchs to support him. He even decided that he was going to get the French to support him. He was on his way to the French when he received word that the Spanish were willing to finance his voyages of exploration in order to beat Portugal in the race to the East. Columbus first set sail on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1492 and landed in San Salvador in the Bahamas first. His three ships were called the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and the *Santa María* (his flagship).

### **Voyages to the New World (The Americas)**

#### **First Expedition**

On August 3, 1492, Columbus sailed from Palos, Spain, with three small ships, the *Santa María*, commanded by Columbus himself, the *Pinta* under Martín Pinzón, and the *Niña* under Vicente Yáñez Pinzón. After halting at the Canary Islands, he sailed due west from September 6<sup>th</sup> until October 7<sup>th</sup>, when he changed his course to the southwest. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, a small mutiny was quelled, and on October 12<sup>th</sup>, he landed on a small island called San Salvador in the Bahamas. He took possession for Spain and, with impressed natives aboard, discovered other islands in the neighbourhood. On October 27<sup>th</sup>, he sighted Cuba and on December 5<sup>th</sup> reached Hispaniola.

On Christmas Eve, the *Santa María* was wrecked on the north coast of Hispaniola, and Columbus, leaving men there to found a colony, hurried back to Spain on the *Niña*. His reception was all he could wish; according to his contract with the Spanish sovereigns he was made "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" and Governor-General of all new lands he had discovered or should discover.

#### **Second Expedition**

Fitted out with a large fleet of 17 ships, with 1,500 colonists aboard, Columbus sailed from Cádiz in October of 1493. His landfall this time was made in the Lesser Antilles, and his new discoveries included the Leeward Islands and Puerto Rico. The admiral arrived at Hispaniola to find the first colony destroyed by the indigenous natives. He founded a new colony nearby, then sailed off in the summer of 1494 to explore the southern coast of Cuba. After discovering Jamaica, he returned to Hispaniola and found the colonists, interested only in finding gold, completely disorderly; his attempts to enforce strict discipline led some to seize vessels and return to Spain to complain of his administration. Leaving his brother Bartholomew in charge at Hispaniola, Columbus also returned to Spain in 1496.

#### **Third Expedition**

On his third expedition, in 1498, Columbus was forced to transport convicts as colonists, because of the bad reports on conditions in Hispaniola and because the novelty of the New World was wearing off. He sailed still farther south and made his landfall on Trinidad. He sailed across the mouth of the Orinoco River (in present day Venezuela) and realized that he saw a continent, but without further exploration he hurried back to Hispaniola to administer his colony. In 1500, an

independent governor arrived, sent by Isabella and Ferdinand as the result of reports on the wretched conditions in the colony, and he sent Columbus back to Spain in chains. The admiral was immediately released, but his favour was on the wane; other navigators, including Amerigo [Vespucci](#), had been in the New World and established much of the coast line of NE South America.

## **Fourth Expedition**

It was 1502 before Columbus finally gathered together four ships for a fourth expedition, by which he hoped to re-establish his reputation. If he could sail past the islands and far enough west, he hoped he might still find lands answering to the description of Asia or Japan. He struck the coast of Honduras in Central America and coasted southward along an inhospitable shore, suffering terrible hardships, until he reached the Gulf of Darién. Attempting to return to Hispaniola, he was marooned on Jamaica. After his rescue, he was forced to abandon his hopes and return to Spain. Although his voyages were of great importance, Columbus died in relative neglect, having had to petition King Ferdinand in an attempt to secure his promised titles and wealth.

### **Problems Columbus faced while at sea**

- Columbus first stopped at the Canary Islands to do some repairs.
- After 3 weeks without sight of land, the sailors began to murmur among themselves wondering if there was really land beyond the horizon.
- In the mid- Atlantic, they noticed the compasses in their ships were no longer pointing to the true north. Columbus had to explain that it was a normal occurrence. There was a variation in the compass because the ships were going so far west that the natural pull of the magnetic north was altered.
- After two days at sea without sight of land, the seamen became violent and rebellious. They wanted to return to Europe and Columbus convinced them that land was near and promised that if landfall was not made soon he would turn back.

## **The contact between The Europeans and the Indigenous Peoples**

### **The Clash of Cultures**

The arrival of the Spaniards and the setting up of colonies brought them into contact with the Tainos who lived in the Greater Antilles. The culture or way of life of these two groups was so vastly different that their interaction often resulted in direct conflict. When people from different cultures meet we say that there is a “clash of culture”. A clash of cultures between the Tainos and the Spaniards led to the destruction or the genocide (extermination or near-extinction of a racial or ethnic group) of the Tainos.

### **The destruction of the Tainos**

The destruction of the Tainos began shortly after Columbus arrived. On his first voyage, Columbus had left some men behind on the island of Hispaniola when he returned to Spain. Columbus' men angered the Tainos by stealing their crops and interfering with their women. This caused fights to break out between the Spaniards and Tainos. The Spaniards who were greatly outnumbered were badly beaten and some of them were killed. On Columbus' 2<sup>nd</sup> voyage, he established a colony called Isabella in Hispaniola. As soon as Columbus went away, the Spaniards abandoned working on farms and buildings and forced the Amerindians to provide them with labour.

The Tainos, who were usually a peaceful people, resisted the Spaniards and came together to fight against them. However, the Spaniards managed to fight off the Amerindians and on Columbus' return, they informed him of the events. Columbus immediately organized his men to fight against the Tainos. The Tainos with their wooden spears and bows were no match for the Spaniards with their guns.

### **Changes faced by the Tainos**

#### **Technology**

The Spaniards had far superior technology, weapons (guns, steel swords), tools and other inventions to the Tainos. The Tainos, who were still in the Stone Age, had bows, arrows, wooden spears, and wooden clubs, were no match for the Spaniards. The Spaniards also used fierce dogs which could rip the Tainos into pieces. The Tainos were terrified of the bloodhounds. They were only accustomed to small barkless dogs. The Spaniards also rode horses which gave them additional advantage of quick attacks and withdrawals. The Tainos on foot were no match for the well-armed Spaniards on horseback.

#### **Enslavement (The Introduction of Amerindian Slavery)**

Most of the Spanish colonists had come to colonize the New World, in search of riches. They had no sympathy for the peaceful Tainos and enslaved them- that is they forced them to work for the Spaniards. The Tainos were overworked and poorly fed and many of them died. Others drowned while diving for pearls for the Spaniards.

The first system of slavery the Tainos were subjected to was called the *Repartimiento System*. The Repartimiento System was later extended by Ovando who was the first governor of Hispaniola from 1502 to 1509. The new system was called the *Encomienda System*. Under this system, grants of Tainos

were given to the Spanish Settlers. The Tainos were to work for the Spaniards who were responsible for Christianizing and educating them.

The Spaniards had no intention of educating the Tainos and the encomienda system was just a means of obtaining labour from the Tainos. There were no paid wages and no schools nor churches were built in Taino villages.

### **Land Ownership**

Before the arrival of the Spaniards, land was communally owned. This meant that land did not belong to individuals but to the entire tribe. Each family was given to a plot of land to work so they could feed themselves. The coming of the Spaniards changed the system of land ownership because the Spaniards took the lands belonging to the Tainos. Most of the land now was privately owned and the Tainos could no longer use it for their own purposes.

### **Destruction of food crops**

The Tainos were subsistent farmers and depended on their conucos (family plots) for food. When the adults were taken away as slaves, the children who were left behind often starved, since they were unable to take care of the crops and feed themselves. For those Tainos who continued to grow their crops on the conucos, there was a new problem. The Spaniards often allowed their cattle to graze on the crops belonging to the Tainos, destroying them.

### **Government**

The Taino system of government was replaced by Spanish rule. The caciques could no longer protect their people as even the caciques were captured and killed or enslaved. The Spaniards now demanded that taxes be paid to them. Taxes were paid in gold or in free labour.

### **Disease**

The Spaniards brought many diseases which were new to the Tainos. Since they had no immunity to these diseases, many of them died quickly. Diseases such as small pox, measles and even the common flu killed many Tainos.

### **Social Changes**

Family life was disrupted as adults were taken away and children left on their own. The frustration and hopelessness felt by many Tainos caused them to commit suicide. Some of them also practiced infanticide (killing of babies). They hoped to save them from the cruelty of the Spaniards. The Spaniards forced the Tainos to accept their religion, manner of dress, and did not allow them to participate in their festivals.

## **Survival of Amerindian Culture in the Caribbean**

### **Names**

Many places in Trinidad and Tobago still carry Amerindian names. For example, Caroni and Naparima. Even trees in the forests carry Amerindian names, e.g. Balata. Many animals have names given by Amerindians, e.g. iguana, agouti and manicou.

### **Foods**

Foods eaten by the Amerindians included cassava cakes. These were made by grating the cassava (manioc) and squeezing out the juice before baking the cassava flour which was left. Today Caribbean people used cassava to make flour, cassava chips, pone, bakes, and bread. They also made starch. Apart from cassava, maize (corn) was another staple of the Amerindians. It is today used in the following ways: corn flour, corn bread, corn pie, corn starch.

Their rich diet included a variety of fresh fruits, e.g. guava, pawpaw, hog plum, cashew, and pineapple. They also use sweet potato and a variety of cooking bananas. The use of hot pepper was common among the Amerindians. A favourite dish was pepperpot. The Amerindians also made a sauce called cassareep from cassava juice, salt and pepper. Another common method of cooking among the Amerindians was barbecuing. Barbecuing is also an Amerindian word.

## **European Settlement in the New World**

Since Columbus had sailed in the name of the King and Queen and Spain, the land he “discovered” now belonged to Spain. This aroused the jealousy of the other European nations who were now determined to acquire land for themselves in the New World.

### **The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)**

In 1493, both Spain and Portugal claimed the East. The Pope, Alexander VI, issued a Bull, Inter Cetera, dividing the world between Portugal and Spain by a line 100 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands.

In the Treaty of Tordesillas, Portugal and Spain moved the line of demarcation to 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. All unclaimed lands to the east of this line were Portuguese, and to the west were Spanish.

The Europeans established settlements in the New World in the larger colonies where gold was found, fertile land for growing tropical crops, and friendly natives were present.

### **Spain's Monopoly System**

The Spanish Government believed that the wealth of its empire in the Americas existed solely to increase the power of Spain. This meant that a monopoly of trade with her colonies and close control over buying and selling by colonists. All goods produced in the New World had to be exported to Spain and no other country. Everything the colonists bought had to be imported from Spain itself and carried in Spanish ships. The Council of the Indies had supreme control over all the colonies in the New World.

### **The House of Trade**

The House of Trade was established by the Spanish King in 1503 to control all trade between Spain and her colonies. This was done to protect the trade and keep out foreigners. All ships coming and going had to leave from and return to Seville. No ship could leave port or discharge its cargo on arrival without the permission of the House of Trade. In order to trade with Spanish territories, a license had to be given by the House of Trade.

### **The Challenge to Spain's Monopoly System**

European nations were not prepared to accept Spain's claim to all the wealth from the New World. The European powers no longer just fought in Europe. Each country wanted to weaken its rivals by capturing their overseas bases and interrupting the flow of trading goods: silver and gold. In these ways, they could damage the rival powers in Europe. The Dutch broke the Spanish Monopoly.

### **Pirates and Privateers**

The sailors who raided the Spanish ships and settlements were different types. Some captains went out in their own ships. Others were financed by merchants or noblemen and sometimes even by the Government. Some traded slaves and goods as well as raiding. They were given many names (pirates, seas dogs, freebooters, privateers). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, European countries other than Spain had only small fighting navies. When war broke out, the governments would take over, or command the merchant ships and fit them out with guns. They would also issue letters of marque to captains or merchant ships. The letter gave authority to attack enemy ports and ships. Captains had to hand over part of their treasure but they could sell the rest.

### **Colonization of the Americas by European Nations**

- 1500s-** The Spanish Empire claimed the entire Caribbean and most of Latin America. Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica, and Trinidad were settled.
- (1612)-** British colonized Bermuda.
- (1623)-** British colonized St. Kitts.

- (1627-1635)- British colonized Barbados, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, Anguilla, Tortola, and the Windward Islands.
- (1635)- French contested colonization of St. Kitts. French colonized Guadeloupe and Martinique.
- (1655)- English conquered Jamaica.
- (1650-1680)- Dutch colonized Saba, St. Eustatius, Saint Martin, Curacao, Bonaire, Aruba, Tobago, St. Croix, Tortola, Anegada, Virgin Gorda, Anguilla, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- (1664-1674)- St. Eustatius changed hands ten times in British- Dutch disputes over the island.
- (1697)- Spain ceded Haiti to France. France controlled Tortuga.
- (1750s)- Turks and Caicos captured by the British.
- (1761-1778)- British captured Dominica from France.
- 1762-1783)- British and French forces contested for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in which Britain won and St. Vincent and the Grenadines came under British rule.

## **CARIBBEAN ECONOMY AND SLAVERY**

### ***The Economic Revolution***

### **The Sugar Revolution**

**Definition:** A rapid change from tobacco to sugar as the basic cash crop that occurred in the mid-to-late 17<sup>th</sup> century in the British and French West Indians islands. The sugar revolution brought great social, economic and political changes to the islands it occurred in. It is most drastically seen in the history of Barbados where it occurred roughly in one decade (1640-1650).

### **Causes of the Sugar Revolution:**

1. For a long time, tobacco from the West Indies had been preferred. However, by the 17c., tobacco from the West Indies was facing competition from tobacco from Virginia in North America, which was superior in quality and quantity.
2. There was an increasing demand for sugar in Europe to be used as a sweetener for teas and other beverages.
3. The Caribbean islands had favourable climatic conditions on which sugar could be grown.
4. There was a glut on the market so the price of tobacco fell.

**Social changes:**

1. The black population increased with the importation of African slaves to produce sugar.
2. The white population decreased as the whites returned to Europe or moved onto other islands because they did not want to work alongside the blacks.
3. Society changed from a free citizenry to a slave society as the Africans were enslaved on the plantations and the small number of whites ruled society. "Free" meant "white" and "slave" meant "black".
4. Absenteeism (practice of owning land in one country but living in another) became a feature of West Indian society as planters owned plantations in the West Indies but lived in Europe.

**Economic changes:**

1. The price of land inflated as there was an increasing demand for land.
2. The number of landholders decreased. Small land owners were put out of business and small plots of land could not accommodate the amount of sugarcane necessary. Many small holdings were grouped together into large estates, under the ownership of a rich planter.
3. The number of landholdings increased as sugar could only be grown economically on large estates.
4. Monoculture (the concentration on the cultivation of a single crop) became the backbone of the Caribbean economy as sugar became the main crop that was relied upon. This was a dangerous foundation for the Caribbean economy which would eventually lead to much distress.

**Political changes:**

The Proprietorship System of Government was replaced by The Old Representative System of Government. The Old Representative System of Government had a Governor and an Assembly. Barbados had its assembly set up in 1639. This was the first Assembly to be established in the West Indies. The planter-class ruled the assembly and made the decisions as they held many seats.

It is said that the Dutch made the West Indies "black" as they provided the labourers from Africa and put up the capital needed by the planters to set up production.

## **Change from Logwood to Mahogany**

Logwood was the first major timber export from the Caribbean and was produced mainly in Belize. It was very valuable for its dye, which was used by wood manufacturers. Spanish ships carrying logwood were often attacked by British pirates, who stole the cargo and resold it. However, the buccaneers soon decided that cutting the logwood trees themselves was an easier way and safer way to make a profit. These new producers caused a glut on the market. This resulted in falling prices in the 1760s and so mahogany replaced logwood as Belize's main wood export. Since mahogany wood was harder than logwood, the economy of Belize (renamed British Honduras after it was colonized by Britain) changed drastically. Logwood was a small tree which required only a few men to cut it.

Slavery started in Belize in 1724 but there were relatively few Africans until the 1770s after which the number of Africans expanded to more than three quarters of the population of about 5 000 people. Mahogany production created new jobs, e.g., as huntsmen, the axe men and cattle men and these jobs were done by skilled slaves. The huntsmen went into the forest to find mahogany trees, the axe men did the chopping and trimming of the trees, and the cattle men took care of the animals used to transport the logs. These enslaved men, their masters and overseers had to cover long distances to find the trees, which did not grow in clumps like the logwood but were located singly and often far apart. This meant that sites were temporary and that enslaved men were away from their families for long period of time so logging had to be seasonal. After the logging season ended, families were reunited and celebrations took place at the community festivals where the enslaved interacted with each other. This interaction among the enslaved created a new Belizean creole culture.

Tobago and British Guiana are other territories which experienced the changeover from logwood to mahogany.

## **The Coming of the Africans**

The most important change occurred as a result of the sugar revolution was a need for a large amount of skilled labour that was not available in the West Indies.

The first source of labour which Europeans experimented with was that of the Amerindians. Under the **Encomienda** and **Repartimiento** systems, many natives lost their lives. The genocide of these indigenous peoples meant that Europeans were forced to seek alternative sources of labour. They turned to the indentureship system. Poor whites were attracted to West Indian plantations to

perform manual labour. They too proved unsuccessful as these indentured servants were unaccustomed to plantation life. As a result, another source was necessary.

### **Why African Slavery?**

- The main religion practiced by Europeans during this period was Christianity. Europeans were predominately Roman Catholics. The British however were Anglicans. Europeans believed it was their God-given duty to convert non-Christians. In addition, it was believed that Africans were direct descendants of Ham (one of Noah's sons) who was condemned to a life of servitude. Europeans believed Africans/blacks were made to be slaves. Bartholomew de Las Casas suggested the use of African slaves.
- Slavery already existed in Africa. Persons were made slaves for debts, punishment, crimes, marriages, etc., making it easy to access the large numbers required. Europeans felt that they were not introducing anything new into Africa so there was nothing wrong with what they were doing.
- Sugar was now the major export commodity of the West Indies and demanded a large labour force.
- Slavery was seen as a "necessary evil" because for sugar cultivation and manufacture to be profitable, a large, readily available, and cheap labour supply was essential.
- The Amerindian population had declined so the remaining population could not provide an adequate labour force.
- Africans were available in large numbers.
- Planters saw a cost advantage in the use of African slaves. An African purchased was a slave for life and the children of slaves became the properties of their masters.
- Africans were skilled agriculturists and accustomed to manual labour in a tropical climate. The Caribbean and Africa had similar tropical climates.
- Africa is closer to the Caribbean than Europe and the Trans-Atlantic voyage was assisted by the trade winds blowing east to west.
- As the plantation system developed planters no longer wanted to give prime sugar land as incentives to attract indentured servants and so they began to rely more heavily on African slaves, since there was no need to give them land.

### **A look at West African Societies before the arrival of the Europeans**

Slavery existed in West Africa long before the Europeans arrived in 1515 for debt, as punishment, and as sacrifice. West African societies were very diverse, prosperous and consisting of states at various stages of development. Africa maybe divided in two main regions:

#### **The Savannah States (Ghana, Mali, Songhai)**

These consisted of fertile grass land and was ideal for farming, agriculture and cattle and goat rearing. Weaving, leather making, and crafting were also popular means of earning a living.

Trade to the north was also very profitable and goods such as salt, gold, ivory, kola nuts as well as European and Asian goods were the basis of this trade which soon expanded to include slaves. This trade led to the transformation of small settlements into large cities, along government and powerful empires. Thus, there was a need for administrators, accountants, law enforcers, tax collectors, and merchants.

### **Political Organization**

During the 15c., when the trade in African slaves was in existence, the Songhai Empire was ruling. Before the rise of this empire, the Mali Empire had been the major Savannah Empire. The Mali had been taken over by another thriving empire- Ghana Empire. These powerful empires had arisen because of the revenue gained from the high taxes which the merchants were required to pay the rulers for passing through their lands.

### **The Forest States (Oyo, Benin, Dahome, Asante)**

The Forest States were increasing in status shortly before the arrival of the Europeans. Slaves were taken almost fully from this region due to its proximity to the coast. The people in these areas were generally agriculturist planting yam, cassava, bananas and rearing small animals such as chickens, pigs and fowls. The forest provided an abundance of fruits, river teemed with fish and hunting was practiced. There were also potters, weavers, sculptors, mines, and metal workers. Initially, these people practiced small scale trading but later provided the north with Ebony, Leopard skin and Pepper. Their wealth grew and industries thrived as a result of the slave trade.

### **Political Organization**

By the time the slave trade began, there were no vast empires in the forest region like those of the savannah. Each forest state had its own unique pattern of government. The Yoruba people were one of the most organized in the forest region. There were many towns which served as centres for trade. In every town could be found farmers, priests and craftsmen. Each town was a small kingdom ruled by a king or Obah who controlled the neighbouring forest lands. The Edo people lived in the state of Benin. The rulers of Benin called themselves Obas of Benin because they copied from the Yoruba people. However, the Obas of Benin were more powerful than those of the Yoruba. The state of Benin was situated at end of the busy trade roots leading to the savannah town. The kings gained a lot of riches by taxing the merchants. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the Edo merchants sold ivory, pepper and ebony. The merchants also sold cloth and jewellery.

### **Religion in West African Societies**

Between AD 1000 and 1500, Islam spread from the Mediterranean into the Sudanic belt, the region of Africa which lies to the south of the Sahara Desert and to the empires of Sudan. Islam was carried into the forest zone to the south where it competed with tribal religions and finally into conflict with ancestor worship and

each tribe was united into the common worship of tribal gods who were often mythical. In Kingdoms such as Benin and Oyo, the immediate ancestors of Lings were seen as gods. Each god had a specialized function but all were responsible for fertility of their followers, fetishism, or the harnessing of impersonal forces of the universe by incarnations and charms was prevalent everywhere.

### **A comparison between the Forest and Savannah States**

- Both were traders and agriculturists, but in the savannah a great use of currency (cowry shell, gold) was employed.
- Hunting existed in both regions but was more popular in the forest states.
- They both had organized systems of government.
- Trade was better developed in the savannah, building and construction was more advanced and printing was practiced.

### **Areas from which slaves were taken**

Slaves were taken mainly from West Africa. Slaves were taken from the forest states (Oyo, Benin, Dahome, and Asante). They came from that section of West Africa stretching from the Senegal River in the north to the Congo River in the south. The various areas along the West African Coast have been given different names, e.g. Grain Coast, Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, and Slave Coast.

### **Methods used to acquire Slaves**

- Slaves were sold at auction to the highest bidder.
- Slave scramble. In a slave scramble, Africans were divided into groups for which set prices were fixed. At a signal, the planters rushed on board to assess which groups offered the best quality for the least money.

### **How slaves were captured and their journey to the coast**

The slaves were captured in tribal wars or raids on villages. Boys and men between the ages of sixteen and forty were sought especially. Old persons, women and children were left behind or killed in the raids. Those captured were marched to the coast. The slaves were assembled in coffles and were often chained together. Speed was essential as a captain was waiting at the coast for the slaves. Those who did not keep up were left behind or punished.

### **Methods used to capture slaves**

- Surprise attacks- The slave raiders often used the element of surprise. Africans were ambushed and kidnapped as they worked or travelled away from the community. Under such conditions they would have been outnumbered with little chance of escaping or calling for help. As people ran from their burning homes, many were grabbed and taken away.
- The use of trickery- Sometimes slave hunters enticed people to go with them promising to take them to exciting new places and to see many wonderful things. Some Africans went willingly only to be captured and forced to make a trip away from their home.

➤ Tribal differences- The animosity which often existed between the tribes was exploited by the slave traders. Whereas Africans would've been reluctant to sell a member of their own tribe, they usually would've been more willing to sell a member of the enemies' tribe. Enemies captured during tribal warfare were therefore sold to the Europeans.

#### **Items used as a medium of exchange for slaves**

The items used as a medium of exchange for slaves include knives, guns, alcohol, beads, cloth, and silk.

#### **What happened to the slaves as they arrived at the coast?**

When the slaves arrived at the coast, slave quarters called barracoons were ready to receive them. The initial examination of the slaves took place outside the barracoons which were as dark dungeons. Usually the ship surgeon examines them on the beach. They were stripped naked and placed into two groups: the sound ones and the rejects. The rejected ones had ailments. The sound ones were branded on the chest with a red hot iron, signifying the country that they will be shipped to. The slave sales then came. After, the slaves were placed on board ships waiting to be transported to the New World.

### **The Organization of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**

The organization of the slave trade was placed in the hand of a company which was given the sole right by a particular nation to trade in slaves on the coast of West Africa, to erect and maintain forts necessary for the protection of the trade and transport and sell slaves in the West Indies. Individuals, that is free traders or interlopers, were excluded.

The British established the Company of Royal Adventurers trading to Africa in 1663 and replaced it in 1672 by the Royal African Company. The French established the French West Indian Company in 1673 and in 1674 it was transferred to the Senegal Company. The Dutch trade was given the name Dutch West Indian Company in 1621.

These slaves trading companies established trading forts called factors. Factors were in charge of these forts. The responsibility of these factors was to purchase slaves from the Africans and to keep them in barracoons, they were also responsible for overseeing the large complex credit system. The slave trade was one side of the triangular trade linking Europe, West Africa and the Americas. The trip from Europe was the first leg of the triangular trade. The traders involved in this leg of the trade had to ensure that they had the financial support of the national company or the sponsorship of independent private people before they set out to obtain slaves in Africa. This sponsorship included the provision of suitable ships, adequate crew, supplies of food and water, proper insurance coverage against loss at sea from pirate attacks, in addition to manufactured goods to exchange in Africa.

Ships left the European ports (Bristol and Liverpool) carrying textiles, guns and other metal goods to forts exchanged for slaves who were taken to Bridgetown, Barbados and Kingston, Jamaica. On the return journey from the Caribbean to England, they carried sugar on the return journey.

### **The Middle Passage**

The Middle Passage refers to the journey across the Atlantic Ocean from the coast of West Africa to the New World. During the period of slavery, this journey lasted from 6 weeks to 3 months. The duration depended on the weather and the exact distance to be covered.

Many slaves saw the ocean for the first time when they arrived on the coast after their first capture. The sound of water and the sight of the huge vessel riding at anchor filled them with great fear and amazement. Their fear increased when they were made to board the vessel and saw Europeans for the first time. According to Equiano, "I was now persuaded that they were going to kill me.", the different complexion and strange language spoken by the Europeans only served to confirm the belief in the minds of Africans that they would be killed.

When the ship started on its journey the slaves were packed in the hold of the ship without even sufficient room to turn. The heat in the hold of the ship was overbearing due to the fact that the ship always travelled in the tropics. It was made worse by the usual overcrowding. The air in the hold soon became unfit for breathing. There was the stench of filth, perspiration and vomit. Disease spread easily under these conditions and the groans of the dying could sometimes be heard. The slaves often suffered from circulatory problems brought up from lying all day in the same position. To reduce this effect, the slaves were brought up on deck one day for exercise. While on deck the slaves were always closely guarded to prevent them from jumping overboard. As an added precaution nettings were placed along the sides of the vessel. Despite these measures however, a few slaves did jump into the ocean. Some of them may have hoped to swim back to Africa, whilst others would have looked forward to the after-life, preferring death to the misery aboard the ship. For those who jumped overboard and caught, the punishment was severe.

### **Arrival in the West Indies**

On arrival in the New World, the slaves were physically weak and mentally depressed. If sold immediately the slave captains would only have obtained a low price for them. To ensure a good price, they sometimes allowed the slaves a few days of fresh air to refresh themselves. They were fed fresh fruits to improve their skin tone and carbohydrates and protein to increase weight and strength. Just before the sale, the slaves were oiled in an effort to give them a healthy glow.

### **Effects of the slave trade on West Africa**

- Reduction in the population. Historians estimate that by time the British slave trade ended, some 10-15 million slaves were forcibly taken from their homeland. This obviously led to an artificial decrease in the population. It was to be an annual decline as the slave trade gathered momentum each year until its abolition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (1807).

- Families were separated. Parents were crudely snatched, leaving their precious children behind. In some cases, it was the reverse. Children were taken leaving grieving parents behind.
- Homes were literally destroyed by fire during the raids.
- The raiders took the young and strong people. These represented the backbone of the economy- the labour force. Needless to say, production declined, particularly in the short run until they were able to start all over again.
- There was increased distrust among neighbours and even friends.
- Local production and crafts such as pottery and brass work decreased. Firstly, many skilled persons were taken. Secondly, with the influx of European consumer goods that were exchanged for slaves, there was an increase in the taste and demand for these goods. They were now viewed as better than the local products.
- The guns and ammunition that were trade items for slaves gave extra security to one group but provided the means for them to raid another group.
- Many African chiefs became rich from the trade. Some used the profits from the trade to expand their kingdom. One such group was Benin.
- The trade opened up new routes in the interior of West Africa.
- Employment was provided for a number of locals. Sadly, they found jobs as cohorts with white slave raiders. Others supplied traders with food on the journey to the coast and so on.
- Some chiefs charged taxes for the coffles to pass through their area. With this money they were able to develop their territory.
- Other chiefs concentrated on the slave trade and the profits to be had from it rather than their political duties.

## **The Effects of Slavery on the Caribbean**

### **Social**

- An artificial increase in the size of the population as literally hundreds of thousands of African slaves were imported annually into the New World.
- A change in the racial composition of the society. Before the Sugar Revolution the majority of the population was white and the minority black. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, blacks far outnumbered whites, in some cases the ratio was as much as 25:1.
- A host of new laws were introduced to regulate and define the relationship between master and slaves, for example, the **Deficiency Act** was passed to deal with the unequal ration. Then each Colonial Power drafted their own set of laws: **Spanish: Siete Partidas**, **French: Code Noir** and the **English** colonies enacted their individual **Slave Codes**.

- A whole new culture was introduced- the African culture. There was a small amount of mixing of the two cultures(hybridization/creolization) as well.
- A new “breed” of person was introduced. These were the mulattoes. They were the off spring of the whites and blacks.
- Society became highly stratified. A person was now judged firstly by colour and then wealth, so that even a poor white was deemed to be of a higher status than a rich mulatto.

## **Economic**

- The pattern of landownership changed. Before sugar and slavery, there were many farmers owning small plots of land on which they grew tobacco and other cash crops. This pattern changed to a few landowners owning large estates on which they cultivated sugarcane to be manufactured into raw muscovado sugar for export to the Mother Country.
- The price of land increased dramatically towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and into the 18<sup>th</sup> century as more and more sugar estates were being established.
- Large amounts of capital were invested in the sugar industry. Most of this capital however came from the Mother Country itself. Soon the West Indian planters became indebted to (European) British bankers, investors and merchants.
- The plantation owners became very wealthy. Some of them went back to Europe to live in comfort and style, showing off their wealth. The expression “as rich as a West Indian planter” became the accepted description of any wealthy person.
- England collected a lot of taxes and duties and shared in the profits of the Sugar Industry. Later, she would use much of this money to finance her Industrial Revolution.
- The Triangular trade provided employment in a number of areas from shipbuilding to insurance, to porters and warehouse landlords among others.

The European countries: France, Portugal, Britain, the Netherlands (Holland), and Denmark were directly involved in the slave trade. Spain did not directly participate in the slave trade but chiefly purchased slaves from the Portuguese and English traders in Africa.

## **Mahogany, logwood, cotton, coffee, and cocoa production**

Coffee was grown as an export crop during the days of slavery in the following colonies: **Jamaica      Dominica      Grenada      St. Lucia**

The forest or trees had to be burnt and cut and the land prepared for the coffee seedlings. This, of course, was done by the slaves as they worked their way on the steep slopes of the hillsides. They then marked out the fields in even rows with an equal distance from each other. The land was then levelled with terraces.

Why?

- (a) For convenience of working in the fields
- (b) To prevent soil erosion

The field slaves planted ground provisions, for example, cassava between the young trees. This provided quick income for the estates until the coffee was matured. On most of the estates also, trees were planted to protect the plants from strong winds. Constant weeding of the fields was done. At reaping time which was usually from the end of August to the beginning of September, the slaves would go out to the fields as early as it dawned to pick berries. This exercise continued until about midday when they had a break for lunch.

After lunch, they resumed picking until sunset or it was too dark to see, whichever occurred first. At the end of each packaging session, a Negro slave driver checked the basket of each slave. Those whose baskets were not full were lashed.

Another set of slaves was responsible for passing the berries through a pumping/pulping mill. This process also allowed for the removal of the skin from the berries. The "naked" berries were then washed in a certain cistern. Again it was the job of the slaves to ensure that the cisterns contained enough water for the washing process. After they were washed, the slaves spread them out on a platform or glacis to dry in the drying house. Meanwhile, the old and sick slaves and children sat and cleaned the coffee. That is, they picked out the bad/spoilt

berries and threw them away and stored the “good” ones in a granary. Another set of slaves packed the good beans for export on carts which were then driven by the slaves to the port where they were stacked on the waiting ship.

### **The Work of the Slaves in Cotton Production**

Cotton was grown in: Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Vincent, Jamaica, and British North America- chiefly Louisiana.

The slaves would clear the land and then dig holes for the cotton seeds to be planted. The seeds were planted one metre apart. The slaves continuously weeded and fertilized the soil using animal manure. Other cash crops were planted between to prevent soil erosion. When the cotton bolls burst this was an indication that they were ready for harvesting! The slaves then picked the crop boll by boll using their bare hands. The bolls did not open all at the same time so the slaves were to keep moving up and down the rows to ensure that they got all the ripe cottons. Each slave was given a sack to put the fluffy white bolls in. Slave drivers checked the amount in each sack and administered lashes to those slaves who did not meet the minimum required amount. The slaves then emptied their sacks and hurried back to the fields to resume picking.

The bolls were then spread out on a platform to dry. Old and sick slaves, joined by the children, picked out any trash or leaves that may have been gathered with the bolls. Another set of slaves separated the fibres in the boll. They were then packed and shipped off.

### **The Work of the Slaves in the Cocoa Industry**

Cocoa was produced chiefly in Jamaica, St. Vincent, Dominica and Grenada.

The slaves would clear the land and plant the cuttings directly. It took about five (5) years for the trees to grow to maturity but the best harvest was after eight years. The second option is to plant the seedlings that are grown in a nursery. The seedlings were allowed to grow to a certain height before they were transplanted. The slaves then planted cash crops around the cocoa plants to increase the humidity while providing shade. The pods took about five and a half months to mature so there were two harvesting seasons for this industry. Meanwhile, the slaves constantly weeded the fields.

When the pods were ready for harvesting, the first gang of slaves, armed with machetes, moved into the fields to cut the pods swiftly from the tree. They dropped these in the baskets that they had been provided with. Since they had to cover a wide area, these were usually the older or stronger slaves.

The second gang used their machetes to split the pods open to enable them to remove the pulpy or flesh fruit inside. The fruit was then put to dry and ferment. This took about five to seven days in the sun. The pulp drained away leaving just the beans. In Grenada, slaves danced on the beans to give them a polished look. This attracted the buyer faster than dull beans. The beans were then packed for export.

### **The Work of the Slaves in the Forestry Industry**

Logwood and mahogany were produced in British Guiana, Jamaica, Tobago, and British Honduras (Belize) but the latter was the chief supplier before Emancipation. Only the strong males were selected for work in the logwood and mahogany industries.

### **Logwood**

Logwood is a dyewood that grows plentiful in Belize. It was used to dye woolen goods, black, grey, purple and dark red.

The slaves along with a white overseer, went to the forest for a number of days or even weeks. They too were armed with a machete for cutting their way through the forest and an axe to chop down the trees. The whites had guns to shoot game. At the end of each day, the men cooked, smoked tobacco and even drank rum together. It may sound like fun but there was a lot of hard work to be done before this and it was basically a lonely life for these male slaves.

Arrangements were then made to get the lumber to the ports.

### **Mahogany**

By 1770, there was more logwood on the market than was needed. This is known as a glut. This resulted in a dramatic fall in the price being offered on the market. In addition, the development of cheaper man-made dyes in Europe led to a decrease in the demand for logwood so the settlers shifted to mahogany.

By 1779, mahogany replaced logwood and dominated the social, economic and political life of British Honduras until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Mahogany was required for shipbuilding and to a lesser extent, cabinet making.

Wood cutting was seasonal and required the slaves to spend long periods away from their family. The mahogany trees had to be found, cut and trimmed. The logs were then taken through temporary paths to the nearest riverside. They were then formed into rafts and floated down river. There were basically three (3) groups of slaves that were involved in this strenuous exercise and the numbers ranged from a minimum of ten (10) to a maximum of fifty (50). A foreman or captain was responsible for coordinating the gangs' activities.

### **The Huntsman**

He was very important to the process. He was regarded as a skilled slave. His job was to search for the mahogany trees. Unlike logwood which grows along river banks in groups, mahogany was scattered throughout the forests and must be searched out among the other trees and dense undergrowth.

The axe men were the ones to cut the trees down. They were usually the ones also to clear a path through which the logs were dragged. This gang was responsible for trimming the trees after they had fallen.

### **What were the similarities and differences in the forestry industry?**

#### **Similarities**

-Only strong males were used.

- The males stayed away from families and friends for long periods.
- The tools and tasks were similar.
- The presence of white supervisors and overseers.

### **Differences**

- Mahogany slaves spent a longer time in the fields.
- The huntsman or skilled slave was needed.
- Different organization of labour.
- Logwood slaves enjoyed certain “recreational activities” at the end of their working time.

### **Plantation Society: Divisions among the ethnic groups (social stratification) and occupations of each group**

Plantation Society: The rigidly stratified system of social and economic relations enforced on plantations in the Americas.

#### **Divisions among slaves**

At the top of the slave social ladder were the domestic slaves. They were then followed by the artisan or skilled slaves. The field slaves or praedial slaves were at the bottom of the slave social ladder. The slaves used mainly skin tone and the type of work they did as factors to determine their social status. Other factors included: leadership skills, age, treatment which they enjoyed on the estate, and personal possessions.

#### **Divisions among whites**

The planters or attorneys were at the top of the social ladder of the whites. They were followed by the overseers, bookkeepers, and indentured servants. The whites used education, family background and wealth as factors to determine their social status.

#### **Occupations**

##### **Whites**

- Planning estate work
- Supervising labour

- Administering punishment
- Teaching the slaves skills

### ***Coloureds***

- Nannies
- Cooks
- Domestic Slaves

### ***Blacks***

- Carpenters
- Blacksmiths
- Taylors
- Factory workers
- Wheel rights
- Coopers
- Masons
- Prepare and harvest plants

### **Reasons why free coloureds had less status than whites**

- They were descendants of Black slaves
- They were less wealthy than whites and so were disadvantaged when it came to holding certain positions in society
- They were generally less educated than whites

### **What factors were used by whites to determine slaves' social status?**

- Their skills (carpenters, coopers, masons)
- Strength (muscular build, size)
- Age (youthfulness)
- Health
- Leadership qualities
- Country/place of birth
- Complexion
- Special medicinal skills
- Degree of loyalty which they demonstrated to their masters

### **What privileges were enjoyed by whites on the estate?**

- Better jobs
- Better living quarters
- Better food
- Payment
- Respected

- Had rights to bear arms
- More educated
- Right to vote
- They could influence political decisions as they were members of parliament
- Visit their homeland

### **Privileges enjoyed by coloured slaves (mulattoes)**

- Some lived in the Great House (basement)
- Generally better fed than blacks
- Had access to books and could read
- Better dressed than blacks

### **Organization of a typical 18<sup>th</sup> century Sugar Plantation**

Sugar estate lands were divided into:

1. Sugarcane fields
2. Pasture lands (animals)
3. Woodlands (building slave huts & fuel for boiling houses)
4. Vegetable gardens (vegetables for whites)
5. Provision grounds (where slaves got their food to sell)
6. Work yards
7. Living quarters

### **Buildings on the Sugar Plantations and their use**

- The Mill- grinding/crushing of cane to make sugar.
- Boiling House- cane was clarified by heating with white lime, cane juice evapourated, leaving a mixture of sugar crystals and molasses.
- Curing House- for weeks, excess molasses dripped through small holes at the bottom of the hogsheads leaving muscovado sugar behind.
- Distillery (Still House)- molasses skimmed of cane juice was converted into rum.
- Trash House- crushed cane was stored here to be used as fuel.
- Work Shops- this is where skilled craftsmen made barrels, carts, wagons, etc.

- Great House- largest house on the estate, house of the planter and his family, easy access to the road, usually stood on top of a hill where all could be seen.
- Overseers and bookkeepers' quarters- used for living by the overseers and bookkeepers and also as offices.
- Slave Huts- no real architecture, small and just enough to sleep in.
- Store House- supplies, tools, chemicals.
- Hospital- "Hot House", where sick slaves were taken care of.
- G A O L- where slaves were punished.

## SUGAR PRODUCTION PROCESS

- **Cultivating/planting:** The field slaves prepared the land for cultivation at the end of August. The slaves dug the holes, put animal manure in them, then placed cane cuttings called ratoons and lightly covered them with soil. The canes were planted just before the rainy season, as they grew, the slaves weeded the fields, moulded (refilled the holes with soil that was removed). The canes removed the dry trash from the cane stock. The canes took 14- 18 months to mature.
- **Harvesting:** When the canes were ripe the slaves, armed with machetes and cutlasses, cut the canes and removed the outer leaves. The reaped canes were then tied into bundles and transported to the mill in carts or wagons within 48 hours to prevent deterioration of the sucrose content.

## MANUFACTURING OF SUGAR

After the canes were unloaded they were fed by hand into the mill, which consisted of three pairs of rotating iron rollers. Here the canes were crushed and the juice was extracted. The extracted juice was conveyed by a gutter from the mill to the boiling house where it was emptied into the copper clarifier called the siphon where it was heated with white lime. The impurities rose as scum to the surface and were skimmed off and put aside to be used in the making of rum. The head boiler ladled the purified juice into successive boilers where it was boiled. There were about three to six boilers, each smaller and hotter than the previous one, hung over a fire. As the hot juice passed through the boilers, it was constantly stirred by the slaves until it became thick and dark brown in colour. After it boiled for some time, the head boiler tested its readiness by stretching the mixture between his thumb and forefinger. This is the crystallization process. The sugar crystals mixed with molasses were ladled into large troughs to cool. After the sugar had cooled, it was placed on sloping platforms for about three weeks to allow the molasses to drain off. The molasses was collected and later used in the making of rum. The sugar which remained in the barrels was called muscovado. The barrels were sealed and ready for shipment. The sealed barrels of sugar crystals were loaded onto carts and taken to the coast. They were loaded and rolled onto the canoes which took them to the waiting ships. On arrival in Europe, the sugar was further refined at one of the chief ports. This process made the sugar crystals finer.

## **From the Caribbean to Britain**

The planter would have made prior arrangements with a merchant, agent or consignee to collect the shipment of sugar as it arrives at the port in England. One such port would be Liverpool or Bristol. He paid the shipping cost and customs duties charged on entry.

The agent made arrangements to store the shipment of hogsheads in a warehouse until the time of sale. He awaited the best price, especially since he was usually paid on a commission basis. Porters at the dock eagerly unloaded the hogshead for him from the ship to the waiting carts. He then hired and paid draymen to transport the goods to the warehouse that he had selected.

As per arrangement with the warehouse, he was charged insurance in case of fire and/or theft. The latter was fairly common in those days. He paid rent to the warehouse manager.

The next day or so, he sold the sugar to the highest bidder or hires a broker to do this for him. After the goods had been sold he paid the broker if he had hired one, and then subtracted his commission. According to the arrangement that he had with the planter, the rest was usually deposited.

Depending on the relationship that he shared with the planter, the latter might have requested certain items or consumer goods such as crockery, items of clothing, watches, etc. These would have been sourced and shipped to the planter at the next convenient departure of ships for the Caribbean.

## **The Use of Labour on the Sugar Plantation**

The labour force on an estate was divided into two main groups: white employees and the slaves.

### **1. White employees**

They occupied the managerial and supervisory positions on the estates. The highest in rank among them was the overseer or manager.

The overseers had quite a lot to do. Apart from the overall supervision of the estates activities, they had to ensure that all the material, equipment and other necessities for the production process was right there on the plantation. For example, he had to see to it that the staves and horses were ordered in time, as well as flour and saltfish for the slaves, that the mills were in working order and that there was adequate machetes and hoes for the field slaves.

Other white employees included clerks, bookkeepers and so on. Their job was to keep an accurate record of the estates assets and equipment. They recorded the number of hogsheads made, the number of carts/wains in stock and so on. We use the word employee because they got paid.

## **2. The slaves**

This was undisputedly the largest percentage of the labour force. They did not receive wages for their work. There were two types of slaves: African slaves and Creole slaves but for the purposes of work, the slaves were divided into three main groups:

### **A. Domestic slaves**

These were considered to be the crème de la crème of the slave population because they worked in the Great House and received favors and rewards from its occupants. For example, "hand me down" clothes and left over food. The mere fact that they worked in close proximity to the owners seemed to have been enough, for them to be considered as "privileged" by some of the other slaves.

Their workload was also comparatively lighter. True, the job was more demanding, since they had to respond to the whims and fancy and every cry of the owner and his family, but at least they did not have to toil in the blazing heat under the watchful eye of a slave driver who was not afraid to use his whip.

On the other hand, their daily working conditions depended upon the very nature of the master and his family that they served. Some were spiteful, ill-tempered and grossly inhumane. Still, others were demanding and gave them quaint jobs to perform such as scratching their feet! They did not always have a scheduled time to begin or end work. In the event of a function (party, ball, etc.), they could begin the work of preparing the food from before dawn and still be kept up on their feet all night.

This group of slaves included: washerwomen, butlers, cooks, nursemaids, and coachmen.

### **B. Artisans/Skilled slaves**

These were considered to be the most valuable slaves on the estate because of the importance of their job in converting the cane to the export product known as raw muscovado sugar. This group of slaves worked in the workshops and factory.

### **C. Field/Praedial Slaves**

These represented the largest portion of the slave population. They did the most strenuous work in the fields. They had three main seasons of work: planting, maintenance and reaping or harvest time. This large group is further divided into three gangs. A slave driver was placed in charge of each gang. He was a fellow slave who has been given a bit of authority over the gang. He was expected to use the whip to keep the gang working.

**First Gang:** the strong and healthy slaves, both male and females made up this group. They were responsible for the planting of the cane to include the preparation of the land for planting. At harvest time, they were the ones charged with the responsibility of quickly cutting the canes and tying them in bundles.

**Second Gang:** the young boys and girls about ten to twelve years old, pregnant and convalescing slaves made up this group. They did the lighter work of weeding and harrowing.

**Third Gang:** this gang is called the "pickney" gang. These children of six or seven years are supervised by the elderly as they carried out their assigned tasks of weeding the gardens, carrying sticks for fire for the slaves' meals, collecting yam peels etc., to feed the estate animals and any other general light work that was deemed suitable for their age, size and strength.

The "**guinea birds**", as the newly arrived Africans were called, would be assigned to Creole slaves who were to train them and teach them the new language. This is part of what was known as the "**seasoning period**".

### **Social relations on a typical 18th Century Sugar Estate**

It is fair to argue that there was limited social contact between the slaves and their masters. This was to preserve the distance between them as well as the notion of superiority of the whites and inferiority of the blacks. But there were some instances when they were forced to relate to each other.

**In what instances and circumstances would they be forced to relate to each other?**

Planters, overseers and white employees came into contact when issuing orders, in their supervisory capacity, and when carrying out punishments.

**Planters and Domestic slaves:**

Domestic slaves had the most day to day contact or relations with the whites. They had many personal tasks to perform that brought them into contact with each other, for example, serving meals, assisting with baths and so on.

### **Overseer and Field/ Artisan slaves**

He was the one with the constant day to day relating at roll call, supervising the issue of rations be it food or clothing (osnaburg) and so on. He was expected to stand by or sit astride his horse constantly supervising the planting and reaping of the cane as well as the conversion of the juice to sugar.

He was usually the person to whom the slaves reported their "illnesses". He had to determine if the slaves' illness warranted being sent from the fields to the "hospital". At times, he even had to dispense medicines!

He also had sexual relations with the female slaves. They were also the ones who prepared his meals, washed his clothes, and saw to all his other social needs.

### **The Masters and the Field Slaves**

The whites came into contact with the field slaves chiefly at holiday time. For example, the planter sometimes sat on their verandah and watched the slave parade at Christmas time. He would laugh and call to them. Some slaves were often invited to perform acts of amusements at parties, especially the sambo or quashie characters.

### **Sexual Contact:**

The planters conveniently thought of their slaves as property and as such felt that they had the unquestionable right to do what they wanted with them. To make matters worse, they lived in a society that "turned a blind eye" to the sexual relations with and ill treatment of the slaves.

### **White women vs Slave women**

There was much resentment between the white women and the enslaved woman who was "involved" with the white man. As a result, relations between were hostile. The white woman would try to hurt or maim the enslaved. She would often complain that tasks done by her were not done well hoping to get the planter to demote her to the fields. If that didn't work she would give her the most demeaning and degrading jobs to perform.

Some white or coloured women in the towns who kept taverns and brothels owned one or two female slaves. The patrons and clients of these business places were sailors, military officers and so on.

# African Cultural Forms in the Caribbean up to 1838

## Religion

Though the planters tried to stifle the indigenous religion, much cultural retention occurred. The slaves held on to their beliefs and practices as much as and where possible. Here are some of them:

- Life after death.
- The spirit world: duppies or ghosts.
- The forces of good and evil and the constant struggle between the two.
- That the dead is still a part of the community.
- Two types of magic. Obeah- used to inflict hurt or harm and Myalism- used to promote life, love, health, and success. Both involved the use of herbs, oils, potions, etc.
- A lot of music and dance in their expressions of worship.
- Ancestral spirits and that one can actually make contact with them and that they are constantly watching over us.
- Chanting of songs.
- Gods of nature- rain, thunder, lightning and fertility.
- Highest respect for Mother earth.

## Food

The slaves had to prepare their own meals. They did it the way they were taught back home in Africa. Also, the fact that they were allowed to grow their own provisions meant that they were able to choose what to grow- example, yam, coco, dasheen, etc. They continued their culinary skills. Trinidadian slaves had the luxury of beans and palm oils as they would have had in Africa.

## Dress

They were given either two suits of clothing per year or the equivalent yards of **osnaburg**. This is a type of rough khaki also called guinea blue or Dutch stripes. The women would wrap their themselves with the cloth the way they would have in Africa to form dress or skirts. And of course, they did not forget their "tie head".

## Language

The slaves came from different areas and ethnic groups in West Africa and so spoke different languages. This forced them to create a new tongue we now know as patois. But several African words survived.

## Music and Dance

They had all sorts of songs, work or digging songs as we have learnt, love songs, songs of sorrow, songs of joy and so on. In fact, it seems as if they had a song for every occasion just as they had a proverb to fit every situation. Their music had a lot

of rhythm and beat. It involved the use of instruments such as: Tambourines, Banjos, Flutes, Rattles, and Xylophones.

Their dance had a lot of movement and passion, involving gyration of the hip and pelvic areas and the shaking of the rear. This was seen as vulgar by many of the whites, though secretly they were aroused by it, no wonder they understood its sexual importance and described it as debauchery. Types of dance included: Dinkie, Minnie, Kumina, and Brukins.

### **Medicine**

Traditional African Medicine is a holistic discipline involving extensive use of indigenous herbalism combined with aspects of African spirituality. The Africans fiercely resisted the medicinal practices of the Europeans and preferred to use their indigenous methods of healing. The Africans used a lot of herbs and plantsto treat ailments. They also believed that not only the physical body should be free from illness but the spirit as well. African healers not only used plants and herbs to cure ailments but also charms, incantations, and the casting as spells. The individual should be both physically and spiritually sound.

### **Reasons it was difficult for slaves to retain their Culture**

1. The opposition which they faced from the planters who instituted laws to suppress aspects of the culture, like drumming and obeah.
2. Planters discouraged the slaves from practising their dances, which some mistakenly described as devil worship.
3. Slaves were not encouraged to practise their tribal religions but, instead, were sometimes baptized into the Euro-Christian churches so as to try to destroy their link with their native religion, since they worked for most of the daylight hours.
4. During the “seasoning” period, definite attempts were made to “deculturize” the slaves as they were taught the language of the master and forbidden to use their own tribal languages.
5. The planters tried to ensure that their slaves were from different ethnic groups so that they would not unite around common customs.
6. Marriages and families were never encouraged in the British colonies.
7. In some cases, planters deliberately separated family members so as to deprive the male of any other object of his loyalty other than the planter himself.
8. Slaves were robbed of their African names that would allow them to identify with their African origin, and given European names.
9. The slaves’ fear of the severe punishment that could result from disobeying anti-African cultural laws and regulations.
10. Their need for survival, which was guaranteed only by loyalty to, and cooperation with, the whites, meant that some of them were extremely cautious about continued participation in traditional cultural activities which planters frowned upon.

## **Ways in which slaves resisted planters and retained some aspects of their Culture**

1. The slaves congregated late at nights and in secret which was against the law.
2. Some plantation owners used obeahmen as supplements to doctors. This was intended to be a cost effective measure but provided the slaves with the opportunity to pass down herbal secrets and practices of their forefathers.
3. Others used or allow the obeahmen to continue his practice as a means of driving fear in the slaves.
4. The slaves conducted their own funeral services and so the tradition and practices were preserved with each successive funeral that they performed. Of course, the planter did not attach any significance to these ceremonies so he did not attend them. His absence gave the slaves the opportunity to do their own thing and so preserve their heritage.
5. The slaves used their own language when communicating. This includes the language of the drums and other musical instruments. As more slaves were bought and brought to the estates, the languages revived.
6. They kept their dances and songs, and the planters, at times, believed that when they danced and sang, it was a sign of their contentment, and so left them alone.
7. They held on to the rhythm of African music and revelry.
8. The slaves were given some amount of leniency at Christmas time in particular. They managed to mix and hide their religion within the established faith. For example, Pocomania is a mixture of the Roman Catholic faith and the African religion.

## **Reasons slaves were able to keep aspects of their Culture**

1. Firstly, mortality rate was very high on the estates. This meant that the planters had to constantly buy new slaves. Though he tried to buy slaves from different areas, the reality was that most planters liked to buy slaves from a particular area of the West African coast because they were known for their hard work and industrial skills.
2. The slaves had a strong determination to continue to practice their culture.
3. They practiced some aspects like drumming and obeah secretly because any evidence of these could have dire consequences including death for the adherents.
4. The large number of slaves helped to keep the culture alive as they were able to strengthen the will and the memory of one another, so that what some were afraid to do, others would dare to do, and what some forgot, others would remind them of.

5. Many of the slaves who came were young, and they had a strong recollection of their cultural practices and so, although they were robbed of the material aspects when they were taken from Africa, they could use what was available locally to recreate what they had lost.
6. The planters' ignorance of the significance of some aspects of the culture caused them to encourage or ignore some and outlaw others and so, even though the John Canoe dance, for example, was fraught with rebellious overtones, the planters did not understand that, and so they allowed the slaves to practice it freely.
7. They were able to pass on aspects of their culture to succeeding generations through their strong oral tradition, which was encouraged by the quasi-communal lifestyle, which they maintained.
8. Their obeahmen were responsible for the survival of the culture as they provided bold leadership and defied the odds in order to maintain their practices.

## **RESISTANCE AND REVOLTS**

### **Forms and measures of Slave Control**

Slave control refers to the various methods used by the planters or slave-owners in order to keep the slaves subjected and in an inferior position.

1. **Psychological and ideological**- constantly proclaiming in word and by deed that the Negro was inferior to the white man, conditioning the slaves to accept servitude.
2. **Cultural**- prohibiting the use of African languages and practice of African religions and customs. They were forced to celebrate Western Holidays. The planters changed the slaves' African names to Christian names. The slaves were forced to develop a patois, that is a mixture of English, French, Indian, African tribal, and Creole.
3. **Physical**- the establishment and maintenance of police and military forces intended to prevent or punish slave insurrection. Slaves were whipped severely, thrown in jail, their limbs were cut off (dismembered) and even killed.

**4. Social-** the practice of rewarding those slaves who acted as informants or who in other ways assisted the masters against their fellow slaves. Planters were responsible for creating social divisions among the slaves in terms of occupations. The slaves who were informants were usually loyal and less willing to rebel because they had the most to lose.

**5. Economical-** preventing them from earning money which they could use to purchase their freedom. In the British Caribbean slave society, it was difficult for a slave to find a wage earning occupation.

Although many British West Indian planters were not enthusiastic about Christianizing their slaves and many of them made life difficult for the Non-Conformist Missionaries who sought to work among the slaves, some of these planters, particularly in smaller islands like Antigua, were willing to grant missionaries permission to enter their plantations. Some planters welcomed the work of the missionaries in making the slaves more loyal. The Christian principles that were taught by the missionaries might have helped to prevent slaves and gang uprisings.

Slaves could not own property without the master's consent. Their provision grounds were kept small so as to keep them from earning a sizeable income or reaping food. There were laws that prevented slaves from rendering services in town. Slaves were only allowed one market day, initially Sunday. They were also forbidden to sell sugar, fire wood and from trading in a great variety of articles such as horses and cattle. Shopkeepers in town could not buy from slaves. All of these were economic methods of slave control used by the planters to keep the slaves dependent on them and less likely to free themselves from their terrible situation.

## **Slave Laws**

Slave laws were introduced into the colonies and were the main method used to control slaves.

### **The British Slave Laws**

- ❖ A slave could not own property.
- ❖ A slave could not grow or sell sugar, cotton or coffee but could sell things he made like baskets, pots, jewellery.
- ❖ He could not give evidence against a free man in court.
- ❖ He could not hire himself out without his owners' permission.
- ❖ He was forbidden to get married.
- ❖ They were not to be taught to read or write.
- ❖ They were forbidden to become Christians.

### **The Spanish Slave Laws (Las Siete Partidas)**

The Spanish Code was different from other slave laws in that the Spanish regarded the slave as a person as well as property. Therefore, the laws offered him protection against unwarranted assault or punishment, or other forms of inhumane treatment by his master. In addition, the Spanish acknowledged that slavery was contrary to natural justice and was evil, but a necessary evil for the economic development of the colonies.

The Spanish authorities recognized the right of slaves to seek their freedom to remove the danger of revolt by other means than repressive legislation.

- ❖ A slave had the right to purchase his freedom with or without the consent of his owner by repaying his purchase price and, if necessary, by periodic repayments.
- ❖ A slave could appeal to the courts (Audiencia) if he was ill-treated.
- ❖ A slave had the right to be baptized and instructed in the Catholic Faith.
- ❖ Plantation slaves held the right to be free from work on Sundays and Holy Days.
- ❖ A slave had the right to marry with or without the consent of his owner.
- ❖ A slave had the right to be provided with food, clothing, shelter, and to be taken care of by his master in his old age.
- ❖ A slave had the right to his plot of land without the consent of his master.
- ❖ The owner could not kill or ill-treat him to the point of suffering. He could not overwork or underfeed his slaves.
- ❖ All judges were required to promote freedom because freedom was natural.

### **The French Slave Laws (Code Noir)**

The control and treatment of slaves in the French Caribbean was laid down by the *Code Noir* (Black Code), which was drawn up in France in 1685. It remained in force until 1804, when it was replaced by the *Code Napoleon*, the basis for the

legal system throughout the French empire. The *Code Noir* was meant to be strictly applied, but in practice the milder measures were disregarded, and many modifications were made to separate clauses in the following century.

However, basically the code survived in its original form.

- ❖ All slaves to be baptised.
- ❖ Slaves should not be worked on Sundays or Holy Days.
- ❖ Slave marriage to be encouraged. The owner's consent must be given.
- ❖ Sexual intercourse between master and his slave to be punished by the confiscation of the slave. If between another man and the slave, a fine to be imposed. Children of such unions would take the status of the mother.
- ❖ Rations and clothes to be provided. Old and sick slaves to be fed and maintained.
- ❖ Slaves to be forbidden to own property and anything they acquired to belong to their owner.
- ❖ Promises, contracts and gifts made by slaves to be null and void.
- ❖ Slaves to be forbidden to sell sugar, or any other produce, without their owner's permission.
- ❖ Death penalty to be inflicted for striking master or mistress, and in some cases, any free person.
- ❖ Absenteeism of one month to be punished by cutting off ears and branding on the shoulder. Absent two times in one month to be punished by cutting off the buttock and branding the other shoulder. Absent three in one month to be punished by death.
- ❖ Owner to be compensated if slave executed on owner's own denunciation.
- ❖ Torture and mutilation to be prohibited under penalty of confiscation of the slave.
- ❖ Slaves to be regarded as movable property and liable to be sold apart from the rest of their family.
- ❖ The plantation and slaves to be regarded as one.
- ❖ Owners and drivers to treat slaves humanely.
- ❖ Owners to have right to free slave after twenty years' service.
- ❖ Manumitted slaves to have the same rights as free persons.

Thus, in general, the *Code Noir* was more humane than the British laws. For example, Christianity, marriage and humane treatment were expressly ordered. However, punishment was equally harsh and in many other ways French laws were similar to those in the British colonies.

### **Difference between Spanish and British Slave Laws**

- ❖ The Spanish Laws were not framed to deal with the West Indian situation but were incorporated into the laws of the Spanish colonies. Slavery in Spain was a

less severe institution than was plantation slavery in the New World and so the "Siete Partidas" were less severe than the British Slave Laws.

- ❖ In British colonies, the laws were made by the assemblies of white settlers in each colony. The basis of the slave laws was fear. As the number of slaves increased, the fear of the whites grew and so the severity of the laws increased.
- ❖ Slaves, according to the Spanish Laws, were souls to be saved and therefore should be converted to the Roman Catholic faith. There was no concern about the souls of slaves in the English Laws prior to that of the 18c.

### **The Dutch and Danish Codes**

The legal provisions designed to control the slaves in the Dutch Caribbean possessions were drawn up by the Dutch West India Company. They were intended to suppress the slaves, but at the same time to show that the owners had social, religious and educational obligations towards them. As in the French colonies, however, the laws concerning these obligations were soon largely unobserved, while the policing laws were expanded and rigidly enforced. As a result, the Dutch acquired a reputation of being the cruellest of all the European slave-owners.

In the Danish islands, the sole purpose of the slave code was to maintain order. The welfare of the slaves was left entirely to the discretion of individual owners until 1755, when the Danish Crown passed an act laying down the responsibilities. As this was intended to form the basis for local laws, a conflict then arose between the need to repress the slaves for security reasons, and the requirement to protect them as human beings. The conflict was resolved by concentrating on repression, and the local laws became even more severe as the ratio of blacks to white increased.

### **Similarities between Code Noir and Siete Partidas**

- ❖ They were drawn up by the metropolis (Mother Country). They were laws of the Crown and they were applicable throughout all the overseas colonies of the Crown.
- ❖ They reflected the strong influence of the Roman Catholic Church on the government. Both provided for the conversion of the slaves to the Roman Catholic Faith.

### **Similarities between Spanish and British Slave Laws**

- ❖ Penalties for slaves.
- ❖ Rights of owners.

### **Reasons Slave Laws were not always successful in controlling slaves**

The brutality of the plantation system never succeeded in crushing the spirit of the enslaved nor did the implementation of slave laws always succeed in controlling their actions.

- ❖ Laws could not deny that slaves were human and capable of objecting to the unjust system that kept them bound.
- ❖ The harsh laws and system often created conditions that caused the slaves to revolt.
- ❖ The slaves' strong basic desire for freedom forced them to ignore or violate the laws which denied them their freedom.
- ❖ Laws could restrain the slaves but they could not prevent them from engaging in acts of resistance such as running away. Runaway slaves like the Maroons of Jamaica successfully resisted the laws and forced the government to sign a treaty with them in 1739.
- ❖ In some of the territories like Barbados, it was sometimes impossible to control runaways when they ran off to a neighbouring island for refuge.
- ❖ Slaves were able to run away and avoid recapture because it was not always easy to determine whether a black person was a runaway slave or free person.
- ❖ The punishment for running away was not always administered because it was not always sensible materially for masters to mutilate, maim or dismember their slaves.
- ❖ Sometimes slaves ignored the laws for example, laws which forbade the slaves to hold fiestas, beat drums and congregate together.
- ❖ Literate slaves like Samuel Sharpe in Jamaica were conscious of debates in Parliament concerning freedom and often felt that the planters were intent on withholding what was legally theirs and thus, they were prepared to take action to force the authorities to act on their behalf.

## **Conclusion**

The disability laws in the French, Spanish and British colonies were primarily concerned with the control of runaways, the need to prevent slave uprisings, prevention and detection of thefts, limiting of slaves' economic opportunities, and general subordination of slaves to their masters. The laws which were in their favour aimed at the dependence of slaves upon their masters.

However, the disability laws tended to be executed vigorously so as to preserve slavery and because of the unequal number of slaves to whites. The laws in their favour were neglected or loosely enforced. Manumission became more and more difficult. In theory, the Spanish Slave Laws were more humane and gave far more protection than the British Police Laws or even the French *Code Noir*. However, as the sugar plantation system developed and slavery was extended in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century throughout the Caribbean, slavery became harsher. Thus, there is evidence which suggests that slavery in the Spanish territories was equally harsh. In addition to the legal slave laws, there were unwritten laws that were used to help control the lives of the slaves. Planters were determined to dominate the lives of the slaves and make them feel racially inferior. It was instilled into the slaves that European culture was superior to African culture which was crude and degrading.

## **Slave Resistance**

Slave resistance was a constant feature of slave society. Enslaved persons in the Caribbean were persistent in their commitment to "freedom and liberty". Such persistence manifested itself in a number of acts such as working slow, full scale rebellion, murder, and the destruction of property. These many acts could be seen as an ongoing struggle between the enslaved and their enslavers which thus came to shape the form of plantation society.

Slave resistance was defined by:

1. Powerlessness
2. Social degradation
3. Natal alienation- being alienated from your roots

## **Causes of Slave Protests**

- A desire for freedom- slaves longed to be free in order to conduct their lives as they thought best.
- Harsh treatment- unreasonable demands and excessive punishment forced slaves to contest their conditions.
- Denial of customary rights- slaves were denied basic rights and many privileges were undermined including those relating to the supply of food, clothing, housing, and medical care.
- Shortage of food- in times of natural disasters such as droughts, slaves protested against inadequacy.
- Conspiracy- a number of slaves having the same tribal backgrounds were usually encouraged to rebel, e.g. Asante.
- Geography- The mountainous terrain of the West Indies with the many hidden passes, forests and ravines were ideal slave hideouts, from which slaves could engage in guerrilla warfare if attacked.

- Landlord Absenteeism- in times when plantations were run by overseers, managers, or Attorneys conditions were harsher.

### **Forms/types of resistance**

1. **Active/overt/ Insurrectionary**- those acts which immediately had an effect on slavery. The more obvious the act, the more one could classify it as a means of active resistance.
2. **Passive/overt/ Non- Insurrectionary**- could be contrasted to the acts of active resistance.

### **Acts of resistance included:**

- Running away
- Obeah
- Setting fire to cane fields
- Destruction of estate machinery
- Pretending ignorance
- Playing drums, singing
- Speaking their native language in private
- Setting up Maroon communities
- Lying
- Insubordination
- Revolution
- Revolts
- Petty stealing of estate property
- Slow work and (malingering) absence
- Maiming and killing of livestock
- Poisoning- the more subtle form of resistance

### **Classification of forms of resistance**

#### **Active forms of resistance**

- Setting fires to cane fields
- Destruction of estate machinery
- Revolution
- Revolts (insurrectionary)
- Maiming and killing of livestock

#### **Passive forms of resistance**

- Running away
- Obeah
- Pretending ignorance
- Playing drums, singing
- Setting up Maroon communities

- Lying
- Insubordination
- Petty stealing of estate property
- Slow working and (malingering) absence
- Poisoning slave owners

### **"Gender specific" forms of resistance**

Specific acts of resistance by enslaved women

- Delaying pregnancies
- Inducing abortions (probably most prevalent where the enslaved women had been a victim of sexual abuse by whites)
- Delaying weaning or breast-feeding babies
- Pretending to be ill during menstrual cycles
- Infanticide
- Cultural resistance- mothers passed on cultural traits to their children
- Concubinage
- Women made up songs making fun of their masters

## **Marronage**

**Definition:** Those slaves who ran away and established small settlements in the mountainous areas of Jamaica, British Guiana, Hispaniola, and Suriname. These individuals were called "maroons". The word marronage is derived from the Spanish word "cimarron", which means "fugitive" or "runaway". The two types of marronage: are **Grand Marronage** and **Petit Marronage**. Grand marronage refers to large groups of people who ran away from plantations, and petit marronage describes the individuals or small groups who ran away. Grand Marronage led to the establishment of "maroon communities" while petit marronage was made up of people who sometimes returned to the estates.

### **Factors which encouraged the development of Maroon Societies**

By the 1730s, maroon settlements were established in Jamaica at Trelawney Town, Crawford Town, Accompong, and Nanny Town because:

- ❖ Effective leadership by people like Cudjoe and Nanny.
- ❖ The topography of Jamaica (dense forests, caves, trees, rocks, mountains, etc.)
- ❖ They were expert trackers and skilled marksmen (learned from Africa).
- ❖ They planted provisions which helped them to survive and they relied on wild cattle and pigs for meat.
- ❖ Their members were replenished by other runaways.
- ❖ They had an excellent signalling system using cow horns (abengs) to send coded messages and were thus able to communicate between settlements.

- ❖ They raided plantations, then retreated back to their hideouts when food was scarce.

### **Bush Negroes of Suriname**

Suriname was a Dutch colony. Bush Negroes stayed close enough to raid plantations but far enough not to be caught. They settled along rivers and were an innovative group.

### **Effects on running away on planters and the efficiency of the plantation**

The act of running away by enslaved persons would have affected the planter and the efficiency of the plantation in a number of ways:

- ❖ Loss of labour for the plantations- resulted in planters having to spend money to replace those who would have escaped.
- ❖ Served as an encouragement to those already on the plantations.
- ❖ Theft- many of the enslaved would have ran away with some of the planter's animals, crops and equipment.
- ❖ Attack on plantations- maroon societies represented a real danger to the estates.

### **The First Maroon War**

The First Maroon War was a conflict between the Jamaican Maroons and the British in Jamaica that reached a climax in 1732.

## **Background**

In 1655, the British defeated the Spanish colonists and took control of most of Jamaica. Following the flight of the Spanish, the Africans whom they had enslaved joined the Amerindian population (and some others who had previously escaped slavery) in the centre of Jamaica to form the Windward Maroon communities. The area is known as the Blue Mountains. The British forces were unable to establish control over the whole island, a large portion remaining in the hands of the Maroons. For 76 years, there were periodic skirmishes between the British and the Maroons, alongside occasional slave revolts. In 1673, one such revolt in St. Ann's Parish of 200 slaves created the separate group of Leeward Maroons. These Maroons united with a group of Madagascars who had survived the shipwreck of a slave ship and formed their own maroon community in St. George's parish. Several more rebellions strengthened the numbers of this Leeward group. Notably, in 1690 a revolt at Sutton's plantation, Clarendon of 400 slaves considerably strengthened the Leeward Maroons. In September 1728, the British sent more troops to Jamaica, changing the balance of power with the Windward Maroons.

The Leeward Maroons inhabited "cockpits," caves, or deep ravines that were easily defended. Their warning of approaching British soldiers allowed the Maroons to evade, thwart, frustrate, and defeat the forces of an Empire.

## **The treaty**

In 1739–40, the British government in Jamaica recognized that it could not defeat the Maroons, so they came to an agreement with them instead. The Maroons were to remain in their five main towns (Accompong, Trelawney Town, Moore Town, Scott's Pass, Nanny Town), living under their own rulers and a British supervisor.

In exchange, they were asked to agree not to harbour new runaway slaves, but rather to help catch them. This last clause in the treaty naturally caused a split between the Maroons and the rest of the black population, although from time to time runaways from the plantations still found their way into Maroon settlements.

Another provision of the agreement was that the Maroons would serve to protect the island from invaders. The latter was because the Maroons were revered by the British as skilled warriors.

The person responsible for the compromise with the British was the Leeward Maroon leader, Cudjoe, a short, almost dwarf-like man who for years fought skillfully and bravely to maintain his people's independence. As he grew older, however, Cudjoe became increasingly disillusioned. He ran into quarrels with his lieutenants and with other Maroon groups. He felt that the only hope for the future was honourable peace with the enemy, which was just what the British were thinking. The 1739 treaty should be seen in this light.

A year later, the even more rebellious Windward Maroons of Trelawney Town also agreed to sign a treaty under pressure from both white Jamaicans and the Leeward

Maroons, though they were never happy about it. This discontentment with the treaty later led to the Second Maroon War.

**The Articles of Pacification with the Maroons of Trelawney Town,  
Concluded on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1739**

**Please note that this is the original form of the Treaty**

In the name of God, Amen. Whereas Captain Cudjoe, Captain, Acompong, Captain Johnny, Captain Cuffee, Captain Quaco, and several other Negroes, their dependents and adherents, have been in a state of war and hostility, for several years past, against our sovereign lord the King, and the inhabitants of this island; and whereas peace and friendship among mankind, and the preventing of effusion of blood, is agreeable to God, consonant to reason, and desired by every good man; and whereas his Majesty George the Second, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, and of Jamaica Lord, Defender of the Faith, has by his letters patent, dated February the twenty-fourth, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight, in the twelfth year of his reign, granted full power and authority to John Guthrie and Francis Sadler, Esquires, to negotiate and finally conclude a treaty of peace and friendship with the aforesaid Captain Cudjoe, and the rest of his captains, adherents, and others his men; they mutually, sincerely, and amicably, have agreed to the following articles:

Firstly: All hostilities shall cease on both sides for ever.

Secondly: The said Captain Cudjoe, the rest of his captains, adherents, and men shall for ever hereafter in a perfect state of freedom and liberty, excepting those who have been taken by them, or fled to them, within two years last past, if such are willing to return to their said masters and owners, with full pardon and indemnity from their said masters or owners for what is past; provided always that, if they are not willing to return, they shall remain in subjection to Captain Cudjoe and in friendship with us, according to the form an tenor of this treaty.

Thirdly: They shall enjoy and possess, for themselves and posterity for ever, all the lands situate and lying between Trelawney Town and the Cockpits, to the amount of fifteen hundred acres, bearing northwest from the said Trelawney Town.

Fourthly: They shall have liberty to plant the said lands with coffee, cocoa, ginger, tobacco, and cotton, and to breed cattle, hogs, goats, or any other flock, and dispose of the produce or increase of the said commodities to the inhabitants of this island; provided always, that when they bring the said commodities to market, they shall apply first to the customs, or any other magistrate of the respective parishes where they expose their goods to sale, for a license to vend the same.

Fifthly: Captain Cudjoe, and all the Captain's adherents, and people now in subjection to him, shall all live together within the bounds of Trelawney Town, and that they have liberty to hunt where they shall think fit, except within three miles of any settlement, crawl, or pen; provided always, that in case the hunters of Captain Cudjoe and those of other settlements meet, then the hogs to be equally divided between both parties.

Sixthly: The said Captain Cudjoe, and his successors, do use their best endeavours to take, kill, suppress, or destroy, either by themselves, or jointly with any other number of men, commanded on that service by his excellency the Governor, or Commander-in-Chief for the time being, all rebels, whosoever they be, throughout this island, unless they submit to the same terms of accommodation granted to Captain Cudjoe, and his successors.

Seventhly: In case this island be invaded by any foreign enemy, the said Captain Cudjoe, and his successors hereinafter named or to be appointed, shall then, upon notice given, immediately repair to any place the Governor for the time being shall appoint, in order to repel the said invaders with his or their utmost force, and to submit to the orders of the Commander in Chief on that occasion.

Eighthly: If any white man shall do any manner of injury to Captain Cudjoe, his successor, or any of his or their people, they shall apply to any commanding officer or magistrate in the neighbourhood for justice; and in case Captain Cudjoe, or any of his people, shall do any injury to any whiter person, he shall submit himself, or deliver up such offenders to justice.

Ninthly: If any negroes shall hereafter run away from their masters or owners, and shall fall into Captain Cudjoe's hands, they shall immediately be sent back to the chief magistrate of the next parish where they are taken; and these that bring them are to be satisfied for their trouble, as the legislature shall appoint. [The assembly granted a premium of thirty shillings for each fugitive slave returned to his owner by the Maroons, besides expenses.]

Tenthly: That all negroes taken, since the raising of this party by Captain Cudjoe's people, shall immediately be returned.

Eleventh: Captain Cudjoe, and his successors, shall wait on his Excellency, or the Commander in Chief for the time being, every year, if thereunto required.

Twelfth: Captain Cudjoe, during his life, and the captains succeeding him, shall have full power to inflict any punishment they think proper for crimes committed by their men among themselves, death only excepted; in which case, if the Captain thinks they deserve death, he shall be obliged to bring them before any justice of the peace, who shall order proceedings on their trial equal to those of other free negroes.

Thirteenth: Captain Cudjoe with his people, shall cut, clear, and keep open, large and convenient roads from Trelawney Town to Westmorland and St. James's, and if possible to St. Elizabeth's.

Fourteenth: Two white men, to be nominated by his Excellency, or the Commander and Chief for the time being, shall constantly live and reside with Captain Cudjoe and his successors, in order to maintain a friendly correspondence (not dominance, correspondence). These are ambassadors, not governors) with the inhabitants of this island.

Fifteenth: Captain Cudjoe shall, during his life, be Chief Commander in Trelawney Town; after his decease the command to devolve on his brother, Captain Accompong; and in case of his decease, on his next brother Captain Johnny; and, failing him, Captain Cuffee shall succeed; who is to be succeeded by Captain Quaco; and after all their demises, the Governor, or Commander-in-Chief for the time being, shall appoint, from time to time, whom he thinks fit for that command.

**Treaty courtesy of the Kress Collection of Business and Economic Literature, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.**

### **The Second Maroon War**

**The Second Maroon War** of 1795-1796 was an eight-month conflict between the Maroons of Trelawney Parish, Jamaica, and the British. The other Jamaican Maroon communities did not take part in this rebellion.

#### **The outbreak of the war**

The Maroons felt that they were being mistreated under the terms of Cudjoe's Treaty of 1739, which ended the First Maroon War. The spark of the war was when two Maroons were flogged by a black slave for stealing two pigs. When six Maroon leaders came to the British to present their grievances, the British took them as prisoners. Fighting began in mid-August.

#### **The war**

The war lasted for five months as a bloody stalemate. The British 5,000 troops and militia outnumbered the Maroons ten to one, but the mountainous and forested topography of Jamaica proved ideal for guerilla warfare. The Maroons surrendered

the war in December 1795. The British also had some one hundred bloodhounds and their handlers imported from Cuba.

### **Aftermath**

The treaty signed in December between Major General George Walpole and the Maroon leaders established that the Maroons would beg on their knees for the King's forgiveness, return all runaway slaves, and be relocated elsewhere in Jamaica. The governor of Jamaica ratified the treaty, but gave the Maroons only three days to present themselves to beg forgiveness on 1 January, 1796. Suspicious of British intentions, most of the Maroons did not surrender until mid-March. The British used the contrived breach of treaty as a pretext to deport the entire Trelawney town Maroons to Nova Scotia. After a few years, the Maroons were again deported to the new British settlement of Sierra Leone in West Africa.

## **The Haitian Revolution {1791-1804}**

### **Haitian Society before 1789**

The 1695 Treaty of Ryswick between France and Spain gave the French a legal right to the Western part of Hispaniola called Saint Domingue. The French, like every other government existing in those days, saw the colonies as existing exclusively for the profit of the Metropolis. Therefore, any goods which the colonists required, had to be bought exclusively from France and transported only by French ships. The society was made up of a number of classes. The "grand blancs" (planters, civil & military officers) were the highest group. The second comprised merchants and professionals. Then, there were the "petit blancs" (artisans, shopkeepers and bookkeepers), followed by the mulattoes/free coloured and finally, the slaves.

- 55,000 Whites
- 25,000 Mulattoes
- 450,000 Blacks

### **Social Groups**

#### **Divisions within Social Groups**

- Whites- These were divided by the fact that the "grand blancs" had property and education and controlled the colonial assembly while the "petit blancs" were poorer and had very little education and no political power.
- Coloureds- These were mixed blood and the more fortunate ones were wealthy, and had a good education. However, there were those that were not fortunate enough, to have their freedom purchased for them.
- Blacks- The free blacks and the slaves were of same colour but had former freedom and sometimes property.

### **Nature of Discontent**

St. Domingue was a divided society. Among the whites, those who were born in colonies (creoles) resented those from the mother country who occupied all the important offices of government. The whites wanted greater autonomy (self-

government). They were dissatisfied because of high taxation, the denial of equal political rights and wanted trade liberalization. After mulattoes who were educated in Paris returned home, their education and accomplishments filled the whites with hatred, envy and fear. This expressed in fierce legislation laws, designed to keep coloureds away without political power.

### **Reasons for Conflict between Whites and Mulattoes**

- The mulattoes (free coloureds) were numerous
- The whites resented the mulattoes' wealth
- Laws were passed by the whites to limit the opportunities of the mulattoes, e.g. mulattoes could not:
  - Wear European dress
  - Play mulatto games
  - Marry whites
  - Use of the title of Monsieur or Madame
  - Sit in certain seats in church
  - Assume the names of their white fathers
  - They were responsible for the upkeep of the roads

### **The French Revolution (1789-1799) and its impact on the Haitian Revolution**

A revolution in France broke out because:

- Persons wanted liberty and freedom of expression
- Persons wanted equality before the law
- Persons wanted equal taxation regardless of wealth or nobility

The revolutionary slogan was ***Liberté, Égalité et Fraternité***. In English this means Freedom, Equality and Fraternity (brotherhood).

The white plantocracy in Haiti believed that they could capitalize on upheavals in France to press for independence or at least autonomy. They hoped to press for the right to pass their own laws, equality with French whites and an end to trading restrictions imposed by the metropolis.

The free coloureds wanted social and political equality with the whites and discrimination against them to come to an end.

The blacks/slaves just wanted freedom from their shackled existence.

Encouraged by the "**Amis des Noirs**" (**Friends of blacks**) in 1790 following the outbreak in France, the mulattoes petitioned to the National Assembly (French Government). They demanded full citizenship be given to children born of free parents and also that the right to vote should be given to all free persons over 25 years. The whites objected and Vincent Ogé (a young free coloured living in Paris) landed in St. Domingue in 1790 and started a revolt.

Ogé was defeated because only a few free coloureds were prepared to actually fight, the whites were better armed and supported. When Ogé realized he was

outnumbered, he fled the border into Santo Domingo where he was captured, returned and executed.

News of the execution reached France and the National Assembly agreed to pass a law allowing persons of colour born to free parents the right to vote for members of the colonial assembly. The planters refused to put this law in force and put together instead their own militia and armed their slaves. They soon began to fight.

The conflict which erupted gave the blacks a great opportunity to fight for their freedom. Property was left unattended and the whites were not united. The turmoil in France had also distracted the attention of the whites and both the mulattoes and blacks embraced the slogan of the French Revolution.

The revolt started under the leadership of Boukman (a High Priest of the Voodoo cult). The plan was to exterminate the whites and take the colony. Within days, half of the Northern Plain had been destroyed and whites murdered.

### **A month later Toussaint Brenda (L'Overture) joined the fight**

In 1792, France declared war on Spain and Toussaint aided with the Spanish Forces in an attempt to drive the French from the island. He trained 4000 blacks. In the same year, the National Assembly in France had passed another law, giving the vote to free coloureds and free blacks. They sent out an army of 6000 under the leadership of Léger Sonthonax to enforce the law. In 1793, Sonthonax granted emancipation to the slaves. This caused the whites and mulattoes to unite against the French Army and Sonthonax. The royalist planters invited Britain to invade. Toussaint was afraid that this might have meant the reinstatement of slavery, so he deserted the Spanish Army, killed the Spanish Officers who opposed him and joined Sonthonax. Toussaint now became the real leader of the French Forces. When the Spanish and French Governments made peace in 1795, Toussaint directed his energies against the English and planters. By 1798, the English invaders were worn down, disease stricken and gave up. Toussaint then turned against the coloureds who were threatening to take control of the South and West of the colony. About 10 000 men, women and children were murdered. The coloured commander: André Rigaud fled to France.

In 1779, the French Government formally appointed Toussaint as governor. Napoleon Bonaparte, the ruler of France who opposed this sent his brother-in-law, Vincent Leclerc, to remove Toussaint who had made it clear that he would resist slavery to the last drop of his blood. Napoleon's plan however had included just that.

### **How Leclerc got rid of Toussaint**

General Leclerc came with the plan to exploit the rivalries among the leaders and the tension between blacks and mulattoes. He was able to win several generals who came to join him along with their followers. Two such generals were **Henri Christophe** and **Jean-Jacques Dessalines**. In May 1802, Toussaint sent two of his aides-de-camp and a secretary to Leclerc to negotiate. After several hours of discussions, Toussaint agreed to submit under two conditions:

- Liberty for all in St. Domingue.
- Toussaint was allowed to keep his staff and retire where he wished in the territory.

Toussaint gave up the fight. Dessalines who had formerly worshiped Toussaint, sought to get rid of him. He told Leclerc that peace could never be achieved unless Toussaint was sent from the colony. The following month, Leclerc sent Toussaint to a meeting in Cape Français. Although warned by friends that Leclerc intended to arrest him, Toussaint still attended the meeting. After he arrived for the meeting, Toussaint conversed with one of his generals who then asked to be excused. As soon as he left, some men arrived with rifles, entered the house, bound Toussaint like a common criminal and put him aboard a warship to France where he died in 1803.

### **Haitian Independence**

On January 1804, Dessalines declared the colony independent of France. He gave it its native name, (Haiti), and took the white out of the flag to symbolize the colony being purged of its white suppressors.

### **Reasons why Toussaint was considered the leader of the revolt in St. Domingue:**

Although Toussaint was not involved until one month after its outbreak he is considered the leader because:

- ❖ His name has been associated the most with the revolution.
- ❖ It was he who impressed the slaves with his military ability to command the rebel troops.
- ❖ He ensured his army was well supplied with arms. (30 000 guns from the U.S.).
- ❖ He appointed assistants who had specific duties. (Christophe & Dessalines).
- ❖ He made and broke alliances when necessary.
- ❖ He drove the British troops from the light bank of the Artibonite River.
- ❖ It was he who led the slaves of Haiti to freedom and in to the intermediate post- Emancipation period.

### **Reasons why slaves succeeded in overthrowing slavery in St. Domingue:**

- ❖ The effective leadership of Toussaint.
- ❖ The unity of slaves under Toussaint's leadership (especially through religion).
- ❖ The slaves' determination to end slavery and thereby free themselves.
- ❖ The timing of the revolt.
- ❖ The defeat of the French allies and British troops.
- ❖ The slaves' superior knowledge of the terrain.
- ❖ Diseases such as yellow fever ravaged foreign troops.
- ❖ The slaves devastated the land which made it difficult for the troops to survive without impacts.

### **Effects of the Haitian Revolution on Haiti:**

#### **Positive:**

- The slaves defeated all forces with whom they fought.
- The slaves won their freedom.
- It showed that blacks could unite from a common cause.

□□The revolt led to an emergence of great black leaders.

#### **Negative:**

□□Political instability as a result of early independence and rivalries between mulattoes and blacks evolved.

□□Tremendous loss of lives due to fighting, murders and disease.

□□Many people fled to other countries reducing the population even further.

□□Economic difficulties since the revolt was fought on Haitian soil (crops destroyed/fields burnt) A lot of plantations were split into small land holdings and used for subsistent living.

□□The major countries of the world such as: USA, Britain, Spain and France placed an embargo on Haiti and refused to trade with her.

#### **Effects of the Haitian Revolution on the other Caribbean countries**

##### **Social:**

□□Greater fear by the whites of the thought of a slave uprising similar to the Haitian Revolution.

□□Emigration led to an increased French Creole population in Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad, and Puerto Rico.

□□The French Creole Emigrants helped to influence the culture of these islands especially by way of language and religion.

##### **Economical:**

□□St. Domingue's sugar industry collapsed boosting sugar production elsewhere.

□□Cuba became the world's leading sugar producer as French planters and technicians introduced new forms of technology.

□□World market prices increased and some commodities like sugar, cotton and coffee.

##### **Political:**

➤• Slave control was tightened in the other Caribbean colonies. The plantocracy became more repressive.

➤• Haiti inspired slave revolts elsewhere like Jamaica, Martinique and Guadeloupe.

➤• French Emigrants spread stories about the harshness of slavery in Haiti which strengthened the argument for abolition.

## **Toussaint L’Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution**

Known to his contemporaries as “The Black Napoleon”, Toussaint L’Ouverture was a former slave who rose to become the leader of the only successful slave revolt in modern history, the Haitian Revolution.

Born into slavery on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1743 in the French colony of Saint Domingue, L’Ouverture was the eldest son of Gaou Guinon, an African prince who was captured by slavers. At a time when revisions to the French *Code Noir* (Black Code) legalized the harsh treatment of slaves as property, young L’Ouverture instead inspired kindness from those in authority over him. His godfather, the priest Simon Baptiste, for example, taught him to read and write. Impressed by L’Ouverture, Bayon de Libertad, the manager of the Breda Plantation on which L’Ouverture was born, allowed him unlimited access to his personal library. By the time he was twenty, the well-read and tri-lingual L’Ouverture- he spoke French, Creole, and some Latin- had also gained a reputation as a skilled horseman and for his knowledge of medicinal plants and herbs. More importantly, L’Ouverture had secured his freedom from de Libertad even as he continued to manage his former owner’s household personnel and to act as his coachman. Over the course of the next 18 years, L’Ouverture settled into life on the Breda Plantation marrying fellow Catholic Suzanne Simon and parenting two sons, Isaac and Saint-Jean.

The events of August 22th, 1791, the “Night of Fire” in which slaves revolted by setting fire to plantation houses and fields and killing whites, convinced the 48 year old L’Ouverture that he should join the growing insurgency, although not before securing the safety of his wife and children in the Spanish-controlled eastern half of the island (Santo Domingo) and assuring that Bayon de Libertad and his wife were safely onboard a ship bound for the United States.

Inspired by French Revolutionary ideology and angered by generations of abuse at the hands of white planters, the initial slave uprising was quelled within several days, but ongoing fighting between the slaves, free blacks, and planters continued. Although he was free, L’Ouverture joined the slave insurgency and quickly developed a reputation first as a capable soldier and then as military secretary to Georges Biassou, one of the insurgency’s leaders. When the insurgency’s leadership chose to ally itself with Spain against France, L’Ouverture followed. Threatened by Spain and Britain’s attempts to control the island, the French National Convention acted to preserve its colonial rule in 1794 by securing the loyalty of the black population; France granted citizenship rights and freedom to all blacks within the empire.

Following France's decision to emancipate the slaves, L'Ouverture allied with France against Spain, and from 1794 to 1802, he was the dominant political and military leader in the French colony. Operating under the self-assumed title of General-in-Chief of the Army, L'Ouverture led the French in ousting the British and then in capturing the Spanish controlled half of the island. By 1801, although Saint Domingue remained ostensibly a French colony, L'Ouverture was ruling it as an independent state. He drafted a constitution in which he reiterated the 1794 abolition of slavery and appointed himself governor for "the rest of his glorious life."

L'Ouverture's actions eventually aroused the ire of Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1802, Napoleon dispatched his brother-in-law, Charles Leclerc, to capture L'Ouverture and return the island to slavery under French control. Captured and imprisoned at Fort de Joux in France, L'Ouverture died of pneumonia on April 7, 1803. Independence for Saint Domingue would follow one year later under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, one of L'Ouverture's generals.

### **The role of Henri Christophe in the Haitian Revolution**

Henri Christophe was a military leader in the Haitian Revolution as well as president and later king of the young nation. Born into slavery in 1767, Christophe was brought to French colonial Haiti, known as St. Domingue, from St. Kitts. There he worked a wide variety of posts including sailor, mason, bartender, and billiard marker. Like many slaves and free people of color in St. Domingue, Christophe was familiar with military matters from a young age, having accompanied the French expedition to Savannah, Georgia in 1779. By his early twenties, Christophe was able to purchase his freedom and joined the growing class of free blacks.

Spurred on by the revolution in France, a conflict between the colony's free factions erupted in 1791 into a full-blown slave revolt lead by Toussaint L' Ouverture. Christophe would side with the slaves despite his free status and serve as one of L' Ouverture's most important generals for most of the conflict, along with the freed slave Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

By 1802, Christophe had been placed in command of the port town of Le Cap. When a French expeditionary force under Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc arrived in Le Cap in February of that year, Christophe led the defense against them before setting fire to the town and retreating inland where he, like L' Ouverture,

conducted a guerilla war in the mountains. Three months later, Christophe surrendered to Leclerc under the conditions that he would maintain his rank and that he and his soldiers would be incorporated into the French Army- a deal which would soon be accepted by most of the Haitian commanders, including L' Ouverture. The peace did not last, and when L' Ouverture was deported to France, Christophe rejoined the resistance, now led by Dessalines.

By 1804, Dessalines declared the nation of Haiti independent with himself as its emperor. Two years later, however, Dessalines was assassinated when war broke out between his generals. Christophe held sway in the north and was appointed president of the still young republic in 1806. In 1811, he assumed the title of king.

During his reign, Christophe introduced a monetary system based on gourds (predecessor to Haiti's gourde currency), created a system of nobility, declared Catholicism the state religion, and established schools and hospitals including a basic school of medicine. Christophe gained much infamy, however, because of his insistence on the use of corvée labour to sustain the economy. As he aged, he became more eccentric and brutal as well as unpopular. He took his own life with a silver bullet in 1820.

### **The role of Jean-Jacques Dessalines in the Haitian Revolution**

Jean-Jacques Dessalines was an African-born slave on the plantation of a free Negro when the slave broke out in 1791. As soon as he had the opportunity, he murdered his master, seized his property, assumed his name and joined the revolt. At that time, he was 40 years old and unable to read or write.

Dessalines played a significant role in the slave revolt up to 1804. He became one of Toussaint's fearless lieutenants who fought against the French army in 1793 and the Spanish in Santo Domingo from 1794 to 1795. He was appointed general in 1796 and became the most famous of the black generals. He fought against the British from 1795 to 1798 and against the coloureds who wanted to set up their own republic in the south. His black forces mutilated and murdered over 10 000 coloureds in 1799 and 1800. He was the military governor (1798-1802) of the area St. Marc near Port-au-Prince and which he ruled very firmly. He succeeded Toussaint after he was kidnapped and forcibly taken to France. He, Christophe and other black generals, shocked at Toussaint's betrayal by the French, escaped from French service and began fighting again. He defeated General Rochambeau who succeeded Leclerc in late 1802. In November 1803, he declared the independence of St. Domingue and on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1804, he renounced all connections with France and renamed St. Domingue, Haiti, which means "Land of the Mountains". He tore the white out of the Tricolour- the French Flag and replaced the letters "R.F." (Republic Français) with the words "Liberty or Death". In October 1804, he declared himself Emperor of Haiti.

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (1789-1799)

### **Feudalism and Unfair Taxation**

No one factor was directly responsible for the French Revolution. Years of feudal oppression and fiscal mismanagement contributed to a French society that was ripe for revolt. Noting a downward economic spiral in the late 1700s, King **Louis XVI** brought in a number of financial advisors to review the weakened French treasury. Each advisor reached the same conclusion—that France needed a radical change in the way it taxed the public—and each advisor was, in turn, kicked out.

Finally, the King realized that this **taxation** problem really did need to be addressed, so he appointed a new controller general of finance, **Charles de Calonne**, in 1783. Calonne suggested that, among other things, France begin taxing the previously exempt **nobility**. The nobility refused, even after Calonne pleaded with them during the **Assembly of Notables** in 1787. Financial ruin thus seemed imminent.

### **The Estates-General**

In a final act of desperation, Louis XVI decided in 1789 to convene the **Estates-General**, an ancient assembly consisting of three different **estates** that each represented a portion of the French population. If the Estates-General could agree

on a tax solution, it would be implemented. However, since two of the three estates—the **clergy** and the **nobility**—were tax-exempt, the attainment of any such solution was unlikely.

Moreover, the outdated rules of order for the Estates-General gave each estate a single vote, despite the fact that the **Third Estate**—consisting of the general French public—was many times larger than either of the first two. Feuds quickly broke out over this disparity and would prove to be irreconcilable. Realizing that its numbers gave it an automatic advantage, the Third Estate declared itself the sovereign **National Assembly**. Within days of the announcement, many members of the other two estates had switched allegiances over to this revolutionary new assembly.

### **The Bastille and the Great Fear**

Shortly after the National Assembly formed, its members took the **Tennis Court Oath**, swearing that they would not relent in their efforts until a new constitution had been agreed upon. The National Assembly's revolutionary spirit galvanized France, manifesting in a number of different ways. In Paris, citizens stormed the city's largest prison, the **Bastille**, in pursuit of arms. In the countryside, peasants and farmers revolted against their feudal contracts by attacking the manors and estates of their landlords. Dubbed the “**Great Fear**,” these rural attacks continued until the early August issuing of the **August Decrees**, which freed those peasants from their oppressive contracts. Shortly thereafter, the assembly released the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen**, which established a proper judicial code and the autonomy of the French people.

### **Rifts in the Assembly**

Though the National Assembly did succeed in drafting a **constitution**, the relative peace of the moment was short-lived. A rift slowly grew between the radical and moderate assembly members, while the common laborers and workers began to feel overlooked. When Louis XVI was caught in a foiled escape plot, the assembly became especially divided. The moderate **Girondins** took a stance in favor of retaining the constitutional monarchy, while the radical **Jacobins** wanted the king completely out of the picture.

Outside of France, some neighboring countries feared that France's revolutionary spirit would spread beyond French land. In response, they issued the **Declaration of Pillnitz**, which insisted that the French return Louis XVI to the throne. French leaders interpreted the declaration as hostile, so the Girondin-led assembly declared war on Austria and Prussia.

### **The Reign of Terror**

The first acts of the newly named **National Convention** were the abolition of the monarchy and the declaration of France as a **republic**. In January 1793, the convention tried and **executed** Louis XVI on the grounds of treason. Despite the creation of the **Committee of Public Safety**, the war with Austria and Prussia went poorly for France, and foreign forces pressed on into French territory. Enraged

citizens overthrew the Girondin-led National Convention, and the Jacobins, led by **Maximilien Robespierre**, took control.

Backed by the newly approved **Constitution of 1793**, Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety began conscripting French soldiers and implementing laws to stabilize the economy. For a time, it seemed that France's fortunes might be changing. But Robespierre, growing increasingly paranoid about counterrevolutionary influences, embarked upon a **Reign of Terror** in late 1793-1794, during which he had more than 15,000 people executed at the guillotine. When the French army successfully removed foreign invaders and the economy finally stabilized, however, Robespierre no longer had any justification for his extreme actions, and he himself was arrested in July 1794 and executed.

### **The Thermidorian Reaction and the Directory**

The era following the ousting of Robespierre was known as the **Thermidorian Reaction**, and a period of governmental restructuring began, leading to the new **Constitution of 1795** and a significantly more conservative National Convention. To control executive responsibilities and appointments, a group known as the **Directory** was formed. Though it had no legislative abilities, the Directory's abuse of power soon came to rival that of any of the tyrannous revolutionaries France had faced.

### **Napoleon Bonaparte**

Meanwhile, the Committee of Public Safety's war effort was realizing unimaginable success. French armies, especially those led by young general **Napoleon Bonaparte**, were making progress in nearly every direction. Napoleon's forces drove through Italy and reached as far as Egypt before facing a deflating defeat. In the face of this rout, and having received word of political upheavals in France, Napoleon returned to Paris. He arrived in time to lead a **coup** against the Directory in 1799, eventually stepping up and naming himself "first consul", effectively, the leader of France. With Napoleon at the helm, the Revolution ended, and France entered a fifteen-year period of military rule.

## **SLAVE REVOLTS**

### **The 1763 Revolt in Berbice**

The Berbice Revolt occurred in British Guiana and began on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1763 and lasted into 1764.

#### **Causes of the revolt:**

- The slaves wished for permanent freedom from the Dutch and felt that a revolt was the only way to achieve this.
- The slaves wanted revenge on the managers and overseers because of the ill-treatment they received at their hands.
- Some slaves received little or no provisions because the planters did not grow enough on the estates and the Berbice Association cut down on food imports.

- The slaves knew that the whites were weak as a group (both in size and physically).
- The slaves were inspired to start a revolt by a Maroon revolt in Suriname in 1762.

### **Course of the revolt**

The revolt began on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1763 at Plantation Magdelenenberg owned by a widow, Madame Vernesobre, on the Caje River. The slaves killed the manager and carpenter, burned down the owner's house, and moved onto neighbouring plantations along the Berbice River. Coffy, a house slave, became the leader and set up headquarters at Plantations Hollandia and Zeelandia. This forced the whites to retreat to Fort Nassau and Peerboom.

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, Governor Van Hoogenheim received a shipload of 10 soldiers from a British ship from Suriname and was able to attack for the first time. Van Hoogenheim led the main party of the Berbice River to Plantation Dageraad, but his three attacks were unsuccessful. In April, Coffy and the Governor sought to divide Berbice but in that time the Governor received reinforcements from Gravesande, the Governor of Essequibo.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, Coffy attacked Dageraad unsuccessfully. Eight whites and 58 slaves were killed. Coffy's Deputy: Akara deserted him. Divisions plagued the black forces (slaves). Ultimately, Coffy committed suicide.

### **Reasons for Initial Success of the revolt:**

- The quality of the leadership was good. Initially, the rebellion was well organized under the leadership of Coffy, Akara and Atta, and there was cooperation between the Akan slave rebels and the Congolese and Angolans.
- The discipline and the military organization of the rebels were at first fairly strong, so they were able to take control of almost the entire colony, leaving the whites in control of the swampy and malaria-infested area at the mouth of the Canje River.
- The slave rebels outnumbered the whites.
- Many of the slaves in the colony were newly imported Africans who had not been socialized into the slave systems, and so were anxious to get out of it.
- The rebellion took the whites by surprise.
- The rebels were able to seize some arms and ammunition from some estates.

### **Results/consequences of the revolt:**

- In the months of March and April of 1764, 40 slaves were hanged, 24 broken at the wheel and 24 were burned.
- February 23<sup>rd</sup> was changed to Guyanese National Day.
- In 1970 when Berbice became a Republic, Coffy was chosen as a National Hero.

- The revolt marked the first serious attempt by a large group of enslaved people to win their freedom in Guyana.

### **Reasons for failure of the revolt:**

- Coffy's hesitation on attacking Fort Nassau.
- The leaders of the revolt were divided in their struggle for power which deterred their aim.
- The Dutch soldiers were far superior in weaponry and skill compared to the rebels (slaves).
- Betrayal among leaders also led to the failure of this revolt.

### **The 1816 Revolt in Barbados (Bussa's Rebellion)**

Prior to 1816, Barbados had not had a major revolt for over 100 years, and the enslavers boasted of having succeeded in creating a stable slave society. That notion of stability and contentedness was shattered on Sunday April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1816, when enslaved blacks launched an island wide assault on the enslavers. This revolt was carefully planned and organized by the senior enslaved men and women who worked on several estates. The leader of the revolt was Bussa. Bussa was born a free man in Africa in the 18c. and captured and brought to Barbados as a slave. He had a job as a Head Ranger at Bayley's Plantation. He was also brave, strong and determined to enforce change.

### **Causes of the revolt:**

- Harsh treatment inflicted by white society created a desire for permanent freedom and revenge.
- The efforts of the Non-Conformists Missionaries and Abolitionists in England gave the enslaved population the moral justification for the revolt.
- An able leader called Bussa emerged among the slaves.
- The news of the success of the Haitian Revolution reached the other Caribbean countries and so the slaves in Barbados believed that they too could obtain freedom by an uprising. Slaves such as Nanny Grigg (senior domestic slave), who aided in the revolt, frequently spoke of the Haitian struggle for freedom.
- Marronage on the island of Barbados was difficult because of the flat terrain and lack of dense forest. So for the enslaved blacks the best option to obtain freedom and establish themselves as a dominant force was to attack the enslavers.
- The enslaved made a decision to revolt because they were conscious of international efforts aimed against enslavement. Washington Franklin, a free man, often read newspaper reports of anti-slavery reports to the slaves.
- Slaves in Barbados enjoyed some measure of freedom and this measure of freedom helped them to organize the revolt.

- The slave trade had been abolished in 1807. In 1815, the British Parliament came up with an Imperial Registry Bill to register all slaves so as to monitor the treatment of the slaves and to stop excessive cruelty. The planters were infuriated over the passing of this bill and saw it as an interference in their domestic affairs. The slaves misinterpreted this as being anger about a plan for their emancipation. The slaves then decided to take their own freedom.

### **Courses of the revolt**

Bussa and his collaborators decided to start the revolt on 14<sup>th</sup> April, Easter Sunday. It commenced in the eastern parishes of St. Phillip and Christ Church spreading into the parishes of St. Thomas, St. George, St. John, and parts of St. Michael, putting a temporary halt to the sugar harvest as enslaved persons, the militia and the imperial troops, clashed in a war for freedom and independence. Bussa commanded about 400 men and women against the troops. Bussa was killed in battle and his troops continued to fight until they were defeated by superior firepower. By the time the soldiers had crushed the revolt, 25% of the island's sugarcane had gone up in smoke. Some accounts say that no whites lost their lives, others said that one died. Several hundred slaves were killed by the soldiers and many others were executed afterwards. Also, some slaves were sent to other islands. Other key persons in this revolt besides Bussa were: Washington Franklin, John and Nanny Grigg, Johnny, King Wiltshire, Jackey, and Dick Bailey. The two major plantations that were involved in the revolt were Bailey's Plantation and Simmons Plantation. John and Nanny Grigg and Jackey were from Simmons Plantation while King Wiltshire, Dick Bailey, Johnny, and Bussa were from Bailey's Plantation. The revolt finally ended on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Reasons for the Initial Success of the revolt:**

- The planters were complacent and they were misguided in their belief that the slaves were content and happy. This caused them to be caught off guard.
- The leaders of the revolt were elite slave drivers and other privileged slaves from various estates including Bussa, Nanny Grigg, and some free coloureds such as Joseph Washington Franklin. They provided effective leadership for the slaves.
- The revolt had spread to over seventy of the largest estates in the island.
- Some slaves were threatened and were forced to join the rebellion.
- Some slaves used guerrilla tactics against the troops.

### **Results/consequences of the revolt:**

- The whites now lived in constant fear of another slave uprising.
- Bussa was killed in the revolt.
- The whites turned against the missionaries in the island, chapels were damaged and missionaries like the Methodist, William Shrewsbury, were threatened. Some poor whites pulled down Shrewsbury Chapel and forced him to leave the island and take refuge in St. Vincent.
- Many slaves were killed during the revolt.

- Many slaves were executed including Washington Franklin and others were sent to other islands.
- 25% of the sugarcane crop in Barbados was destroyed. This slowed down the sugar production process.
- There was a reduction in the size of the labour force.
- Plantation machinery was damaged and destroyed along with planters' homes or great houses. This caused the planters great expense. Property damage was estimated at 175 000 pounds.
- Bussa (leader of the revolt) became a Barbadian National Hero in 1998.
- In 1985, 169 years after his rebellion, the Emancipation Statue, created by Karl Broodhagen, was unveiled in Haggatt Hall, St. Michael.

### **Reasons for the failure of the revolt:**

- The whites had superior weapons compared to the slaves.
- The number of slaves who participated in the revolt was relatively small. A large force would have been needed in order to overpower the whites.
- Limited ammunitions for the slaves to use.
- Martial law was imposed to help suppress the revolt.
- The free coloureds supported the whites.
- The slaves lacked proper, effective means of communication and proper military training.
- The unfavourable nature of the terrain did not allow the slaves to use their guerrilla tactics effectively which could have led to victory.
- The plan for an island-wide mobilization of the slaves was not realized.

### **The 1823 Revolt in Demerara**

The Demerara Revolt was a slave uprising involving more than 10 000 slaves that took place in the Crown colony of Demerara-Essequibo (now part of Guyana). The rebellion took place on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1823 and lasted for two days and was held by slaves of the highest status.

### **Causes of the revolt:**

- In 1823, Amelioration proposals (improvement in slave conditions) were sent from the British Colonial Secretary to the Governor of Demerara so that the amelioration proposals could be adopted. The Court of Policy in Demerara examined the proposals on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1823, and postponed making a decision. The slaves believed that their masters were concealing news of the slaves' emancipation decided to seek their own freedom by revolting.
- The slaves also wanted freedom from their enslavement.
- They also wanted revenge on the whites because of the harsh treatment they were subjected to and poor living conditions they were forced to live under.

## **Course of the revolt**

On the morning of Sunday, 17 August, 1823, slaves at Mahaica met together at Plantation Success and three of them, Jack Gladstone, a cooper on that plantation, Joseph Packwood and Manuel, assumed some kind of leadership of the group. All of them began to plan an uprising, but Gladstone's father, Quamina, who arrived at the meeting later, objected to any bloody revolt and suggested that the slaves should go on strike. When someone asked if they should get guns to protect themselves, Quamina said he would have to seek the advice of the Rev. Smith on this matter.

Quamina departed for Bethel Chapel at Le Ressouvenir and after the Sunday service, he and two other slaves, Manuel and Seaton, went to Smith's home. There they told the priest that the managers of the plantation should go to Georgetown to "fetch up the new law." Smith rebuked them and advised them against speaking to any of the managers about this, saying if they did so they would provoke the Governor. He begged them to wait until the Governor and their masters inform them about the new regulations. When Quamina told Smith of the uprising being planned, the priest asked them to request the other slaves, particularly the Christians, not to rebel. Quamina promised to obey Smith and he sent his two companions to urge other slaves not to rebel. He also told Smith he would send a message in the evening to the Mahaica slaves not to rise up against their masters.

But despite Quamina's efforts, the slaves were determined to rebel from the following evening. Their plan was to seize all guns on the plantations, lock up the Whites during the night and then send them to the Governor on the following morning to bring the "new law". All Quamina could do was to implore them not to be violent in the process.

But on the morning of Monday, 18 August, the plan was leaked by Joseph Packwood, a house slave, who revealed it to his master, John Simpson, of Le Reduit plantation, located about five miles east of Georgetown. Simpson immediately gave this information to Governor Murray who with a group of soldiers rode up to the area of Le Ressouvenir and La Bonne Intention where he met a large group of armed Africans on the road. He asked them what they wanted and they replied, "Our right." He then ordered them to surrender their weapons, but after they refused he warned that their disobedience would cause them to lose whatever new benefits the new regulations aimed to provide. Further, Murray asked them to go home and to meet with him at Plantation Felicity the next morning, but the slaves bluntly refused this invitation.

It was very late that afternoon when Rev. John Smith first heard of the uprising. In a note to his informant, Jackey Reed, a slave who attended his church, he stated that hasty, violent measures were contrary to Christianity and begged Reed not to participate in the revolt.

Shortly after, while Smith and his wife were walking on the plantation, they saw a large group of noisy African slaves outside the home of Hamilton, the manager of Le Ressouvenir. Smith begged them not to harm Hamilton but they told him to go home.

That night the slaves seized and locked up the White managers and overseers on thirty-seven plantations between Georgetown and Mahaica in East Demerara. They searched their houses for weapons and ammunition, but there was very little violence since the slaves apparently heeded Quamina's request. However, some slaves took revenge on their masters or overseers by putting them in stocks; this action resulted in some violence a few white men were killed. The white population naturally were very terrified and feared they would be killed. But the slaves who were mainly Christians did not want to lose their religious character so they proclaimed that their action was a strike and not a rebellion. At the same time, not all slaves joined the rebels and they remained loyal to their masters.

The next day an Anglican priest, Wiltshire Austin, suggested to Governor Murray that he and Smith should be allowed to meet with the slaves to urge them to return to work, but the Governor refused to accept this suggestion and immediately declared Martial law.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Fusileers and the 1<sup>st</sup> West Indian Regiment under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Leahy, aided by a volunteer battalion, were dispatched to combat the rebels who were armed mainly with cutlasses and bayonets on poles and a small number of stands of rifles captured from plantations. At first, the movement of the troops was hampered since many of the wooden bridges across the various plantation canals were destroyed by the rebels.

The suppression of the rebellion saw much violence. On Tuesday, 19 August, there were major confrontations at Dochfour Estate where ten to fifteen of the 800 rebels were killed; and at Good Hope where six rebels were shot dead. On the morning of 20 August, six were killed at Bee Hive Plantation and forty at Elizabeth Hall.

There was also a major battle on the same day Bachelor's Adventure where more roughly 2 000 slaves confronted the military. Lieutenant-Colonel John Thomas Leahy who had about 300 men under his command asked them what they wanted. They responded that they wanted to work for only two or three days a week. Leahy told them if they lay down their arms and returned home he would tell the Governor what they wanted. But perceiving that they were not interested in surrendering their arms he, accompanied by one of his officers, Captain John Croal, went up to them and again enquired what they wanted. They shouted that they wanted their freedom which the King had granted to them. Leahy then read the proclamation of Martial law to them. When he completed the reading, Jack Gladstone, one of the slave leaders, showed him a copy of a letter signed by many plantation owners that they were not abused by the rebels.

One of the other leaders then suggested that they should hold Leahy and Croal as hostages, but Gladstone objected strongly and prevented such an occurrence. Many other rebels suggested that all the slaves should march to Georgetown to present their demands to the Governor, but Leahy discouraged this saying that if they did so they would all be hanged, and suggested that they should communicate to the Governor through him. He then gave them half an hour to decide to surrender their arms, failing which he would order his men to shoot. However, the rebels continued

to show defiance and Leahy ordered his troops to open fire. Many of the slaves fled in confusion while some others quickly surrendered their weapons to the troops. In this savage crushing military action, more than 250 were killed. A report prepared by Governor Murray two days later praised Leahy and his troops and noted that only one soldier was slightly injured while noting that "100 to 150" slaves were shot dead.

The uprising collapsed very quickly since the slaves, despite being armed, was poorly organised. After their defeat at Bachelor's Adventure, the Governor proclaimed a full and free pardon to all slaves who surrendered within 48 hours, provided that they were not ringleaders of the rebellion. He also offered a reward of 1 000 guineas for the capture of Quamina whom he regarded as the main leader of the rebellion.

In the military sweeping-up exercises that followed, there were impromptu court-martials of captured slaves and those regarded as ringleaders were immediately after executed by firing-squad or by hanging. Many of the corpses were also decapitated and the heads were nailed on posts along the public road. Among those hanged was Telemachus of Bachelor's Adventure who was regarded as a "ringleader" of the uprising at that location.

Some of the rebels who escaped were also hunted down and shot by Amerindian slave-catchers. Quamina himself was shot dead by these Amerindian slave-catchers in the back lands of Chateau Margot on 16 September and his body was later publicly hanged by the side of the public road at Success. Jack Gladstone was later arrested and also sentenced to be hanged; however, his sentence was commuted but he was sold and deported to St. Lucia in the British West Indies.

Out of an estimated 74,000 slaves in the united colony of Essequibo-Demerara about 13 000 took part in the uprising. And of the 350 plantations estates in the colony, only thirty-seven were involved. No doubt, many who did not take part sympathized with the rebels and shared their suspicion that the planters would spare no efforts to prevent them from obtaining their freedom.

On 25 August, Governor Murray set up a "court-martial" headed by Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Arthur Goodman, for the trials of the arrested rebel slaves who were considered to be "ringleaders." The trials which continued into early 1824 were conducted at different plantations and the prisoners were executed by shooting or hanging and their heads were cut off and nailed to posts. Over 200 Africans were beheaded and their heads placed on stakes at the Parade Ground in Georgetown and from Plaisance to Mahaica in East Demerara. Of those condemned to death, fourteen had their sentences commuted but, like Jack Gladstone, they were sold to other slave owners in the British West Indies.

In addition, there were other sentences, including solitary confinement and flogging of up to 1 000 lashes each. Some were also condemned to be chained for the rest of their servitude.

Meanwhile, on the day of the Bachelor's Adventure battle, the situation took a strange turn when Rev. John Smith was arrested and charged for encouraging the

slaves to rebel. While awaiting trial, he was imprisoned in Colony House. His arrest, undoubtedly encouraged by many of the planters, was seen as an act of revenge against the priest for preaching to the slaves.

Despite being a civilian and charged for the crime allegedly committed before Martial law was proclaimed, he faced a trial by a military court-martial presided by Lieutenant Colonel Goodman from 13 October to 24 November, 1823. He was tried for four offences: promoting discontent and dissatisfaction in the minds of the slaves towards their masters, overseers and managers, and inciting rebellion; advising, consulting and corresponding with Quamina, and aiding and abetting him in the revolt; failure to make known the planned rebellion to the proper authorities; and not making efforts to suppress, detain and restrain Quamina once the rebellion was under way.

Smith denied the charges but, nevertheless, he remained imprisoned for seven weeks in Colony House before his trial took place. He was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged and was transferred from Colony House to the local prison. He appealed to the British government which subsequently ordered a commutation of the death sentence and restored his freedom. However, while awaiting information of the results of his appeal to arrive by ship from England, he died from pneumonia in the prison on 6 February, 1824. To avoid the risk of stirring sentiment against the slave-owners, the colonial authorities buried his body before daybreak but deliberately did not mark his grave.

The information that he was acquitted actually arrived in Georgetown on 30 March, weeks after his funeral, (significantly, the appeals court in repealing his sentence also banned him from residing in Guyana and any other British Caribbean territory and ordered him to post a bond of 2,000 pounds.) News of his death was later published in British newspapers; it caused great outrage throughout Great Britain and 200 petitions denouncing the actions of the colonial authorities were sent to the British Parliament.

### **Results/consequences of the revolt:**

- The numerous petitions, including some by Parliamentarians, and newspaper comments condemning the military trial and the death sentence on Rev. Smith finally resulted in a formal motion being raised in the British House of Commons. It called for the members to "declare that they contemplate with serious alarm and deep sorrow the violation of law and justice" in the trial of Rev. Smith and urged King George to adopt measures to enable the just and humane administration of law in Demerara to "protect the voluntary instructors of the Negroes, as well as the Negroes themselves and the rest of His Majesty's subjects from oppression."
- Many slaves lost their lives.
- The motion was presented by a Member of Parliament from the Opposition and it was debated on 1 June and 11 June, 1824.

- Speeches opposing the motion and supporting the trial by court martial were made by parliamentarians on the government side as well as ministers of the government, including the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, George Canning. Speaking in support of the motion were leading members of the Opposition, including the famous leader of the anti-slavery movement, William Wilberforce, but despite their strong arguments, the government majority voted against it.
- The forceful speeches on both sides examined the trial of Rev. Smith through the perspective of various laws- British common law, Dutch law, British military law, Dutch military law and Demerara colonial law.
- The debate also threw light on the political feelings of British lawmakers of the early nineteenth century regarding their opinions on slavery and British amelioration policies in Guyana and the British Caribbean possessions. In addition, it exposed some of their views on the East Coast Demerara slave uprising of August 1823 which was a major blow to colonial rule and most likely helped to hasten the end of African slavery in the British colonial territories.
- In Guyana, the slaves regarded Rev. Smith's death as a sacrifice which was made on their behalf, and soon after, they began referring to him as the "Demerara Martyr".

### **Reasons for the failure of the revolt:**

- There was a lack of unity among the rebels. Some slaves wanted to use passive forms of resistance while others wanted to use insurrectionary forms of resistance.
- The whites had superior weapons compared to the slaves.
- The slaves had limited ammunitions while the whites had plenty of ammunitions which they readily used.
- The troops were better trained and organized.
- The slaves lacked proper training and they were not well-organized.

## **The 1831-2 Revolt in Jamaica/ Sam Sharpe Rebellion/ Christmas Rebellion/ The Baptist War**

This revolt was led by Samuel Sharpe, a slave Baptist deacon. Samuel Sharpe is blamed for the violence that occurred but however, he never instructed the slaves to act violently against the whites. Instead, he suggested a peaceful approach such as the refusal to work unless wages were paid. This revolt is the last slave revolt to take place in the British West Indies and the largest with over 20 000 slaves involved. This revolt saw the end of slavery soon afterwards in the British West Indies. This revolt along with the 1816 revolt in Barbados and the 1823 revolt in Demerara are collectively known as the “Emancipation Wars”.

### **Causes:**

- Samuel Sharpe was a literate man who would have had access to newspaper reports about English politics and about the anti-slavery arguments in England. In 1831, it was clear that the British Parliament would emancipate the slaves soon and that the planters would try to find ways of keeping their unpaid labour. Sam Sharpe and the other slaves believed that the planters were withholding their freedom so they sought out to obtain it.
- The slaves desired freedom from their harsh enslavement.
- The activities of the Non-Conformist Missionaries in Jamaica implanted in the minds of the slaves that slavery was wrong and that they were supposed to be free men so they wanted to be freed so they started a revolt.

### **Course of the revolt**

The plan for the revolt began on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1831. Sam Sharpe had suggested that the slaves refused to work unless they were paid wages. The actual violence of the Jamaican Revolt that began on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1831. It was the last night of the three-day Christmas festival. The signal for the strike to begin started with the firing of the sugar trash on the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> on the Kensington Estate. By midnight, sixteen other estates were burning. It moved from the original aim of a strike quickly into a rebellion. With little or no arms, the slaves knew that the only way to struck their oppression was by firing the estates. The planters who were in the interior began to desert their estates. The roads were then in the hands of the rebels. For eight days, there was hardly a single colonist to be seen in those areas. As well as in Montego Bay and Savanna-La-Mar. Fifty thousand slaves fled to coastal towns and began to ramble about, plundering and burning at will.

By the first week of January 1832, the revolt was completely squashed by the martial law that was called in.

The hunt was then put in place to gather the slaves that had escaped to be placed before the court and have their fate handed down to them.

### **Ways in which Sharpe's Leadership Role in the Church helped the revolt:**

- He read scriptures thoughtfully and came to the conclusion that all men are equal and that no man has the right to keep another man in slavery. This helped him to make up his mind to fight slavery.

- He had the freedom to move from estate to estate conducting meetings. He shared his ideas with selected people with whom he had private talks after the prayer meetings, thus he was able to push the recruitment campaign vigorously under the cover of prayer meetings.
- As a preacher, he was an eloquent speaker and was able to rouse the emotions of his audience.
- He had an extraordinary degree of influence among his fellow slaves, and he was able to influence several people in recruiting to join his struggle.

### **Reasons for Initial Success of the revolt:**

- Samuel Sharpe had spent several months from April 1831 secretly, patiently, carefully planning. He moved from estate to estate, secretly organizing, lecturing, arguing and persuading the slaves. He worked tirelessly and was totally committed.
- He used the bible to support his theme that all men had a right to freedom. This won him the support of many slaves in the western section of the island, who had come under his influence directly or indirectly.
- Even though the planters had heard slight rumours about the work stoppage, they did not employ sufficient extra precautionary measures. They were therefore taken by surprise. This gave the slaves an advantage at the start.
- The small garrison of some several hundred soldiers seemed no match for the thousands of slaves who began to wander about.

### **Results/Consequences of the revolt:**

- One hundred and sixty estates of various kinds were destroyed by fire.
- The slaves were defeated (400 slaves died) and another 100 were executed following Martial law.
- About a dozen whites were murdered.
- The Non-Conformist Missionaries were blamed for the revolt and were made to suffer their alleged guilt.
- William Knibb and Thomas Burchell were Missionaries who were threatened with trial for encouraging the rebellion returned to England after their acquittal and gave first-hand accounts of what occurred in Jamaica. They told the people what would occur if slavery was to occur.
- Samuel Sharpe was tried in April 1832, found guilty of rebellion and insurrection, and hanged on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1832.
- The whites now lived in constant fear of a greater slave insurrection. It reminded many of rebellion in St. Domingue.
- Despite its failure, the Jamaican uprising played a significant role in the advent of abolition in the British Caribbean. A week after Sharpe's execution, Parliament appointed a committee to consider measures for abolition. Dozens of witnesses were called to testify in London, and after months of debate, the

Act for the Abolition of Slavery was passed in 1833. Samuel Sharpe's war brought about an earlier emancipation for the enslaved, and built up their confidence that they were agents of their own liberation.

- Samuel Sharpe was made a Jamaican National Hero in 1975 and a statue in his honour has been erected in Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- Samuel Sharpe's face also appears on the Jamaican \$50 bill.

### **Reasons for the failure of the revolt:**

- The revolt was brutally suppressed. Hundreds of virtually unarmed people were killed by the troops, many were executed after brief trials, others were brutally flogged.
- The British Troops and Militia had superior weaponry and skill compared to the slaves so they were able to defeat them and bring the revolt under control as they brutally suppressed them.
- The revolt was relatively poorly planned.
- Sharpe's plan of action did not include violence. Therefore, there was a lack of proper leadership, training, organization, and communication among the slaves who had resorted to violence.
- The government was able to deploy the Maroons against the slaves as a result of the 1739 treaty.

### **Reasons why many slave revolts failed**

The fact that many slave revolts did not achieve freedom was due to:

- The lack of unity among the insurgents.
- The military assistance to colonies by other colonies.
- The superior weapons of the whites.
- Limited ammunitions.

- Divisiveness among the blacks.

### **The Impact of revolts**

While slave revolts may have assisted in giving planters a sense of racial and group solidarity they also invoked a great deal of fear for the following reasons.

- Death and injury.
- Overthrow of slavery.
- Destruction of the plantations.
- Removal of the planter government.
- Independence- European countries feared the loss of their colonies to the enslaved.
- Disruption of the social order and political systems.

Throughout slavery, resistance and revolts were constant features of Caribbean society. Slaves did not flee because escape undermined their master's property, even though flight had that impact. Slaves fled because they wanted freedom from their bondage, and flight- desperate as such action often was- offered some hope that freedom might be attained. By revolting, enslaved persons tried to undermine the stratified system of slavery.

## **METROPOLITION MOVEMENTS TOWARDS EMANCIPATION**

### **Introduction**

The slaves took the first steps towards emancipation. They made many attempts to free themselves and destroy a system that robbed them of their freedom.

Consequently, they resorted to non-violent and violent methods such as lying, malingering, insolence, infanticide, abortion, marronage (running away), suicide, sabotage, and revolt.

Revolts were a constant feature of Caribbean slave society. They were feared by the whites because they resulted in death and destruction. Most of the revolts were instigated and carried out by African-born slaves rather than Creole slaves.

### **Reasons why**

1. There were some African-born slaves who were from highly military societies such as the Akan and were not prepared to accept enslavement. These slaves were skilled in forest warfare and guerrilla type tactics and so, they used these skills to try to gain their freedom.
2. In territories like Jamaica, St. Domingue, Suriname, and Berbice, the African-born population vastly outnumbered the Creoles, and so the majority group took the initiative to try to free themselves.

3. Many of the African-born slaves in the Caribbean experienced freedom in their native land and so they resented the loss of their freedom. As a result, they were determined to regain their freedom.
4. The obeahmen who were African-born, were community leaders among the slaves and so were in the forefront of the planning and execution of revolts. They were able to convince the other African-born slaves that the ointment and potions administered would make them invisible and immune to the bullets used by the whites. This helped to give them confidence that they would succeed against the whites and be able to return to their homeland.
5. The Creole slaves were often given lighter work than the African-born slaves, and since they did not experience freedom, tended to be content to be slaves.
6. The African-born slaves tended to maintain much of their cultural heritage and at the same time resisted the European culture in every possible way.

### **Responses to revolt**

#### **Negative Effects of revolts on the planters**

1. Many planters suffered serious financial losses since buildings were destroyed and cane fields burnt.
2. They experienced more financial loss when slaves, who were their legal property were killed, hurt or sometimes ran away.
3. Planters had difficulty getting loans because people with money were reluctant to invest in an unstable political climate.
4. Some planters had to terminate their businesses in the Caribbean because of the severe losses which they suffered. They were also afraid and insecure among discontented slaves.
5. The planters' attitude towards the missionaries hardened in response to the revolts. They blamed the non-conformist missionaries for the resistance of the slaves and so made them suffer for example, William Shrewsbury in Barbados in 1816, John Smith in Demerara in 1823, and William Knibb and Thomas Burchell in Jamaica in 1831.
6. The planters' attitude towards the slaves also hardened. They brutally suppressed the revolts and this demonstrated their ruthlessness.

#### **Negative Effects of revolts on the slaves**

1. Many of the slaves were killed in battle, others were executed afterwards, while in other cases, for example, after the Barbados Revolt in 1816 and the Second Maroon War in Jamaica in 1795, some were deported.
2. Others were punished mercilessly, conditions under which they lived became more intolerable because of the repressive actions of the planters.
3. Some slaves were forced into submission, while others remained resistant especially those who were proud of their African heritage.
4. The Haitian Revolution inspired the Maroons of Jamaica to revolt against the whites in 1795 and it demonstrated to the slaves that the Europeans were not invincible.
5. Some slaves became impatient for their freedom.

6. The revolts created divisions among the slaves, for example during the 1763 Berbice Revolt.

### **Negative Effects of slave revolts on slavery**

1. The destabilization of the slave society for example, the whites lived in fear and the slaves became more restless. Many people were reluctant to invest their money in colonies that were considered politically unstable.

### **Positive Effects of slave revolts on the emancipation process**

1. The whites in the societies began to realize that their hold on power had become rather slight. The fact was that they were outnumbered by the slaves in most colonies.
2. The system of slavery was being undermined. It was realized that the slaves were not as illiterate and impossible to organize into military action as was thought, for example, the slaves in Haiti had destroyed slavery and made the country the first Black Nation in the Americas.
3. Anti-slavery societies grew in strength as they realized that with each slave revolt there were more lives lost.
4. The slave revolts created opportunities for slave leaders to emerge.
5. The slave revolts forced planters to recognize that their position was extremely dangerous since they lived among hostile slaves. Hence, they were persuaded reluctantly to accept emancipation especially in the British Caribbean where the government had incorporated monetary compensation and apprenticeship in the emancipation agreement.

### **Reasons why slaves failed to overthrow the system of slavery**

1. There were divisions among the slaves, for example, between the Creole slaves and the African-born slaves. There were some Creole slaves who resented the African-born slaves, and so did not want to be led into a rebellion by an African-born leader.
2. Some slaves and rebel groups had extremely limited aims, for example, they were content to limit themselves to escape from the estate and to live lives of freedom like the Maroons in Jamaica and the Bush Negroes in Suriname. This limited approach was in contrast with the more far-reaching ambitions of their militant colleagues who wanted to destroy all whites as well as the slave system.
3. The Bush Negroes and the Maroons signed treaties with the colonial powers, binding themselves to a permanent, peaceful coexistence in the slave community, or to help to prevent or subdue further uprisings and return runaway slaves in return for the good will of the whites in the colonies.
4. Some domestic slaves, particularly females, often betrayed the plans of rebellion.
5. There was some measure of unity among the free groups in the colonies such as the coloureds and whites as opposed to the disunity among the slaves. This unity was crucial for the whites in revolts such as the 1816 Barbados Revolt when the free coloureds supported the whites and refused to help the slaves.

6. The size and topography of the territory prevented slaves from overthrowing the system in smaller territories where it was difficult for slaves to find suitable hiding places where they could elude the whites.
7. Leadership struggles among the slaves helped to undo the plans of rebel for example, during the Berbice Revolt of 1763. Two leaders: Coffy and Atta quarrelled bitterly over the plans for development of the uprising. The conflict between them allowed the Dutch to regroup their forces and defeat the divided slave group.
8. The military strength of the whites also assisted in defeating the slaves. Most of the whites had some military training as they had guns opposed to the makeshift weapons of the slaves. In addition, the whites were assured of the support of the troops from the mother country.
9. The slaves lacked external assistance. Unlike the Haitian Revolution where the United States of America, Britain and Spain intervened at crucial times, most revolts in the Caribbean did not have the support of the various international monarchies and fledgling republics that were sympathetic to the cause of the slaves' liberty. Consequently, they did nothing to help such uprisings to gain total success.

## **Arguments against slavery/Anti-Slavery Arguments**

### **Humanitarian**

1. Slavery was inhumane and cruel, unjust and the punishment meted out to the slaves was harsh for example the uses of the treadmill.
2. Slaves were not properly provided for, since food, clothing, housing and medical care were inadequate and so the slaves often fell prey to diseases.
3. Slaves were regarded as part of the estate stock and not as humans and so were constantly humiliated and dehumanized.
4. The colonial laws for the control of slaves were repressive and did not provide for their protection.
5. The judicial system was against them since some judges and magistrates were slave-owners, and slaves were not allowed to give evidence in court against a white person.
6. Slaves possessed no legal right to own property or to have a family since family members could be sold for payment of debt or families could be separated.
7. Slaves were people and if they were not freed, they would free themselves and destroy the planters' property.
8. The Slave Trade led to inter-tribal warfare in Africa and destroyed family and political structures in African societies.

### **Economic**

1. Slavery was uneconomic as provisions had to be made for control of the slaves.
2. These provisions were more expensive than employment of free labour.

3. Investments in slaves were wasted when they died in large numbers from measles, epidemics, or when struck with yaws, scurvy, worms, ulcers, and fevers.
4. There was evidence which indicated that a higher percentage of British sailors than slaves died in the Middle Passage.
5. There was also evidence that the British Government earned more money from custom duties from export of manufactured goods than from the slave trade.
6. British industrial development would be stimulated by free trade.
7. Abolition of slavery would increase the number of customers/consumers in the British Caribbean market thus increasing British exports.
8. Slavery led to monoculture which was dangerous to the economy.
9. The profits of plantation owners were not reinvested in the local economy but just spent abroad.
10. Slavery made the whites lazy and ignorant, William Byrd II, a wealthy Virginian planter, said that “slavery blew up the pride and ruin the industry of the white people who seeing a rank of poor creatures below them, detest work, for fear it would make them look like slaves.”

### **Religious**

1. Slavery was contrary to the will of God.
2. The system of slavery encouraged hatred rather than love whereas Christianity urges its followers to “love” thy neighbour as thyself.
3. Christianity teaches that all men are equal in the sight of God but slaves were subjugated to the will of their master.
4. Missionaries were discouraged from working among slaves, they were persecuted and at the same time the religious education of the slaves was neglected.

### **Social**

1. Some whites had “guilt conscience” about slavery and preferred to live in a free society.
2. Life in a slave society was unpleasant and uncomfortable for whites surrounded by cruelty and suffering.
3. Slavery brought fear and insecurity. There was danger of slave revolt and massacre ever present.
4. A slave society was inevitably socially restrictive.

## **Arguments for slavery/Pro-Slavery Arguments**

### **Humanitarian**

1. Slavery existed in Africa and it was felt that the slaves were treated better in the Caribbean than in Africa.
2. There was a paternalistic relationship between the slaves and their masters, and the slaves' basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and their medical needs were taken care of by their masters.
3. Slaves were private property as stated by the English laws.
4. Slaves were being "civilized" and they would revert to barbarism without the positive effects of European civilization
5. Times were harsh yet slaves were relatively well-off. They would not put up with harsh treatment and would run away, revolt, or work less.

### **Economic**

1. Blacks were best suited for estate labour in a tropical climate.
2. Slave labour was vital to the survival of the sugar economy as alternative sources of labour like the Amerindians or white indentured servants were not available.
3. Substantial capital was already invested in the sugar industry and slavery. Thus, the value of that investment would be lost without slavery.
4. Loss of investments in sugar estates might injure the British economy.
5. Slave labour was more economically viable than free labour.
6. Slavery promoted the development of a strong navy and merchant marine.
7. Slavery stimulated British industrial development and provided jobs for the British public, and Britain with essential tropical products.
8. The plantation system could lead to diversification in agriculture. Slaves were capable of producing food crops as plantation crops. They were also capable of handling cattle.
9. The plantation system supported British shipping.
10. Those dependent on West Indian sugar would lose commerce, reputation and power

### **Religious**

1. Slavery provided an opportunity for slaves to be converted to Christianity, thus giving them a chance of saving their souls, a privilege not afforded in Africa.
2. Slavery was supported by the Scriptures and was compatible with Christianity.
3. Slaves in the Caribbean could learn from whites how to live a Christian life.

### **Social**

1. If slaves were freed, the whites would become a minority.
2. Successful planters could make huge profits and become the leaders of society economically, politically, socially and culturally.
3. Slavery was the means by which small planters could rise in the world and emulate the big planters.
4. Poor whites were committed to slavery and racial superiority theories in order to preserve the little status they had. The threat of free blacks to white privilege made the poor whites hate the blacks more than anyone else.

5. Slavery provided the basis for a superior culture. There had to be a class of slaves to perform the menial duties so that the whites, leisured class could confine itself to government and culture.

## **The Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Trade in Africans (1807)**

The task which slaves failed to accomplish was taken up successfully and completed by a group of abolitionists including humanitarians, members of a religious sect called Quakers and some industrialists. These included men like Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, and Thomas Fowell-Buxton.

### **The Quakers**

The Quakers were the first opponents of slavery in the British islands. It was a religious group known as the Society of Friends founded by George Fox, a Non-Conformist in 1648. The members held religious meetings in ordinary buildings without the rituals of a church service. They avoided any kind of amusement or elaborate dress. Their lives based on love and never used violence. Those Quakers who went to Pennsylvania and Barbados were instructed by George Fox to welcome their slaves to religious services, treat them kindly and free them after a number of years of faithful service.

The Quakers acted as a pressure group in the movement for the abolition of slavery. They were the first campaigners in England against the slave trade and in 1727 passed a proposal against the slave trade. Between 1750 and 1800, abolition became a religious crusade for the Quakers. Eleven of the twelve committee of the "Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade" were Quakers. The society was later joined by members of other denominations. The Quakers were the leading force in the movement outside Parliament.

### **The Clapham Sect or the Saints**

The Established Church in Britain and her colonies was the Church of England. Within the Church of England, an evangelical movement grew up in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These members wanted more emphasis on salvation through good works and morality. Within this movement was the "Clapham Sect". Among them were William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, James Stephen and Zachary Macaulay. These men such as Ramsay, Stephen and Zachary had first-hand experience of the evils of slavery. The contribution of the Saints to abolition was great.

## **The Industrialists**

The abolition movement coincided with the Industrial Revolution in Britain. The new industrialists were producing goods more cheaply and in greater quantities. However, the flood of cheap manufactured goods which they were producing, needed wider markets which the slave-populated islands could not provide. In 1760, commercial interests strongly supported slavery but by 1800, they were becoming indifferent and later against it. However, the humanitarian motive was present in many industrialists since many of them were members of the Non-Conformists Churches.

## **Granville Sharp**

Granville Sharp was the first man to agitate publicly against the slave trade. He was an apprenticed tailor and then he became a clerk in the Ordinance (Supplies) department of the British Government. He was a devout Christian. He taught himself Greek and Hebrew in his spare time. He never gave up working for a cause in which he believed. He resigned from his Government post when the American War of Independence broke out, because he was in sympathy with the Americans.

In 1765, his interest turned to the abolition movement when he met an African stumbling down a London street. Jonathan Strong had just been beaten and turned out of the house of his master, a Barbadian lawyer living in England. Sharp took the wounded man to his brother who was a doctor and looked after him until he was well again. The brothers found him a job as a messenger for a nearby pharmacy. Two years later, Strong was spied by his master who seized him and sold him to a Jamaican planter for 30 Euros. Sharpe took the case to court and managed to have Strong set free. However, the judge refused to give a judgment on whether the English law allowed a man to be bought and sold as a slave.

After that, Granville Sharp was determined to get a clear ruling against slavery in England. He studied the law and the conditions of slaves in the country. He noted that in 1749, a judge, Lord Hardwicke, had ruled that a slave who ran away in England could be legally recovered. In 1770, he took the case of Thomas Lewis to court. Lewis was a slave who had been seized and put on board a ship to the Caribbean. The jury freed Lewis only because the master could not prove ownership. Once again the court managed to avoid ruling on the question of whether slavery was illegal.

However, the opportunity came when he took the case of James Somerset to court. Somerset, like Strong, had been turned out by his master, a Virginian planter and then seized again. This time the master had clear proof of ownership.

## **Mansfield's Judgement (1772)**

In February 1772, Somerset's case was presented before Chief Justice Lord Mansfield. Eventually, he ruled in June 1772, that his study of the laws of England found that the power of the master to use force on a slave was unknown to the laws of England. Somerset was set free as well as thousands of other slaves in England. Mansfield's ruling paved the way for the opponents of the slave trade to organize their attack.

## **The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade**

In 1787, an anti-slavery society was formed called “The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade”. Most of the members of the Society were Quakers and some belonged to an ever growing evangelical movement which was trying to make the Church of England show as much concern about spreading religious ideas as the Baptists and Methodists. Included in this group were Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce and other abolitionists such as Henry Thornton, Zachary Macaulay and James Ramsay.

The society was determined to have a law passed in Parliament to abolish the slave trade. It hoped that after that, slavery would be forced to collapse because of the lack of the supply of slaves. The society had the support of the Prime Minister William Pitt, William Wilberforce became the spokesman in Parliament and Thomas Clarkson provided the evidence.

### **Thomas Clarkson**

Thomas Clarkson was known as the “eyes and ears” of William Wilberforce. He was born in 1760 and was the son of Reverend John Clarkson, a school master. In 1785, he won a Latin essay prize at Cambridge entitled “Should men be given into slavery against their will?” He showed that there was no justification for slavery. In 1786, he published this essay in English and circulated it among influential people. From then, he devoted his life to abolition, collecting evidence against the slave trade and urging people to take action against what was morally wrong. He worked closely with the Society to abolish slavery.

In 1788, he visited slave trading ports such as Liverpool, Bristol and Lancaster collecting evidence such as shackles, thumbscrews, branding irons and teeth chisels that were used in the trade. He also interviewed thousands of seamen and lived in personal danger. He continued to trade extensively until 1792 when his health failed and he had to retire.

### **William Wilberforce**

William Wilberforce was a Member of Parliament as well as a member of the “Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade”. He was considered the most famous of those members who introduced the abolition issue into debate in the House of Commons. In 1787, he was approached by Thomas Clarkson to take up the cause of abolition. The evidence collected by Thomas Clarkson convinced William Wilberforce and other members of Parliament that the slave trade was an “affront to God and below the dignity of a civilized people”. Outside Parliament, the movement gained support from missionary societies, humanitarians and by many industrialists.

William Wilberforce became the spokesmen on the abolition. He spoke so regularly on the abolition that it became known as the “perennial resolution”. He was the personal friend of Prime Minister William Pitt and so was able to encourage him to introduce a resolution against the slave trade in the House of Commons.

Meanwhile, a law passed which limited the number of slaves carried according to the ship. William Willberforce put forward a proposal to abolish the slave trade in 1789 in a masterly three- hour speech and in 1791 but was defeated. In 1792, he achieved

partial success when the House of Commons passed a resolution: "That the slave trade ought to be gradually abolished."

In 1792, the campaign for abolition experienced two major problems. Firstly, the French Revolution followed by the revolutionary wars, thus causing the Prime Minister, William Pitt to withdraw his support for abolition. He wanted the government to devote all its energies to the war in France. The second obstacle was the West India Interest which consisted of London merchants and English landowners with interests in the West Indies and who were members of Parliament. They made slavery their chief concern and began a serious counter propaganda campaign in 1792 so that they succeeded in having abolition deterred.

William Wilberforce continued to the next 14 years to put forward a proposal to end the slave trade. The parliamentary campaign was strengthened by three new members of the Clapham Sect: James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay and Henry Brougham. The campaign was further strengthened by the death of William Pitt in 1806. His successor, James Fox, was a keen supporter of abolition. In 1807, the English Parliament passed the Act to abolish the Slave Trade.

#### **Reasons why the Act to abolish the Slave Trade was passed**

1. The hard work and the relentless efforts of abolitionists like Wilberforce kept the question of abolition fresh in the minds of the public, and won the support of those involved with shipping, and who were previously opposed to abolition. In 1807, Liverpool, a major slave trading port, voted for the abolition of the slave trade.
2. During the Napoleonic Wars, Napoleon Bonaparte, the French ruler, established a continental blockade which was designed to cripple Britain's trade. This blockade created a glut on the sugar market in Britain, as British goods were confined to the British market. As a result, the price of sugar declined, and so the British government decided in 1807 that the only solution was to reduce sugar production. To accomplish this, it meant that the Slave Trade had to be abolished.
3. Some planters in the older British colonies like Jamaica and Barbados, supported the abolition of the Slave Trade. They believed that if the Slave Trade was extended to the newly acquired Crown colonies like Trinidad and Tobago and St. Lucia, these colonies would begin to produce sugar, and market conditions would further deteriorate with the introduction of sugar from these territories.
4. British slave traders also supplied slaves to foreign territories. These slaves produced sugar which helped to create competition for the British West Indian sugar producers. In order to deprive the foreign territories and newly acquired British territories of slaves, for the purpose of protecting their own sugar interest, the planters in colonies like Jamaica, Antigua and Barbados supported the abolition of the Slave Trade.
5. The death of Prime Minister, William Pitt, in 1806 also favoured the abolitionists' cause since, in his later years, he had withdrawn his support for the anti-slavery movement, and so he had become somewhat of a hindrance to

the success of the abolitionists. His successor, Charles James Fox, supported the movement, and in 1807, Parliament passed the Act to abolish the Slave Trade.

## **Amelioration (1823- 1833)**

Between 1823 and 1833, the British Government introduced a system aimed at making slave conditions better in the sugar colonies. This system was called by the British Government "**Amelioration**". Loosely translated it means making the slave system better. Amelioration was regarded by the Imperial Government as a logical step to take in an era when the whole system of slavery was under attack from missionaries and humanitarians in England and the Caribbean.

### **Who proposed amelioration?**

Amelioration was first proposed by abolitionist groups who sought to vehemently to bring about emancipation in the British West Indies. In 1823, a new abolition society called the "London Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery" was formed. Led by Thomas Fowell-Buxton, the society sought to garner wide-spread support for the abolition of slavery through petitions and the creation of a newspaper called the "Anti-Slavery Monthly Report". The Society sought to have their own amelioration proposals enforced by Law and thus asked the Imperial Government to make such proposals as a part of their policy and eventually asked that the abolition of slavery be gradual process eventually leading to its end. In an attempt to forestall or undermine the Society's attempt and prevent the abolition of slavery, the 15 members of the West India Interest quickly formed a committee and formulated their own amelioration proposals which were submitted to Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State for the colonies.

### **Reasons for the West India Interest's Amelioration proposals**

By formulating their own amelioration proposals, the pro-slavery group felt that they would be able to:

- i. Appear to the humanitarians thus,
- ii. Undermine the efforts of the abolitionists
- iii. Forestall their movement
- iv. Prolong slavery

In addition, since the slave trade had already been abolished and they could not import new slaves it was therefore imperative to improve the conditions under which slaves lived in order to prolong their life span. Thus, they recognized that since planters were not likely to voluntary improve the conditions of their slaves so they had to encourage them to do so. Furthermore, if the living condition of slaves continued to be unacceptable there was the likelihood of increased revolts which were not desired.

The legal basis of amelioration was set of approximately 10 rules which were absolute in the Crown colonies of Trinidad, British Guiana and St. Lucia, but which were only guidelines in the other colonies because these colonies felt

strongly that it was their right to legislate for their slaves without interference from Britain. Some of the laws sought to concede rights to the slaves and give them opportunity to own property or remove hardship from their lives (the Barbados Consolidated Law of 1826 gave this right to the slave). The major amelioration law gave the following:

1. Slaves could now legally join the right to be part of the Christian community especially the Anglican Church. Adequate religious instruction should be provided for slaves at the expense of the Imperial Government. In addition, they could be baptized, have legal marriages, give surnames and Christian name and then buried according to Christian rights in consecrated ground in church cemeteries rather than being interred in family plots as was the custom.
2. Females were not to be flogged.
3. A record should be kept of flogging of over three lashes, which should then be submitted to the magistrate at the quarterly sessions.
4. Slave families should not be separated and slaves were not to be sold for payment of debt.
5. Slaves should be allowed to give evidence in court provided that a minister would give the slave a character reference.
6. Saving banks were to be established for slaves as a means of encouraging thriftiness and enable them to buy personal items.
7. All children born after 1823 should be emancipated and those who remained in bondage should be protected from flagrant abuses.
8. Slaves could now pass on property to their children.
9. Overseers and drivers should not carry whips in the fields.
10. Slaves should be given Saturdays to go to the market and Sundays to go to church.

These were measures which did not require any major disruption of the social order in the British West Indian colonies and it seemed likely that if they were scrupulously observed there would be no need for planters to fear slave uprisings or the sabotage of their equipment by slaves or even the likelihood of slaves running away from the plantations. However, well laid out it was, amelioration was a plan that went astray because British West Indian planters continued to practice all the measures which had ensured control and dominance over two hundred years.

Planter-dominated assemblies continued to enact only a few of the amelioration measures and those which they accepted made little real difference to the practice of slavery.

### **Reasons for the failure of amelioration**

The amelioration policy failed because:

1. Planters were strongly opposed to it. They were totally against the acceptance of slave evidence against a white person in court.

2. The planter-dominated assemblies resented what they perceived as the unnecessary and illegitimate interference in the internal affairs of their colonies by the British Parliament and the humanitarians in Britain.
3. They were not enough officials in the Crown Colonies to supervise the enforcement of Amelioration laws, and those who had the responsibility were either slave owners themselves or sympathetic to slave owners.
4. In territories like Barbados and the Leeward Islands, the planters claimed that the slave conditions were good and did not need improvement, that their slaves were treated as well as seamen and manual workers in Britain. They viewed amelioration as the work of their enemies, the humanitarians, and thus objected to the policy.
5. Many planters feared that amelioration would somehow erode their authority and control over their slaves, that slave insubordination would be encouraged and that ultimately, amelioration would lead to emancipation. They claimed that amelioration was a violation of their right to their property in slaves.

### **Conclusion**

Amelioration represented a concession by the British authorities that slavery as a system that needed overhauling if they were to silence the persons who opposed slavery and the plantation system. The main complaint about slavery at this time was that there were no enforceable restraints in either the laws or social practice in the British West Indies to prevent masters from brutally mistreating their slaves in the name of punishment. Most planters preferred to think of themselves as respectable gentlemen, who managed their estates well and treated their slaves, humanely but they were involved in a system in which punishment was an essential part of the system and they could not envisage a regime in which blacks were free and equal to whites.

## **EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH CARIBBEAN**

### **Factors/Conditions that led to the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies**

Amelioration had failed because it was rejected as being unworkable by the planters. As a result, it was decided that there was a need for immediate emancipation in the British colonies.

In 1830, a few members of the Anti-Slavery Movement set up an Agency Committee whose aim was to win public opinion over to immediate emancipation. The committee divided the country into five districts and put a paid lecture in charge of each. Within a year, they had set up over 1,000 new anti-slavery groups. The campaigners resorted to house-to-house lobbying and they launched a poster campaign, highlighting the need for emancipation. They employed the services of the press and they printed pamphlets which they distributed. Ministers of religion were encouraged to use the pulpit to help the cause of the movement. Hundreds of petitions with large numbers of signatures were sent to Parliament. Non-conformist missionaries such as William Knibb helped to enhance the movement when they informed the British public about slave uprisings and planter reprisals.

The Sam Sharpe Rebellion of 1831 also known as the Baptist War or the Christmas Rebellion played a significant role in helping to speed up the emancipation process. It was the first time that slaves had planned to use strike action to pressure the planters to meet their demands. The harsh response of the planters to this revolt including the hostile treatment of the missionaries and the fear created in the minds of many by the slaves' action, ultimately contributed to the decision to bring slavery to an end.

The formation of a terrorist organization in St. Ann's Bay in 1832, called the Colonial Church Union and sponsored by a number of planters also contributed to the emancipation process. Its founder and leading spirit of the union was an Anglican parson and rector of the parish of St. Ann. He declared that the union's purpose was to defend the interests of the colony, to expose the alleged falsehood of the Anti-Slavery Society and to uphold the church.

However, the union was really an anti-missionary organization with a religious façade. It prevented the spread of any other doctrine except those of the churches of England and Scotland. It persecuted missionaries of the non-conformist religions especially those of the Baptist and Methodist faith. It also tries to support by force the crumbling foundation of the slave system. It influenced the magistrates to withdraw the licenses which were granted to missionaries to preach. Eventually, in January 1833, the Governor of Jamaica, Lord Musgrave, declared the organization illegal. It rapidly disintegrated.

□□There was a general demand for the reform of Parliament in Britain. In 1830, King George IV who was opposed to reform in parliamentary elections died.

Furthermore, the Whig Government which was more in favour of reform replaced the Tory Government. Soon a Parliamentary Reform Act was passed in 1832. This Act led to the redistribution of the electoral divisions according to the new voting population and the loss of a number of boroughs which were generally "bought" by members of the landed interest including wealthy West Indian planters in Britain. These vacant seats transferred to the new industrial towns like Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield, which previously

had no representation to the countries and small farmers who previously had no vote.

□□The strength of the West India Lobby was reduced and this helped the emancipation cause. The passing of the Reform Act led to an increase in the number of votes, since the franchise was extended to all town dwellers who paid 10 Euros on a short lease, factory owners and traders. The Abolition Society urged the new voters to support emancipation as well as the election candidates. When elections were held in 1833, two successful candidates included industrialists, manufacturers and others who were prepared to support emancipation.

□□Many of the new members of Parliament were industrialists who favoured free trade to provide them with new markets for their goods. The interest of the humanitarians coincided with that of the industrialists. In addition, major slave trading towns like London, Bristol and Liverpool were developing other trading interests to supplement sugar, and so they were prepared to support the abolitionists. At the same time, the decline of the sugar industry in the early years of the century and the decline of the plantocracy further weakened the position of the West India interest. Therefore, when the opportunity came, the members of the reformed British Parliament voted overwhelmingly for the emancipation of the slaves.

## **THE EMANCIPATION ACT OF 1833**

The Emancipation Bill was introduced by Thomas Fowell-Buxton. It was he who replaced William Wilberforce in Parliament in 1822 as the chief Parliamentary spokesman for abolition. The Bill stated that "Slavery shall be and is hereby utterly and forever abolished and declared unlawful throughout the British colonies and possessions abroad." However, in 1833 emancipation was not complete because there were clauses in the Act about an apprenticeship System which delayed complete emancipation until 1838.

### **Reasons why the Emancipation Act was passed**

1. The campaigners for abolition kept the question alive in the minds of the public and helped to win the support for the cause. The humanitarians and other abolitionists like Thomas Buxton worked tirelessly in and out of Parliament and brought pressure on the government to abolish the system.
2. Many of the abolitionists were economists who revealed the uneconomic nature of slavery. Others were industrialists who has displaced the West Indian Interest (the hard-core supporters of slavery) and reduced their strength in the reformed Parliament. They used their political strength in Parliament to vote against slavery which retarded industrial growth and development.
3. The slave economy was in decline and there was no fear that abolition would make it worse, so the government was willing to pass the Act.
4. The planters failed to adopt the amelioration measures and their attitude demonstrated the need for Parliament to act.

5. The actions of the slaves were important particularly the Sam Sharpe Rebellion (Christmas Rebellion) which the slaves used to demand their freedom. People in Britain became convinced that if the authorities failed to respond to the slaves, then they would use violence to free themselves. This could be disastrous for the West Indies, and so the government were persuaded to act to avoid any disasters.
6. The planters' response to and their treatment of the missionaries such as John Smith and William Knibb were discouraging. People associated with the religious and the evangelical movement in Britain were not only convinced about the immorality of slavery but were also infuriated by the planters' treatment of the missionaries. Hence, they put pressure on the government to abolish the system.
7. The first-hand reports by Knibb and Burchell of the atrocities committed by members of the Colonial Church Union as well as planters on the slaves, when they returned to Britain also helped. The public was convinced that the planters were not willing to change, and therefore, it was important for the government to bring the system to an end.

### **The Provisions/Clauses of the Emancipation Act**

The Emancipation Act stated that slavery was to be abolished from August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1834. Some of the provisions of the Act were designed to gain the cooperation of the planters. These stated that:

1. Slaves, six years and over were to serve a period of apprenticeship. In the case of domestic slaves, four years whereas field slaves were to serve six years.
2. Apprentices were to work for their masters for three-quarters of the working week (40 ½ hours) without wages.
3. Twenty million pounds were provided to compensate the planters for the loss of their unpaid labour.
4. Apprentices were to remain on the estate during the Apprenticeship period.

There were also provisions designed to benefit the apprentices. These stated that:

1. Children under six years old on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1834 were to be freed immediately.
2. Planters were to continue to provide food, clothing, shelter and medical care for apprentices, and in the absence of food, provision grounds should be provided and time to cultivate them.
3. Apprentices were to be paid for work done in excess of the compulsory 40 ½ hours per week.
4. Apprentices could not be sold unless the estate to which they belonged was sold.
5. Stipendiary Magistrates were to be provided to supervise the Apprenticeship System.
6. Apprentices could purchase their freedom with or without the consent of their masters.
7. The Apprenticeship period could be shortened but no alternative to Apprenticeship would be allowed.

## **Result**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1833, the Emancipation Act received royal assent and so Emancipation was to come into effect on August, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1834. Order-in-Council enforced it on the Crown Colonies. In other colonies, the local legislatures were expected to follow. However, the legislature of Antigua and Barbuda decided not to implement Apprenticeship so their slaves received complete freedom on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1834.

## **The Apprenticeship System (1834-1838)**

Apprenticeship was proposed by James Stephen, a member of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery and adviser to the Colonial office on West Indian affairs in 1833. This was to give slaves time to adjust to freedom, to look after themselves, to handle money and support their families. Apprenticeship was neither full freedom nor full slavery.

### **The Aims of Apprenticeship**

1. To provide a peaceful transition from slavery to freedom.
2. To train the apprentices for the responsibilities of full freedom especially in working regularly for wages.
3. To teach them to be thrifty, thus enabling them to earn a living and to provide them with sustenance during the period.
4. To delay immediate emancipation.
5. To facilitate the continuation of a plantation economy.
6. To facilitate the changeover to a wage economy.
7. It sought to guarantee to the planters an adequate supply of labour for the sugar estates for the six-year period while apprenticeship lasted. i.e. to ensure the ex-slaves did not leave the plantation.

As Professor Douglas Hall stated- it was intended to- “squeeze the last juice out of compulsory labour before the great ruin of freedom set in.”

The extent to which these aims were achieved varied from territory to territory depending on such factors as geographical location, size of the territory, the extent of uncultivated Crown land available, and the attitude of the planters and the government.

In Antigua there was no period of apprenticeship. The planters who controlled the House of Assembly believed that they could increase the profits of the sugar industry despite paying wages for the whole week because of the greatly increased output of the labourers. This decision was probably influenced by the very good relationship between master and slave due probably to the work of the missionaries, especially the Moravians.

### **Difficulties faced by the British Government in implementing the Emancipation Act**

1. The planters felt that they were unfairly robbed of their property in slaves, and so they were determined to take revenge on the slaves. They tried to exploit the apprentices over wages, provision ground and other benefits which they should have enjoyed.
2. It was difficult to turn the master/slave relationship into the employer/employee relationship.
3. There were difficulties concerning the number of hours of work each day and the minimum wages to be paid to slaves.
4. Apprentices were dissatisfied with the Act, they could not understand why free people should work without wages.
5. It was difficult to get the assemblies to pass the necessary laws to bring the Act into operation.
6. It was difficult to get enough suitable candidates to serve as Stipendiary Magistrates and so local personnel were appointed to fill some of the positions.
7. The locally appointed Stipendiary Magistrates tended to side with the planters against the apprentices.

### **How the British Government tried to solve these problems**

1. They tried to recruit people directly from Britain to serve as Stipendiary Magistrates but unfortunately, the number of persons found was grossly inadequate.
2. The compensation money was tied to the passing of the Emancipation Act in order to force the assemblies to pass the Act. No compensation money would be paid if the Act was not passed.
3. The British government tried to keep a close check on the local laws to try to prevent the exploitation of the apprentices.
4. The £30, 000 grant provided in 1835 for education of the ex-slaves was given to the missionaries to eliminate the possibility of the planters using the desire of an education to exploit the ex-slaves.
5. The government shortened the period of Apprenticeship.

### **Problems which apprentices experienced due to the implementation of the Emancipation Act**

1. Planters classified artisans as praedials (field slaves) in order to maintain the labour for six years. They argued that the artisans contributed indirectly to production.
2. Apprentices were sometimes threatened with demotion to the field for offences like acts of insubordination.
3. The planters, in their attempt to keep the apprentices attached to the estates for as long as possible, demanded that they work eight hours each day for five each week. On the other hand, the apprentices wanted to work nine hours each day for four and a half days each week.
4. The planters counted the number of hours from the time when the apprentices arrived at work, whereas the apprentices wanted the hours to be counted from the time they left home.
5. If planters did not feed the apprentices, the Act stated that they were to be provided with provision grounds and time to cultivate their grounds. However, where provision grounds were provided, they were usually far away from the estate, the land was infertile and sometimes the planters charged the apprentices rent for the use of the land.
6. Some planters refused to give apprentices customary allowances such as saltfish and rum. They refused to allow the apprentices to graze their animals on the estate land or to use estate tools and equipment as they had done previously, unless they were prepared to work extra hours for their masters. Other privileges which they previously enjoyed were stopped for example, the practice of old women cooking for people who worked in fields and the provision of drinking water for workers. In addition, mothers who worked in the fields were no longer allowed to suckle their babies, nurses (usually old women) no longer looked after the sick in estate hospitals, pregnant women, old women and mothers of six and more children were no longer given light work or sometimes exempt from work.
7. There was no minimum wage set by the Act, hence planters often paid very little for work done outside of the compulsory 40 ½ hours.
8. Sometimes the planters refused to pay the apprentices and instead charged them for their huts despite what was stated in the Act.
9. In some cases, the planter freed old and sick slaves so that they would not be responsible for providing for them.
10. Apprentices often had difficulty purchasing their freedom because planters raised the prices to limit the number of those who would not be able to purchase their freedom.
11. Harsh estate discipline was not relaxed. Apprentices were still being flogged even though this was mainly done by the Stipendiary Magistrates, whom some apprentices did not trust because they felt that sided with the planters. In addition, a new form of punishment was introduced called the treadmill in the islands.

### **How the Ex-slaves responded to the Emancipation Act**

After August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1834, the more docile ex-slaves continued to work on the estates eagerly anticipating the day when they would be truly free. However, the more militant slaves did otherwise.

1. In Jamaica, some apprentices refused to work until several were flogged or locked in jail.
2. Some apprentices saved their money during the apprenticeship period and brought their freedom in order to escape the planter's exploitation. In Jamaica, nearly 1, 500 apprentices purchased their freedom before the system was abolished.
3. Many of them when they were fully free, refused to allow their children to work on the estates. Instead, they wanted to take advantage of the educational opportunities available with the hope that this would provide a better way of life.
4. Some apprentices demanded higher wages for their labour during crop time when it was needed most.
5. Whenever possible, the apprentices complained to the Stipendiary Magistrates about the abuse imposed by the planters. However, it was usually difficult to contact the magistrates since apprentices needed a pass to leave the estates, and obtaining a pass could be difficult.
6. At the earliest time possible, ex-slaves moved away from the estates as a means of protesting against the bad treatment which they received and escaping from those things that reminded them of slavery. Where land was available, some squatted on unused land whereas others purchased land with assistance of missionaries who helped them to establish free villages.

### **The Stipendiary or Special Magistrates**

The Stipendiary Magistrates were appointed from Britain and from among retired army and naval officers living on half-pay. These men were qualified because they were accustomed to rough conditions in various parts of the world and they were accustomed to enforcing discipline. They were supposed to be "Men uninfluenced by the local assemblies, free from local passions."

### **The Duties/ Roles of the Stipendiary Magistrates**

1. To administer justice and to assist in preventing social and economic disturbances.
2. To help to preserve public peace and order and to alleviate this fear.
3. To supervise the operation of the Act of Emancipation.
4. They were given exclusive jurisdiction over offences committed by the apprentices or their employers in relation to each other. In some colonies, this jurisdiction extended to minor offences such as petty thefts.
5. They had to visit various estates at regular intervals so as to settle differences. They dealt with a multitude of cases such as insolence, laziness and insubordination against the apprentices as well as counter charges against

owners such as severity, assault, inadequate medical treatment and cheating in the matter of working hours.

6. To ensure that no one was imprisoned without their orders and that medical attention was given to apprentices in hospitals.
7. To inspect jails and workhouses.
8. To assist in fixing the value of negroes who wanted to buy their freedom.

### **Problems Experienced by the Stipendiary Magistrates**

Stipendiary Magistrates faced many problems as they tried to supervise the Apprenticeship System. For example:

1. Apprenticeship was neither full slavery nor full freedom, so the magistrates' administration of it was difficult or confusing for all parties.
2. The Stipendiary Magistrates were too few and as a result, were over-worked.
3. The system was grossly under financed and so the magistrates were underpaid.
4. There was no provision for sick leave or return passages to England if they were dismissed from service, or if they were forced to return home because of ill-health.
5. There was no pension for their family if they died in service.
6. There were no provisions made for the stabling of horses used by the magistrates or for lodging if they were caught far from home at nightfall.
7. Stipendiary Magistrates were required to submit regular reports to the governor on the general state of the areas they supervised. These documents had to be written at night after weary hours of rough riding.
8. Many of the magistrates were retired professionals for example army officers who were mostly elderly. Consequently, the heavy work load and the constant travelling sometimes through mountains with improper roads were too difficult for them.
9. The mortality rate of the magistrates was high as they suffered from tropical fevers and dysentery.
10. Both apprentices and planters did not trust the magistrates. Sometimes when they sought to intervene on behalf of the apprentices, they were obstructed by estate personnel who were also hostile towards them.
11. They had the responsibility of helping to set the price of the apprentices' freedom. However, since they were not familiar with the pricing of the slaves, their decision was often influenced by the planters who inflated the prices. This made it difficult for apprentices to purchase their freedom.
12. In addition, local legislatures and governors often obstructed magistrates from carrying out their duties.

### **Reasons the Apprenticeship System came to a premature end in 1838**

Apprenticeship according to the Emancipation Act was supposed to end in 1838 for non-praedials and in 1840 for praedials. In 1838 it ended for everyone. Several factors were responsible for this premature end.

1. The planters felt that slavery was uneconomical and that they would benefit from freedom because they would not have to provide apprentices with food, clothes, medical care and housing. They could also pay the lowest wages which

would attract the number of workers they needed. The planter therefore felt that he would be better off financially since his expenses would be reduced.

2. The British Government was beginning to have doubts about the benefits of the apprenticeship system and it was not providing the apprentices with the kind of training for freedom which was envisaged. In 1838, a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the working of apprenticeship in the British West Indies. From Jamaica, it produced very critical reports.
  3. The planters realized that it would be impractical to free the domestic slaves in 1838 and retain the services of the field slaves since they were both needed for the effective operation of the estate. They believed that those who were retained would create trouble for the planters who failed to give them their freedom.
  4. In some colonies, it was difficult to differentiate between the domestic slaves and field slaves. Sometimes, domestics were recruited to the fields because of shortage of labour. Therefore, if the domestic slaves working in the fields obtained their freedom, then regular field slaves would also claim their freedom.
  5. The apprentices who were anticipating their complete freedom were becoming restless, hence they began to exert pressure on the authorities to act on their behalf.
  6. From 1837 in England, a group of Quakers led by Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey and two other Englishmen visited the West Indies to enquire into the working of the apprenticeship. They were strongly prejudicial against the system. On return to England, they published a report severely criticizing the system and also making a number of misleading statements. In 1837, Sturge's book: ***The West Indies in 1837*** was published and aroused much concern among members of the Anti-Slavery Society and other humanitarian groups who launched a massive propaganda campaign to end the system.
- Apprenticeship was ended on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1838 and all ex-slaves were given complete freedom.

#### **An Assessment of the Work of Stipendiary Magistrates**

- The limited success which apprentices achieved was due to a large extent to the work of Stipendiary Magistrates. As a result of their achievements and despite their failings, they came to be called the "Architects of Freedom".
- Their activities accounted in a large degree for the peaceful transition from slavery to full freedom. This nullified the fears of those who predicted violence and destruction after emancipation.
- The regular contact with the magistrates seemed to inform the apprentices of their rights and duties in a way no other agency would have done. The magistrates could allay suspicions and misunderstandings which may have led to violence and disturbances.
- They were so overburdened with the need to attend petty offences that they had little time to formulate and implement schemes for the improvement of the social conditions of the apprentices.

□□Their effectiveness was furthered impaired by the weak economic position which made it impossible to live on equal terms with the resident whites. They could not return hospitality offered to them so could not accept it without prejudice to their position of impartiality.

"On the tone of the West Indian life as a whole, they had too little effect on the defensive and made them glad if they held their own, avoid unnecessary trouble and keep their health.

## **EMANCIPATION IN THE FRENCH CARIBBEAN**

### **Early Protests**

In France, the French Revolution echoed the cry of liberty, equality and fraternity. The abolition of slavery by revolution was announced in 1790. This early action spurred the opponents of slavery especially when slavery was reinstated by Napoleon Emperor (Emperor of France 1803) when the Bourbon Kings were restored in 1815.

### **The Abolition of the Slave Trade**

In France, the Haitian Revolution was keenly observed by those for and against slavery. The slaves in St. Domingue were successful in abolishing slavery themselves, thus resulting in a turning point in abolition throughout the West Indies. Despite efforts to retake the island by the French forces and the capture of Toussaint, the colony remained at war. The Haitian blacks declared independence under Dessalines in 1804 and the country became the first free country led by blacks in the Americas.

In other French colonies like Martinique and Guadeloupe freedom was granted to the slaves by the Revolutionary Commander Léger Félicité Sonthonax after his arrival in St. Domingue in 1792. However, slavery was restored after Napoleon became ruler of France except in St. Domingue.

The French Government abolished the slave trade in 1818 but in practice little was done to prevent it. As a result, the trade continued illegally until 1833 when the Anglo-French Right of Search agreement was extended and reinforced.

### **Amelioration**

By the beginning of the 1830s, the French Government decided to introduce measures to ameliorate the condition of the slaves as a result of the numerous slave

revolts, for example, in Martinique 1822, 1824, 1831, and 1834. These measures were:

1. The abolition of the manumission tax and the process of manumission simplified.
2. Registration of all slaves was made compulsory.
3. Branding and mutilation were prohibited.
4. Corporal punishment was limited.
5. Elementary education and religious instruction for slaves were compulsory.

In the French Caribbean, government officials were required to adopt the amelioration measures unlike in the British Caribbean islands which were self-governing. These measures aroused the same kind of resistance from the planters as they had done in the British colonies. The French planters who resisted them had the approval of some of the government officials. In France, public opinion was satisfied with these measures and so complete emancipation was demanded. It was influenced by Victor Schoelcher, a business man who had observed slavery first hand when he visited the French West Indies. He was deeply affected by the abuse of slavery, so when he returned to France he was determined to fight for its abolition.

### **Abolition of Slavery**

In France in 1834, an abolition society called *La Société pour l'Abolition de l'Esclavage* was formed with Victor Schoelcher as the spokesman. Like Thomas Clarkson, he was a prolific writer and pamphleteer. He published several writings in favour of immediate abolition. He gave public lectures on the need for emancipation and directed a wide petition campaign.

Unlike the British abolition movement, *La Société pour l'Abolition de l'Esclavage* was a rationalist and secular movement not connected to any religious group. It achieved a minor victory in 1836 when it was declared that any slave setting foot in France must be set free. In 1838, the Society drafted an emancipation bill but this was opposed by the West India Interest in the French Assembly even more so than in the British Parliament. Meanwhile, after 1838 thousands of French slaves escaped to the neighbouring British islands. In the early 1840s, the call for emancipation became more intense as many industrial workers began to join the abolition movement.

In 1847, the Society issued a national petition for immediate emancipation. The following year in 1848, Schoelcher was appointed Under Secretary for the colonies and President of a commission on slavery after Louis Philippe, King of France, was overthrown and a Republic set up in France.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1848, Schoelcher drew up a bill proposing the abolition of slavery throughout the French Empire. This incorporated the idea of compensation to the owners of slaves in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Cayenne (next to Suriname) and Réunion in the Indian Ocean. He insisted that there would be no halfway stage between slavery and freedom such as apprenticeship. All who were emancipated immediately received full freedom and full French citizenship.

## **Reasons slavery was not abolished in the French Caribbean until 1848**

1. The Humanitarian movement in France came later than it did in the British territories or in Britain itself. The Society for the Abolition of Slavery was formed in 1834, and even after that, the Humanitarian movement remained relatively weak numerically and in fervour when compared with the movement in Britain.
2. In France, the movement was rational and secular and lacked the fervour of a religious crusade which marked the movement in Britain, and which helped to make it victorious.
3. There was strong resistance to the emancipation movement by local planters and officials, for example, the amelioration proposals were fiercely resisted by the planters although there were no local legislatures in the French colonies.
4. Even though slaves revolted in the French colonies, the impact of their resistance was less severe than that of the slaves in the British colonies who staged major rebellions, which caused the authorities to take action.
5. The sugar industry in Martinique and Guadeloupe continued to prosper for a while longer than the industry in the British colonies, and with her loss of St. Domingue to the slaves, France had better economic reasons than Britain to continue with slavery.

## **Reasons why the French abolished slavery**

1. Victor Schoelcher worked tirelessly and hard.
2. The work of the Anti-Slavery Society such as its propaganda campaign against the slave owners which helped to win the support for its cause.
3. The economic importance of the West Indian sugar interest was reduced because of the growth of beet sugar farming in France. In addition, the political strength of the West Indian cane interest was also reduced because representatives for beet sugar districts in the French Assembly outnumbered those with connections with trading or planting in the Caribbean. The beet growers and beet sugar manufacturers refused to relent in their efforts to destroy slavery.
4. The slave revolts particularly in Martinique helped the French abolition campaign. In 1822 and 1824, there were revolts at Carbet and a large one at Grande Anse in 1833. Other revolts in Martinique and Guadeloupe in 1848 forced the respective governors to proclaim abolition without awaiting the decree from France.
5. There was a great desire to end the growing incidence of the flight of thousands of slaves from the French Caribbean to the British colonies where slavery had ended in 1838.
6. The planters had little regard for the amelioration measures and so this encouraged the abolitionists to press for complete freedom.
7. The abolition of slavery in the British territories in 1834 provided an example for the French abolitionists to press for complete freedom.
8. The French colonies did not have assemblies like those in the British islands which organized a long campaign against emancipation.

9. Most of the leading abolitionists became enthusiastic supporters of the new government in France (brought about by the French Revolution) which soon took the decision that "French soil cannot support slavery any longer". Consequently, the provisional government of the newly established republic appointed a commission headed by Victor Schoelcher, Under Secretary for the colonies, to prepare the Act for immediate emancipation in all the French colonies. The commission encouraged by Schoelcher's zeal did not waste any time, and on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1848, abolition was proclaimed by decree.
10. The planters were attracted to the offer of compensation money and so accepted the decree. In addition, they realized that they could no longer hold down the slaves who showed increasing bitter resistance.

## **Similarities and Differences between French and British Emancipation Movements**

### **Similarities**

1. Each movement had a champion in the person of Victor Schoelcher in the French movement and William Wilberforce in the British.
2. In each movement, there was an influential West Indian Interest which strongly opposed the abolitionists. However, political strength and influence waned as more liberal politicians who were supportive of emancipation, displaced them.
3. Similar methods were used in the publicity campaigns of the abolition movements such as the printing of pamphlets and the holding of lectures in Britain and France as abolitionists sought to win public support for their cause.
4. The information about slave revolts in the French colonies like Martinique and the reports of slave resistance provided by missionaries in British colonies like Jamaica were useful to the struggle.
5. Similar attempts were made in both campaigns to forestall or stop the emancipation movement with the introduction of amelioration measures. However, planters were equally hostile and uncooperative and so, the Amelioration policy failed in both movements.
6. The reform of Parliament in Britain which was followed by a change of government, a direct forerunner of the Emancipation Act corresponded with the form of the Estates-General in France following the 1848 revolution. The aristocracy was reduced in the new government which contributed significantly to the success of the abolition movement.

### **Differences**

1. The British movement was earlier than the French movement.
2. The British West India Lobby was defeated in Parliament in the early 1830s whereas the French Sugar Lobby was able to resist for another 15 years.
3. The British movement was more widely supported and involved outstanding individuals. On the other hand, the French movement was more of an individual struggle by Victor Schoelcher.

4. The emancipation campaign in Britain was both a humanitarian and a religious crusade whereas in France it was purely secular and intellectual with no link to any religious group.
5. The British movement was gradual but the leading figure of the French movement believed in immediacy. Therefore, when the Emancipation Act was drafted, no provision was made for an apprenticeship period, instead the slaves were given freedom immediately.

## **EMANCIPATION IN THE SPANISH CARIBBEAN**

### **Abolition of the Slave Trade**

In the Spanish colonies such as Cuba and Puerto Rico, emancipation came later than in the British and French colonies. The Spanish colonies experienced a sugar boom after 1750 which lasted into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With increased sugar production, slavery grew in the Spanish colonies, especially in Cuba where the planters there could not obtain enough slaves due to trade restrictions.

In 1791, the Cuban Slave Trade was declared open and duties on slaves were reduced. Traders from any country were allowed to export any commodity without paying any duty. As a result, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish had imported more slaves than before. The Spanish authorities became concerned about the increase in black: white ratio rather than the humanitarian aspect of the slave trade.

In 1815, at the Congress of Vienna, Spain promised to abolish the slave trade and in 1817 signed a Reciprocal Search Treaty with Britain. However, the Spanish made no attempt to enforce these measures and even after 1820 when it was formally agreed to abolish the slave trade. The Spanish continued to import slaves, sometimes under the flag of the United States if they thought that they were going to be searched. However, in 1865, the Spanish abolished the slave trade due to the outside pressure and the growing abolition movement in Spain such as the Spanish Anti-Slavery Society.

### **Abolition of Slavery**

Britain exerted increasing pressure on Spain to free the slaves. The Spanish slaves were aware that the British slaves were freed and this increased the danger of slave revolts. In Cuba, by 1840, the majority of the slaves were entitled to their freedom if they could prove that they were imported after 1820 but this was difficult. This led to a series of revolts in the Matanzas region in 1843 by slaves who thought their freedom was being withheld. There were even encouraged by some mulattoes. These revolts were brutally suppressed and the mulattoes who participated were executed. This encouraged more people in Cuba to desire the abolition of slavery. The fortunes of abolition in Cuba and Puerto Rico were linked to the independence movement. Planters in Cuba and Puerto Rico wanted colonial rule whereas many Creole Spaniards wanted independence, yet they were dependent on Spain for

protection in the event of the outbreak of slave revolts. Many feared that there would be a decline in the sugar industry as in Jamaica. The extreme pro-slavery group in Cuba considered annexation by the United States if Spain could not protect them from slave revolts to bring emancipation.

The British wanted emancipation in the Spanish empire for humanitarian and economic reasons. Slaves-produced sugar from the Spanish colonies were underselling the sugar produced in the British colonies and furthermore Britain wanted to keep Cuba out of the hands of the United States.

In 1861-1865, the American Civil War led to the emancipation of slaves throughout the United States and ended any thoughts of annexation by Cuban slave-owners. In 1868, the monarchy in Spain was overthrown and the country became a republic with a new government which had a number of anti-slavery sympathizers. This encouraged those who wanted independence in Cuba and Puerto Rico to include emancipation in their goals.

In 1870, the Spanish Government passed a law granting freedom to all slaves over 60 years old and those born after September 1868. Three years later, all slaves in Puerto Rico were set free and 35 million pesetas were paid to their former owners. In Cuba, there was a struggle for independence known as the Ten Years' War which broke out in 1868. This war was brought to an end by the Treaty of Zanjón. Two years after the end of the war in 1880, the Spanish government passed a measure for the gradual emancipation of slaves in Cuba. There was no compensation offered to slave-owners because of the cost of the war. By the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1886, all remaining slaves were granted their freedom.

### **Reasons why Spain abolished slavery in Cuba in 1886**

1. There was a growing resistance of the slaves, for example, in 1843, there was a widespread slave revolt in the areas around Mantanzas in Cuba. Many plantation owners became afraid that the island might become a black republic like Haiti. As a result, some owners began using indentured servants from Mexico, China and the Canary Islands rather than importing slaves. This was the beginning of a successful policy of immigration which showed that slavery was not a "necessary evil" and so many Cuban planters were prepared to support emancipation.
2. The Spanish Government faced increasing international pressure initially from Britain after the 1815 Vienna Congress and later, after the American Civil War and abolition in that country, the increased pressure to bring about abolition in Spanish colonies.
3. Spain felt isolated after the removal of the United States' support after 1865 and concerned about her image as a slave holding power. As a result, she was forced to act decisively.
4. There was increasing pressure from abolitionists in Spain and from a small number in Cuba.
5. Abolition in Cuba was linked to the independence movement in that as long as slavery continued, the Cubans would remain loyal to Spain to be guaranteed

protection in the event of a slave uprising. By the 1860s, many Cubans liberals urged emancipation and independence.

6. In 1868, Carols Manuel de Cespedes, an eastern landowner and lawyer freed his slaves and this led to the start of the Ten Years' War. Cespedes issued an Emancipation decree which stated that the slaves were freed and drafted into the service of the country. Those owners who supported the revolution would be compensated for their slaves if they so desired and those who opposed would be ineligible.
7. In 1870, Segismundo Moret y Prendergast, the Colonial Minister and a former Vice-President of the Abolition Society, introduced to the Spanish Cortes, a number of measures which became the Moret Law. This provided for the freeing of all slaves over 60 years old.
8. The commander of the Spanish troops in Cuba, Martinez Campos, was afraid that all adult slaves would join the rebels unless he freed them. As a result, he quickly brought the fighting to an end. In 1878, the signed the Treaty of Zanjón with the revolutionaries. It stated that all those who helped the Spanish troops would gain their freedom. The new law to abolish slavery came into effect on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1880.
9. All newly freed slaves were to remain with their owners under a system of trusteeship "Patronato" until 1888, instead of compensation to their owners. The master was to feed, clothe, protect and care for them as well as teach them a useful trade. In return, any work done by the slaves for their masters would not be compensated. The stipulated time ended prematurely in 1886 like the Apprenticeship system in the British territories had done.
10. There was agitation by abolitionists in the Cortes and the slave system was in decline because the richer planters had accepted abolition and had sold their slaves or freed them, and some slaves ran away.
11. Slavery was preceded by a rapidly deteriorating economic situation which was aggravated in part by a general decline in the price of sugar on the world market. The abolitionists and the Cuban deputies attacked the patronage system and in response, a royal decree of 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1886 formally dissolved the patronage system thereby bringing slavery to an end.

## **ADJUSTMENTS TO EMANCIPATION, 1838-1876**

### **Economic situation after Emancipation**

The Post-Emancipation period resulted in most of the ex-slaves leaving the estates. Many of them set themselves up as peasant (small) farmers. This resulted in a massive labour shortage which threatened to cause the sugar industry to collapse. The sugar industry was already in a poor state because of (1) shortage of labour and (2) beet sugar competition. To avoid total decline, planters tried to introduce immigration in the form of bringing in labourers from Europe, other Caribbean islands, Asia and other areas. They also tried to introduce technology in order to reduce the cost of sugar production. However, all of these efforts could not stop the changes from sugar **monoculture** (planting of one crop which was sugarcane) to **agricultural diversification** (planting of many crops). As a result of this, many crops were produced after emancipation e.g. banana, cocoa and arrowroot. Agricultural diversification also occurred because ex-slaves grew crops other than sugarcane. These peasant farmers grew not only food crops for eating but cash crops to sell. Peasant farming began by ex-slaves but was boosted by the East Indians who came through immigration to work on plantations.

Therefore the emancipation of slaves and their **exodus or mass departure** from the plantations led to (1) the development of peasant farming and (2) Immigration.

**n.b. The exodus from the plantations was greatest in Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana where large areas of unoccupied land were available.**

### **Labour Problems in the Post-Emancipation period**

Before emancipation, all territories in the British West Indies could be classified as the same because they were all plantation economies based on slave labour. After emancipation, island separateness developed as each island began to take different turns to develop. In other words, islands developed at different rates. Larger islands had greater labour problems because they had more land and larger numbers of ex-slaves but few of them were willing to work on plantations after emancipation.

Let's compare Trinidad and Jamaica after emancipation. Trinidad was considered a medium sized territory with a large population of freed persons or ex-slaves, Jamaica was considered a large island with an even larger population of freed persons. The difference is that Trinidad had a similar labour problem and saw immigration as the solution to this labour shortage. Jamaica had a lot more problems and therefore an even larger labour problem, but the government at the time did not want to introduce immigration to solve this problem.

### **Attitudes to Labour in the English-speaking Caribbean after 1838**

The newly emancipated people also had some adjusting to do:

1. They had to find their own food, clothing and shelter. They could either make arrangements with their former owner or establish independent settlements. Where possible, they much preferred the latter.
2. They had to learn and exercise the rules governing bargaining of labour.
3. They had to address the issue of education, health as well as their legal and political rights. Needless to say the colonial authorities were not in a hurry to include them in the political process or to change the laws to reflect their new status. As Governor Harris of Trinidad noted: "A race has been freed but a society has not been formed."
4. The planters shifted the burden of taxation to the newly emancipated people.

### **Attitudes of the planters or plantation owners**

After emancipation, the main concern of the white planters was to ensure that they had labour for their plantations. However, some planters had abandoned their estates because they watched the exodus of ex-slaves and were afraid of having to pay high wages to labourers. Most planters tried to convince ex-slaves to stay and work for pay by saying that they would provide good working and living conditions on their plantations as well as high wages but this was far from the truth. Many planters also tried to prevent freed men from getting land so that they would not be able to make a living planting crops and so they would therefore be forced to return to plantations to work. They did this by making the land too expensive or the ex-slaves to buy.

## **Problems affecting the Sugar Industry in the Post-Emancipation Period**

### **Problems affecting the sugar industry 1838 to 1854**

#### **(1) Increasing cost of sugar production**

- There was mismanagement of estates by managers who were in charge because of absentee ownership.
- Labourers had to be paid wages now that slavery was abolished.

#### **(2) Increasing debts**

- Planters had borrowed extensively from British merchants and were unable to repay their loans because of low profits.
- Many continued to borrow in an attempt to revive their plantations.
- However, banks and merchant houses were sceptical about giving loans to West Indian planters. The Bank of British Guiana and the Planters' Bank of Jamaica did not want to use estates as security for loans anymore and the Colonial Bank of the

West Indies did not make any substantial loans to planters.

### **(3) Shortage of a regular, relatively cheap supply of labour**

- After emancipation there was an exodus of ex-slaves from the plantations in the colonies with higher populations.
- Those who left the plantations established themselves as peasant cultivators; they planted small-scale market crops and provisions and they kept livestock. Skilled Africans moved to towns where they were employed as blacksmiths and carpenters and masons, etc.
- Africans often supplemented their incomes by working part time on plantations but the planters found their labour unsatisfactory- the planters wanted cheap, full time labourers as they had been accustomed to during slavery.

### **(4) Decline in markets for West Indian sugar**

- Preferential duties (taxes) on West Indian sugar were removed under the Sugar Duties Equalization Act of 1846. This meant that sugar sold in Britain was to be sold at one price with no taxes added on.
- Sugar from British Caribbean colonies had to compete with the cheaper sugar being produced in Cuba, Brazil and other parts of the world.
- The British West Indies could no longer compete against much larger suppliers.
- There was competition from beet sugar. By 1833, France had set up more than 400 factories that made twice the amount of cane sugar than was being produced at that time.
- The policies of the British Government after emancipation actually helped to set back the sugar industry in its colonies. As a general rule, Britain/England did not want its colonies making manufactured goods to compete with products from England. This policy was called **mercantilism** - the idea that a country's prosperity depended on getting cheap raw material from colonies, making manufactured goods from these materials then selling the goods within national borders, back to the colonies and to other countries. This policy even included refined sugar. So even though the West Indian plantations were technically capable of making refined sugar, instead of just exploiting brown sugar to England to be processed into white sugar, the British Government charged higher duties on refined sugar coming from its colonies.

# **Measures adopted to deal with the problems facing the West Indian Sugar Industry**

## **(1) Alternative labour sources**

- Immigrants were brought to some Caribbean countries to work plantations.

## **(2) Mechanization of production**

- Steam mills replaced mills that were run by animals (such as cow-drawn mills)
- New equipment was installed, such as vacuum pans and the centrifuge.

## **(3) Introduction of new varieties of cane**

- Attempts were made to improve the varieties of cane so that cane had higher sugar content.

## **(4) New farming techniques**

- New techniques developed on the fields included the use of:
  - the plough and harrow
  - different types of fertilizers
  - irrigation schemes
  - proper drainage systems

## **(5) Amalgamation of estates**

- Smaller estates were joined together to form larger ones. This allowed for more efficient use of factory equipment and generally better management of estates. It also meant that labour was more readily available and estates could share marketing facilities.
- More land was available for cultivation so therefore, the most fertile areas were cultivated.

- A large estate was more likely to get loans which could then be divided and given to individual planters.

#### **(6) West Indian planters attempted to establish newer markets**

- Some planters turned to the USA to export their sugar. As the USA is relatively close to the West Indies, transport costs were lower and prices were better than when supplying to Britain for example.

#### **(7) Technical advice**

- Many colonial governments employed skilled engineers to give advice to planters, for example on new types of manufacturing which could save cost.

- Departments of agriculture were established by some governments. These gave advice to sugarcane farmers and offered technical assistance and financial advice on how to increase production. These government departments also conducted research on new types of crops.

**n.b. The above measures were adopted in different degrees according to the size and wealth of the colony and what individual planters could afford.**

#### **Outcome of these improvements on the sugar industry**

Despite all of the measures mentioned, production of sugar in the British Caribbean colonies declined in the years just before and after emancipation. From 1831 and 1838, there was an overall decline of 20% and by 1842 this decline had reached 40%.

This fall in production was due to several factors including:

- the trade policies of the British Government.
- competition from Spanish and French sugar producers.
- shortage of labour.
- a flooding on the sugar market of sugar from many countries.

# **Immigration in the British Caribbean (1834-1917)**

## **Reasons for Caribbean Immigration in the Post-Emancipation period**

The planters believed that their most serious post-emancipation problem was the scarcity of cheap reliable estate labour caused by the flight of ex-slaves from the plantations/estates after emancipation. Many of the freemen formed an independent peasantry through land ownership. The planters responded by importing **indentured (an indenture was a formal legal agreement or contract)** labourers from densely populated **agrarian (agricultural)** communities and they petitioned the colonial governments to support the various immigration schemes. Moreover, it was felt that in the long-term immigration would lead to reduced wages for labourers when a new set of labour was established.

The Crown (British Government) had four main aims in supporting immigration, which were to:

- restore and even expand the sugar industry.
- create a steady supply of labourers.
- ensure that the ruling class in the colonies maintained control over the labour force.
- keep wages low by having immigrant labour compete for wages with the freed populace.

## **Introduction**

China and India were the first places that Europeans checked for replacement labour after slavery ended. The planters had already tried using other Europeans before the slave trade from Africa began and already knew that this plan would not work because they would have to pay high wages to white labourers. China and India seemed ideal sources of labour. Both were poor countries with large populations, which meant that there were many people who would see even the hard labour on the sugar plantations as an opportunity for a better life.

The first shipment of labourers left India just before the apprenticeship period drew to a close in 1838. Of the 414 Indians who came, 18 died on board the ship and 98 died within 5 years of landing in the colony. 238 Indians later returned to the subcontinent and just 60 decided to stay in the Caribbean. Emigration from India was suspended until 1844 because of this high mortality rate, while the authorities examined the conditions of retirement and shipping.

Between 1845 and 1847, Jamaica received 4,551 Indians and 507 Chinese. By 1854 though, just over 1,800 of these immigrants had died or disappeared. It is likely that many of them were killed by a cholera epidemic which swept through Jamaica in 1850. Between 1838 and 1917, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada received Indian labourers. Some people in Jamaica were against this importations of

immigrants. Some churches also opposed Indian immigration worrying about the effects the Indians would have on African Christian converts. The Anti-Slavery Society in England also opposed Indian immigration, saying that it would reverse the social and moral gains made by abolition.

The planters however saw immigration as the key solution to their labour and financial problems. Only in islands such as the Leewards, Barbados and Belize was there opposition to immigration schemes by the ruling whites and this was only because the labour supply was adequate. Even this situation soon changed because the freed blacks refused to work for low wages and became more independent so that by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century planters in some small islands like Antigua, St Kitts and Nevis were also calling for immigrant labour.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the West Indies had received over 300,000 Indian labourers. Some Chinese and Portuguese labourers were also brought in but in small numbers. There were also small numbers of European and African immigrants as well as ex slaves migrating to different islands for labour.

### **Immigration schemes**

British immigration schemes:

- The Madeirans from 1835 to 1852
- The Chinese from 1852 to 1893
- The Africans- after 1841, attempts to bring free Africans from Sierra Leone and the Kru Coast in Africa failed because the Africans soon became aware of working conditions in the Caribbean. By 1869, 36,160 free Africans came mainly to British Guiana, Jamaica and Trinidad
- The East Indians from 1845 to 1917
- The West Indians from 1837

### **THE EUROPEANS**

Due to a decline in the white population, planters sought European immigrants to increase the size of the white population. It was hoped that Europeans would set an example of industry to ex-slaves and eventually develop into a middle class. They would settle on available land in the interior, thus forcing ex-slaves off the land and back to the plantations. Jamaica imported the largest number. Europeans also went to Trinidad, British Guiana and St Kitts. These immigrants were mainly Scots, Irish, French and Germans. They were recruited under a bounty system.

### **Problems with European immigration**

Europeans were unsatisfactory as most died soon after they arrived. They died from tropical diseases, heat stroke and many drank themselves to death. They also refused to work on the plantations with blacks. Many asked to be sent home or migrated to the United States. Planters also failed to supply proper food, shelter and medical facilities.

## **THE PORTUGUESE**

Madeirans were paid only 3d per day in Madeira and were attracted by higher wages in the Caribbean, especially in British Guiana. Many went to Trinidad and a few to the Windward Islands. They were brought in by government bounty. Most came during periods of famine in Madeira (1846-1847). Their numbers decreased after 1847 until the scheme ended in 1882.

### **Problems with Madeiran immigration**

The Madeirans died in large numbers. They suffered severely from yellow fever, malaria, overwork and inadequate food. The scheme was very irregular and most of them went into trading as soon as their contracts ended. In addition, because so many of its citizens were leaving, the Madeiran Government objected to the scheme and implemented measures to make it difficult for them to be recruited.

## **THE AFRICANS**

There were two distinct groups of Africans that were used as labourers in the post-emancipation period. These were the free Africans and the liberated Africans. The free Africans were persons who willingly opted to come and work on the plantations in the Caribbean. The liberated Africans were persons freed by British naval personnel from vessels illegally transporting them to the Caribbean as slaves.

### **Free Africans**

Attempts were made to obtain Africans from the Kru Coast and Sierra Leone. The British government was reluctant to grant approval of this scheme as it seemed to be a revival of the slave trade. However, in 1840, approval was granted. At first they were recruited privately but the British government assumed direct control two years later.

### **Problems with African immigration**

1. Very few Africans were willing to come to the Caribbean. There were no catastrophes in Africa which would make them leave.
2. Many who came to the Caribbean did not remain on the plantation; rather they followed the ex-slaves and settled on lands and became peasant farmers.

### **Liberated Africans**

The largest number of Africans who came to the British Caribbean were “rescued” by the British Navy from slave ships bound for Cuba and Brazil. These Africans were forcibly indentured for up to five years in the Caribbean, primarily in British Guiana, Trinidad and Jamaica.

### **Problems**

1. The number of liberated Africans was too small to make a difference to the labour. This scheme ended when Cuba and Brazil abolished slavery in 1886 and

1888, respectively. Like the ex-slaves, they abandoned the estates and settled on land.

## **THE CHINESE**

The first Chinese immigrants arrived in Trinidad in 1806 from Malaya. They were to be indentured for five years, with a promise of small plots of land afterwards. They were extremely unsuitable as estate labourers, and most were shipped back. Most Chinese immigrants came during the period 1859-1886 and went to British Guiana, Jamaica and Trinidad. They came mostly from the Portuguese colony of Macao and from Canton. Others came as well because of the Teiping Rebellion (1851-1864).

### **Problems with Chinese immigration**

Planters complained that the Chinese did not make good estate workers. A few re-indentured themselves. They preferred to return to China or open retail shops. In addition, they were more expensive than the Indians. The Chinese government insisted that a full return passage be granted after a five-year indenture contract, but the planters were willing to pay this only after two five-year contracts.

The Chinese Government also opposed immigration because the Chinese were ill-treated in Cuba. Most Chinese avoided the West Indies, preferring to go to the United States or to find work nearer to home in Java or the Philippines. Finally, race relations between blacks and Chinese were quite poor.

## **THE EAST INDIANS**

The first Indians arrived in 1838 on Gladstone's Estate in British Guiana. However, the British government stopped the scheme because of evidence of ill-treatment and the high death rate among the immigrants in Mauritius. However, due to pressure from the planters, the British reopened the Indian immigration scheme in 1844.

It was not difficult to find willing immigrants. Many craftsmen had lost their jobs due to competition from the mechanized factories and mills of England. Also, India was becoming overpopulated and there was not enough land to divide among the younger generation. In addition, wages in India had fallen to 1/2d per day and there was a series of famine during the period 1857-1877 that led to an increase in food prices. Those seeking to escape the police and the caste system were also willing to migrate.

The Caribbean seemed attractive with high wages, shelter, medical care and a chance to find new occupations beside agriculture. Indians were easily recruited as India was a British colony. British ships and trading posts were already there, and the British Government could easily provide British Officials to supervise the scheme. Planters were satisfied with the Indians because they were hardworking, accustomed to tropical agriculture and they re-indentured themselves.

### **Working and living conditions on the plantations**

East Indians immigrants served their indentureship in Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Trinidad. They were contracted to those owners who had requested their services and who had partly funded their importation. The protector

or Asian General explained their terms of contract to them. They also saw it that the employers signed the indenture conflict before the proper authorities and gave a written contract or guarantee that the immigrants would receive medical care. In Jamaica they worked also on banana plantations and in Trinidad on cocoa and coconut plantations. Most of the estates were in rural areas. In the 1840's Indians served a one- year contract. They could recontract after the first year but most did not. By the 1850's, there were three year contracts and by 1862 there were five year contracts. Some land owners wanted seven year contracts. Initially, immigrants were guaranteed a return passage at the end of the contract. First after five years but later after ten years of residence. Later they had to pay part of the cost to return. They could pay cash or land. On the estates, the living conditions were slave like. Labourers could not leave estates without a pass and they were subject to fines and imprisonment for being absent from work and for disobedience.

### **Methods of recruitment:**

- Promise of land and work in the Caribbean.
- Kidnapping.
- Recruitment of Indians involved a degree of deception where information related to their jobs were either withheld or misinterpreted. In particular, the amount that they were likely to be able to earn and save were often exaggerated.

### **Reasons why some Immigrants did not return home at the end of their contract**

- They could not afford the money to subsidize their passage back to India.
- They accepted the offer of free land, or a cash grant instead of a return passage.
- Many Immigrants were unwilling to return to the poor social and economic conditions and the crushing poverty from which they had come from.
- Opportunities for self-fulfilment and material gain that were available in the West Indies were not available at home.

### **Difficulties Immigration created for resident Creoles**

Immigration created some difficulties for the resident Creoles. It contributed to unemployment and underemployment in the during the "off- crop" period of sugar production. It limited bargaining opportunities and so forced them to accept low wages. It forced them to carry more of the fax burden to finance immigration.

The poor conditions for Immigrants led to the Indian Legislative Council in India passing the Abolition of Indenture Act so East Indian Immigration ended in 1917.

## **The impact/ effects of Immigration on Caribbean Society, Culture and the Sugar Industry**

## **ECONOMIC EFFECTS ON THE SUGAR INDUSTRY**

1. There was an increase in the supply of labour. Their coming definitely solved the labour shortage problem.
2. There was a decrease in the wages offered to workers on the estates. This helped to cut the cost of production dramatically since wages was two thirds of the cost of production.
4. Sugar production increased particularly in Trinidad and British Guiana.
5. A number of immigrants remained and worked on the estates after their contract expired. They did both skilled and unskilled jobs.
6. It is said that the Indian immigrants encouraged the use of mechanization.
7. This improvement in the sugar industry slowed down the diversification of the Caribbean economy.

British West Indian planters had turned to immigration as a tool for reviving the sugar industry. The hope was that with the steady supply of labour, planters could focus on increasing their output. Immigration, however, did not have its desired impact, especially in a colony as Jamaica. In territories such as Trinidad and British Guiana, we cannot assume that immigration saved their sugar industry. For instance, they introduced mechanization and placed more lands under sugarcane cultivation. These other factors could readily be counted as factors that saved their sugar industries. Barbados could be used as another example. Up to 1848, they had seen an increase in their output by 250 per cent. However, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this had declined. We cannot assume that it was because Barbados was not using immigrant labour that its output declined. During the period, Barbados was plagued by problems such as soil exhaustion and inadequate mechanization.

The overall conclusion must be that immigration did not cause increased sugar production in the British West Indies, as many other factors could have been responsible.

## **SOCIAL EFFECTS**

1. Indians were felt to be inferior and they could only find work in poorly paid jobs. They could not settle in the towns, but lived in the countryside and formed an active peasant class. The employment of Indians mainly as field workers led to the employment of blacks in better jobs, for example, the police force.
2. The ex-slaves despised the Indians and refused to work alongside them in the fields. They were described as “heathens” because of their speech and clothing. Indians also despised the blacks because of their alleged low moral standards.
3. Immigration led to the expansion of social services, for example, medical facilities and a large police force.
4. Caribbean societies became plural societies or multi-ethnic societies. In other words, there are people in the Caribbean who are citizens of the same country, but

who belong to different racial groups, different ancestral cultures, different religions or all of these.

## CULTURAL EFFECTS

**1. Family-** Indians brought their firm family structure in which all relations supported each other. The idea of extended family, which included several generations, was very strong. All males over 16 years were members of a family council. They made all decisions of the family, for example, marriage, religious ceremonies and expenditure.

**2. Religion- Hinduism-** Hindus worshipped several gods of which Brahma was the most important. He was the supreme god or creator. They believed that when people die, their souls are reborn in a new body. The Hindus had very strict divisions in the society; this was known as the caste system. Each person belonged to a special group or caste. The Brahmins or the religious leaders were at the top of the society and the Hindus in the Caribbean continued to follow them as their leaders.

**Islam-** The Indians who came were also Muslims. They believed in one God, called Allah. They followed the teachings of the Quran.

**3. Festivals-** Divali or Festival of lights was celebrated by the Hindus. They told stories, shared gifts and decorated their windows and doors with lights and candles.

**Hosein-** A Muslim festival. Small temples, made from paper and bamboo, were decorated and carried in a procession through the streets, while there was dancing to the beats of drums.

4. The Indians normally segregated themselves deliberately in the educational institution. Oftentimes, they were unwilling to send their children to school, since they feared they would be converted to Christianity. It was not until the late 1870s when separate schools for Indian children were established, mainly by the Canadian Presbyterian Mission to the Indians, that Indian children went to school and language barriers began to crumble. Indian integration in the Caribbean was not very easy, since many of them spoke the Hindi language and this served as a language barrier.

5. New culinary skills were introduced, the use of curry, and new kinds of food, for example, roti. Chinese foods were also introduced.

## The Free Village Movement Introduction

The drift of ex-slaves from the plantation can be found in the ex-slaves' desire to establish himself in a social and economic context free from the demands of the plantation. The desire for independence drove ex-slaves away from the plantations and led to the village movement.

No matter how many blacks became small landowners they could not resist the oppressive system unless they cooperated as a group. This was why the formation of free villages became so important. Free villages developed when ex-slaves moved off the plantation and settled themselves in "free villages".

Some free villages were established before emancipation by run-away slaves in the forests of Guyana and the mountains of Jamaica and were known as **maroon settlements**.

The formation of free villages happened quite rapidly in the British Caribbean. In Jamaica, the first free village called Sligoville (named after Marquess of Sligo) was established by a Baptist Minister named James Phillipo just one year after emancipation which catered to 100 families when emancipation was declared. The second free village was established in 1838 through the efforts of an English Minister named William Knibb. The village was named Sturge Town and was established on land bought by the Anglican Church.

### **Factors which determined the establishment of free villages**

A number of factors were attributed to the development of free villages within the British Caribbean after emancipation.

1. Places like British Guiana, Trinidad and Jamaica had much unused land available and because of this the development of free villages was possible, while in smaller territories such as St. Kitts, Barbados and Antigua and so on, little land was available which resulted in the development of fewer free villages.
2. The ex-slaves had a desire to be free and to own a piece of land. They associated work on estates with slavery, so they wanted to be independent of the estates. In addition, owning a piece of land was the key to independence.
3. The former slaves disliked plantation labour and they wanted to forget the bad treatment that had been meted out under slavery.
4. There were some governors who encouraged the movement away from the plantation. A good example was Governor Colebrook of Antigua in 1837. On the other hand, there were also governors who legislated against the growth of cooperative estates. For example, in British Guiana.
5. The ex-slaves' familiarity with agriculture helped to pave the way for the establishment of free villages. During slavery, slave owners who had available land provided their slaves with provision grounds on which they grew food crops. Slave-owners had also developed the practice of allowing slaves to sell any surplus in the Sunday market. When freedom came the ex-slaves wanted to devote as much time as they chose to the growing and marketing of provisions from which they could make a living.

6. Some ex-slaves squatted on unused land and disregarded official warnings to desist from such practice, because they knew that it was difficult for them to be brought to justice.
7. Some landowners were willing to sell some of their land in order to ease their financial problems, for example to raise money to pay wages or to clear off longstanding debts.
8. Many ex-slaves were able to use their savings to purchase land at prices ranging from two pounds to ten pounds per acre.
9. In British Guiana, ex-slaves pooled their resources, obtained limited credit and purchased large territories of land from estate owners. Victoria, Queenstown, Plaisance and Beterverwagting were some of the villages which they established. By 1852, it was estimated that there were more than 70, 000 ex-slaves owning property in houses and land for which they had paid one million pounds.
10. Baptist and Wesleyan missionaries for example William Knibb, James Phillip and Thomas Burchell in Jamaica who wanted to protect the ex-slaves from the abuses of the planters, established free villages such as Sligoville, Sturge Town, Clarkson, Clarksonville, Wilberforce, Boston, Bethany, Salem, Philadelphia and Harmony, where ex-slaves were able to purchase small lots of land.
11. The generosity of some planters also contributed to the establishment of free villages. In Barbados, Reynold Alleyne Ellcock, the owner of Mt. Wilton Estate in St. Thomas, left money in his will to teach his slaves. After his death, they received this money in 1841 and together, they bought sections of Rock Hall Estate to establish free villages.
12. A few planters for example Peter Chapman, owner of Workman's Estate in St. George made land available for sale. In 1856, he subdivided 102 acres of his estate and allowed ex-slaves to purchase lots in instalments.

#### **Effects of free villages on the supply of labour on the British Caribbean sugar estates**

The development of free villages in various colonies in the British Caribbean had a profound effect on the labour supply on the sugar estates.

1. Free villages greatly reduced the number of full-time labourers on plantations.
2. Free villages reduced the labour supply on sugar plantations which created a labour shortage in some islands particularly in the larger territories like Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana which further resulted in the decline in production of sugar.
3. Free villages reduced the number of male artisans and craftsmen on the plantations.
4. Free villages resulted in planters having to seek alternative labour supply for the estates which inevitably resulted in indentured immigration.

## **The African-Caribbean Peasantry in the Post-Emancipation Period in the British Caribbean**

A fundamental development during the post emancipation period was the movement away from the estates by ex-slaves mostly to set themselves up as peasant proprietors. Indeed, many ex-slaves struggled to make a life for themselves and to etch out some form of existence for themselves and their families in a society that still had many of the prejudices of the pre-emancipation era.

One of the many problems facing the ex-slaves after emancipation which still prevented them from enjoying full equality with members of the planter class was the difficulty in obtaining land to set themselves up as independent small farmers. Many ex-slaves desired to become independent small farmers but this could only happen if the ex-slaves acquired their own land. Such a life would give them the security of personal liberty and landownership, enabling them to escape the high rents and the low wages or in some cases the métayage system.

Despite the fact that the colonial governments made it difficult for the ex-slaves to own Crown lands (in an attempt to keep them bound to the estates and ensure continued production of sugar), some ex-slaves were able to become peasants.

1. Some ex-slaves set themselves up most easily where unoccupied land was most available. As the fall in sugar prices hit the estates land values fell and some estates were abandoned. By pooling their money together ex-slaves could buy these abandoned estates and then subdivide them into plots of two, three or more acres.
2. Ex-slaves acquired land through the help of Baptist missionaries who helped to bargain with landowners and provided funds so that peasants could set themselves up in farming villages. This also acted as an incentive to the ex-slaves to convert to Christianity and to become members of the Christian Church.
3. Peasants who could not buy land squatted on unused Crown lands in the hills. By living on these plots long enough they came into possession of the land.

Despite their success in acquiring land peasants still encountered a number of obstacles in acquiring land to establish peasant plots.

1. For one thing peasants were not free of official interference. Licenses and land taxes were imposed and small landholders had to follow numerous regulations or deal with interfering planters nearby. There were still many peasants who were unable to buy plots because plantations were so tied up in debt and uncertainty of ownership that they lay unused and unsold while the peasantry was desperately in need of land. At times there were violent protests when peasants felt they were being unfairly treated for example the peasant revolt led by Paul Boggle at Morant Bay in 1865.

2. There were problems with the acquisition of land due to high rents, lack of Crown Land and planters' reluctance to sell land.
3. Planters charged high rents on and the peasants could not afford these.
4. Planters used legislation, such as the Squatters' Act and the Tenancy Act, to make it difficult for peasants to acquire land.

A number of crops were planted on a large scale by this emerging peasant population. These were cash crops grown for sale in the local markets and subsistence crops grown to be eaten by the peasant family. Peasants used every piece of land however steep or stony to grow ground provisions, fruits and vegetables. Livestock ranged from cattle to sheep, goats, pigs and poultry. Cash crops included, tobacco, bananas, spices, cocoa, coffee, coconuts, and some sugarcane. The increase of these crops helped to change the pattern of agriculture in the Caribbean leading to what was called the Agricultural Diversification.

- a) Individual peasant holdings normally comprised:
  - Marginal, un-cleared and un-surveyed land
  - Land that was usually located far from the markets where goods were sold
- b) Peasant holdings were normally a half acre to two acres
- c) The land was usually used for:
  - Growing provisions, fruits and vegetables
  - Rearing livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry
- d) Peasants normally practiced subsistence agriculture where sufficient crops were grown to feed the family.
- e) Some peasants supplemented their income by working part-time on the estates for wages.

The peasantry developed in every British Caribbean island to a lesser or greater extent. The islands grew the same crops. However, only a few emerged as leaders such as Jamaica. Jamaica had adequate shipping arrangements as well as enough peasants and plantations supplying banana for export figure for this fruit continued to rise in the early 1900s and it was established as a major industry. The island of Barbados was still fairly concentrated on sugar. Trinidad and St. Kitts did not put so much acreage into those other crops for several reasons. The islands' sizes as well as the smaller size of their peasantry were also deterrents.

Sidney Mintz shows that the cultivation of provision grounds came to be seen by slaves as a customary right and that the experience of this "proto-peasantry" in producing and marketing crops and livestock was an important aspect of their transition to emancipation. After slavery, the rise of the peasantries constituted some kind of resistance response to the dominant plantation system and for many reasons the former slaves valued peasant farming for their independence.

### **Contribution of the Peasantry to the Economic and Social Life of the Caribbean Economic:**

1. The peasants helped the Caribbean people to reduce their dependence on imported food as they grew crops for the local market and their families. Their

goods consisted mainly of fruits, vegetables and ground provisions which they sold at the local Saturday or Sunday market for cash.

2. A complex system of direct trading and middlemen developed in places like Jamaica where not all the peasants who produced crops came to the market. For example, farmers in the mountainous eastern parishes, sold their produce to coastal traders who carried them to the southwest where main wage earners still worked on sugar plantations. Other peasants sold goods to those who were going to market in Kingston and Spanish Town.
3. Some peasants in the Eastern Caribbean traded with other islands for provisions, e.g. Montserrat small farmers sold food to people in St. Kitts, Nevis and Antigua.
4. The development of the peasantry helped to make sure that a variety of different crops were grown in the region. In the Eastern Caribbean, the peasantry changed the pure plantation economies which was based on growing just one crop.
5. The peasants contributed to the money earned by the region by exporting spices, ginger, logwood, cotton, sugar, rum, coffee, arrowroot, citrus, pimento, lime juice, and coconuts.

#### **Social:**

1. Peasants promoted cultural events, some of which helped to keep African and Indian culture alive in the Caribbean.
2. Peasants laid the foundation of modern Caribbean society by building schools and churches in their villages, by campaigning for roads and streets, and for improved medical and educational facilities.
3. Peasants helped to develop Friendly and Benefit Societies, and to develop agricultural societies and cooperative banks.

#### **Alternatives to Sugar**

Sugar was the main export crop in Trinidad, British Guiana and Jamaica, however, a main export crop was developed. In Trinidad, cocoa was grown along with quicker growing crops such as bananas, plantains, peas, beans, and groundnuts.

In Jamaica, bananas were at first grown as a locally eaten food until Lorenzo Dow Baker realized its profitability and officially registered the L.D. Baker Fruit Company in 1772. In 1885, he formed the Boston Fruit Company and controlled the stages of this banana business. In 1929, small farmers in Jamaica pooled their resources and set up an organization for the transportation and sale of their crops in the USA and Britain. This organization was called the Jamaica Producers' Association.

In British Guiana, rice became important due to the arrival of the Indian labourers. In the Eastern Caribbean, small famers turned to other crops in addition to sugar. Barbados and Antigua exported sea island cotton, cocoa was grown in St. Lucia and Dominica. In St. Vincent, arrowroot was the new chief crop; in Grenada, it was

nutmeg, and in Montserrat, sea island cotton and limes. These crops were met with new difficulties such as insects, hurricanes, diseases, and overseas marketing.

## **DEFINITIONS**

A **small farmer** owns or rents lands, hires labour to help work the land or harvest a crop, lives on the income from the farm, and very seldom if ever, labours for wages. A **peasant** owns or rents land, works on the land and is mainly dependent on it for a living. He very seldom hires labour, and sometimes looks for work for wages to help out the income from the cultivation.

A **labourer** is a person who might have a piece of land and work it, but whose income comes mainly from wages earned working for someone else.

**Métayage:** In métayage, the planter did not pay money as wages to his labourers. Instead, he shared with them the proceeds of the crop. The arrangement was made in one of two ways. In one, the sharecroppers would undertake to plant and reap and supply the cane to the planter's factory. The sharecroppers would plant and the planter would then hire labourers to reap and supply to his factory. The sharecropper would receive about half or one-third of the proceeds. In the second, the sharecropper would plant and the planter would then hire labourers to reap and supply to his factory. The sharecropper would receive about half or one-third of the proceeds.

Métayage was most widely attempted in the Windward Islands, especially after the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 had been passed. After 1846, all planters found it more difficult to raise money because of sugar prices declined and merchant creditors stopped lending money except to those planters who had good security to offer.

Métayage was advantageous as the planters did not have to advance any money for wages. Also, no matter whether the price obtained for the produce was high or low, the planter could not lose, since he was committed only to pay an agreed proportion of what he received.

However, métayage was not a successful arrangement because of the falling sugar prices so planters and ex-slaves were reluctant to agree to such an arrangement.

## **Adoption of Crown Colony Government in the British Caribbean in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

We have already pointed out that very little provisions were made for the newly emancipated people. No public health system or housing scheme was put in place to accommodate them. The laws did not address the matter of their legal and voting rights. It was the Missionaries who gave them guidance and support in these unfamiliar areas.

All of these problems and more led the peasants in St. Vincent (1862) and Jamaica (1865) and Barbados (1876) to stage a rebellion in their respective territory.

The government felt that it had done enough. It had partnered with the Churches in providing elementary education for the masses. For ten years through the Negro Education grant, it helped to finance education. From 1835 to 1840, it provided an

annual sum of thirty thousand pounds to help finance education. The amount decreased gradually for the next five years until it ceased in 1845.

In addition, they took the initiative to use the **Mico Trust Charity Fund** of £120,000, to open a number of schools. These were operated by religious bodies in colonies such as Jamaica, St. Lucia, Dominica and Trinidad. By 1841, just three years after emancipation, there were about 196 schools throughout the British Caribbean with a school population of about 1,500. Government inspectors were appointed and commissioned to supervise the education system.

The truth is that after this very little was done. Once the Imperial Government withdrew or ceased funding, the local government authorities refused to vote any significant amount of money for education of the masses. It was in their best interest to keep the masses ignorant. It would ensure labour for their estates and enterprises and secure their class from any entrance of any lower class people. Primary Education was not seen as necessary or compulsory (except in British Guiana). How then could the masses reach any further?

The authorities had the same attitude towards public health and housing. The Old Representative System of Government was anything but representative. The composition of it was mainly plantocrats and upper class whites with a few coloured members. These people did not care about the suffering of the masses.

The 1850s and 1860s brought further distress on the already frustrated masses:

- Cholera epidemic claimed the lives of thousands and left many children orphaned and families without the main breadwinner (income earner).
- 1861-1865 was the American Civil War. This meant that essential food supply- flour and saltfish- was not available. The shortage of food sent the prices "sky high". Bread and flour went up by as much as 83%!
- 1863-1865 were years of drought and other natural disasters.

No relief was provided. What followed next is a prime example of how the Representative Government dealt with the demands of the freed people.

The people in the parish of St. Ann, Jamaica, sent a petition to the Queen Victoria. She sent an unkind reply. She advised them to work hard for whatever wages they were offered and find ways to help themselves. The biased and racist governor Eyre loved the response. It seemed to give him approval for his draconian way of dealing with the masses that he treated with open disdain. He published thousands of copies, held public readings of them and had them posted all over different towns.

He treated **Paul Bogle** with open disdain. The peasants from St. Thomas dared to seek audience with him. He had no time to listen to the grievances of peasants. It did not matter to him that Bogle and his marching band had walked more than sixty miles to see him! They returned to Morant Bay in St. Thomas were only a few days later the **Morant Bay Rebellion** led by Bogle erupted.

The governor quickly proclaimed Martial law. As usual their first response was force and repression! The militia was called out to suppress the rebellion. Ringleaders were caught, brutally and publicly flogged and then hung.

This forced the Imperial government to change its response. It effected a change from the Old Representative System to Crown Colony Government. All colonies except Barbados and the Bahamas instituted this new form of government. Crown Colony Government was more responsive to the needs of the public but the attitude of control and superiority was basically the same.

### **Reforms of Crown Colony Government**

- Public works: roads, bridges, etc.
- Police Force
- District Courts
- Social services: Boards of Health, Government Hospitals constructed

### **The Morant Bay Rebellion (1865)**

#### **Rebellion and response**

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1865, a black man was put on trial and imprisoned for trespassing on a long-abandoned plantation, creating anger among black Jamaicans. When one member of a group of black protesters from the village of Stony Gut was arrested, the protesters became unruly and liberated the accused man from prison. When he returned to his home, Bogle learned that he and 27 of his men had warrants issued for their arrest for rioting, resisting arrest, and assaulting the police.

A few days later on October 11, Bogle marched with a group of protesters to Morant Bay. When the group arrived at the court house they were met by a small volunteer militia who panicked and opened fire on the group, killing seven black protesters before retreating. The black protesters then rioted, killing 18 people (including white officials and militia) and taking control of the town. In the days that followed some 2,000 black rebels roamed the countryside, killing two white planters and forcing others to flee for their lives.

The White planter population feared that the revolt would spread to the rest of Jamaica and Governor Eyre sent government troops, under Brigadier-General Alexander Nelson, to hunt down the poorly armed rebels and bring Paul Bogle back to Morant Bay for trial. The troops were met with no organized resistance but killed blacks indiscriminately, many of whom had not been involved in the riot or rebellion: according to one soldier, “we slaughtered all before us... man or woman or child.” In the end, 439 black Jamaicans were killed directly by soldiers, and 354 more (including Paul Bogle) were arrested and later executed, some without proper trials. Paul Bogle was executed “either the same evening he was tried or the next morning.” Other punishments included flogging for over 600 men and women (including some pregnant women), and long prison sentences.

Gordon, who had little- if anything -to do with the rebellion was also arrested. Though he was arrested in Kingston, he was transferred by Eyre to Morant Bay, where he could be tried under martial law. The speedy trial saw Gordon hanged on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, two days after his trial. He and William Bogle, Paul’s brother, “were both tried together, and executed at the same time.”

### **Consequences in Britain**

When news of the response to the rebellion broke in Britain it generated fierce debate, with public figures of different political affiliations lining up to support or oppose Governor Eyre’s actions. When Eyre returned to Britain in August 1866, his supporters held a banquet in his honour, while opponents at a protest meeting the same evening condemned him as a murderer. Opponents went on to establish the Jamaica Committee, which called for Eyre to be tried for his excesses in suppressing the “insurrection.” More radical members of the Committee wanted him tried for the murder of British subjects under the rule of law. The Committee included English liberals, such as John Bright, Charles Darwin, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Huxley, Thomas Hughes and Herbert Spencer. An opposing committee, which included such Tories and Tory socialists as Thomas Carlyle, Rev. Charles Kingsley, Charles Dickens, and John Ruskin, sprang up in Eyre’s defense. Twice Eyre was charged with murder, but the cases never proceeded.

### **Consequences in the Caribbean**

The rebellion led to the adoption of the Crown Colony System of Government in the British territories except Barbados and the Bahamas.

## **CARIBBEAN ECONOMY, 1875- 1985**

### **Problems of the sugar industry, 1875-1985**

The decline of sugar in the British Caribbean began before 1850. The causes of this crisis in the sugar industry at this time were:

- Britain's loss of North American colonies in 1783 which resulted in an increase in the cost of estate supplies thereafter purchased from Britain.
- Abolition of the Slave Trade and emancipation produced increased labour costs and labour shortages.

The decline of the sugar industry accelerated after 1850. The following are the causes of this decline:

- Sugar Duties Equalization Act of 1846
- Competition from Cuba and Brazil
- Competition from beet sugar
- Inefficiency of various aspects of the industry

#### **(1) Sugar Duties Equalization Act**

**n.b. Free trade means trading or buying and selling without the additional cost of paying duties or taxes on items to be sold.**

The Sugar Duties Act of 1846 was the worst news for the British West Indies sugar industry because it meant not only that all sugar prices had to be equalized (entered at the same price on the sugar market) but also at a lower price. Before this, the West Indies had been a protected market (meaning that duties would protect them from competition because the duties would make the competitors' sugar more expensive). However, with the Act, this no longer happened and the price of BWI sugar and the cost of sugar production had to be reduced if any profit was to be made.

#### **(2) Competition from sugar produced in Cuba and Brazil**

Cuba was a main competitor of the British West Indies because they were able to produce sugar more cheaply and thus undersell the BWI sugar on the world market and in Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Cuba had an advantage for following reasons:

- Cuba had more virgin soil
- Cuba had more available land
- The Cuban sugar industry adopted the most technologically advanced methods of refining and producing sugar (e.g. steam engines, vacuum pans, centrifuges)
- Adequate, reliable slave labour until 1886 when Cuban slavery ended

These major reasons made Cuba sugar cheaper to produce than BWI sugar. The British West Indies on the other hand had:

- Little or no virgin soil
- Islands were small
- Lack of capital meant no mechanization
- Estates were in debt
- Unreliable labour force especially where land was available

Brazil had the same advantages as Cuba such as Virgin soil, large expanses of land, slave labour, and superior technology. Other areas that were competitors were Java (in Asia) and Louisiana (in North America).

### **(3) Competition from Beet Sugar**

European countries started beet sugar industries because:

- It would make them independent of imported sugar
- It would provide employment
- It would suit the rotation of crops they practiced in Europe

Napoleon encouraged the development beet sugar in France during the Napoleonic war when cane sugar at a shortage. During the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, beet sugar was a serious threat to sugar because it satisfied the European market therefore cutting off the need for European and even British imports of cane sugar.

Beet root produced not only sugar but also cattle feed from its residue. It also helped the economy in Europe because it employed a large working population and unlike sugarcane could be stored for months without spoiling. Beet sugar had a lower cost of production and lower costs. It was easier to transport because it had lower freight (transportation weights) than sugarcane which made it easier to transport.

Lower prices made beet sugar more popular among British consumers. and it also had the reputation of being of a superior quality to the West Indian/Caribbean cane sugar. As a result, both the consumption and level of imports of cane sugar into Britain decreased.

In order to overcome the depression in the British market, British Caribbean sugarcane producers turned to the U.S., but even there they were met with competition from beet sugar.

Apart from destroying the sugarcane market, beet sugar competition led to a fall in

the price of sugarcane. The fall in prices affected profits and this led to the abandonment of several sugar estates.

Beginning in 1897, actions were taken to reduce sugar beet competition. The U.S. government put duties and tariffs on sugar imported into the country to protect the U.S. sugar industry. In 1902, **The Brussels Convention** was signed by which beet sugar producing countries no longer subsidized the production of beet sugar. As a result of all this, British West Indies exports of cane sugar into Britain had increased.

### **Measures (solutions) taken to improve the sugar industry from 1875 onwards**

**(1) Loans-** From 1848 onwards the British Parliament provided West Indian planters with loans to mechanize plantations, assist immigration and improve communications. These were taken up by Barbados, Trinidad and British Guiana but generally refused by Jamaica.

**(2) Amalgamation of Estates-** Smaller estates amalgamated into bigger working units. Estates were turned into Limited Companies. In 1833, there were 600 estates in British Guiana and in 1890, there were only 140.

**(3) Scientific agriculture-** Government botanists were appointed (a botanist is a person who studies plants. The botanists were placed in Jamaica, Barbados and British Guiana. These botanists used new varieties of cane, fertilizers and more efficient planting methods. In 1898, the Imperial Department of Agriculture was established in Barbados. In 1922, The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was opened in Trinidad.

**(4) Centralization-** Introduction of a Central factory systems allowed for greater efficiency and lower production costs. In 1871, the Colonial Company established the Usine St Madeline factory in Trinidad.

**(5) New Markets-** The loss of European markets to European beet sugar forced the British Caribbean planters to seek new markets. From 1875 to 1899, the new market was the U.S. and from 1898 to 1912, the new market for West Indian sugar was Canada.

### **Were the measures taken to improve the sugar industry a success or a failure?**

The measures taken to improve the sugar crisis succeeded for the most part. There were improved yields of cane and fewer diseased crops. This was mainly due to the efforts of the agricultural departments and the planters' willingness to learn.

There were lower production costs to produce sugar on the estates, especially those

which had amalgamated. Many uneconomical estates were abandoned or became part of amalgamated units.

More capital was invested in the sugar industry and this was really helpful in saving the industry from crisis. The British Government's efforts as well as that of the planters ensured that the economy survived. There were enough funds to purchase equipment such as vacuum pans and steam mills.

Success in the area of loans was limited because loans were disliked because repayment became a burden on colony revenues.

### **Comparison of the Sugar Industry in the British West Indies in the 19th century (1800s) and the 20th century (1900s up to 1985)**

#### **19th Century**

- Low production
- Little use of steam power
- Slow adaptation of central factories
- Small size of population
- Absentee owners
- Little capital invested
- Backward technology because of capital

#### **20th Century to a certain extent there was still the following issues:**

- Low production
- Small amount of Central Factories
- Dependence of the BWI on sugar for export and employment

# **Agricultural/Economic Diversification**

## **The development of alternative crops**

Alternative crops were the other crops in the colonies. The list consisted of the other crops that were grown in the colonies after emancipation. They were grown mainly by peasant farmers. These crops included limes, bananas, rice, coffee, cotton, cocoa, nutmeg, and coconuts.

## **Introduction**

Economic/agricultural diversification began even during the slavery and sugar period because slaves grew other crops on their plots on the plantations either for their families to consume or to sell in the Sunday markets. When slaves were emancipated in 1838, the now free men wanted to get as far away from the plantations for the most part so many of them decided to become independent peasant farmers and cultivate crops to make a living.

The diversification process was further pushed by the abandonment of sugar cultivation on some estates. On such estates, some planters began to focus on new crops which required less labour. Some planters would also sell or rent land to peasant farmers who wanted to cultivate other crops.

Several features of agricultural/economic diversification should be considered:

- Mostly peasant farmers practiced the cultivation of alternative crops. The peasants had increased independence as a result of their cultivation of alternative crops. They were able to exist on the earnings from the crops as many were seasonal and as such they were always able to reap a crop. There was a ready market both locally and overseas for several of the crops, such as banana, coffee and coconuts. The peasants were able to rely less on estate work. This also made them more independent.

The peasants were very instrumental in making crops such as banana important exports. In colonies such as Jamaica, bananas were able to become chief revenue earners, putting sugar into the second place. The peasant activities in Trinidad and Guyana also saw crops such as rice becoming vital to the economies.

- The majority of planters continue to cultivate sugarcane.
- Some planters in some colonies decided to grow alternative crops.

The planters recognized the profitability of the alternative crops. Planters had long looked at the banana industry with distaste. However, when the United Fruit Company started its own banana estates, planters recognized the value of the crop. Some planters even stopped planting sugarcane in order to plant banana and coconuts. The sugar estates that had been unprofitable found that this was a very good alternative.

## The crops

### Banana

The crop was planted by peasants but became important as an export commodity in **Jamaica** after 1869 when the first load of bananas was carried to the U.S. Many planters who had abandoned sugarcane in the 1880s started to cultivate bananas for export. In 1893, 113 estates cultivated bananas. By 1912, bananas, oranges and grapefruits made up about 56% of export earnings for that year while sugar made up only 6% of export earnings. The banana industry was greatly helped by the fact that the United Fruit Company also had banana estates and also bought the fruit from peasant producers.

### Coffee, pimento, ginger, logwood

These crops were cultivated in small amounts by the peasants for exports in Jamaica. Coffee was also cultivated in Grenada.

### Cotton

Owing to the high cotton prices during the American Civil War (1861-65), cotton was grown again with success in Tobago, Grenada, St Lucia, Antigua, and Nevis but with the end of the war and the return of low priced American cotton, production soon fell away again. The cotton of St Vincent was of particularly good quality.

### Cocoa

Cocoa was grown extensively in Trinidad and Grenada and produced in smaller quantities in Jamaica, St Lucia and Dominica. In Grenada, it completely replaced sugarcane.

### Citrus

Citrus such as limes, grapefruits and oranges replaces sugarcane in Dominica and was encouraged in St. Lucia and Montserrat for making lime juice. In Jamaica, oranges and grapefruits were cultivated by peasants for exports and up to 1912, made up over 50% of export earnings including banana.

### Spices such as nutmeg

Nutmeg was planted extensively in Grenada. The island became known as the "Spice Island." Nutmeg production was however not to reach the important levels of production as elsewhere in the world.

### Rice

Rice was produced in large quantities in Guyana and to a lesser extent in Trinidad and Jamaica by East Indian peasants. It was first grown for domestic consumption locally in Guyana but later it was produced in sufficient quantities to support an export market. In 1889, Guyana had imported 24,000 lbs of rice and

exported none; but in 1913, only 13,00 lbs was imported and a huge 17,000,000 lbs was exported. In time, rice production became the second largest agricultural industry in Guyana.

### Arrowroot

In St Vincent, arrowroot replaces sugarcane as the primary crop.

### Coconut

Grown in most colonies for copra and oil making. In Trinidad, the high prices obtained for coconuts between 1918 and 1921 encouraged coconut cultivation to increase.

### Forestry

In the mainland colonies of Guyana and Belize, huge forests existed and though a wide variety of timbers is found in each country, the green heart trees of Guyana and mahogany of Belize are world famous. For some time, mainly to satisfy war time demands, Trinidad and Guyana experimented with rubber production but this stopped due to competition from Asian countries.

## **Factors which affected the survival of alternative crops**

### **Positive factors**

- The crops did not require expensive machinery to grow and harvest unlike sugarcane. These crops were ideal for peasants to develop since little capital was required.
- A large labour force for cultivation and processing was also not required. Again this factor encouraged the survival of these crops since peasants and his family and an extra hand or two could cultivate and process the entire crop.
- Unlike sugarcane production, large amounts of land were not necessary. An acre or two cultivated any of these crops.
- A major disadvantage of these crops over sugar was that they did not last long. However, this was overcome because of nearness to the market, mainly the U.S. and fast efficient transport. Refrigeration helped to keep the crop in marketable condition especially bananas.
- The topography of the land was also a factor that determined the survival of crops other than sugarcane. In some places sugarcane could not be cultivated because of the terrain. However, other crops could successfully be cultivated in mountainous islands such as Dominica.
- New departments of agriculture carried out research into the new types of crops, new methods of cultivation, etc. Such departments were set up in Trinidad, Jamaica, and Barbados.

## **Negative factors**

(1) The main negative factor affecting the popularity and success in sale in alternative crops was a push to promote sugarcane in the early 1900s. At the **Brussels Convention in 1902**, European countries decided to abolish subsidies on beet sugar which meant that it would not be able to compete with sugarcane. This restored confidence in cane sugar which led to an expansion of sugarcane on idle land.

Other factors which pushed sugar production in the early 1900s were the adoption of the central sugar factory system, departments of agriculture began to focus on finding new varieties of sugarcane and the outbreak of World War I caused a reduction in beet sugar exports from Europe.

Therefore, during the first 30 years of the 20th Century (early 1900s) it was difficult for alternative crops to further establish themselves in the West Indian economy since most attention was being paid to re-establishing sugar.

(2) Natural disasters also discouraged the survival of alternative crops. This also affected sugarcane but the alternative crops had a less solid foundation and less capital so the alternative crops would therefore be more negatively affected by natural disasters.

(3) Diseases affected some crops.

## **Social effects of the development of alternative crops**

(1) Growing importance of the peasantry. The peasant/small holding class grew in number and importance because peasant farming became important to many British Caribbean countries. The peasant class wanted to improve its living standards for its children and peasant farming of alternative crops was the way to do so.

(2) Demand for social services. Social services for the majority of the population was poor and non-existent. Because of greater profits brought in by alternative crops more money could be spent by the local governments on social services.

## **Industrialization and the growth of the Oil and Bauxite Industries**

### **Industrialization**

By the early 20th century, agriculture was not providing enough money or jobs for the growing population in the Caribbean. Land was limited and it could only produce so many crops which could only be sold for so much money. As a result, people started thinking about developing the manufacturing, oil and mining industries in the region. It was considered more productive at the time to use land to build factories than to plant more crops.

However, there were several barriers to industrialization including; limited capital, lack of fuel, limited knowledge of industry, few workers with technical skills, few entrepreneurs. This meant that countries in the region had to depend on foreign investors to provide money to start these industries. Before investors would decide to spend their money on building these industries Caribbean countries had to promise the investors certain incentives such as tax breaks, protection from foreign competition and the promise that they would not have to pay taxes on raw materials and equipment.

Countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, tripled their manufacturing output between the 1950s and early 1960s. This was partly because these countries along with Guyana had natural resources.

- Oil in Trinidad and Tobago
- Bauxite in Jamaica and Guyana

Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago also developed what were called “screwdriver industries”, which were industries based on automobiles, radios, televisions, aluminium, steel, rubber, and plastics. They were called screwdriver industries because in these factories, the workers only put together parts to make the finished product.

By 1967, petroleum and its by products were a major export from Trinidad and Tobago and bauxite and alumina was from Jamaica and Guyana.

## **Development of the Oil industry in Trinidad and Tobago**

There were many factors which encouraged the growth of the oil industry in Trinidad and Tobago. They are as follows:

- **The growth in world demand for oil-** This helped grow the oil industry due to major developments in motor vehicle, aircraft and ship technology by World War II (1939- 1945) which caused an increase in the need for oil products. Trinidad and Tobago's oil production and export levels raised higher year after year, in fact, Trinidad supplied the British and Allied Forces with much of the fuel needed for WWII. By the 1960s, the island was supplying over 20 million barrels of oil each year. This pushed oil exports to the position of number 1 revenue earner for Trinidad and Tobago.
- **The capital pumped into the industry-** Interested people both in Trinidad and abroad saw the vast potential of the oil industry. The government was also very interested and involved in the industry. There was also American interest in the industry.
- **American interest in the oil industry-** There were several American companies that became involved in the production of oil. These companies put huge sums of money in developing the industry by laying pipelines and setting up oil rigs and pumping the oil for production as well as providing experts in oil production.
- **Seemingly never ending/inexhaustible supply of oil in Trinidad-** The first oil had been found in Airpero in 1866. The commercial exploitation started in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, however the industry expanded slowly during this time as demand for oil was low. The production of oil on a large scale grew after World War I and by the World War II, oil was the leading export in Trinidad.
- **The available labour for oil operations-** The labourers in the oil industry were paid higher than those in other industries on the island. There were various jobs to be found in the oil industry for both skilled and unskilled workers.

## **Social changes brought about by the growth of the Oil Industry**

- **Increased incomes for those working in the industry-** Trinidadians worked at all levels in the industry but most were found in the lower job categories. Yet even in these groups the income earned was higher than in other industries such as the sugar industry. The influx (coming in) of the American dollar helped raise the standard of living.
- **Standards of living rose-** The country's oil exports became very large by the 1960s and as a result the income earned helped to push economic development on the island. Trinidad was one the richest islands in the Caribbean by the 1960s and this was due mainly to the successful oil industry.

- **Infrastructure improved-** The social infrastructure improved in the island. There were better houses for the population. Several houses and roads were built across the island. The improvement in roadways and shipping was essential for the use of the industry but the whole country benefited.
- **Trinidad became somewhat Americanized-** The island had a level of Americanization and this was the direct result of the presence of Americans in the oil industry. These American interests to some extent infused the island with their culture.

## **Development of the Bauxite Industry**

### **Guyana**

Bauxite was first found in Guyana in 1910. In 1916, the first bauxite company was set up. called the Demerara Bauxite Company. In 1917, bauxite was exported from Guyana for the first time and soon after another company called the Suriname Bauxite Company was set up. The depression of 1929 in the U.S. however caused a slump in the Bauxite Industry in Guyana.

### **Jamaica**

Bauxite was first found in Jamaica in 1869 and first mined in 1890. There was a huge demand after 1939 because of World War II because bauxite was used to make weapons and vehicles. It was mined by 3 companies but the largest one was the U.S.company ALCOA.

### **Tourism**

Tourism became a factor in the economic development of the West Indies mainly after World War II with the growing wealth of North America and Europe. Before this, the tourism industry was not seen as a money earner for the Caribbean.

Visitors came to Jamaica and several other islands on the ships that also carried bananas to North America and England, as tourists as early as 1890s. These early tourists often came to recover from illnesses as the tropical climate was seen as suitable for such recovery.

The increased amount of transportation to the islands helped the tourism industry to grow. The steamships that took produce such as bananas abroad were also built to accommodate passengers who wished to travel to the islands as tourists.

The growth and development of transportation saw larger ships that could carry more passengers. The development of passenger airplanes also helped as people began to come to the British West Indies on charter flights. By the late 1960s, national airlines were developing in the region and helped increase the flow of visitors to the islands.

The building of accommodation and later places of entertainment was another important development in the tourism industry. In the 1890s, the first tourists had to be satisfied with the few inns available in the islands. However, by the 1920s, a

few hotels had been built. The colonial government also gave tax incentives to hotel builders. In Jamaica, for example, the Myrtle Bank Hotel in downtown Kingston was one of the best places to stay.

Between the 1940s and the 1970s, other infrastructure was put in place which helped boost their industry. These included better local transportation such as the tramcar. There were several places of entertainment built.

The Caribbean governments after the 1960s began to advertise their countries as tourist destinations. However, there were some problems in the beginning of the development of the tourist industry in the Caribbean as the tourists were seen as the new colonial masters and blacks working in the tourist industry sometimes experienced prejudice as tourists were mostly white.

Therefore, when the governments had to advertise tourism they had to be aware of these problems. Many governments provided funds from their budgets to pay for advertisements in foreign newspapers and magazines. Hotels also placed ads in newspapers and magazines.

The sun, sea and sand concept began to be a major attraction for tourists by the early 1970s. The Caribbean was advertised as an area where there was never ending paradise with the sun, sea and sand readily available to tourists. The focus was on the climate of the islands and this was often a good selling point as many visitors came from much colder climates.

The tourism industry provided significant revenue for the islands by the 1980s. It was among the top earners of revenue for islands such as Jamaica, Barbados and Antigua for many years. The industry continued to provide thousands of jobs and there are many spin off areas that benefited tremendously from the industry.

## **THE UNITED STATES IN THE CARIBBEAN, 1776-1985**

### **The United States Influence in the Caribbean**

The Caribbean had been under European domination for three centuries: 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>. The region had been a centre of colonization, trade and a base for expansion into North, Central and South America. In addition, it was the arena for almost continuous rivalry and conflict among European nations as they competed with each other for naval and territorial supremacy.

By the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Britain had emerged over France, Spain and the Netherlands (Dutch) as the most viable, imperial and naval power in the West Indies. However, Britain's supremacy was short lived when it was effectively challenged by the USA, a new nation which had emerged on the world scene when the thirteen British North American colonies finally won their independence from Britain.

After American independence, the U.S. was prohibited from trading with the British West Indies by the Navigation Acts. After independence, the viable North American and British West Indian trade of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century was severely reduced.

American trading activities in the Caribbean were largely shifted from the British to the French colonies, primarily, St. Domingue. American commercial interests in the Caribbean countries continued and increased throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The strength of the United States as a world power was first demonstrated in the western hemisphere in 1898 during the Spanish-American war. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American policy was described as a "Big Stick" policy because of the aggressive nature of its attitude towards the developing Caribbean republics. The construction of the Panama Canal during this period and the determination of the American Government to make the Caribbean an "American Lake" were largely responsible for this attitude.

From about 1912 to the early 1930s, the U.S. policy in the Caribbean has been described as Dollar Diplomacy. During this period, American dollars were pumped into republics which were plagued with political and economic unrest in an effort to bring about peace and stability and exclude any other foreign power from the Canal Zone.

By 1933, the American image in the western hemisphere had been badly tarnished. In an effort to remedy this, the Good Neighbour Policy was adopted. During this period, the American government attempted to act in accordance with the principles of "Good Neighbour" policy. Acts of aggression were severely reduced.

### **Factors which influenced United States in the Caribbean up to 1962**

1) National defence and security were primary factors which influenced the United States' interest in the Caribbean. The U.S. wanted to create a situation which would protect them from against enemy attack and help to retain supremacy over the area. Hence, the U.S. constructed military bases and centres and maintained military training facilities in the Caribbean. In addition, the U.S. put measures place to justify her intervention, if and when it became necessary for example, the Platt Amendment and the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

2) The U.S. was considered the foremost champion of democracy especially since the First World War hence, President Woodrow Wilson from 1913, was

concerned with promoting constitutionally elected governments. He believed that it was the moral responsibility of the U.S. to promote democratic government in territories which lay within its sphere of interest.

- 3) Around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Britain became less capable of maintaining its world-wide control of the seas, and so gave up strategic control over the Caribbean to the United States.
- 4) The independent territories were of great importance to the U.S. because members of the United Nations, their votes in support of the U.S. were especially useful in "Cold War" (ideological conflict between the U.S. and the Soviet Union) politics.
- 5) The United States was concerned about territorial ambitions of France and Germany in areas of trade and investment. The reason for this war was that the U.S. felt its own potential for expansion in the region was threatened.
- 6) The U.S. had investments in the Caribbean which were of economic importance in Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, in areas such as tobacco, sugar, mining industries, banking, and railways. These vital interests needed to be protected and required its intervention when considered necessary.
- 7) The U.S. wanted to construct a canal across Central America which became known as the Panama Canal. This canal would link the Pacific and Atlantic fleets. Hence, it was important that these territories maintain political stability and economic progress to prevent foreign interference which threaten American control.
- 8) The U.S. wanted to spread some of the benefits of their "superior" civilization to their southern neighbours, e.g. building of schools and hospitals, eradicating diseases, improving agricultural methods and techniques, improving communication and other public works, and providing for more efficient and honest administration.

## **Reasons for the United States Intervention in the following territories**

### **Cuba (1898)**

Cuba was of strategic importance to the U.S. because it lay across the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico and blocked the United States' access to the Caribbean. Cuba commanded the important shipping lanes of the Yucatan Channel and the Florida Strait. Havana, the capital and main port of Cuba was the key port in the Spanish trade system.

From 1825 to 1859, the United States made several attempts to purchase Cuba. In 1825, they asked for Cuba as a security for a loan to Spain but were refused. In 1848, President Polk of the U.S. offered \$100 million but was refused. In 1852, President Pierce also offered \$100 million and hinted that he would go up to \$130 million if necessary. In 1854, President Pierce offered \$120 million unsuccessfully. The last attempt made in 1859 failed. After that, the U.S. resorted to economic,

diplomatic, ideological, and military reasons from 1868 to 1898 to intervene in Cuba. These reasons included the protection of U.S. investments, Spain's failure to emancipate slaves and grant internal self-government, the fact that other powers had imperial designs in the region and the blowing of a U.S. battleship in Havana Harbour.

In 1895, a new revolution for independence had started in Cuba. The U.S. urged Spain to terminate the fighting because American commerce and interests had suffered heavily. However, the revolutionaries continued because of their desire for independence. As a result, the government sent the battleship, USS Maine to Cuba in January 1898. The battleship was blown up in Havana Harbour and about 260 Americans were killed. The U.S. blamed Spain and demanded its withdrawal from Cuba. Spain refused and the U.S. declared war on Spain in April 1898. After three months of fighting, the Spanish Army surrendered at Santiago. In December 1898, by the Treaty of Paris, Spain recognized the independence of Cuba. From 1898 to 1903, the U.S. occupied Cuba militarily in order to "Americanize" Cuba before complete independence.

### **Puerto Rico (1898)**

Puerto Ricans agitated for home rule throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and ended in 1898 when Spain introduced the Charter of Autonomy which granted self-government to the Puerto Ricans. Under this Charter, Puerto Ricans were given an elected chamber of Representatives and a 15- member Council of Administration (a Senate), eight of whom were elected by Puerto Rico, the remaining seven were nominated by the Governor General appointed by the Crown.

Under the Charter, general elections were held in March 1898. For the first time Puerto Ricans were free from Spanish government restrictions since the Spanish settled on the island. However, this freedom was short-lived when the Spanish American war of 1898 spread to all and by August, the island was taken. Most of the Puerto Ricans welcomed the American soldiers and there was little resistance. The Puerto Ricans thought that they would be better off materially and politically under the United States.

The Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico were made American territories, but not American States. The U.S. had to pay Spain \$20 million for the loss of these territories. The important constitutional change made by Puerto Rico earlier in the year no longer existed since Puerto Rico changed her Spanish "master" for an American "master".

The United States wanted to control Puerto Rico because:

1. The island was strategically located. Puerto Rico commanded the eastern approach to the Caribbean and so was of great geographic and strategic importance to the United States. The control of the Caribbean was critical to the control of the waters including the Gulf of Mexico which was adjacent to the United States.
2. The island was close to the mainland. United States' control of the island would reduce the risk of European powers controlling and spreading their ideologies there.

3. Puerto Rico was an ideal location for the construction of a base to help protect a Central American canal. A canal was essential for the easy movement of the United States' Pacific and Atlantic fleets as well as for the United States' trade. From this base, the United States could better "police" and control the Caribbean as its own "backyard".
4. Puerto Rico was an important investment outlet for North Americans who pumped millions of dollars into agro-exports especially sugar and tobacco. There were large investments in banking, public utilities, and manufacturing that were sustained by cheap Puerto Rican labour.
5. Puerto Rico provided a market for the surplus products from American factories and food from American farms.
6. Puerto Rico provided the United States with raw materials primarily tobacco and sugar which enjoyed protective tariffs in the American market.

### **Panama (1904)**

The Spanish-American War had made the United States realized that there was an urgent need for a canal through Central America to facilitate the rapid movement of troops between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. When the war broke out, it took out the USS Oregon more than two months to sail from California around Cape Horn to the scene of the battle in Cuba. The war was almost over before the ship arrived.

As a result, a canal was needed for the following reasons:

1. A canal would provide a shorter route for defensive purposes. After the war, the U.S. had acquired territories and trading interests including Puerto Rico, Guam, Philippines, and Cuba in both the Atlantic and Pacific. Hence, there was a need for quick communication between the two oceans so as to have easier access to these territories.
2. The U.S. had extended its boundaries to the Pacific Coast, and so there was an additional need for quick communication to facilitate trade between the eastern and western parts of the country.
3. A canal would help the U.S. to expand its sphere of influence in the Caribbean and it would place it in a position to enforce its "police" powers over region and prevent European intervention in the region.
4. It would give the U.S. a political foothold in Central America as the canal would exercise direct control over the zone.

Before the United States could build the canal, it had to free itself from an arrangement with Britain (Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 in which the U.S. and Britain agreed to share in the construction and control of a canal), buy the rights from a French company and obtain permission from the Colombian Government. President Roosevelt instigated a revolution in Panama when Colombia revoked the agreement in 1903 to allow the United States to build a canal on Colombian soil. The Panamanian Government gave the United States a canal zone through its territory for \$10 million down and \$250 000 every year. The canal was started in 1904 and opened for shipping in 1914. The canal Zone was garrisoned by U.S.

marines. The Panama Canal dominated U.S. policy and strategy in the Caribbean in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Haiti (1915)**

The United States primarily had a trading relationship with Haiti at the beginning of the 20c. Compared to France and Germany, the U.S. only had a small amount of investments in Haiti. By 1910, the Americans controlled about 60% of Haiti's import trade and the National Railway Company had a concession to build a railway from Port-au-Prince to Cap Haitien. In addition, some Americans acquired a 50% share in the Banque Nationale which was the sole depository of the Haitian treasury that served the government's growing indebtedness.

Haiti was characterized by political instability with seven presidents between 1900 and 1915. Three of these were murdered by the Cacos (armies of paid mercenaries) to make way for rivals. Haiti's financial condition was made worse by continuous revolutions and by 1915, the government owned \$32 million to European creditors. Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States was of the view that the political situation required the creation of a U.S. customs receivership. However, none of Haiti's Presidents seemed inclined to accept President Wilson's suggestion except Vilbrun Guilaume who took office in February 1915.

In 1914, the Haitian Government severed its connection with the Banque Nationale and in doing so endangered the repayment of foreign debts. Foreign creditors became alarmed because of the possibility of foreign intervention. In addition, World War 1 started in 1914 and Germany would assist her in war on this side of the Atlantic.

The United States took the initiative and intervened in Haiti because Germany threatened to seize Haiti for the non-payment of debts to German lenders. In addition, this would provide the opportunity for Germany to establish the supply base that it had always longed for on this side of the Atlantic. The U.S. wanted to protect the lives of American citizens who were living in Haiti, their property there, the Panama Canal and the Windward Passage, whose safety could be endangered if European countries took control of Haiti as well as the interest of foreign creditors. The U.S. wanted to restore law and order in Haiti and make sure that it was able to retain a larger degree of political control over the country.

### **Dominican Republic (1916)**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States' relationship with the Dominican Republic was confined primarily to trading, investment in the sugar industry and providing loans for the government. Between 1882 and 1899, the Dominican Republic experienced political stability and economic growth under the presidency of Ulises Heureaux. However, he was assassinated in 1899 and this resulted in turmoil.

In March 1903, another revolution broke out which caused several foreign nations to send warships and land troops to protect the lives and property of their nationals. In 1903, the government failed to keep its promise to German, Italian, and Spanish creditors that it would make monthly payments on its debts. As a result, the French and Belgian Governments threatened to seize the customs

house in Santo Domingo. This caused President Roosevelt to issue his Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in December 1904.

In January 1905, an agreement was signed between the United States and the Dominican Republic. This gave the U.S. the authority to administer the customs collection from which the debts would be serviced. This meant that European nations would have no reason to intervene, as the debts owed to them would be serviced by the U.S. The U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic was known as Dollar Diplomacy and was credited to William Howard Taft.

In 1916, President Juan Isidro Jimenez was forced to accept more American control in the Dominican Republic. He refused and resigned, leaving the country without a government. The U.S. became afraid that another government would be elected that might not be in favour with U.S. intervention. Consequently, further elections did not take place and President Woodrow Wilson landed troops in the Dominican Republic so as to prevent political instability and the intervention of German and other foreign troops.

### **Reasons for U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic**

Firstly, the U.S. wanted to forestall any possible European intervention. The First World War was in progress and the Dominican Republic was indebted to European nations including Germany. These countries could use the political instability within the country as an excuse to intervene. Germany wanted a place in the Caribbean to establish a base to help in its war efforts. The Germans could use the political instability as an excuse to take over the country for the non-payment of debts. A base could then be established and this could pose a serious threat to the safety of the Panama Canal.

Secondly, the U.S. wanted to protect the canal, restore law and order in the country and protect the lives and the property of its citizens in the country.

### **Grenada (1983)**

In March 1979, the New Jewel Movement (NJM) led by Maurice Bishop seized power when the Prime Minister was not in the country. He established a new government called the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) which was welcomed by the people especially when it launched a set of reforms to improve health, education and housing. However, the new government began to establish close ties with the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other communist countries. The PRG delayed national elections, created a large military force and with Cuban help began to build a new airport at Point Salines which could accommodate large military aircrafts. The U.S. became afraid that Grenada might become communist and in so doing became a threat to democratic institutions in the neighbouring states.

In October 1983, extremist members of the PRG led by Bernard Coard, Deputy Prime Minister seized power and placed Maurice Bishop under house arrest.

Bernard Coard and his followers were dissatisfied at Bishop's moderate policies and so formed a Revolutionary Military Council led by General Hudson Austin. On October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1983, they executed Bishop and other members of the PRG. The

heads of government of the Commonwealth Caribbean appealed to the U.S. for military assistance to restore democracy in Grenada.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1983, Operation Urgent Fury under the command of Admiral Joseph Metcalf III under the presidency of Ronald Reagan launched a surprise attack on Grenada. It was accompanied by troops from several British Caribbean islands.

### **Reasons why the U.S. intervened in Grenada**

1. The Caribbean Commonwealth leaders appealed to the U.S. for help.
2. The U.S. wanted to protect the lives of American citizens who were mostly medical students at the American-run St. George's University School of Medicine on the island.
3. The United States wanted to strengthen its declining position as a world power.
4. The U.S. wanted to restore political stability in the island.
5. The U.S. wanted to prevent the establishment of another communist regime in the region, as this could undermine their regional and national interests.

## **Economic, Cultural and Political Effects of the United States' Imperialism in the English-speaking Caribbean up to 1985**

### **Economic Effects**

The United States involvement in the British Caribbean after 1939 had a direct effect upon the economy of the region.

- The naval bases provided employment for thousands of people which helped to boost the local economies due to the influx of United States' dollars.
- The U.S. built military airports in Antigua and St. Lucia and later handed them over to the governments of these islands. These have proved to be useful infrastructure which would greatly enhance the islands' links with international centres.
- United States' investments in developing Trinidadian oil, Jamaican and Guyanese bauxite created employment for local people and provided revenue for the government.
- After 1945, the governments of several British Caribbean territories including Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados began to offer incentives like "tax holidays",

lower tariffs or customs duties on machinery and raw material to attract foreign, mostly United States' investments to the territories. By the 1960s, 800 registered manufacturing businesses were established in Jamaica, with a similar pattern in other territories. These were mainly light industries and even though they were not labour intensive, they provided jobs in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing occupations such as selling, distribution, repairs and maintenance. They also helped the countries' balance of payment.

- Caribbean governments seized an important share of the international tourist industry by offering hotel builders the same types of incentives as manufacturers. The British Caribbean's share of the American tourist market grew after Castro's revolution in Cuba. Tourism created a number of jobs in construction, shops, handicrafts, service trade and direct employment in the resorts. Tourists contributed significantly to the foreign exchange earnings of many of the islands through expenditure on gifts, food, and accommodation.
- The United States was the most important trading partner for the British Caribbean territories by the 1970s. For example, by 1970, the U.S. was taking 53% of Jamaica's exports, and contributed 43% of her imports. In 1977, Jamaica and Guyana combined, supplied 65% of the United States' bauxite imports, while 60% of Trinidad's petroleum went to the United States. In 1974, all of the British Caribbean territories except Barbados, imported between 77% and 92% of their grain products from the U.S.
- After the Cuban revolution, American financial aid, which was provided in an attempt to achieve economic development, so as to prevent communism, gave the British territories some worthwhile infrastructure such as roads, airports, harbours, schools, and housing.
- The United States Immigration Act of 1965 granted independent Caribbean nations non-quota status, which allowed West Indians from British ex-colonies to move freely to the U.S. Over 200, 000 West Indians emigrated to the U.S. from 1967-1976. Emigration released the population pressure on the territories' economies, and the remittances sent to relatives raised standards of living and provided foreign exchange for economies.
- On the negative side, emigration results in a "brain drain", thus depriving the region of skills necessary for sustainable development. In addition, much of the investments in tourism, bauxite, oil, light manufacturing industries came from the U.S., and so a high percentage of the earnings were returned to the shareholders instead of being reinvested in the territories.

### **Cultural Effects**

Due to the interaction of trade, travel and other forms of contact, the U.S. had been able to exercise a strong influence on the culture of the British Caribbean throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. People who had extra money to spend travelled for leisure, educational advancement and employment. As a result of travel, people became directly exposed to the United States' culture. They acquired a taste for the popular foods, they liked the clothes, hairstyles, music, and even the slang.

**Radio** has been a prime medium for spreading American culture to the Caribbean via its music such as country and western, jazz, rock and roll, jive, and gospel. After World War II, musical instruments like the electric guitar, saxophone, gramophone, and jukeboxes were introduced from North America. In addition, the British Caribbean islands were bombarded with religious programmes from North America which have helped to erode some of the traditional religious practices of the region. Radios have also helped to popularize the recording industry and this helped to spread North American music and dance.

**Films** played a significant role in spreading American culture to the British Caribbean throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the entertainment available in cinemas was imported from the U.S. and so Caribbean people were exposed to movies depicting American social, political, religious, and moral values. The prevalence of televisions during the 1970s, and the subsequent introduction of the videocassette recorder (VCR), brought the movie house into the living rooms of the region and enhanced the American cultural impact on the Caribbean people.

**Magazines** and other kinds of publications have also played a part in exposing British Caribbean people to the U.S. culture. Since the 1960s, for example, thousands of used American textbooks and novels were sent as gifts to Jamaica for use in schools and libraries. Textbooks provided information on political and religious issues and influenced the attitude of people on issues like communism. News and opinions in magazines had a similar effect. Magazines also popularized the latest fashion in clothes and hairstyles which were useful to seamstresses and hairdressers, as well as drinks, food, architecture, and different forms of entertainment.

**Recreational activities** of various forms such as games like dominoes, monopoly, chess, checkers, draughts, and the use of dice and dolls infiltrated the Caribbean region. Also, the popular game of basketball, rounders, softball, and boxing were adopted from the U.S. The drinking of beer, sodas, fast foods like chicken and chips, hotdogs, and hamburgers were all imported from North America.

**Fashions** of all kinds were also imported. During the early half of century, it was customary for Caribbean men to wear hats particularly Panama hats which were an American fashion adopted in the Caribbean. Similarly, denim jeans for both men and women, sneakers, bobby socks, etc., were all imported from North America. By the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the adaptation of American cultural imports dominated the British Caribbean culture.

## Political Effects

- Military occupation of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic resulted in stable democracy for some time afterwards. However, democracy and stable government did not last long. There is still unrest to this day.

- Policies were put in place to put the Caribbean a main priority of the Americans. The following are some of these policies; The Monroe Doctrine, The Roosevelt Corollary, The Good Neighbour Policy, and the Alliance for Progress.
- The presence of the U.S. has helped promote the spread of democracy in the Caribbean especially by opposing the laws set by rulers who took power by illegal means. In other words, the U.S. Presence prevented the creation of authoritarian and militaristic leaders and groups. In the Dominican Republic for instance, all senior officials were removed and replaced by U.S. military officers.
- By the 1980s, the U.S. opposition to communism and its demonstrated willingness to use force kept the USSR from getting control of the Caribbean.

## **The United States and Cuba (1901-1962)**

In 1898, Cuba obtained its independence from Spain by the Treaty of Paris. After the Spanish-American War, the island came under control of the United States military who occupied the island up until 1901. That year the United States government passed a law called the Platt Amendment which determined relations between the United States and Cuba for more than three decades. Under the provisions of the Platt Amendment, Cuba was forbidden to negotiate any treaty with foreign powers or borrow money from any country if it could not repay the debt. The U.S. also had the right to intervene in Cuba to preserve law and order and uphold electoral government. The U.S. was also given the right to set up military bases on Cuban soil and build a naval base at Guantanamo in Eastern Cuba.

The victory over Spain also gave the United States the islands of the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. The United States took full control of Cuba and restored order. Money was poured into Cuba which helped to repair damage of the war and organizing new projects such as schools, roads, bridges, and hospitals. Havana was transformed into a more modern city and the harbour was deepened. They also provided food for the Cubans and took action to eradicate yellow fever. Health and sanitation services in general were improved. In 1902, the United States withdrew its military from Cuba and a new government was established. Cuba was declared a republic and held its first presidential election and a pro-American President by the name of Estrada Palma assumed the office of President.

Gradually, U.S. business interests dominated the Cuban economy. For the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the island's revenues continued to be based mainly on sugar. Cuban tourism also developed in the 1920s and a tourism industry based on gambling and prostitution flourished. When the U.S. government outlawed alcohol between 1919 and 1933, through a policy called Prohibition, Havana became an even more popular destination for Americans. This however contributed to the anti-American sentiments among Cubans. Although money flowed into Cuba the prosperity was one-sided. The island was turned into a giant plantation and the vast majority of its citizens became servants to American big business. Sugar prices increased tremendously during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century resulting in what became known as the "Dance of the Millions", but the greater part of the millions went to top Cuban families. Only four out of 100 Cubans could afford to eat regularly and in the rural areas 75% of the dwellings were huts made from palm trees, with only 50% having toilets, 15% having inside water and less than 10% having electricity. One third of the work force was poor and depended on seasonal employment on the sugar estates to earn money. In addition, most of the businesses were controlled by foreigners who owned about three-quarters of the island's arable land.

### **The U.S., Fulgencia Batista and Fidel Castro**

Against the background of these events, nearly all of the Cuban administrations were run by corrupt leaders. One such leader was Fulgencia Batista who came to power in 1933 and was responsible for one of the most ruthless dictatorships in Cuba. Under his leadership, he forged an early alliance with the United States. Under his leadership, his administration built schools and houses all over the island. But while Cuba developed and showed signs of prosperity, rural Cuba was very underdeveloped. Corruption also continued and in 1944 after losing the election, Batista left Cuba and went to live in Florida.

In 1953, through a *coup d'état* Batista regained power and set up a dictatorship with the support of the United States Government. Many of the American dollars that were pumped into Cuba by tourists, gamblers and investors never reached the masses. The rural population continued to live in dire poverty while politicians lived lavishly on their collected fortunes. Batista kept himself in power by subverting the political process using the military to get support through threats and even by assassinating his opponents. Order was kept by brutal repression, the press was censored and anyone who dared oppose his regime was either executed, imprisoned or exiled.

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1959, the Batista regime was overthrown in a *coup* led by a young lawyer named Fidel Castro. This young lawyer was one of the many who willing to see Cuba become politically free from United States domination. Immediately after, Castro became the leader of Cuba he began implementing social reforms and putting his radical schemes for agriculture into action. Land reform was carried out via the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). Large plantations including American holdings were divided and plots were distributed among the landless. The Cuban revolutionaries believed that one of the reasons for the hardships they experienced was because of the land being in the hands of the large estate owners

or *latifundistas*- the small group of rich corporations and individuals. Castro also nationalized many service industries such as telephones, railways and oil refineries-a large percentage of which were American owned.

In order to carry out his social reforms, Castro turned to the communist states of the world, the USSR and her allies for assistance. All of them were state owned and run by state planning organizations. The USSR granted Cuba a loan of \$100 million to be used to buy goods from the USSR which helped Castro to launch his industrialization plans. They were to include petroleum, iron, steel, aluminium products, chemicals, and fertilizers. The money was also used to buy machinery for factories which were set up by Soviet technicians.

Cuba's plans for industrialization and her dealings with the USSR angered the U.S. government which resulted in an economic war between the two countries. In 1961, Congress cancelled the purchase of Cuban sugar at preferential rates which could have ruined Cuba. However, the USSR came to Cuba's aid by agreeing to purchase nearly all the Cuban sugar crop. From then on, Cuba and the United States carried on an economic war. American citizens were prohibited from travelling to Cuba which stopped the island's income. The United States also placed an embargo on all trade with Cuba except in food drugs.

There were many Cubans who did not like what was going on and as a result left Cuba for places like Central America and Florida. Many Cubans and American citizens who would have lost their property were resentful of Castro and his actions and thus gathered in Florida and plan to *coup* to overthrow the revolution. With the support of President John F. Kennedy and the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 1,500 Cuban exiles invaded Cuba in 1961 in what became known as the "Bay of Pigs" invasion in an attempt to overthrow Castro and his revolutionary forces. The Bay of Pigs invasion was however a failure. Castro's forces were warned of the planned attack and were therefore well prepared. Three hundred of the invaders were killed while the other 1200 were taken as prisoners.

The Bay of Pigs Invasion only served to strengthen Cuba's ties with the USSR. By the end of 1961, Castro declared himself a fully-fledged communist and Cuba became the first communist nation in the Western hemisphere. In October 1962, the world almost came to a nuclear war when the United States discovered through satellite photographs that the Soviet Government was building missile launch sites in Cuba. These nuclear missiles represented a threat to the United States for the simple fact that they could have reached any chosen target in the United States and thus doubled the number of U.S. cities and military bases which could be destroyed by the USSR. When the United States found about the base, the two countries stood for days on the brink of open war, but the Russian stepped down when the Premier Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles and close the base. This later became known as the "Cuban Missile Crisis" and helped prevent the Cold War between the world's two super-powers from becoming a nuclear conflict, with a "hotline" between the U.S. and the USSR leaders, as well as other measures being installed after the incident.

Thus by 1962 Castro had abandoned his first policy of returning Cuba to a system of democratic government. Two factors were responsible for Castro adopting the Communist model. One was the attempts by the United States to destroy his revolutionary movement, which forced him to turn to the USSR for aid and protection. The other was the development of his plans for state-controlled industrialization in which he had turned to the USSR for guidance on planning and for help in starting up the industries.

In 1962, the United States forced the Organization of American States (OAS) to expel Cuba from that body, and to have a policy of hemispheric exclusion towards Cuba from then on.

## **THE UNITED STATES INFLUENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN**

The United States were formerly thirteen colonies on the eastern coast of North America. In 1783, they won their independence from Britain after a successful rebellion. Their first president was George Washington. To the east of the thirteen colonies lay the Atlantic, to the west lay Louisiana (French), to the south lay Florida and New Orleans (Spanish) and to the far south lay the West Indian islands owned by various European nations.

### **The United States entered the Caribbean in three stages:**

- 1745: The United States signed Pinckney's Treaty with Spain and therefore obtained permission to use the Mississippi and the port of New Orleans. This made trade with the West Indies easier.
- 1803: President Jefferson purchased Louisiana from France for \$15 million. This gave the U.S an outlet into the Gulf of Mexico and easy access to the Caribbean.
- President Jackson forced Spain to give Florida to the U.S. in exchange for the U.S. taking over the payment of \$5 million compensation which Spain owed to the U.S.merchants.

### **Some terms associated with the United States American War of Independence 1775-1783**

This was a war which broke out between the thirteen North American colonies and Britain thus resulting in their independence in 1783. The Americans had protested against the rights of the British Parliament to tax the colonies. Behind the protests were the 18<sup>th</sup> century teachings on free trade, individual rights and sovereignty of the state. In 1778 and 1779, France and Spain joined the war on the side of the

American colonies. In 1783, the U.S. became an independent nation after the 13 American colonies defeated the British forces.

### **Manifest Destiny 1801**

This was a theory put forward by Thomas Jefferson in 1801 and upheld by other U.S. presidents. He put forward the idea that since the U.S. was superior both racially and culturally to other people on the American continent, then it was natural and inevitable that the U.S. would dominate the Americas. As a result, an independent Cuba would gravitate towards the U.S.

Cuba was located across the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico and so was blocking the U.S. access to the Caribbean. Therefore, Cuba was of strategic importance to the U.S. as it commanded the important shipping lanes of the Yucatan Channel and Florida Strait. Havana, the capital and main port, was the key port of the Spanish Trade System. Since Britain was declining as a colonial power, Thomas Jefferson thought that Cuba would gravitate towards the U.S.

### **Monroe Doctrine 1823**

In 1823, President Monroe in his inaugural speech which became known as the Monroe Doctrine and aimed at Cuba, warned European colonial powers that the U.S. would consider any further colonization in the Americas, suppression of independence or reclaiming of colonies which had won independence as unfriendly acts towards the U.S.

### **Louisiana Purchase 1803**

Although the U.S. remained neutral in the French Revolutionary wars, it concluded Pinckney's Treaty with Spain which opened New Orleans to U.S. shipping and access to the Caribbean. Then the U.S. obtained coastline on the Gulf of Mexico west of the Mississippi River through the Louisiana Purchase by which the U.S. paid France \$15 million for Louisiana.

### **Ten Years' War 1868-78**

This was a civil war which took place in Cuba. There were many internal disorders and differences in opinion. Creole plantation owners hated the Spanish-born ruling classes and wanted annexation by U.S. Nationalists including Afro-Cubans who wanted independence from Spain. The Spaniards wanted to continue under colonial rule.

During this war, the U.S. remained neutral and merely acted as a mediator to end the war on the basis of Cuban independence and the abolition of slavery. This failed and the war continued resulting in strained relations between the U.S. and Spain since the U.S. was convinced that Spain was unable to control Cuba. This war eventually came to an end in 1878 with the Treaty of Zanjón when Spain promised to emancipate the slaves and grant internal self-government to Cuba. However, emancipation did not come until eight years later in 1886 and self-government was not introduced. The President of the United States at that time was President Rutherford Hayes who adopted a policy of non-intervention in Cuban affairs.

### **Spanish-American War 1898**

In February 1898, two incidents occurred which severed peaceful relations between Spain and the U.S. and led to war. Firstly, there was the de Lome letter written by

Enrique Duppy de Lome to a friend in Havana in which he denounced the President of the U.S. and implied that the offer of autonomy was a ruse. The letter fell into the hands of Cuban insurgents and was published in American newspapers. Secondly, the explosion of the American ship, the USS Maine, in Havana Harbour on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1898 which resulted in the loss of 266 lives.

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1898, President William McKinley signed a joint resolution which authorized him to use force to end the insurrection in Cuba. Two days later he ordered a naval blockade of Cuba. The Spanish-American war had begun. It ended in August 1898. In December 1898, the U.S. and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris which reflected in the U.S. assuming sovereignty over the Spanish colonies. Cuba was forced to accept an American Army of occupation while Puerto Rico and the Philippines and Guam (in the Pacific) were annexed outright by the U.S.

### **Ostend Manifesto 1854**

After the U.S. had reached the Gulf of Mexico, their nearest Caribbean neighbour was Cuba. They tried therefore to obtain Cuba from Spain because it was strategically located and was the key port to Spanish trade in the Caribbean.

European colonial powers France and Britain were alarmed at the determination of the U.S. to acquire Cuba. President Franklin Pierce (1853-57) was very eager to acquire Cuba and offered Spain \$100 million but was rejected. The U.S. arranged a meeting in Ostend in Belgium where they offered \$120 million for the purchase of Cuba. Pierce's opponents issued the Ostend Manifesto which showed how strongly France and Spain and Britain rejected the U.S. designs on Cuba.

### **Clayton-Bulwer Treaty 1850**

The annexation of California in 1848 and the discovery of gold there shortly afterwards resulted in the need for an interoceanic canal to facilitate the movement of people and goods between the eastern and western seaboards of the U.S. The site selected for the canal brought the U.S. into direct conflict with Britain who had been expanding its influence in the area.

However, neither the U.S. nor the British government wanted exclusive privileges in the area. Thus, Britain showed its willingness to compromise by renouncing exclusive claim to the mouth of the San Juan River. In 1850, Britain and the U.S. reached a peaceful settlement on the issue by agreeing to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty which provided a neutralized canal under the exclusive control of neither country and for the non-colonization of Central America. This involved American Secretary of State, John M. Clayton, and British Minister, Henry Lytton Bulwer.

### **Hay-Pauncefote Treaty 1901**

This was signed on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1901 by Britain and the U.S. the right to build, operate and defend a canal which would be "free and open to the vessels of commerce and war and of all nations" on the basis of equal treatment. The treaty removed the British from their dominant position in the Caribbean while enhancing that of the U.S.

### **Platt Amendment 1901**

This was the compromise between annexation and complete Cuban independence. It called for:

1. A commitment by Cuba not to sign any treaty which would impair Cuban independence or to grant foreign special commissions without U.S. permission.
2. A pledge to keep the Cuban debt at a low level.
3. An extension of authority to the U.S. to intervene to protect Cuban independence and maintain stability.
4. Ratification of the acts of the military government.
5. Granting of sites for naval bases on the island.

The Platt Amendment was presented as an ultimatum to the Cuban people either to accept it or face continued military occupation. It was adopted on the 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1901 by the Cuban Constitutional Convention by a vote of 16:11.

The adoption of the Platt Amendment paved the way for the withdrawal of the U.S. military forces and the end of the occupation. On 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1902, with the U.S. backing, Tomas Estrada Palma was declared the first President of the Republic of Cuba.

### **Hay-Herrán Treaty 1903**

The treaty laid down the conditions for the construction and operation of the canal. It called for the payment of \$10 million and an annual annuity of \$25,000, it specified a zone of 10kms (6mls) and granted the U.S. rights in the canal zone for 100 years, renewable at the option of the U.S. These conditions were unacceptable to the Colombian senate as they posed a threat to the independence of their country. The U.S. Government was not to be thwarted and since Colombia refused to comply, other tactics had to be employed.

### **Big Stick Policy of the U.S.**

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American policy was described as "Big Stick Policy" because of the aggressive nature of its attitudes towards the developing Caribbean republics. The construction of the Panama Canal during this period and the determination of the American government to make the Caribbean an American lake were largely responsible for this attitude. This policy was associated with Theodore Roosevelt.

### **The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine 1904**

The Roosevelt Corollary operated under three administrations. Theodore Roosevelt (international policeman), William Taft (who pursued the Corollary under the guise of Dollar Diplomacy) and Woodrow Wilson (idealist).

Theodore Roosevelt decided to intervene in order to bring about a general settlement of the Dominican Republic's debt issue. He expressed his policy in his annual message to Congress on the 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1904. This statement was called the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. It meant that the intervention of the U.S. in the internal affairs of the Caribbean and Latin American States was necessary to maintain stability in order to prevent interference from European nations.

### **Dollar Diplomacy 1904-1930**

This was associated with William H. Taft who succeeded Theodore Roosevelt in 1909. In order to promote government and economic prosperity to prevent European interference in the Caribbean, the Taft administration resorted to a combination of loans and customs receivership in the delinquent states, e.g. Dominican Republic. Financial reform involved the refunding of old European held bonded debts by loans floated in the U.S. or the participation of American bankers in international financial operations. Dollar Diplomacy was applied in Central American republics especially Guatemala and Honduras, also Dominican Republic. The policy was best implemented in Haiti.

### **Organic Acts**

This act was also known as the Foraker Act and was passed in Puerto Rico in 1900 by the U.S. Congress. This gave Puerto Rico a civilian government (which replaced the military government) and a law-making body elected by Puerto Ricans. However, the true power stayed with the U.S. though the Puerto Rican Senate made up of an American government and five official members appointed by the Puerto Rican Government. This Act also stated that Puerto Ricans were not American citizens and could not travel freely to the U.S.

### **The Second Organic Act**

This Act replaced the Foraker Act and was also known as the Jones Act passed by the U.S Congress. This Act gave a greater measure of self-government to Puerto Rico by separating the executive and legislative branches of government. It stated that:

- Puerto Ricans were citizens of the United States.
- There would be two elected houses of Parliament.
- U.S. civil servants were limited (only three heads of department).
- U.S. President and Congress could veto (reject) laws passed in Puerto Rico.
- Puerto Ricans could not vote in U.S. congressional elections.
- Puerto Ricans did not have to pay taxes to the U.S.

As in Cuba, there were many improvements to the economic and social life of Puerto Rico after U.S. intervention. In 1952, Puerto Rico was declared a Commonwealth in the U.S.

### **The Dance of the Millions**

This referred to the period: 1919-1920 when great profits were coming from the Cuban sugar industry and there was a rush to buy Cuban sugar. Cuban property continued to pass into the hands of the U.S. businessmen who bought up plantations, factories, etc. Between 1919-1960, many hotels and thousands of American tourists came to Cuba on vacation to gamble and to buy liquor. The popularity of Cuba impeded the tourist industry of other West Indian islands.

### **The New Deal**

The period: 1917-1931 witnessed a steady decline in the economy of the Virgin Islands due to the inability of the naval administration to devise schemes for economic rehabilitation. The economy had declined to such an extent that President Herbert C. Hoover, referred to the territory as "an effective poorhouse comprising 90% of the population". Thus, the New Deal programme was extended to the

Virgin Islands in the 1930s. It was expressed primarily through the Virgin Islands Company which undertook a programme of economic rehabilitation to create employment. Abandoned sugar plantations were bought and peasant farming was encouraged to produce food and cash crops. The company assisted farmers by ploughing their lands, giving them seeds, transporting and milling their cane and buying their produce. By 1914, the company was the sole manufacturer and rum distiller in St. Croix.

### **Little New Deal**

In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was elected President of the U.S. He began the New Deal programme to get people back to work which was extended to the USA's overseas protectorates. In Puerto Rico it became known as the "Little New Deal". It was Puerto Rico through the worse depression years but too much money was spent purely on relief and too little on schemes that would provide long-term employment.

### **Good Neighbour Policy 1933**

Before World War 1 (1914-1918), the U.S. had adopted and pursued a policy of active intervention in the affairs of Caribbean states because of their unsettled political condition. The object was to promote peace and orderly government in order to prevent the establishment of new productive enterprises by American capital and prevent foreign intervention considered detrimental to American investment and national security. Consequently, due to its policies of interference, the U.S. government became increasingly unpopular in the other countries of the Americas and Caribbean. The U.S. tried to counter this unpopularity by acting with great restraint, demonstrating the evolution of a new attitude towards the region. This changing attitude was transformed into policy during the administration of Franklin Roosevelt. In his inaugural address in 1933, he pledged the U.S. to pursue a policy of a "good neighbour". That pledge became known as the "Good Neighbour Policy". By new treaties, the U.S. government pledge began to withdraw its claims to rights of interference in the government of other countries.

### **Cold War**

After the Second World War (1939-1945), the policy of the U.S. in the Caribbean underwent a significant change. This restraint which characterized the era of the Good Neighbour Policy was discarded. Thus, during the years after the war persistent hostility or cold war between the two major powers (Russia and USA) spread to Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The Soviet Union adopted the communist ideology after the revolution of 1917 and by 1945 had been recognized as the most outstanding member of the anti-communist country. The USA with its so-called "democratic system of government" and as the most outstanding member of the anti-communist group, assumed the task of protecting the western hemisphere from the threat of communism.

### **Operation Bootstrap**

In 1940, the Popular Democratic Party led by Munoz Marin won the election in Puerto Rico. President F. Roosevelt sent a new governor: Rexford Guy Tugwell who was sympathetic to Munoz Marin to Puerto Rico. Together the two men set about

remaking Puerto Rico. They adopted a massive industrial programme which was later nicknamed: "Operation Bootstrap", a title which made it clear that Puerto Ricans would pull their country together by their own efforts. The government established industries and then sold them to private individuals and gave tax exemptions to new industries for ten years in order to encourage industrial development.

### **Bay of Pigs 1961**

In 1959, Fidel Castro staged a revolution in Cuba and took over from the dictator: Batista. He felt that the U.S. owned too much property in Cuba and began a programme of nationalization. He took over land, mines, factories, businesses, etc., into which U.S. businessmen had invested. Thus, diplomatic relations between the USA and Cuba were broken off when President Eisenhower gave way to demands that all the staff in the American Embassy in Havana should be withdrawn. Both Eisenhower and the succeeding President John F. Kennedy, were under pressure to take action to destroy the new revolutionary Cuban Government before it became a communist armed base. However, Kennedy did not agree to outright military invasion in Cuba for fear it might lead to a nuclear war with the USSR. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy continued to plot secretly, and Cubans who had fled from Castro's rule were recruited, armed and trained by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). On the 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1961, over 2000 men were made ready to land at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba.

The invasion failed due to lack of proper support from the majority of Cubans, the fact that it was poorly planned and has no American back-up force because the U.S. Government did not want to reveal its part in the invasion. Also, Castro had learnt of the exact time, date and place of Castro's best troops, guns and tanks. The Bay of Pigs fiasco was a blow to the prestige of the U.S. Government at home and abroad.

### **The Missile Crisis 1962**

On 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1962, high-altitude flights over Cuba by American spy planes showed what might be surface-to-air nuclear missiles being installed in the western provinces by Soviet technicians. This was denied by Khrushchev, but October 14<sup>th</sup> photographs delivered to the White House proved that Khrushchev had lied.

President Kennedy informed the OAS (Organization of American States) of the danger from missiles to both the USA and the Latin republics. He demanded and got OAS support the stop and search all Soviet ships heading to Cuba. He then contacted Khrushchev and demanded the removal of the missiles. Without waiting for a reply, he ordered 145,000 American troops to stand by in Florida and Nicaragua. Khrushchev backed down and on 29<sup>th</sup> October, he ordered ships heading to Cuba to turn back and to start dismantling missiles on the island.

# **CARIBBEAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT UP TO 1985**

## **Movements Towards Independence and Regional Integration up to 1985**

### **Attempts at Unification up to 1962, Reasons for Failure and the Results**

#### **The Leeward Islands- early groupings**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the British Government was in favour of groups of colonies because they were easier and cheaper to administer. For example, colonial officials tended to give trouble by opposing the British Government's policies and decisions. Also, since less colonial officials would be needed, less salaries would have to be paid. The colonies were not in favour of groups as they wanted self-government and did not want a central body. In 1627, the Earl of Carlisle was the Proprietor of Barbados and the Leewards under the Proprietary System of Government. However, it was difficult to administer them together, so Thomas Warner governed the Leewards only. From 1600 to 1670, Lord Willoughby was made Governor of Barbados and the Leewards. After the Second Dutch War (1665-1667), the Leewards asked to be separated from Barbados in 1771 and to have their own governor.

In 1674, Sir William Stapleton established the first federation of the British Caribbean in the Leewards: St. Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, and Monserrat. This federation remained active until 1685. However, this federation was unpopular and in 1683, the Leewards rejected the proposal for one government and one set of laws. In the 18c, each island had its own assembly and made its own laws but shared one Governor and Attorney-General.

#### **The Leeward Islands (1871-1956)**

Between 1816 and 1833, the Leewards were divided into two groups and each had its own governor. There was the north-western group which comprised: St. Kitts, Nevis, and Anguilla, and the south-western group which comprised: Antigua, Barbuda, and Montserrat. In 1833, Dominica was added to the north-western group. After emancipation in 1838, the ex-slaves had no political rights and so the assemblies were unrepresentative. In 1871, the British Government passed the Leeward Islands Act and set up the Federal Colony of the Leeward Islands under one governor and one set of laws. Each island was called a "Presidency". This federation was unpopular with the individual islands because it meant a loss of independence. It lasted until 1956 when it made way for a large federation called the Federation of the West Indies.

#### **Reasons why the Leeward Islands Federation failed:**

1. The individual islands still had administrative powers.
2. The local legislatures refused to relinquish the power of taxation of the federal legislature and so each island retained exclusive control over taxation, and had its own treasury and fiscal system.
3. The federal government was supported by direct grants from the individual island legislatures, and they gave the minimum necessary.

4. The individual islands were dissatisfied with the distribution of the resources. They felt that their contributions were too large for the services that they received.
5. They complained of neglect by the governor and federal officials.
6. The geographical separateness of the various colonies and their insularity because of their long history as competitors, and as primary producers of similar goods sold to the same markets.

### **The Windward Islands (1833-1958)**

Barbados was the most windward of the Windward Islands and well outside the chain of the Eastern Caribbean Islands. From 1763, the Governor of Barbados acted as Governor-General of the Windwards, e.g. Grenada and the Grenadines, St. Vincent, Tobago, and Barbados. Each had its own Assembly. In 1838, Trinidad and St. Lucia joined the group as Crown Colonies but did not have any assemblies. From 1833 to 1885, the Windwards were a formal union known as the "Windward Island Colony". In 1840, Trinidad left the group.

In 1868, the British Government proposed federation for Barbados and the Windwards but they resisted especially Barbados. The whites wanted to keep their Assembly whereas the blacks wanted federation because they felt that it would bring them increased wages. In 1876, the people rioted when Governor Pope-Hennessy wanted to enforce federation and tried to dissolve the Assembly. As a result, the British Government was convinced that Barbados did not want a Windward Federation. The Governor of Barbados remained the Governor-General of the Windwards until 1885 when Barbados finally left the Windwards. From 1885 to 1958, the Windward Island Colony consisted of Grenada, the Grenadines, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago until 1889 when it formed a union with Trinidad.

Dominica was transferred to the Windwards in 1940. The islands of the Windward Island Colony continued to resist attempts to establish a federal assembly. The Windward Island Colony however, did not end until 1958.

#### **Reasons why the federation of the Windwards failed:**

1. Barbados' attitude in that Barbados was very strongly opposed to the federation. It saw federation as a step towards Crown Colony Government and did not want to adopt that system of government. Furthermore, it was not prepared to merge with less fortunate islands.

2. The insularity of the islands.
3. The poor communication among them.

### **Jamaica and its Dependencies**

The remaining British colonies in the Caribbean such as British Honduras, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands except British Guiana were grouped under Jamaica at some time in their history. In the case of the Cayman Islands, they were politically connected with Jamaica for 200 years and were not formally recognized as a dependency of Jamaica until 1863 to 1959. Thus, as a dependency of Jamaica, the Cayman Islands became a unit of the Federation of the West Indies when this was formed in 1958. However, they broke their administrative links with Jamaica after the break-up of the West Indies Federation and the independence of Jamaica in 1962.

The Turks and Caicos Islands were administered as two separate units of the Bahamas for almost 50 years after 1799. In 1848, the Turks and Caicos Islands broke their associations with the Bahamas and became a separate colony until 1873. As a result, the Turks and Caicos Islands were made a dependency of Jamaica and the president was replaced by a Commissioner appointed by the Governor of Jamaica. Like the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands became a unit of the Federation of the West Indies when it was formed in 1958. British Honduras was a dependency of Jamaica and directly under Jamaica from 1763. In 1862, British Honduras became a Crown Colony and was placed under the Governor of Jamaica with its own Lieutenant-Governor. In 1884, British Honduras broke its administrative ties with Jamaica and became a separate colony.

### **Reasons for the failure of federation with Jamaica**

1. The distance between the two territories made it difficult for Jamaica to carry out its administrative responsibilities effectively in British Honduras.
2. The races in British Honduras were more varied than those in Jamaica. In British Honduras, there were the Amerindians (the Maya), Europeans including Spaniards, and the Africans which resulted in a multiplicity of languages and cultures unlike in Jamaica where the population was made up primarily of Englishmen and Africans.
3. Both territories had different historical experiences as Jamaica had a sugar plantation economy whereas British Honduras had an economy based on forest, lumbering with a small population. The Jamaican laws were therefore, not always suitable for British Honduras.
4. There were few resources available for public spending in Jamaica, and there was always the fear that the interest of the dependency would not be catered to.
5. There was the constant fear of being dominated by Jamaica, and so the dependency preferred to be able to act independently.

## **The British West Indies Federation (1958-1962)**

### **Forces against a West Indian Federation**

- Early attempts at local federations such as the Federal Colony of the Leewards (1871-1956) and the Windwards (1833-1958) had not been popular with the people. In both federations, the individual colonies had insisted on keeping their own assemblies. Hence, the forces for and against federation were stronger than those for. For example, the British West Indian islands were unwilling to sacrifice their autonomy. They had developed a small community outlook (parochialism), they were selfish and narrow-minded. They could not see the benefits of being a member of a larger union were greater. In addition, this parochialism had been made stronger by the lack of communication between the islands which made them grow further apart and become more insular.
- Economic rivalry was also strong and existed since the days of slavery when islands bid against each other in the slave markets and in the selling of their crops. For example, the older colonies did not want Trinidad and St. Lucia to grow sugar on a larger scale for fear that it would adversely affect their sales.
- The emergence of divergences after 1838 also helped to prevent a closer union. For example, before emancipation, the British islands had the same economic and social structure but this disappeared after 1838 due to the difference in wage rates between Barbados and Trinidad, the development of a class of free peasants in Jamaica because of the availability of land whereas in Barbados, most of the people were plantation labourers.

### **Forces for a West Indian Federation**

- The majority of the islands spoke a common language: English. Only a small minority spoke French in St. Lucia and Spanish in Trinidad. In addition, despite disagreements with the British Government from time to time, the islands still held allegiance to the Crown and looked to Britain for protection.
- Similar economic goals.
- The British colonies had a similar history and similar cultural patterns.
- The British Government was the greatest force towards federation because it was administratively convenient. The British Government always wanted to deal with the West Indies as one unit since it was convenient to pass one law for all, e.g. Amelioration in 1823 and Emancipation in 1833. In addition, the establishment of Crown Colony Government was extremely convenient since it involved direct rule from London by Order-in-Council which laid down one law for all with no local opposition.

However, the forces against federation were stronger until 1939 when the Second World War broke out.

### **Similarities among the British West Indian Colonies which promoted unity**

- Similar history. They were colonized by European powers, similar slave societies, slave systems, plantocracies.
- Similar harsh existential realities or social problems such as poverty, racism, unemployment, crime, and violence.
- Limited resources.
- Limited economic diversification.
- High debt.
- Similar language. Majority of the colonies spoke English.
- Vulnerability to natural disasters.
- Effects of globalization.
- Similar goals.

### **Unifying Forces in the Caribbean**

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were some bodies that demonstrated that individual colonies were able to come together. For example, the West Indian Standing Conference on Federation and the West Indies Unofficial Conference but these bodies achieved little.

Other bodies had federation on their agenda, e.g. the British Guiana and West Indian Labour Conference, and the Associated West Indian Chambers of Commerce. Other bodies gave positive proof that the British West Indian colonies could work together such as the West India Regiment, the Imperial Department of Tropical Agriculture and the West Indies Court of Appeal. Other bodies like the University of the West Indies were forerunners of federation. The Colonial Development and Welfare Organization in particular

paved the way for federation because it helped towards economic viability and trained a body of experts to serve Federation.

#### **Steps taken between 1945 and 1958 to establish the Federation:**

The British Government had become discouraged by the attitude of the colonies towards its attempts to create federations in the British Caribbean. However, between the Wood Report of 1921 and the Moyne Commission of 1938, West Indian attitude turned in favour of federation. West Indian politicians such as T.A. Marryshow of Grenada, Grantley Adams of Barbados, and Norman Manley of Jamaica convinced the British Government that federation would be supported.

#### **Steps taken:**

- In 1945, Colonel Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of States for the colonies, agreed to establish a federation for the whole of the West Indies. His successor, Arthur Creech Jones, called a conference in Montego Bay, Jamaica for September 1947. Grantley Adams, Norman Manley, and T.A. Marryshow all encouraged the British Government to establish a federation.
- Every colony sent delegates from their legislatures to the Montego Bay Conference except the Bahamas. At the conference, details of the federation were discussed. Committees were set up to work out the details of the federation, the two most important being the Regional Economic Committee to consider basic problems like customs union and the Standing Closer Association Committee to draft a federal constitution.
- In March 1950, The Standing Closer Association Committee reported. Eight colonies agreed to the federation without reservation and these were: Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, Nevis, Grenada, Antigua, St. Vincent, and Dominica. These delegates agreed that federation would bring greater efficiency in government, purer democracy, and the promotion of West Indians in government. Jamaica and Trinidad agreed to the federation after, but was reassured that their political progress would not be retarded. A total of ten colonies joined the federation. British Guiana, Belize and the British Virgin Islands rejected federation.

#### **Aims of the British West Indies Federation:**

- To strengthen the movement for self-government.
- To promote economic development.
- To safeguard the democratic system of government from dictatorship and communism.
- To facilitate or promote regional integration/cooperation.

#### **The Constitution of the Federation of the British West Indies:**

The 1956 Conference agreed on the Constitution for the Federation. Then the British Government established the Federation of the West Indies by Order-in-Council. The British Government would be responsible for External Affairs, Defence, and National Stability. The Crown would appoint the Governor-General. The Legislature would consist of: a) a Senate of nineteen members, one from

Montserrat, and two from each of the other colonies; and b) a House of Representatives of forty-five members, seventeen from Jamaica, ten from Trinidad, five from Barbados, one from Montserrat and two from each of the other colonies. The Executive would be a Council of State, not a Cabinet, and would consist of the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, and then other Ministers. The Civil Service would be under the Federal Secretary and in practice it consisted of colonial servants who had been working in the Colonial Development and Welfare Organization. The Federal Capital would be Chaguanas in Trinidad and Britain agreed to contribute £1 000 000 towards the construction. Grantley Adams of Barbados was elected as the Premier of the Federation. Federation came into effect in January of 1958.

### **Reasons for the Failure/ Factors which led to the Collapse or Dissolution of the British West Indies Federation:**

#### **Social:**

- Geographical separateness- Islands divided by water. Lack of communication between islands because of high costs of travel and transportation.
- Insularity- There was conflict between territorial demands and loyalties and regional demands and loyalties. The politicians chose territorial interests over regional interests so federation could not achieve its goal of regional unity.
- Envy and jealousy among members of state from their varying levels of economic prosperity.
- Struggle between the leading colonies, Jamaica and Trinidad on one hand, and the federal government on the other hand had several issues. For example, there was a quarrel between Jamaica and Trinidad and the federal government because Eric Williams of Trinidad negotiated independently with the U.S. and the U.K. about where the federal capital should be located. These colonies and the federal government had growing tension between them so cooperation was severely hindered.
- The West Indian people hardly supported the federation and felt that it was not carrying out its function because they were not educated on the importance or benefits of federation.
- The West Indian leaders quarrelled among themselves throughout the period so unity was hindered.

#### **Political:**

- Federal government had limited political powers, only residual. England remained in control of external affairs so the Federal Government had no say

in the external affairs of the colonies. The Federal Government had no control over taxation.

- Federation was politically backwards. Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados were politically advanced compared to the other countries because they had internal self-government so the islands were not politically equal.
- Lack of strong political spirit of loyalty to the federation. The federal constitution did not allow unit leaders to participate in both federal and unit politics. These men such as Norman Manley and Eric Williams, however, were more committed to local politics and so did not participate in the federal elections of 1958.
- Jamaica and Trinidad, the largest units with approximately 80% of population, land and resources, were under-represented, even after constitutional revision of September 1959. Federation dominated by small islands through House of Representatives and especially the Senate.

### **Economic:**

- Federal government had little funds to do anything to create change in the lives of the West Indian people. Funds that came from England and unit contributions were limited. No possibility of economic development as the Federal Government's revenue was only \$9 000 000 (BWI dollars).
- Jamaica rejected the idea of a customs union and free trade because she made most of her revenue from duties. Trinidad supported customs' union and free trade. The two territories were opposed to each other on this issue.
- Jamaica wanted control over her own economic development. Federal Government and Adams wanted control over all economic development.
- Trinidad opposed the idea of free movement as she felt that it would lead to large-scale immigration into Trinidad and reduce the standard of living.
- The withdrawal of Jamaica and Trinidad. Bustamante of Jamaica, leader of the Democratic Labour Party, became sceptical of the federation which he regarded as a "federation of paupers". He was able to persuade the electorate of Jamaica that they were being exploited in the interest of the Eastern Caribbean islands. In May 1961, he declared that his party was opposed to federation and he had asked for a referendum. The referendum was held in September of 1961 with the approval of the Federal Government. The electorate voted for withdrawal from the federation. Four months after the Jamaican referendum, Eric Williams announced Trinidad's withdrawal from the federation. Eric William is noted for saying "One from ten leaves zero". The federation could not survive without Jamaica and Trinidad. The British West Indies Federation was dissolved by the British Parliament in May of 1962. Trinidad and Jamaica became fully independent states in August 1962.

### **Achievements of the British West Indies Federation:**

- Federation facilitated the movement from colonialism to independence through a united voice.

- The coming together of smaller states strengthened their effectiveness in dealing with international bodies such as the United Nations.

## **Inter-regional cooperation after 1962**

### **The “Little Eight”**

In May 1962, the Eastern Caribbean islands expect Trinidad tried to preserve some form of closer union at a Conference in London. Barbados, the dominant partner by population and resources, was at first enthusiastic and tried to hold the “Little Eight” together by calling conferences in Barbados in 1963 and 1964. However, by 1965 Barbados had decided to seek separate independence and the “Little Eight” broke up.

### **CARIFTA (Caribbean Free Trade Association)**

CARIFTA was founded with the intent to unite various the economies of various independent Caribbean nations and give them a joint presence on the international scene. CARIFTA was founded by Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago on December 15, 1965, with the signing of the Dickenson Bay Agreement. They were joined on July 1, 1968 by Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Saint Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines; and on August 1, 1968 by Montserrat and Jamaica. In 1971, Belize (then British Honduras) joined the Association.

Specifically, CARIFTA was intended to encourage balanced development of the region by:

increasing trade- buying and selling more goods among the Member States;  
diversifying trade- expanding the variety of goods and services available for trade;  
liberalizing trade- removing tariffs and quotas on goods produced and traded within the area; and

ensuring fair competition- setting up rules for all members to follow to protect the smaller enterprises.

The agreement also sought to:

ensure that the benefits of free trade were equitably distributed;  
promote industrial development in the LDCs;  
promote the development of the coconut industry (through an Oils and Fats Agreement) which was significant in many of the LDCs;  
rationalise agricultural production but in the interim, facilitate the marketing of selected agricultural products of particular interest to the LDCs (through the Agricultural Marketing Protocol); and  
provide a longer period to phase out customs duty on certain products which were more important for the revenue of the LDCs.

CARIFTA was superseded by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 1973.  
**LDCs- Less Developed Countries**

## **CARICOM**

### **What it stands for:**

### **CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY**

#### **Previous name:**

*CARIFTA (CARIBBEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION)*

#### **When did it come into full effect:**

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973

#### **Treaty's name & location:**

Treaty of Chaguaramas (Trinidad & Tobago) By the signing of this treaty, CARICOM was set on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1973

#### **Headquarters:**

Turkeyen, Georgetown (Guyana)

#### **Membership:**

- |                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Antigua & Barbuda | 9. Jamaica                       |
| 2. Bahamas           | 10. Montserrat                   |
| 3. Barbados          | 11. Saint Lucia                  |
| 4. Belize            | 12. St. Kitts and Nevis          |
| 5. Dominica          | 13. St. Vincent & the Grenadines |
| 6. Grenada           | 14. Suriname                     |
| 7. Guyana            | 15. Trinidad and Tobago          |
| 8. Haiti             |                                  |

#### **Associate Members:**

Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks & Caicos

### **CARICOM SECRETARIAT**

#### **Objectives (what CARICOM would like to do):**

- a) improved standards of living and working conditions;
- b) full employment;
- c) increased sustainable economic development;
- d) expansion of trade and economic relations with non-members;
- e) enhanced levels of international competitiveness;
- f) increased production and productivity;
- g) having greater control (leverage) when dealing with other countries regarding economic policies;
- h) harmonization (agreement) of economic policies among member countries;
- i) enhanced **functional cooperation**, including a focus on greater understanding of social, cultural & technological development, improved health, education, transportation & telecommunications that would benefit all Caribbean countries involved.

#### **Functions (what is the** ☐Initiate or develop proposals and policies for consideration and decision by the relevant bodies

#### **Secretariat's purpose or what** ☐Conduct studies & research important to the region

#### **they actually do:** ☐Provide services to Member States

☐Service meetings & follow-up action on decisions taken

- Collect, save and publish information to Member States
- Help members in implementing plans & programmes
- Gather finances from donors to help in implementing these programmes
- Prepare the Budget of the Secretariat
- Conduct fact-finding assignments in Member States (i.e. if there is any controversy the Secretariat serves as a fair, unbiased & impartial body)

## **Role of Key Personalities in the Federal Movement of the British West Indies and contribution to National Politics:**

### **Career and Role of Theophilus Albert Marryshow:**

#### **Early life and education**

Theophilus Albert Marryshow was born on 7 November, 1887 and registered as Theophilus Maricheau, son of P.I. Maricheau, a small planter, and Eugenia de Souze. His mother died in 1890, and the boy was brought up by his godmother, Christine, housekeeper and later wife of Antonio Franco, a Portuguese merchant. After a brief apprenticeship to a carpenter, in 1903 Franco obtained a job for the young Maricheau in the printing establishment of W.G. Donovan, initially to deliver newspapers. Donovan produced notably radical newspapers, advocating representative government and a Federation of Britain's West Indian colonies.

Marryshow (he adopted an Anglicized spelling of his surname) demonstrated literary abilities that were soon recognised by Donovan who became his mentor.

"Teddy" Marryshow was soon involved in the whole range of journalistic activity, as well as becoming an active participant in local politics and in the Grenada Literary and Debating Society.

He is known as the "Father of Federation". T.A. Marryshow made various contributions to national politics and the Federal movement.

#### **Career**

T.A. Marryshow was one of the earliest advocates of universal suffrage. He had been involved with politics and newspapers since his boyhood. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he worked as a newsboy.

After World War I, Marryshow was publishing newspaper articles pressing for self-government through greater representation in the legislative councils and federation of the British West Indies. Marryshow began as a reporter for the Federalist and Grenadian People, then in 1911 he was editor of St. Georges Chronicle and in 1915, he became editor of The West Indian.

In these periodicals and at political meetings in St. George's he expounded his views on the West Indian unity. He persuaded the Wood Commission in 1921 to suggest that elected members should be included in those legislatures still bound to the "pure" Crown Colony System. Marryshow went further than other politicians at that time in feeling that all West Indies should enjoy the right to vote, as it would make them more involved in their own political affairs. Marryshow travelled to London and other Caribbean countries to speak about federation and universal suffrage.

By 1930, the work of T.A. Marryshow had brought about a greater feeling of unity among the West Indian political figures of that time. In 1932, political delegates met in Dominica to discuss and plan the future of the West Indies. Although Marryshow was absent, the Conference reflected his views.

Some of Marryshow's fellow politicians did not agree on universal suffrage and when talks about a federation came about in the 1930s, Marryshow did not participate because he distrusted the politicians.

When politicians such as Sir Grantley Adams of Barbados who supported universal suffrage and Norman Manley of Jamaica came about and talked about a federation, Marryshow was now in favour and in 1945, Marryshow, Adams and Manley urged the British government to establish a Federation in the British West Indies, and they agreed.

Grenada was one of the colonies who joined the British West Indies Federation without reservation. This was certainly because of the works of their own local politician, T.A. Marryshow.

Due to his extensive work in the federal movement and also in national politics, it is no surprise that T.A. Marryshow is known today as the "Father of the Federation". His support of universal suffrage helped West Indians to gain the right to vote. T.A. Marryshow legacy remains and even a college in Grenada is named after him.

## **Career and Role of Sir Grantley Adams:**

### **Early life and education**

Grantley Herbert Adams was born at Colliston, Government Hill, St. Michael, Barbados on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1898. He was the third child of seven born to Fitzherbert Adams and the former Rosa Frances Turney.

Grantley was educated at St. Giles and at Harrison College in Barbados. In 1918, he won the Barbados Scholarship and departed the following year for his undergraduate studies at Oxford University.

He was married to Grace Thorne in 1929 at St. John's Church. Their only child, Tom, himself won the Barbados Scholarship, attended Oxford and became a lawyer. Tom Adams later became the second Prime Minister of Barbados.

## Career

As his vehicle for persuading the elitist power structure to accept the poor as humans, Adams, a highly respected lawyer, used his election to the House of Assembly as Member for St. Joseph in 1934 at the age of 36. His mastery of debate on the floor of the House gave him the ideal launching pad for his fight with the wealthy and privileged class, and earned him the respect and admiration of Barbadians in all strata. He was returned to office in the 1935 and 1936 General Elections.

After the 1937 riots, triggered by the arrest, trial and deportation of Clement Payne, a popular unionist born in Trinidad of Barbadian parents, Sir Grantley became Payne's attorney-at-law, and tried to restore order in Barbados.

Because of his professional and political standing, he was sent to England to inform the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was first in giving evidence to the Dean Commission of Enquiry into the riots.

Adams was in his element. Putting forward a strong case for reform on behalf of the masses, he pointedly declared that had there been social change instead of continuing abject poverty, there would never have been any riots.

The flames of protest were rekindled into an idea for workers' unity on March 31, 1938, when the Barbados Labour Party was launched. Such was the high regard in which he was held, Adams was elected, in his absence from the island on legal business, as the party's first deputy leader. The following year, he took over the leadership.

In 1940, under his leadership, the party (then known as the Barbados Progressive League) won five seats in the House of Assembly. In 1941, the Barbados Workers' Union was formed and Adams was President until 1954.

In 1942, he was appointed a member of the Executive Committee.

In the mid-1940s Adams, together with Hugh Worrell Springer (later Sir Hugh), wielded considerable power through their membership on the Governor-in-Executive Committee. He either initiated or was otherwise associated with the passage of various important pieces of legislation which set the stage for widespread and fundamental changes throughout Barbados; for example:

□Barbados Workmen's Compensation Act,

- Amendment to the Barbados Education Act, modernising the system and improving facilities,
- Establishment of a Wages Board and Labour Department,
- Reduction (in 1943) from 50 to 20 pounds sterling in the franchise qualifying a Barbadian to vote in general elections and the ability of women to vote on equal terms with men,
- Erdiston Teachers' College was started in 1948,
- Old age pensions were increased,
- Improved working conditions came for shop assistants,
- Increases in the public service,
- Building the Deep Water Harbour,
- The Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

In 1946, Adams was Leader of the House and the Workmen's Compensation Act, passed in the early 1940s, was proclaimed. Adams, who dethroned the plantocracy in Barbados, consistently took the case of the masses against the ruling class. He has been reported by Theodore Sealy in his "Caribbean Leaders, as a figure challenging the past to build a new future ..."

In political life in Barbados, Sir Grantley combined the talents of a great lawyer with those of a shrewd, visionary politician, in helping to change Barbados into a new, more progressive country. And he did this at great risk to himself physically and professionally.

Bullet holes in his home at Tyrol Cot bear testimony to the violence directed against this great Barbadian.

Grantley and his lieutenants, first Hugh Springer, and then Frank Walcott, built a unique trade union movement, says F.A. Hoyos in his "Builders of Barbados".

In the successful effort to bring about social change, the Barbados Labour Party worked side-by-side with the Barbados Workers' Union. That unified effort was essential in those days to confront powerful forces arrayed against workers and hostile to the emergence of Blacks on the political scene.

In his campaign against the old regime and in pursuit of true democracy, Sir Grantley secured the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage in 1951. Under the Bushe Experiment, in 1946, he was invited to submit four names for membership of the Executive Committee, and the island got a measure of responsible government with a semi-ministerial system of government.

In 1950, Adult Suffrage became a reality, and in 1954 full ministerial government was introduced, with Adams as first Premier. He had brought the popular movement to the summit of political power, according to Hoyos, with the attainment of the Cabinet system and full internal self-government in 1958.

In advancing the island's Constitution, Sir Grantley led the new movement in achieving social and industrial reform. Some of these measures were:

- improved health facilities,
- housing schemes,
- minimum wage legislation,
- benefits for plantation and industrial workers,
- social welfare.

While Sir Grantley fully understood and used his parliamentary office to promote social and political improvements, he also persisted with his commitment to workers' causes.

He was elected President of the Caribbean Labour Congress in 1947 in Jamaica. This was the peak of his work for the formation of this united labour front, which brought together the political Caribbean.

For more than ten years afterwards, he worked on building the foundation of the Federation of the West Indies; and were it not for extreme insularity, selfishness and envy elsewhere in the region, these Caribbean states might today be among the world's mini power blocs.

A firm believer in the highest principles of democratic socialism, Sir Grantley led the movement to sever Caribbean trade unions from the World Federation of Trade Unions, according to Hoyos, and was instrumental in the founding of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. He was elected one of its three vice-chairmen.

In 1954, Frank Walcott broke with Grantley Adams and the next year, some BLP members, led by Errol Barrow, left that organisation and formed the Democratic Labour Party. On his departure to lead the West Indies Federation, Sir Grantley chose Dr. Hugh Gordon Cummins to head the party and be Premier of Barbados in 1958.

By then, he had already achieved such astonishing social and political changes in the island that Barbados was being hailed far and wide as a model country lacking only the formality of political Independence from Britain.

After formal dissolution of the regional enterprise on 31 May, 1962, Sir Grantley returned home.

He was re-elected to the House of Assembly in 1966 and assumed the role of Leader of the Opposition. Helped by new blood in the party, he brought the BLP to the position of a powerful Opposition in the House of Assembly. In 1970, with his health declining, he resigned from public life and, while remaining Life President of the BLP, handed over the responsibilities of leadership to younger men such as H. B. St. John, and J.M.G.M. "Tom" Adams, his son, who became Prime Minister of Barbados in September 1976.

## **Constitutional Steps Towards Independence in the British-Colonized Territories**

In the British West Indies, the movement towards independence was by evolution and not by revolution. This movement was constitutional in that it involved the changes made in the laws by which a country was governed, thus giving local people an ever-increasing share in their own government.

### **Stages in the Constitutional Evolution of the British West Indies:**

- 1. Old Representative System**
- 2. Crown Colony Government**
- 3. Representative Government**
- 4. Responsible Government**
- 5. Internal Self-Government**
- 6. Independence**

### **Proprietary Government and the Old Representative System**

Between 1627 and 1660, the first English colonies were proprietary colonies which were administered by proprietors who were chosen by the King of England. These proprietors such as the Earl of Carlisle sent out settlers, provisions, appointed Governors and carried out the King's instruction for the colonies. In return, they hoped to benefit when the colonies started production. They were encouraged to summon free men of the colony to an assembly to help make laws by the "Letters Patent" issued by the King in 1627. Thus, the representative system government is very old in the Caribbean, e.g. the Barbados Assembly which was first called in 1639. The assembly was elected whereas the legislative council was nominated by the Governor from among leading citizens.

The Proprietary System of government was abandoned on the restoration of King Charles II in 1660 except in the Bahamas. The former proprietary colonies were handed over to a committee of the Privy Council which appointed governors who in turn called the assemblies and councils of the representative principle already established. Hence, the representative system continued.

From 1663 to 1673, the constitution of a British West Indian colony involved a Governor or Lieutenant-Governor who represented the King; a Legislative Council consisting of members nominated by the Governor on account of their property corresponded with the House of Lords which acted as a Court of Appeal; and an Assembly which made minor laws and agreed on taxation corresponded with the House of Commons.

The Crown wanted the colonies put into groups for administrative convenience but the colonies resisted because they valued their independence, e.g. Nevis refused a union with St. Kitts in 1723. Colonies such as Dominica, Grenada and St. Vincent were acquired by Britain in 1763 and encouraged to set up representative assemblies. However, Trinidad, British Guiana and St. Lucia were acquired between 1802 and 1815, and were made Crown Colonies because the Representative System was thought to be inappropriate.

### **Crown Colony Government 1866-1898**

Crown Colony Government was introduced in 1866 after the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica so that the Crown could assume direct and full responsibility for the administration of the colonies. It was thought necessary and desirable because a strong government was needed to deal with the violence threatened by poor blacks. There would be fewer delays caused by debates and votes in assemblies. It could raise taxes without the fear of opposition since taxes were necessary to provide the revenues needed for such forces as has been used to suppress the Morant Bay Rebellion. It was seen as a less costly and more efficient than the Old Representative System.

Under Crown Colony Government, there was little or no election of persons to the legislature. There was a governor who made most of the decisions. He was assisted by an Executive Council which was mainly made of an advisory body without legislative functions and a Legislative Council which comprised senior government officials, as well as some nominated individuals who represented a small section of the community. Later, a few members elected on a restricted franchise were introduced. The Governor sought advice mainly from the Legislative Council. There was greater control from Britain from the Colonial Office.

Crown Colony Government was introduced in Jamaica in 1866, the Windward Islands such as St. Vincent, Tobago and Grenada by 1877; followed by Montserrat, the Virgin Islands, Dominica, Antigua, Nevis, and British Honduras. By 1880, most of the territories had given up their right to self-government.

Barbados and the Bahamas did not adopt Crown Colony Government. The Barbados Assembly was the oldest in the British Caribbean and the people wanted to keep it. Thus, when the Governor Pope-Hennessy wanted Barbados to join the Windward Islands Federation of 1876, the people rioted and Pope-Hennessy was removed. Barbados kept its Old Representative Constitution and escaped Crown Colony Government.

However, there were people in the British Caribbean who became dissatisfied with Crown Colony Government during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was because they were excluded from the electoral process and wanted a return to the elective principle. In

addition, when and represented the planting or merchant interest, and there was no representation in the government for the masses because the property qualification for the franchise remained very high. This dissatisfaction with Crown Colony Government was evident mainly among the emerging black and coloured middle classes who wanted a share in the government of their territories. In Trinidad as well as in other colonies, opposition came mostly from traders and professional townspeople especially those in the capital.

### **Representative Government**

West Indian nationalists regarded Crown Colony Government as a step backwards in constitutional development because they went further from governing themselves than they had been before 1866. Crown Colony Government was out of touch with the masses because the governor and officials were British citizens who came to the West Indies for short tours of duty and then departed. The protests in the 1930s made it clear how out of touch the officials had become. Thus, the people wanted the elective principle re-introduced.

Eventually, changes were made gradually to Crown Colony Government beginning with the introduction of a few elected members, then increasing the numbers.

However, the Governor was always assured of a majority in the Legislative Council. The Legislative Councils began to consist of official members, nominated members, and elected members. Gradually, the Legislative Council was divided into two sides: the official or nominated majority on one side and the elected members on the other side. In the late 1920s and 1940s, the number of elected members in some territories became large enough to have an influence in politics. Political parties began to emerge to win these seats and have their policies put into effect. This re-introduction of the elective principle was a very important step in constitutional and political development.

The elective principle or representative government was introduced in Jamaica in 1884 when elected members were equal in number to nominated and official members in a Legislative Council. In Trinidad which had been a Crown Colony since 1815, the electoral principle was introduced in Antigua, St. Kitts-Nevis, Monserrat, St. Lucia, and British Honduras. However, the outbreak of the Second World War (1939-45) delayed further constitutional changes.

### **Responsible Government**

This type of government was the next step taken. At first, the government appointed a few of the elected representatives to sit on his Executive Council. Later, the members of the Executive Council were appointed and could be removed by the representative legislature (the House of Representatives). Eventually, the governor's Executive Council consisted of a majority of elected representatives who were appointed and removed on the advice of the leader of the party to which most of the members of the House of Representatives belonged. The leader was known as the Chief Minister. Some of these members of the Executive Council were at first appointed Chairman of Committees that gave and offered advice on the activities of the various administrative departments. Eventually, they were given full responsibility for the departments to which they were attached, at which time they assumed status

of ministers. They had administrative authority over their departments and they began to exercise executive functions. The leader of the party with the majority of seats in the House of Representatives became Premier or Chief Minister and then he would select his ministers.

### **Internal Self-Government**

In internal self-government, all the departments were transferred to ministers from the chief administrative officials. However, defence, foreign affairs, and the constitution continued to be the responsibility of Britain. The Executive Council had evolved from an advisory body to the governor to a Cabinet of ministers presided over by the leader of the party with the largest number of seats in the House of Representatives. There was also a gradual reduction in the number of officials in the Legislative Council until it became a Senate of West Indians nominated by the party leaders and formally approved and appointed by the governor who now functioned on the advice of his ministers.

This type of government consisted of (a) the Governor, the representative of the British government, who functioned on the advice of the ministers (b) the Premier or Chief Minister who was the leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives. He presided over the meetings of the Cabinet (c) the Legislative body made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate, or the House of Assembly made up of elected and nominated members (d) the elected representatives who held ministerial positions and had full control over internal affairs (e) Britain still had responsibility for external affairs, defence, and the constitution.

### **Independence**

The final stage in the constitutional process was the attainment of independence. At this stage, all internal and external matters were brought under local control and a locally appointed governor-general replaced the governor. Political leaders like Eric Williams of Trinidad and Alexander Bustamante of Jamaica were dissatisfied with federation which they saw as a burden instead of a blessing. They felt that federation could retard their economic and constitutional progress. Furthermore, they felt that the territories would be better off if they became independent. This would give their leaders the power to promote their national economic interest and to develop their nation economy. They also felt that the masses would benefit more if their leaders were in charge of the development of their own territories.

### **External forces towards Independence**

- World-wide movement to give up colonies (decolonization).
- Mother country's investments withdrawn, imperial trade patterns changing leading to weaker ties.
- Support for self-government strengthened as political parties were being formed.
- The 1941 Atlantic Charter which was against Anti-Imperialism. The U.S. was putting pressure on Britain to give up power over its colonies.

□□In 1947, India (world's largest colony) was given independence so the other British colonies wanted independence also.

### **Internal forces towards Independence**

□□Nationalism was growing in the Caribbean islands. They desired to stand on their own feet. They also demanded universal suffrage.

□□The 1935-8 riots and strikes showed the British Government that Crown Colony Government was out of touch with the masses. There was the need for representative government.

□□Trade Unions gave "muscle" to political parties demanding independence. Universal suffrage strengthened their power.

□□The 1920s United Negro Improvement Association instilled black pride and ambitions in the masses. This movement was led by Marcus Garvey. The masses eventually demanded political power.

□□The Moyne Commission of 1938 led to colonial development and welfare organization. It also suggested that there should be greater political representation by the masses.

#### **>Jamaica**

In Jamaica, Federation was a crucial issue in Jamaican politics. Norman Manley, leader of the People's National Party in 1938 strongly supported Federation whereas Alexander Bustamante, leader of the Jamaica Labour Party, rejected it. Jamaica withdrew from the Federation after Jamaicans voted against it in a referendum and Bustamante insisted on separate independence as Britain had agreed.

The Independence Constitution gave Jamaica a House of Representatives of 45 members, a Senate of 21, of whom 13 would be nominated by the Prime Minister, and 8 by the leader of the Opposition, a Governor-General to represent the Queen, a Prime Minister and Cabinet responsible for both Houses and who would form the government. In the pre-Independence elections, the Jamaica Labour Party won with 26 seats against the People's National Party. Alexander Bustamante (knighted in 1955) became the first Prime Minister of independent Jamaica in August 1962.

#### **>Trinidad**

The year 1956 was important in Trinidad's constitutional and political progress because a new constitution was introduced. This brought in a Chief Minister and 7 ministers. In addition, Dr. Eric Williams formed a new party, the People's National Movement and pressed for early self-government and independence. He became the first Chief Minister of Trinidad.

In 1958, Eric Williams became Premier when Cabinet Government was introduced. He led Trinidad into the federation. He withdrew from it in 1961 because he was worried about the proposal of freedom of movement. He felt that large numbers of immigrants would be flocking to Trinidad to share in its growing prosperity. He demanded separate independence and that same year, Trinidad was given full

internal self-government. In the pre-elections of 1961, his party, the People's National Movement won and August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1962, Dr. Eric Williams became the first Prime Minister of Trinidad.

### ➤ **British Guiana**

In 1815, British Guiana inherited the Old Dutch Constitution which was a representative system and gave elected members financial control. In 1928, the combined court was replaced by the Legislative Council with elected members. In 1947, the first political parties were formed. In 1953, a new constitution introduced universal adult suffrage and Dr. Cheddi Jagan and his party, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), won the first elections to be held. However, British Guiana's constitutional progress was delayed because of Jagan's communist ideas. The Governor suspended the constitution and governed under a modified Crown Colony System from 1953-1957.

In 1957, elections were held in British Guiana and Jagan won. He also won the 1961 elections and British Guiana gained internal self-government. As Premier in 1962, he prepared a budget aimed at forcing Guianese to keep their money in the country and to consume more local goods instead of foreign goods. This resulted in strikes and race riots in 1963. The Governor declared a State of Emergency and once again constitutional progress was delayed. In October 1963, a Constitutional Conference was held in London to plan an Independence Constitution. The leaders of the three parties, Jagan of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Linden Forbes Burnham of the People's National Congress, and Peter Stanislaus d' Aguiar of the United Force (UF) were in attendance. Unfortunately, they could not agree among themselves on a constitution that would guarantee the cooperation of all the races and parties.

As a result, the Secretary of States for the colonies, Duncan Sandys, adopted proportional representation which was new in the West Indian political constitution. Elections were held in December 1964. Jagan's party received the largest number of votes in the election but did not command the majority of seats, with 24 out of 53. Burnham formed a coalition with the United Force that gave him a majority of seats and the right to form the government. He became Premier and following an independence conference in 1965, he led British Guiana into independence on 26 May, 1966. The new state adopted the name Guyana which is derived from the Amerindian word meaning "Land of Many Waters". On 23 February, 1970, Guyana was declared a co-operative republic and became known as the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

### ➤ **Barbados**

Barbados had had a representative Assembly since 1639 and had never changed to Crown Colony Government. However, the 1937 riots showed that there was a real need for more representation. As a result, Grantley Adams formed the Barbados Progressive League which was at first registered as a political party in an effort to carry out labour reforms and ask for universal adult suffrage.

Between 1946 and 1950, Adams led minority governments and was not able to carry through his constitutional reforms. However, in 1950, universal adult suffrage was introduced and this enabled Adams to achieve a ministerial system and to pass legislation on behalf of the workers. Between 1953 and 1958, the Barbados Workers' Union transferred its support to the Democratic labour Party under the leadership of Errol Barrow. The reason for this was because Adams dropped nationalization from his programme. In 1958, Adams still held a majority when Cabinet Government was introduced. However, he chose to be Prime Minister of the Federation and ended up losing popularity in Barbados politics.

In 1961, the Democratic Labour Party won elections and chose to remain a member of the "Little Eight" so as to achieve the economic benefits of a larger union. However, it eventually left the "Little Eight" in 1965 and gained independence on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1966. Errol Walton Barrow became the first Prime Minister of independent Barbados.

### **Other Territories**

#### **>The Bahamas**

In 1964, after a constitutional conference in London, which was attended by the leaders of the United Bahamian Party (UBP) and the opposition Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), internal self-government was introduced in the Bahamas. Ministerial government was introduced and Sir Roland Symonette, the leader of the UBP became the first Premier. In 1967 after an election, the PLP under Lynden Pindling (1930-2000) formed the government. In 1969, further constitutional changes took place and Pindling became Prime Minister of "The Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands". However, full independence was not achieved because Britain still had some reserved powers.

In September of 1972, another general election was held in the Bahamas. It was contested between the PLP which was in favour of independence and a party reconstructed from among members of the UBP called the Free National Movement which was opposed to independence. The PLP under Pindling won a decisive victory and the Bahamas achieved full independence on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1973.

#### **>Grenada**

Grenada was the first of the Associated States to terminate its links with Britain. This was carried out by the Premier Eric Gairy and his party, the Grenada United Labour Party. In February 1974, he became the first Prime Minister when he achieved independence.

#### **>Dominica**

Patrick John succeeded Edward LeBlanc who had resigned as Premier in July 1974. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Patrick John of the Dominica Labour Party led the island into independence without allowing the people to have any say in the decision through an election or referendum. He became the first Prime Minister of the independent Republic of Grenada. It had an Executive President elected by the legislature and government was by a Prime Minister and an eight-member cabinet.

### **> St. Lucia**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1979, St. Lucia became independent under the leadership of John Compton and his united Workers' Party. He became the first Prime Minister.

### **> St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

Milton Cato who was the Premier, became the first Prime Minister when independence was achieved in 1979.

By the 1980s, only Belize located in Central America and the eastern Caribbean islands of Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts, Montserrat, and Anguilla as well as the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the British Virgin Islands were the only parts of the Caribbean region where Britain still exercised some kind of authority.

### **> Belize**

The constitutional advance of British Honduras as an independent nation would have taken place in the 1960s but was delayed because of the claim to much of its territory by the neighbouring country of Guatemala. In 1972, the capital was moved from Belize City on the coast to Belmopan in the interior. The following year in 1973, the name of the country was changed from British Honduras to Belize. On 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1981, George Prince led the country to independence.

### **> Antigua and Barbuda**

Antigua and Barbuda achieved their independence on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1981 under the leadership of Vere Bird who became the first Prime Minister.

### **> St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla**

St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla was the last of the Associated States when on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1983, they became independent under the leadership of Dr. Kennedy Simmonds of the People's Action Movement as the first Prime Minister.

Anguilla, which had been part of the Associated States had soon after rejected being part of the Associated States and was returned to British rule. In 1971, it was legally separated from St. Kitts by the British. In 1982, it was once again recognized as a British territory. Other territories that preserved their links to Britain and remained Crown Colonies with partial self-government were Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands, Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands. The ministerial system of government was introduced in all four colonies between 1961 (Montserrat) and 1976 (Turks and Caicos Islands). The Crown through the governor, retained control over defence, external affairs, internal security, and the public service. After 1968, they were classified as "dependent territories" rather than colonies.

### **Definition of Key Terms:**

**Elected principle:** The idea that people should elect their own representatives in the legislature so that the government might be more in accord with the wishes of the masses.

**Majority of Legislative Council elected:** The representatives of the people could out-vote the civil servants and the Governor's nominees in the Legislative Council.

**Party System:** Political parties are formed to capture the votes of the electorate and the party with the most votes in a constituency wins that seat in the Legislative Council and the party with the most seats forms the government.

**Universal adult suffrage:** Every man and woman over the age of twenty-one has a right to vote. (Later, voting age sometimes reduced to eighteen).

**Ministerial System:** An elected member of the Legislative Council belonging to the majority party is chosen to head a department of the Civil Service, e.g. agriculture. He is completely responsible for it and must answer for it in the Legislative Council.

**Prime Minister/Chief Minister/Premier:** The leader of the majority party in the Legislature who is asked by the Governor to form a government which he does by choosing certain colleagues in his party to accept ministerial posts.

**Cabinet Government:** The Government's policy is decided upon and carried out by a committee selected by the Prime Minister and there are no officials or Governor's nominees.

**Full internal self-government:** The elected representatives of the people through a Prime Minister and Cabinet are in complete control of all affairs except foreign affairs and defence which remain under the Governor.

**Independence:** All internal and external affairs are under the control of the elected government. The colonial power has transferred the government totally to the citizens of the country.

**Qualitative Franchise:** The right to vote based on a condition that is; to own a certain amount of property; to earn a certain income; to be literate or a combination of all.

**Commonwealth:** An association of peoples who join together for their collective well-being. The term was first used to describe the British Empire in 1884. In 1949, the word "British" was dropped. By 1955, the Commonwealth consisted of 51 independent states and their dependencies. These include all the former West Indian colonies. Only Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Dominica do not recognize the British sovereign as their Head of State.

## **Constitutional Arrangements in the French and Dutch Antilles and Puerto Rico**

### **Départments- French Islands**

After the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, France was left with the following colonies in the Caribbean: French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and its dependencies: Marie Galante, Desirade, Les Saintes, and Saint Martin which was shared with the Netherlands. Consequently, the constitutional position of the French Empire reflected the constitutional changes that took place in France.

Early in 1848, the French working class in Paris rioted and this led to the overthrow of King Louis Philippe and the establishment of a Republic in France. This republican government abolished slavery on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1848 and universal adult suffrage was given to all men in the colonies (including former slaves). However, when Napoleon III became Emperor as a result of a coup, universal adult suffrage was abolished from 1852 to 1870. It was again restored in 1871 due to the establishment of the Third Republic and many constitutional changes were implemented.

The French colonies were governed by officials appointed by the French Central Government. Each island had a council which was allowed to give advice to the officials. Each town and city had a mayor and other officials who were locally elected. Each colony was allowed to send three deputies to the National Assembly in Paris.

The French Government supported the assimilation of the people of the colonies. This was known as the policy of Assimilation based on the conviction of the French Government that French colonization and culture were superior to all others. Thus, France wanted all of its colonial subjects absorbed into the dominant system of the

mother country because of its superior culture. They should speak the French language, adopt French manners and customs, and generally adopt the French culture so as to become Frenchmen.

During the Second World War (1939-1945) when the Germans occupied France, the French Caribbean territories remained loyal to the French Crown and did not accept German rule. Towards the end of the war in 1943, General Charles de Gaulle, leader of the "Free French" cause offered the French Caribbean territories a number of options for local government including political amalgamation with France. The reasons were to provide more efficient control of the territory and enhance the process of assimilation.

In 1946, the French Caribbean territories such as Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana chose to become overseas departments of France. The reasons for this decision were that the colonies did not suffer major economic or military damage during the war. In addition, the conservative whites and coloureds were not in favour of local rule by a black majority and so convinced the people that they should be grateful to France that they could choose political amalgamation. Furthermore, those who were in favour of self-government were not strong enough to persuade the public to choose an alternate path to development.

Consequently, French Guiana, Martinique and Guadeloupe became three administrative districts or departments of France as they were called.

The main features of the government of the French Departments were that each department was ruled by a prefect appointed by the central government. It was responsible for carrying out the directives from the central government; it controlled local public services including sanitation, road and bridge maintenance, health care, education; and had special control over the armed forces and the right to declare Martial law. Each department had an elected General Council which was initially an advisory body. Each department could elect deputies to sit in the French National Assembly and Senate.

By 1962, the French Central Government gave Caribbean Departments a greater say in their own affairs because the Martinique Council protested against the way in which the rioting was brutally suppressed by French troops. It complained about the racial arrogance of some Frenchmen, widespread unemployment, low wages and high taxes.

The Martinique Council, along with other Caribbean Councils demanded that changes be made in their government. As a result, the French Government decided to give the councils greater local autonomy, powers of the prefects were increased, and the councils could engage in political debate. This became known as the Decentralisation Decrees of April 1960 which stated that French laws were intended to apply overseas departments should first be sent to their councils for consideration. The councils could put forward their own proposals for laws to the Minister of State in France who would then present them to the Central Government. Overseas councils were given wider control over the spending of government investment funds.

The French Caribbean Departments benefited significantly from their relationship with France for example:

- They had direct budgetary support from France in the area of public expenditure on schools, hospitals, roads, housing, and land reform.
- Their citizens enjoyed the protection of the French army and police, and the full enforcement of all French laws.
- They received benefits from the French Social Security System in times of sickness and unemployment, education, and old age pensions.
- These territories were constitutionally parts of metropolitan France which was a member of the European Economic Community (EEC) and so enjoyed the benefits of this market.
- The EEC spent large sums on grants for the development of the poorest parts of the community. As a result, the Caribbean Departments of France had a share in this money which it used to develop the tourist trade, build better shipping ports and pay for studies on future economic growth.
- As French citizens, the Caribbean people enjoyed freedom of movement to France and they could take advantage of educational and job opportunities there.

However, there were some residents of these overseas departments who were opposed to departmentalization. For example, there were members of the French Communist Party who felt that departmentalization was another form of colonization and so wanted full autonomy. They resented being dominated by whites and wanted to have a greater say in governing themselves. Some felt that complete assimilation with France would destroy the best and unique of their own West Indian culture. They were afraid of losing their Caribbean identity and African heritage. They were proud of being black and resented the cultural domination of France.

In addition, there were the continued economic problems that were related to the fact that the economies of the overseas departments were still largely based on export agriculture. This helped to reinforce monoculture and dependence on the mother country. There was the continued unemployment of many residents, low wages, racism which was demonstrated by resident Frenchmen. Hence, many of the Caribbean people felt that they were regarded as second-class citizens in France. The vast majority of socialists, trade unionists, intellectuals, and nationalists favoured independence.

Despite the negative attitude of some residents to departmentalization, proposals for independence were not implemented up to 1962. France was not in favour of independence for the Caribbean departments and many Caribbean residents, themselves, were in favour of the continued constitutional links with France because of the benefits associated with the relationship. In a referendum in the French Caribbean in 1962, the majority voted for no change. Up to 1979, the majority of the French Caribbean people wanted no constitutional change.

## **Tripartite Kingdom- Netherland Antilles**

After 1815, the Dutch possessions in the Caribbean region consisted of St. Eustatius, Saba and St. Marteen (shared with France), in the Leeward islands: Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, off the southern mainland coast and Dutch Guiana (Suriname). These territories were all administered in the same manner as the British and French colonies in the Caribbean and government was completely in the hands of the Netherlands.

Each territory was ruled by a governor appointed by the Crown in Holland. There was an assembly or staten which was dominated by the Old Dutch classes of planters and merchants. By the 1930s, the Colonial Government was being attacked by the new middle class made up of oil refinery workers from Aruba and Curacao. As a result of continued dissatisfaction in Curacao, a new constitution was proposed in 1936. The representative body (staten) consisted of ten members, five of whom were appointed and the others elected. The governor continued to have the most political power and the Netherlands could intervene in the internal affairs of Curacao.

Despite this, the 1936 constitution represented the first step in the direction of a suffrage. The first election under this particular suffrage was held in 1937 and contested by two political parties: the Catholic Party and the Curacao Political Unit. By 1949, the Dutch Antilles were given greater autonomy especially when universal adult suffrage and internal self-government were granted. In 1954, the colonies became partners (equal members) in a Tripartite Kingdom in a scheme laid down in the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Members of the Tripartite Kingdom were the Dutch Antilles, Suriname and the Netherlands. They were all equal partners and all three had to agree on any constitutional changes in the Caribbean territories. Each member of the kingdom was to keep its full internal self-government. Defence, foreign affairs and the police were a joint responsibility. The people were considered Dutch citizens.

In the Dutch Antilles, an elected local council was established in each island. All sent deputies to a 22-member, single-chamber staten in Curacao, the seat of the governor.

After 1954 and throughout the rest of the 20c, the question of independence including the degree of autonomy enjoyed by each island, dominated politics in the Dutch Antilles. Under the governor appointed by the Crown, executive power rested in an 8-member Council of Ministers led by a Prime Minister. Each island had its own elected Island Council and an Executive Council under a Lieutenant-Governor yet, despite this, resentment was often expressed about the dominant position in Curacao.

In 1985, the local island Council in Aruba decided to ask the Netherlands for a new status as a completely separate internally self-governing unit of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This was granted in 1986 with the Netherlands retaining responsibility for defence and foreign affairs only. It was expected that in 1996, independence would follow. Aruba was then placed under a Governor appointed by the Crown and administered by a Prime Minister and Cabinet drawn from the majority party in a 21-seat staten. However, in 1990 the government requested that the agreement for automatic independence be cancelled in 1996. The request was granted and Aruba remained part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

### **Plebiscite & Commonwealth- Puerto Rico**

Independence was a goal for many Puerto Rico under Spanish rule. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the main political division was between the wealthiest classes and the small group of educated middle class liberals, who wanted independence from Spain. There were several conspiracies on the part of these liberals to win independence. For example, in 1865, one was led by a Venezuelan, M. Rojas, and an exile in New York, Matias Bregman. It began with the Grito de Lares (Declaration at Lares) which called for independence and the emancipation of slaves. This attempt failed but could not prevent the liberal movement from continuing to grow in the island and abroad.

In Puerto Rico, there was a split between those who wanted self-government (autonomists) and those who wanted unconditional freedom from Spain (unconditionalists). The autonomists feared that if they got full independence from Spain, then they would become under United States control. However, Spain

promised their leader, Munoz Riviera, self-government in 1897 once it came to power, so as to terminate all independence sentiments of the Puerto Rico radicals as well as the abolitionist sentiments. In 1897, Spain granted Puerto Rico a constitution but before it could come into effect, the island came into effect, the island was ceded to the U.S. by the Treaty of Paris in September 1898. This took place as a result of the invasion of an American expeditionary force which took the island. The recent constitution gains were erased and Puerto Rico became a protectorate of the United States.

In 1900, the U.S. passed the Foraker Act which gave Puerto Rico its first constitution under the Foraker Act. This made the island an unincorporated territory of the United States. By 1917, there was limited political reform for example the Jones Act which replaced the Foraker Act gave Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship and the U.S. still appointed the governor of the island. The Puerto Ricans could now vote for their Senate representatives. However, the island still remained an "unincorporated territory" of the U.S.

After the 1930s depression, independence sentiments increased in Puerto Rico. In 1937, Pedro Albizu Campus, a pro-independence activist led a protest which resulted in a massacre in the town of Ponce. In 1940, Luis Munoz Marin and his Popular Democratic Party came to power. He rejected the struggle between statehood and independence and stressed the need for economic reform and greater local government control over Puerto Rico's affairs. Marin was able to persuade the U.S. President Harry Truman to appoint a Puerto Rican, Jesus T. Pinero as Governor of Puerto Rico in 1946. In 1947, the Jones Act was amended to allow Puerto Ricans to elect their own governor instead of being directly dominated by the U.S. Thus, Marin was elected governor in 1947/1948. Puerto Rico became a Free Associated State or a commonwealth with a self-government in all local affairs but remained dependent on the U.S. for defence and foreign relations.

In 1952, Puerto Rico adopted a new constitution approved by the U.S. Congress and a majority of Puerto Ricans. It confirmed Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens but they were not allowed to send representatives to vote in Congress. They were entitled to all the obligations of U.S citizens but were exempt from federal taxation. However, the U.S. is still obliged to provide grants and other financial support to the island as if it were a state.

Puerto Ricans gained internal self-government under this commonwealth form of government. There was an elected governor for a four-year term, an elected two-house legislature made up of a Senate of 27 members, and a House of Representatives of 51 members and the U.S. had the responsibility for defence and foreign affairs.

This new form of government allowed Puerto Ricans to enjoy a number of benefits such as:

- The island was guaranteed protection by the U.S. which was responsible for its defence.
- Puerto Ricans could move to the U.S. since they were American citizens and this could help to reduce unemployment at home.

- There were greater prospects for better job opportunities and higher wages in the U.S. This could contribute to greater foreign exchange inflows, as U.S. emigrants provide financial support for relatives who remained in the island.
- Puerto Rico's foreign affairs were looked after by the U.S. and so the island's government was saved the foreign affairs expenditure.
- Puerto Rico could attract U.S. capital investment which would help to strengthen the economy.
- The island had free access to U.S. markets.
- Puerto Ricans did not pay federal income tax unless the money was earned in the U.S.
- Federal funds were provided for services such as coast guard, postal services, customs, the national guard, the naturalization, and diplomatic services. Puerto Ricans also enjoyed some welfare benefits.
- Puerto Ricans could withdraw from the new arrangement through a referendum.

Despite these benefits, there were some disadvantages associated with this relationship such as:

- As American citizens, Puerto Ricans could not vote in federal elections unless they were on the mainland at the time of the elections.
- There were restrictions on the use of federal funds disbursed in the island.
- The U.S. control over foreign affairs and defence did not always give Puerto Ricans opportunity to make any meaningful contribution to the policies governing these areas.
- Puerto Rico's membership status in the U.S. and Senate was incomplete. Although a resident commissioner was elected to the U.S. Congress, he could speak, but he could not vote.
- There was a heavy dependence on the U.S. capital and market, and the U.S. investors dominated the economy.
- The influence of the U.S. culture was so great in Puerto Rico that it tended to suppress the Puerto Rican culture.

The majority of Puerto Ricans accepted the commonwealth status in spite of the disadvantages because they appreciated the benefits to be gained. They were unwilling to adopt any political change that threatened the financial aid which accompanied the political and economic connections to the U.S. Hence, no progress has been made in the advancement to independence.

However, the dream of independence still exists among many Puerto Ricans and this explains the action of many radical nationalists in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, it was reported that Luis Rosa who was linked to a militant group, Armed Forces for National Liberation unsuccessfully sought independence for Puerto Rico in an armed struggle. Thus, those who wanted complete independence and those who wanted Puerto Rico to become a state of the U.S. did not manage to accomplish their aims.

Some changes were made in 1970 when the commissioner was granted the right to vote in congressional committees, and Puerto Rico was given equal treatment to other states by federal departments. In 1973, revenue-sharing status was extended to Puerto Rico, thus emphasizing the financial status of the island as a state.

## **POPULAR PROTESTS IN THE 1930s**

### **The Economic, Political and Social Factors that created the Protests of the 1930s in the Caribbean**

#### **Economic**

- 1) Landownership was unfairly divided. The best land was owned by absentee proprietors and the plantocracy whereas the worthless land was given to the peasants.
- 2) Wages were low for agricultural, domestic and industrial workers. For example, in 1930, male agricultural workers earned between 10 pence in St. Vincent and 1 shilling 6 pence in Grenada and St. Lucia. Women earned between 6 to 8 pence in St. Vincent and 10 pence to 1 shilling in Grenada. In Trinidad and Tobago in 1930, skilled agricultural workers earned between \$1.20 and \$3.00 a day and unskilled workers: 40 cents to \$1.20 a day. Workers in manufacturing and mining industries were paid the same level of wages. Domestic workers who worked averaging 54 hours in Trinidad & Tobago earned between \$4.00 and \$12.00 a month. In Barbados, the daily wage of most workers remained below one shilling and hardly improved since the mid-

19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the hours of work were long, the methods of discipline were harsh and seasonal unemployment and under-employment were common.

- 3) In the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, returning soldiers and migrants created a surplus labouring population that resulted in a competitive labour environment. As a result, some territories attempted to lower their wages even further. For example, the 1930 Report of the West Indian Sugar Commission singled out Barbados as one colony where planters used wage reduction to increase their profits instead of devising ways to increase yield and profitability. In Jamaica, between 1925 and 1935, wage rates for sugar factory and building workers dropped by a quarter. This left many workers in dire poverty.
- 4) Restrictions on emigration which used to help alleviate unemployment at home, created economic hardships on the peasant working class who dependent on agriculture. This occurred after the USA and Central American countries closed their doors to West Indians seeking better employment opportunities there.
- 5) An outbreak of a series of diseases which affected all the major crops such as sugar, cocoa, limes, and bananas also created hardships on the peasant working class. These peasants did not have the resources to cope with the numerous tropical plant disease or with unfavourable weather conditions.
- 6) Many people from the rural areas drifted into the urban sections in search of jobs, e.g. to Bridgetown in Barbados, Kingston in St. Vincent, Port of Spain in Trinidad, etc. They increased the ranks of the unemployed and aggravated the problems of town life.
- 7) During World War 1, there was a shortage of sugar on the world market which caused the price of Caribbean sugar to rise. However, after the war, sugar production fell in the U.S. and England, who were the main market and sources of imports from these countries. The world demand for sugar and bananas dropped, causing unemployment for workers in these industries. In countries which were heavily dependent on imported food, such as Barbados, the working class could not afford the rising cost of such food and people became more and more dissatisfied in both rural and urban centres.
- 8) The Great Depression was an economic crisis which faced the financial world from 1929. It shook the finance industry and commerce of the world in the 1930s and caused widespread distress in Britain and the U.S. This depression seriously affected the people of the Caribbean, causing Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico and Central America to send migrant labourers back to their homes. These people swelled the ranks of the unemployed and increased competition for jobs. The price of sugar dropped. Many territories still had no viable alternative to sugar. Consequently, when the cane sugar market fell in the 1930s, the colonies were left distressed.
- 9) The most severe impact of the depression was that the remittances (money) that relatives overseas sent home was subsequently reduced. This money had begun to make up the greater portion of the working class income. For

example, the total value of remittances from the U.S., the main source fell from £5, 677 in 1981 to £1, 635 in 1933. The sharp decline in remittances was accompanied by labourers being forced to return home.

### **Social Factors**

- 1) Social services such as education and health facilities were very inadequate. Education existed mainly at the elementary level but the curriculum was badly adapted to meet local needs, teachers were too few and badly trained and accommodation was inadequate. Consequently, only a small number of the children passed on to secondary schools which also showed the same basic weakness.
- 2) Throughout the colonies, sanitation was poor, and diseases such as the hookworm, venereal diseases (sexually transmitted diseases/infections), yaws and malaria were prevalent. Houses were in a dilapidated state and constituted to a health hazard.
- 3) During World War II, the men who had served in the West India Regiment of the British Army experienced racism even within the ranks of the army. For example, they were placed in the West Indies Regiment, a separate Black wing of the British army. They were paid less than the war but were in labour service in Egypt or they were the ones who dug the trenches and carried ammunition to the white soldiers who were fighting the Germans in France.
- 4) Black people from the Commonwealth Caribbean territories who had gone to Britain also experienced racial hostility. For example, in 1919, white mobs went around attacking Black people in London and other large towns. This also happened in U.S. cities. As a result, returning soldiers and radicals were frustrated with these situations and tried to encourage local opposition. They got support from their fellow Caribbean people, many of whom not only had their own experience of racism at home but also knew all about the racism abroad which had been reported about it in the press. Hence, Caribbean migrants returned home to a climate of unrest.
- 5) Workers remained controlled as a result of the repressive labour laws and practices. Trade unions were not legal and so workers did not have anybody to press for benefits such as minimum wages and sickness insurance. In St. Kitts, the workers were not very militant because of the Masters and Servants Act of 1849. This Act stated that workers who were absent from work could be prosecuted under criminal law and could be punished by a fine of £50 which was almost two months' wages for the average worker or could be sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour. Picketing was illegal and employers could sue strikers for damage or simply call out the troops.
- 6) Governments maintained tight security in the region by enforcing law and order. Hence, the breaking of any of the representative laws often brought out the police and military forces. The property-owning classes felt that law and order were of vital importance because they needed to protect their

investments. They were afraid that social upheaval would jeopardise their wealth and production.

- 7) The people were affected by the “revolution of rising expectations” and desired a higher standard of living such as that which existed in more advanced countries. Those who had contact with resident whites or through overseas service during the First World War had acquired sophisticated tastes.
- 8) The 1920s and 1930s was a period of rising West Indian nationalism with an emphasis on black consciousness. The Negro “renaissance” in the U.S. which climaxed with the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured people, was partly responsible for this. Also, important were the ideas and activities of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican who has lived in the U.S. but has been deported to Jamaica in 1927. Garvey was a very persuasive speaker and a dynamic leader who gained an international reputation as President of the United Negro Improvement Association. He was an advocate of social reform but more importantly he preached about pride of race and the rejection of white values. Another stimulus to black nationalism was the philosophy of “negritude”, an expression used by the French West Indian writer, Aimé Césaire, which exalted the dignity and vitality of black people. These movements increased West Indian resentment against their unjust social conditions.

### **Political Factors**

- 1) Under the Crown Colony System, West Indian governments were very inefficient. They were incapable of devising measures for economic development and the improvement of social services. The colonial ruling class was still dominated by *laissez-faire* thinking whereas the welfare state philosophy was being observed in more advanced countries.
- 2) New West Indian leaders appeared to organize the people's protest. Many of them were educated in metropolitan countries and could draw upon the methods developed by the world labour movement. They could count on the support of British unions, the International Labour Organization and world opinion.

### **The Role of Outstanding Female Protest Leaders**

Women played an active supportive and leadership role in the labour movement. The protests brought changes for the good of the community. They contributed to democracy and enabled women to strengthen their reputations as leaders and members of the anti-colonial front. Their participation helped to ensure that struggles for better wages, better working conditions, and ultimate political independence were successful. Women of all ethnicities and classes were involved in the protests of the 1930s, though their participation varied along class and colour lines. Many could be defined as early feminists, speaking out where there was discrimination based solely on gender. Like men, they supported the ideologies of anti-imperialism and Pan-Africanism.

Women became involved in the protests of the 1930s because from the days of slavery and the immediate post-slavery period, working class women had specific grievances. They formed a considerable part of the workforce yet their economic life was threatened because they were part of the declining group that was called by the census "gainfully occupied". Unlike during slavery, the agricultural workforce was increasingly male. The census did not include all women who worked, leaving out fulltime housewives and those who worked part-time on the estates. However, it showed a general guide to the percentage of women in the labour force, e.g. in Trinidad, the proportion of women in the labour force fell from 63% in 1921 to 44% in 1934. Between 1911 and 1943, women's participation in the labour force had declined from 60% to 34%.

### **Women in Belize**

In Belize, women were among the earliest to become involved in the 20<sup>th</sup> century protests. They joined the men in the struggle against large companies and the colonial government. Many were members of the LUA (Labourers and Unemployed Association). Individuals like Cleopatra White organized women in Belize to speak up for themselves against oppression. In October 1934, the women in Belize led a shutdown strike against the Belize Estate and Produce and Sawmill Company on North Front Street. They demonstrated at the Town Board Office and were quite loud at the courthouse where Antonio Soberanis was being arraigned for organizing the LUA and demanding social and economic change from the colonial government.

### **Women in Jamaica**

Middle class women supported the efforts of the working class women. Agnes (Aggie) Bernard who was one of the heroines of the 1938 Kingston waterfront strike, converted her Princess Street home into a soup kitchen to feed hungry Longshore strikers. During the early years, she worked alongside Norman Manley and Bustamante in the struggle for independence. Support for working class women also came from Edna Manley and Gladys Longbridge (Lady Bustamante). Gladys Longbridge travelled extensively with Alexander Bustamante across Jamaica in the 1930s to gain first-hand information and eyewitness accounts of the conditions under which the poor and disenfranchised lived. She marched with the crowds during the labour rebellions in Kingston in 1938.

Amy Bailey and Una Marson were two middle class activists in Jamaica with a special interest in the affairs of women. Una Marson wrote *The Jamaica Standard* and Amy Bailey also contributed articles from time to time. In one article written during the protests of the 1930s in Jamaica, they stressed the extent of female participation, e.g.

*The tragic events of the last few weeks must have revealed to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear that young girls and women played a prominent part, and are still doing so. We have seen the women as advanced guards, flanking the sides and bringing up the rear of the strikers and unfortunately, the hooligan crew. They were*

*among the principle stone throwers. I saw young girls and dragging coconut, brought old tins and parts of motor cars to barricade. Several through fares, and the language of many women and young girls were rich in expletives.*

Women in Kingston as well in rural parishes were active in the 1938 events. On 23<sup>rd</sup> May, *The Jamaica Standard* wrote, "Women and children assisted the able bodied men strikers in smashing the doors and windows of the laboratory of the Kingston Public Hospital after assistants there had rescued the doctor by putting him in the laboratory buildings."

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1938, an article entitled "We must save our girls" appeared in *The Jamaica Standard*. The article drew attention to the strike at the Jamaica Biscuit Factory owned by Lascelles de Mercado and Company.

*The factory hands were not all willing at first, but afterwards left the factory, the majority joining them in the demonstration, particularly the women, as the first wave of strikers struck in Trench Pen. Over 300 men and women laid down tools demanding 6/- a day for men and 4s for women.*

At the Kings of Cap Manufacturing Company at 254 Tower Street it was reported that:

*More than 30 women refused to work under conditions which they described as very hard... They made caps at a rate of 3, 6d, 9d, and 10d per dozen and shirts were made at 1/3 and 1/9 per dozen. Employees refused to go back to work until rates were increased.*

In Trench Pen in Kingston, hundreds of men and women put down their tools and demanded increased wages 6/- a day for men and 4/- for women. It is interesting that they did not request the same rates as for men and women. The dressmakers of Kingston called on Bustamante and asked him to alleviate their hardships. They did not have any work because the store operator had imported ready-made garments. These dressmakers even proposed to call a demonstration.

In St. Elizabeth, workers deserted on estate near Aberdeen. About 3000 men and women with sticks and cutlasses marched and sang. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1938, *The Jamaica Standard* told about the involvement of women in St. Thomas. It noted that, "Seaforth, St. Thomas, Serge Island Estate, men, women and children marched to the wharf of the Hon. K. Ereh Stein asking that as a member of the Legislative Council for the parish, he should see that property owners dealt more satisfactorily with their employees."

Women were at the centre of the struggles in Westmoreland, taking part in strikes, demonstrations and riots. Some women faced police bullets, some were wounded, some died at Frome, Westmoreland. Kathleen from Burnt Savannah in Westmoreland was among the first four fatalities in the 1938 riots in Frome.

Although she was seven months pregnant and was unemployed, this did not prevent her from being an activist in the political struggles of the time. Others among the list of casualties were Beatrice Powell who was shot in the hip, Ann Hutchinson who received a bayonet wound in her side, Medora Williams who suffered a fractured knee, and Irene Campbell who received a gunshot wound.

The men and women of Runaway Bay went on a hunger march. The men marched armed with large sticks sang “Onward Christian Soldiers”. Women followed singing and shouting. Both Chinese shops in the village community were forced to close. On Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup>, May, *The Jamaica Standard* wrote about the activities of women in Portland, “Demonstrators in Portland gave the authorities some concern yesterday at Bull Bay, a crowd of 300 men and women marched through the town compelling Chinese shops to close.”

One of the main speakers at the mass meeting of the Social Reconstruction League at North Parade, Kingston, was a twelve-year-old school girl, Joyce Gooden. She spoke bitterly of the lack of education in Jamaica and urged men and women to see to it that the government provided for the children, who would one day be the mass of the country. She is reported to have said, “My school brethren need a leader and I am determined as one of them to lead to acquire that which is for their future benefit.”

### **Women in Trinidad and Tobago**

Trinidadian women were active in the early labour movement and organized workers for the struggle. The women coal carriers of Archer Coaling Station went on strike and then they formed the Trinidad Workers’ Association (TWA). Women could become members of the Trinidad Workers’ Association as it organized workers along occupational and regional lines. The women who joined the Association included: domestics, seamstresses, clerks, and casual general workers. Around 1929 to 1930, the TWA had at least three sections or divisions including one for domestics. This section was led by Albertina Husbands and is usually referred to as the “women’s section”. Eldica Atkins, a Barbadian milliner, led numbers 1 and 2 “women’s section”. Theresa Ogoe (hat maker) led the third section. In 1929, another women’s section was formed in California in South Trinidad.

Other female leaders were Helena Manuel who formed the Trade Union Centre and Daisy Crick who figured prominently as an early member of the Oilfield Workers Trade Union. Daisy Crick became president of the “women’s section” of the La Brea branch of the TWA. She was a leading platform speaker especially during 1937-1938 when the association was organizing and mobilizing members. She urged women to leave the kitchen and join men in the struggle for social justice. Elma François, a noted female activist, was a member of both the UNIA and the TWA. She was originally from St. Vincent and founded the Negro Welfare Cultural and Social Association (NWCSA). She was a member of the Trinidad Working Men’s Association and laid the foundation for the Seamen and Waterfront Workers’ Union, the National Union of Government and the Federated Workers and Trade Union.

Women in Trinidad were also active in highlighting the plight of women in the country in the late 1930s. Some women like Beatrice Greig, Audrey Jeffers and R.M. Scott wrote letters to the editors of various newspapers like the Labour Leader. For example, in 1937, Estelle Antoine Duncan wrote that domestics worked under poor conditions from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays to Sundays and there was no official

control over their working conditions. Mary Patrick, supporter of Uriah Butler wrote that wives had to make tremendous sacrifices to make ends meet on their husbands' low wages. For this reason, there were willing to support husbands in the struggle. The women in Trinidad including self-employed women were directly involved in the protest action in 1937. The Trinidadian Guardian reported that on 25<sup>th</sup> June, many of the strikers on the strike docks were women. In an article, "*Strikers Move Fast*", it was reported that "Men, young and old, women and children brandishing sticks, cutlasses and other weapons, walked from factory to factory in the district infecting workers with the strike fever." Women travelled to the south of Trinidad to San Fernando, moving through the streets, closing stores, interrupting traffic, and threatening individuals. Women were among those arrested and charged after the government suppressed the protests and some even faced prison terms. Women like Albertina Grant, Edith Beckford, Hilda Cunningham, and Angella Smalling were among the women who were charged with riotous assembling during these struggles. Five men and six women appeared before Magistrate Jules Mahabir in the Siparia Magistrate Court on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1937. They were charged with carrying weapons and taking part in an unlawful assembly-related strike. The women were Mary James, Doris Alexandria, Adriana Brizan, Louissa Lewis, Jestina Douglas, and Albertina Solomon. On the same Wednesday, seven more women were arrested in Siparia in connection with strike actions. They were refused bail. On 2<sup>nd</sup> July, Nazim Williams, Ivy Chase, Cordella Williams, Norma Fraser, Netty Rennie, Narissa Church, and Verna Renrit were all given bail at \$50 each.

The Trinidad police arrested and charged five more women for the murder of policemen, Charlie King. They were Maud Charles, Bantin Rodney, Nora Cooper, Henrietta Joseph, and Hilda Maitland.

### **The Role of Outstanding Male Leaders**

Most of the leaders who have been recognized as heroes in the 1930s labour movements were middle class male leaders like Norman Manley, Captain Arthur Cipriani, Grantley Adams, Alexander Bustamante and others. This was because the British Government preferred to negotiate with the educated class of doctors, lawyers and newspaper editors in an effort to solve the problems of the 1930s. The Black popular leaders were often arrested and imprisoned or deported. As a result, the Coloured middle class took over the leadership and tried to get supporters that would vote for them when they formed political parties and pressed for independence. In addition, although women were active, their political role was not highlighted because of the gender ideology at that time.

### **Barbados**

In Barbados, the following people played important roles in the labour movement: Clement Payne, Fitz Archibald Chase, Uric Grant, Herbert Seale, Clennell Wickham, Charles Duncan O' Neal, Wynter Crawford, Mortimer Skeete, Israel Lovell, Darnley Alleyne, and Grantley Adams.

### **Clement Payne**

Clement Payne brought dynamic leadership to the workers in Barbados. He was born in Trinidad to Barbadian parents. At the age of four, he was taken to Barbados

but later returned to Trinidad where he became involved in the workers' movement. He was a supporter and member of Uriah "Buzz" Butler's British Empire Workers' and Citizens' Home Rule Party.

Payne arrived in Barbados in March 1937 calling himself "Butler's Minister of Propaganda". With the assistance of Israel Lovell, a Graveyite, he rapidly acquired a large number of followers in the Bridgetown areas such as Golden Square strategically located in a densely populated slum district. A major part of his activities involved organizing workers into a strong trade union force to counter the power of the merchant-planter elite and to deal with depressed wages, price inflation and victimization of workers in the work place. In his speeches, he kept workers informed about the labour movement in other parts of the Caribbean so that they understood that they were part of a regional movement. Like Butler and Garvey, he told Black Barbadians to adopt a new pride in their race and to work together. He urged his audiences to "Educate, agitate but do not violate."

In Bridgetown, Payne's audiences began to increase as he started to hold two meetings a week instead of one. Government officials and police authorities soon considered Payne dangerous to the social order and someone to be removed. They decide to charge him with falsely declaring to immigration officials that he was born in Barbados. He was convicted but granted bail. He led a group of about 5000 to appeal to his conviction before the governor but the police prevented him from seeing the governor. When he persisted in his efforts, he and some of his followers were arrested. A deportation order was issued, and with the collaboration of the police in Trinidad, Payne was secretly deported to Trinidad.

When Payne's supporters realized what had happened, they became angry. They mashed shop windows, pushed cars into the sea, attacked passers-by, stoned policemen, etc. Shops remained closed and work came to a standstill in both town and country. Strikes intensified at the Central Foundry and among lightermen (people who worked on the small boats called lighters). However, they returned to work after their demands were met.

The governor responded to the rebellion by calling out the security forces. In the end, 14 people were killed, 47 injured and 800 arrested. The leaders who stayed with the struggle after Payne was deported, were arrested for inciting riots. Uric Grant and Mortimer Skeete got 10 years in prison. Israel Lovell and Darnley Alleyne got 5 years and Fitz Archibald Chase got 9 months for saying words which allegedly incited riots, e.g. "Tonight will be a funny day".

### **Grantley Adams**

Grantley Adams was born in 1898. He was from a Black middle class family and was educated at Harrison College and Oxford University in England where he studied law. His education and class position allowed him to move in social circles that embraced him initially as a "liberal" rather than a "radical" like O' Neal, Wickham and Payne. Hence, like other Liberals at that time, Adams was willing to follow a gradual path to change. However, events during and after the protests of 1937, made him reconsider his approach. Gradually, he shifted towards the radical

front and demanded reforms that would enfranchise the working class majority. At this time, he became a keen advocate of trade union activity.

Adams achieved recognition and popularity with the workers when he defended Payne and other leaders who were arrested. In 1938, he and Chrissie Brathwaite founded the Barbados Progressive League. The Barbados Workers' Union (1941), Adams contributed to the struggle for the franchise, for liberal reforms to restore a healthier socio-economic climate, for a greater personal role in representation politics and for political reform.

### **Grenada**

#### **T.A. Marryshow**

T.A. Marryshow was acknowledged as a Grenadian hero. He was born on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1887 in the parish of St. George's. He was educated at the Roman Catholic St. Louis Primary School and later the Methodist School. He worked as a newspaper delivery boy at the "Federalist and Grenada People". He soon learned to write articles and eventually, he became a sub-editor. In 1909, he became editor of the St. George's "Chronicle and Grenada Gazette". In 1915, he reached his full potential and took over as managing editor of the "West Indian".

Marryshow established himself as a journalist and political agitator between 1915 and 1925. He soon started to make life uncomfortable for governors and administrators. In the 1930s, he participated in the fight for racial equality. One of Marryshow's main aims was to introduce a representative government in Grenada. He was interested and concerned with the various organizations that were fighting to improve the status of the masses. He was also involved in the British Caribbean Federal Labour Party, later renamed the British West Indies Federal Labour Party. In 1937, he organized a non-violent demonstration in Grenada to show solidarity with the workers in other islands.

### **Jamaica**

#### **Alexander Bustamante**

Jamaica's modern trade union movement began with William Alexander Clarke (later Alexander Bustamante). He was born in Blenheim, Hanover, on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1884 to an Irish father (Robert Clarke) and a Jamaican mother (Mary Wilson-Clarke) of mixed race. He began advocating in the workers' movement in the early 1930s. He subsequently developed a relationship with St William Grant, a labour advocate known for holding regular "banyan lectures" under the great banyan trees in Victoria Park.

In 1937, Bustamante became involved in the newly formed Jamaica Tradesmen and Workers' Union (JWTU), giving "Busta" an arena to present himself as the representative of the working class. The JWTU was formed by Coombs on June 29, 1937. Bustamante was at the forefront of the protests in 1938 and, shortly thereafter, formed the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU). Bustamante led the referendum of 1961 for Jamaica to withdraw from the British West Indies Federation. He later formed the Jamaica Labour Party in 1943 and became Prime Minister of independent Jamaica in August 1962.

#### **Norman Manley**

Norman Washington Manley was born in the district of Roxborough, Manchester, on July 4, 1893. He was a distinguished athlete and brilliant scholar- this brilliance allowed him to receive the prestigious Rhodes scholarship in 1914 to study law at King's Counsel (KC).

In 1937, he established a social development agency, Jamaica Welfare Limited (JWL), the first of its kind in the island. He was known as the "labour mediator", especially after the arrest of Alexander Bustamante and St William Grant in the labour riots of 1938. This had a tremendous impact on his psyche and his drive to promote nationalism and the idea of self-government that it influenced Manley to form the People's National Party (PNP) in September of 1938.

Manley opposed Crown Colony Government, and until 1949, pressed for a total end to the system in Jamaica. He criticised the constitutional changes of 1953 which ushered in ministerial government. The 1953 constitution left defence, justice and foreign affairs in the hands of the Crown. In 1955, Manley's PNP came to power and quickly changed to full cabinet government. In 1959, Jamaica won full internal self-government. He was a major proponent of Federation; this, however, collapsed in 1962. He called an election only a few months after the referendum on Federation in 1962 and lost to the JLP.

### **Trinidad & Tobago**

#### **Captain Arthur Cipriani**

Captain Arthur Cipriani was a white middle class Trinidadian of Corsican descent. Arthur Cipriani had his political awakening because of his experiences as a member of the British West Indies Regiment during the First World War. In 1925, he was elected to the Legislative Council. He was a leading member of the Trinidad Workingman's Association (TWA), later renamed the Trinidad Labour Party.

#### **Eric Williams**

Eric Williams was a scholar and leading Caribbean politician. In 1944, he published his seminal work, *Capitalism & Slavery*. He later became a faculty member at Howard University and research secretary of the Caribbean Commission. He returned to Trinidad in 1948 as Deputy Chairman of the Caribbean Research Council. He built up a large following from his association with the People's Educational Movement (PEM), a group through which he gave his political speeches. He also gave public lectures at Woodford Square in Port-of-Spain. In 1956, he formed the People's National Movement (PNM). He became Chief Minister of the country in 1956 and led Trinidad & Tobago to independence in August 1962.

Born Tubal Uriah Butler on the 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1897 in St George's Grenada, he has been described as a religious, upright, outspoken, activist by most accounts. By the age of 17, Butler enlisted in the British army during the first world war due to the fact that he could find no work after completing his primary school education. His parents could not provide the finances for Butler to further his education so the regiment became the only other option. Therefore. at a young age Butler was

exposed to the inequalities of the social system under the rule of the British imperialists. In 1918, Butler returned from service to the military and became very active in political pressure groups and workers' unions, two of which he established himself (The Grenada Representative Government Movement, and The Grenada Union of Returned Soldiers).

Butler migrated to Trinidad in 1921, employed as a pipe-fitter in the oilfields. His expertise in organization and political agitation quickly surfaced as he pitted against the ills of the British Crown Colony System and joined Captain Arthur Cipriani in his struggle to obtain constitutional reform, universal suffrage, and improved workers' rights.

Major contributions attributed to Butler are the 1935 Hunger March, the 1937 Oilfield Riots, and the formation of Trade Union (Oilfield Workers Trade Union) and Political Parties (The Butler Party, Citizen's Home Rule Party), which lobbied for reform in political and social life of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Uriah Butler sensitized the "normal citizen" to the harsh realities of the corrupt government system of colonial rule and thus ignited within citizens that desire for self-rule and independence from Britain.

Butler has been credited with being a pivotal actor in the realizing of Independence for Trinidad and Tobago in 1962. As such, in 1970, he had been awarded the Trinity Cross which is the country's highest award in recognition of his contribution to independence.

### **Adrienne Cola Rienzi**

Krishna Deonarine was born in 1908 in the village of Victoria near San Fernando. His father, Deonarine Tiwari, squandered his inheritance, and was forced to move the family to San Fernando. Krishna attended Trinity College, Dublin and the Middle Temple in London. He became the founding father of the New India Political Group while in London. It was formed to assist Indian nationals in their independence struggle against British rule.

When Adrienne returned to Trinidad, he became involved in the labour movement and other political activities. For example, he formed the Trinidad Citizens' League and was President of the San Fernando Branch of the Workingmen's Association. In 1937, he emerged as a series of quickly settled strikes occurred from 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> May by construction workers in Trench Pen.

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, there was a general strike of waterfront workers, a strike of street cleaners on 23<sup>rd</sup> May and afterwards an island-wide upheaval. The strikers marched through Kingston causing shops and factories to close. They were joined by workers from government establishments such as gas workers tram workers. They demonstrated throughout the streets attacking shops and vehicles and blocking the streets.

Sporadic unrests continued until about 10<sup>th</sup> June. In the end, 7 people were killed, 171 wounded and over 700 arrested. Alexander Bustamante, a leading figure in the

riots was arrested on 24 May and released on 28<sup>th</sup> May. He was represented by Norman Manley, a lawyer who negotiated on behalf of the people.

## **Guyana**

### **Cheddi Jagan**

Cheddi Jagan was Chief Minister and Premier of Guyana between 1957 and 1961, and premier from 1961 to 1964. He studied dentistry in the USA and returned to Guyana in 1943. He became involved in politics shortly after his return, gaining a seat in the legislature as an independent candidate in 1947. He would soon after join the British Guiana Labour Party. Upon the disintegration of that party, he and others formed the People's Progressive Party (PPP). The party subsequently won the 1953 elections.

There were fears especially by the opposition in the early 1960s that the PPP intended to turn British Guiana into a communist state. Fearing such a prospect, Britain landed troops in Guiana. On orders from Britain, the governor suspended the constitution and set up an interim government of nominated officials.

The British action delayed the coming of internal self-government and independence to British Guiana for many years. The country became independent in May 1966 under the leadership of Forbes Burnham and the People's National Congress (PNC).

### **Hubert Critchlow**

Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow was born in Georgetown on the 18 December, 1884. His father, James Nathaniel Critchlow, had emigrated from Barbados and was employed as a wharf foreman by the Booker Group of Companies, while his mother Julia Elizabeth Critchlow, born Daniels, was originally from the Essequibo coast. The young Hubert Critchlow attended the Bedford Wesleyan Primary School but left when he was 13 years old after his father died. He had reached up to Standard 4 (equivalent to Grade 6 in American schools), but he felt that he had to find a job to help maintain his home.

While attending school he had excelled in sports, and he continued to do so as a young man. He soon became a popular sports figure and during the period: 1905-1914 he was the country's middle-distance athletic champion. He was also a good footballer and cricketer.

Soon after Critchlow left school, he worked as an apprentice at the Demerara Foundry, and at the turn of the century he obtained employment as a dock labourer on the waterfront. Due to his active representation of his fellow workers during the 1905 strike in Georgetown, his popularity grew. He continued to champion workers' rights, and was always called upon to represent their case to employers in the years that followed.

During the strikes in 1917, he represented the interest of waterfront workers in collective bargaining, and by then was regarded as the leader of all waterfront

workers. He became even more popular when he helped to secure increase wages for them.

In the 1917-1918 period, Critchlow led a petition for an 8-hour day. He was pressured by the Chamber of Commerce to withdraw his name from the petition, after all the other petitioners were forced to do so, but he obstinately refused. He was immediately fired from his job and blacklisted from obtaining employment, and he had to depend on assistance from close friends for sustenance.

Being unemployed, he devoted all his time to the campaign for the 8-hour work day. In December 1918, he and a small delegation of workers met with the Governor, Sir Wilfred Colet. It was after this meeting that Critchlow developed the idea of forming a trade union, and he immediately began making the arrangements for its formation. The union, the British Guiana Labour Union (BGLU), was eventually established on the 11 January, 1919.

The union experienced numerous problems on its establishment. The employers saw it as a force aimed at fomenting industrial unrest, and issued open threats to workers who were union members. Despite this, membership grew and by the end of its first year, it had more than 7,000 financial members comprising waterfront workers, tradesmen, sea defence and road workers, railroad workers, balata bleeders and miners, some Government employees and hundreds of sugar estate labourers. Branches of the union were also set up in various parts of the country.

Critchlow was employed on a full time basis by the union, and he never stopped being a spokesman for the workers, and publicised their grievances and demanded improved working conditions and better wages for them, but he faced opposition from the more educated members of the union who felt that his limited education should not allow him to have such high responsibilities. These members, who were in the minority, wanted a doctor or a lawyer to lead the union. In January 1920 at a meeting of the union, a motion was introduced requesting Critchlow to hand over all the union's funds to Dr. T. T. Nichols, and two lawyers, J. S. Johnson and McClean Ogle, but the motion was rejected by a huge majority and a vote of confidence in Critchlow was passed.

## **Outcomes of the Protests of the 1930s in the British Caribbean**

The following can be regarded as the most important consequences or outcomes of the disturbances of the 1930s.

- a) Mass political parties were formed, designed in conjunction with trade unions to press for political, social and economic advancement. Examples of these were the People's National Party under Norman Manley in Jamaica and the Barbados Progressive League under Grantley Adams in Barbados.
- b) The labour unrest led to the formation of trade unions to enable concerted action among workers to achieve higher wage and better conditions of work. One must remember that trade unions were not recognised in many territories before 1930. This meant they did not have much power to protect the interest and improve the working conditions of workers. Within five years after the riots, there were 58 registered trade unions with a total membership of 65,000 workers in the West Indies. Some of the many benefits brought about by the formation of trade unions were:

- Sick leave
- Pension schemes
- Minimum wage law
- Workmen's compensation
- Holidays with pay
- Redundancy pay

## **Examples of Trade Unions**

1. British Guiana Labour Union- 21st July, 1922
2. Trinidad Oilfield Workers' Trade Union- 15th September, 1937
3. Jamaica Hotel Employees' Association- 1st December, 1937
4. Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) - 23rd January, 1939
5. Barbados Workers' Union- 4th October, 1941
6. Dominica Trade Union- 31st December, 1945

## **c) The Moyne Commission**

The uprisings of the 1930s were a concern of the colonial office in Britain. This led to another Royal Commission (1938). The Commission headed by Lord Moyne, was responsible for investigating the social and economic conditions in the British colonies. Popularly called the Moyne Commission, it was also to make recommendations.

## **THE MOYNE COMMISSION 1938**

The Moyne Commission was a Royal Commission representing the British Government. The Commission was appointed in August 1938 to investigate social and economic conditions and related matters in the colonies and to make recommendations. Some of its members included Walter Edward, Lord Moyne (Chairman), Sir Walter Citrine, and Frank Engledow. The Commission had a total of 10 members.

The investigation including the compilation of facts took 15 months between August 1938 to November 1939. The investigation was carried out by: oral and written evidence from individuals and groups, on the spot investigations of conditions in housing, agriculture, hospitals, schools, prisons, factories, docks, orphanages, and land settlements.

### **The Findings of the Moyne Commission**

The Commission found that the problems of the West Indies were economic with severe depression in industry, thus expressing itself in widespread unemployment in rural and urban areas, and in weak public finances which made governments unable to take remedial action to improve conditions. Social services were inadequate, education required more and better trained teachers, accommodation and equipment, improvements in health for more sufficient food supplies, balanced and nutritious and the need to prevent rather than cure diseases through housing and sanitation.

### **Social and Economic Recommendations of the Moyne Commission**

#### **Strengthening of Trade Unions**

Trade unions in the British West Indies lacked essential powers. They were not legally recognized and governments and employers were hostile towards them. The Commission recommended peaceful picketing and protection against actions brought for damage, noting that British Guiana was the only territory with such

protection in 1938. It encouraged the recognition of trade unions in both public and private sector and urged trade unions to register. It noted the lack of trade unions for agricultural workers and they needed them most.

The Commission believed that trade unions were ineffective because their leaders were inexperienced. It recommended that labour leaders should be sent to England for training in industrial relations and negotiations. It stressed that labour leaders be democratically elected and responsible to their members. It also recommended that the colonies should set up workmen's compensation schemes for injury suffered at work under certain conditions, holidays with pay and severance pay if a worker lost his job because his employer went out of business. There should be factory inspectors to ensure that workplaces were safe and healthy.

### **Labour Departments**

The Moyne Commission recommended that colonial governments should have labour departments to regulate wages, gather statistics, inspect protective laws, register trade unions, audit accounts and settle disputes. Hence, the Jamaican Labour Department was set up in 1939.

The Moyne Commission suggested minimum wage legislation as an interim measure. If this was unacceptable to a colonial government and the unions were to negotiate satisfactory wages for themselves, then the Commission suggested Wage Boards. These would fix wages industry by industry, even company by company until the trade unions were able to take over their own negotiations.

### **Internal Manufacturing Industries**

The Moyne Commission suggested that the West Indian territories should build up their internal manufacturing industries and use locally grown products wherever possible instead of increasing export crops. The reason given was due to poor overseas markets. It recommended that governments should undertake the milling of cornmeal which could provide factory employment and a larger market for locally grown maize. In addition, they could boost the coconut industry by manufacturing soap, margarine and lard substitutes locally.

### **Farming reforms**

The Moyne Commission criticized the dependence of the territories on imported food. It suggested land settlement schemes that would help to reduce unemployment and raise the standard of living in the rural areas and of the territories as a whole. Small farmers should become efficient in farming and should aim at making the colonies self-sufficient in food and even creating surplus food that would transfer them from net importers to exporters of food. Each territory would have to look to other Caribbean territories for the foods needed.

### **The West Indian Welfare Fund**

The Moyne Commission recommended that a special welfare fund should be set up for the Caribbean region by the British Government. It should provide an annual grant of £1 million for 20 years to improve health, housing, welfare, education, and to start new industries.

In 1940, the British Government passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act which provided funds for the relief of distress and for economic development in British colonies throughout the world.

### **Education**

The Moyne Commission criticized the curricula as being unsuitable for the needs of agricultural communities. It recommended the ending of methods of teaching and syllabi that had been given up in England and called for courses that were more closely related to the life and experience of residents in the West Indies. For example, it recommended basic literacy and numeracy, health and agricultural sciences. It also recommended the great need for more trained teachers in secondary schools and colleges to replace the underpaid pupil teachers.

### **Self-government**

The Moyne Commission recommended a slow movement towards the goals of union leaders that is the people of each territory electing its own assembly by adult suffrage. It further recommended extending the opportunities for people other than the financially influential to stand for election. To do this, it recommended the reduction of the margin between the qualifications for registration as a voter and those for membership of the Legislative Council. This eventually led to the establishment of a Franchise Commission which in 1944 recommended the lowering of qualifications for voting and for membership of the Legislative Council. These qualifications were in the areas of land ownership, value of land owned, property occupation, income, and literacy in any language.

## **The Rise of Political Parties**

### **How They Developed**

The same poor social and economic conditions which led to the formation of trade unions were also responsible for the organization of political parties. West Indians were convinced that it was only through political action that effective measures could be adopted to improve working and living conditions.

Effective political parties did not appear before the 1930 labour protests. However, after the labour protests, dedicated and inspired leaders emerged who had "grass-root" connections and sympathy with the working class aspirations. To a large extent, West Indians had become disillusioned with middle class leadership.

West Indians began to develop a new awareness of their social position and the desire to become fuller members of their society because of the rising spirit of nationalism.

The organization of political parties was supported by the majority of the working class and so this gave political parties an effective base on which to operate. In some areas, trade unions themselves created parties or assumed the character of political parties at election time.

The reintroduction of elected members into West Indian legislatures which resulted in representative and ministerial government as well as the grant of universal adult suffrage helped tremendously to stimulate the organization of political parties.

The freedom to organize and exert pressure for reform, the existence of an institutional framework and political climate in which political parties were able to play meaningful roles led to the rise of political parties.

### **Jamaica**

1921- Jamaica Political Reform Association was formed. It was among the first political organizations.

1929- The People's Political Party led by Marcus Garvey.

1935- Quassi- political parties such as the Elected Members' Association and the Federation of Citizens' Association.

1937- Establishment of a branch of the Jamaican Progressive League founded in New York by Jamaican author: W. Adolphe Roberts.

The main objective of these organizations was to have a greater measure of self-government. The movement of self-government gained great mass support after the labour protests of May 1938 and the emergence of Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley as the champions of the working man's cause.

1938- Founding of the People's National Party with Manley as leader until his retirement in 1969.

Bustamante launched the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union and in 1943 launched his own political party- the Jamaican Labour Party. Other political parties were formed but they were unable to successfully challenge the JLP and the PNP, hence, the establishment of a two-party system.

### **Trinidad**

The oldest political party was established in 1894: Trinidad Working Men's Association by Alfred Richards but was hardly active politically until elected members were introduced into the Legislative Council. The extremely high qualifications for voters retarded the development of political parties. However, in 1936, Uriah Butler founded the British Empire Workers' and Citizens' Home Rule Party otherwise called Butler Party.

In the 1940s, political interest increased immensely due to the introduction of an unofficial majority in the Legislative Council in 1941, the introduction of universal adult suffrage in 1945, and the introduction of an elected majority in 1949. However, it was not until January 1956 when Dr. Eric Williams launched the People's National Movement and won a majority of the elected seats for the legislature in general elections that year, that Trinidad began to experience genuine party politics.

### **Barbados**

The first party can be registered as the Democratic League formed by Dr. Charles Duncan O'Neal in October 1924. It disappeared when O'Neal died in 1936. The 1937 protestsmarked a political awakening of Barbadians and in 1938, the Barbados Progressive League was launched. By the early 1940s, the League was divided into three, two of which were the Barbados Workers' Union and the Barbados Labour Party with Grantley Adams as the Chairman of both.

In May 1955, the newly organized Democratic Labour Party was officially launched by Cameron Tudor and Errol Barrow.

### **The Leeward Islands**

In contrast to Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Guyana, the politics of the Leeward Islands was dominated by single parties. The successful parties were virtually identical with the leading island-wide trade unions from which they derived their support.

#### **Antigua**

The Antigua Labour Party organized by V.C. Bird in 1946 as the Political Committee of the Antigua Trades and Labour Union was victorious in every election for the next 20 years despite challenges from the Antigua and Barbuda Democratic Movement. In February 1971, the ALP was defeated at the general elections by the Progressive Labour Movement.

#### **St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla**

The St. Kitts Workers' League dominated the politics of the group since its formation in 1932 with the support of the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union and more recently under the dynamic leadership of Robert Bradshaw. It was challenged by the People's Progressive Movement (1961) and since 1965 by the People's Action Movement.

#### **Montserrat**

The dominant party was the Montserrat Labour Party formed in 1952. It was the political arm of the Montserrat Trades and Labour Union.

### **The Windward Islands**

The Windward Islands were among the last of the British West Indian colonies to develop meaningful political parties. This was due to the fact that universal suffrage was only introduced in 1951. Before then, political parties were left to trade unions.

#### **St. Lucia**

St. Lucia Labour Party was formed in March 1949, and performed the political activities previously performed by the St. Lucia Workers' Union. In June 1950, the People's Progressive Party was formed. A split in the labour party led to the formation of the National Labour Movement under John Compton.

#### **Grenada**

In 1949, Eric Gairy organized the Grenada Manual and Mental Workers' Union which called labour strikes in 1950 and 1951. The union also contested and won the 1951 general elections despite opposition from Grenada Action Committee. The 1957 elections were contested by four parties: Dr. John Watts Grenada National Party, Eric Gairy's Grenada United Labour Party, the People's Democratic Movement, and the Grenada United Federal Labour Party.

#### **St. Vincent**

Political parties were slow to develop even after the introduction of universal suffrage in 1951. The St. Vincent Working Men's Association engaged in political activities in the 1940s, and in the 1951 elections all the seats were won by the United Workers, Peasants and Rate Payers' Union. After the elections, the island's first

purely political organization were launched: the People's Political Party by Ebenezer Joshua. By 1961, it emerged as the major Vincentian Party and by that time time, the St. Vincent Labour Party emerged under Milton Cato in effort to form an effective opposition.

### **Dominica**

Political organizations which existed before 1951, were middle class oriented, e.g. Dominica Taxpayers' Reform Association founded in 1932 and the People's Progressive Party in 1932 also. The 1951 general elections were contested by labour organizations: the Dominica Trade Union and the Dominican Progressive Workers' Union. In May 1955, Mrs. Phyllis Shand Allfrey, a white middle class woman founded the Dominica Labour Party with working class support and in 1957, a second political party, the People's National Movement was formed by Clifton Dupigny. In People's Party which went on to exercise political control in Dominica.

### **An Outline of the Protests in the Various Territories**

The middle classes and some labour leaders formed organizations to press for political, economic and social change. The majority of the Black and Indian workers chose strikes and demonstrations as their method of protest. The majority did not vote and so could not use constitutional means to win changes. As a result, the streets became their political platform. They believed that this was a faster way to get authorities to attend to their demands for wage increases and a better standard of living.

### **Timeline of Various Protests in the Caribbean**

British Honduras- February 1934

St. Kitts- January 1935

Trinidad- July 1934 and June 1937

St. Vincent- October 1935

St. Lucia- 1935 and August 1937

British Guiana- 1935, June 1938 and 1939

Barbados- March 1937

Jamaica- 1934 and May 1938-1940

### **British Honduras**

The "Unemployed Brigade" organized a march through Belize City in February. The leader of the Labourers and Unemployed Association arrested later in the year when a major riot took place in the city. Afterwards, a strike for higher pay was organized at Stann Creek in the south of the country.

### **St. Kitts**

The sugar estate workers in Basseterre went on strike in January 1935 because they wanted their wages returned to the standard wage rates which were established before the general reduction in agricultural wages in 1932. They had been offered 8 pence instead of the original 11 shillings. The striking workers were joined by workers from other estates. The police, a military British warship and marines were

called out. Several workers were killed, 8 were wounded, 39 were arrested and 6 received jail terms ranging from two to five years.

### **Trinidad**

In 1934, there was a demonstration by unemployed workers in Port of Spain and strikes in the sugar industry. In February 1935, Tubal Uriah Butler, a Grenadian by birth, led about 120 people on a hunger march from the southern oilfields to Port of Spain. By 1937, the oilfield workers' strike spread and the sugar workers and urban workers also joined. These workers had specific grievances such as the rise in the cost of living which was estimated at 17% and the "Red Book System" used to identify workers in the oil industry and which the workers said could be used to victimize them.

In 1937, riots broke out in the oilfields in Trinidad under the leadership of Uriah Butler. The trouble started with a sit-down strike on the property of Trinidad Leasehold Limited, operated by South African capital and where white officials were suspected of colour prejudice. Two oilfields broke out in fire and two police officers were killed. The strike spread from the oilfields to the sugar estates and to the towns of San Fernando and Port of Spain where business places were burnt. The Royal Navy and the Marines were called in after 14 persons had been killed and 59 wounded. The workers' demands were heard and Butler became labour leader.

### **St. Vincent**

The protests in St. Vincent were based on the government's attempt to raise taxes on imported food. This put an additional burden on people who were getting low wages, were unemployed or were already in depressed social conditions. In October 1935, the governor made additional taxation proposals. This caused the working class to protest by interrupting a meeting of the legislature called by the governor. The workers damaged the courthouse, stampeded the prison, released 10 prisoners and ransacked the merchant FA Corea's business. The Riot Act was read and the police were called out. 1 person was killed and several injured. The rebellion spread from Kingston to Georgetown and Chateaubelair. A state of emergency was declared and the British warship was summoned. The rebellion resulted in the formation of the Workingmen's Association which had a radical programme with urgent demands for land settlement and constitutional reform.

### **St. Lucia**

In St. Lucia there was an important trade in supplying ships with coal. At the end of 1935, there had been a non-violent strike among the coal workers. The governor, quickly settled the strike and confidently dismissed the workers' demand for increase pay. In 1937, the agricultural labourers on the sugar plantations went on strike for higher wages. The governor called out the troops again, set up a committee and granted only a slight wage increase and gave a minimum wage order.

### **Barbados**

In 1937, riots in Barbados were centred around Clement Payne (Trinidadian). He told the people that they were being oppressed because of their race and he urged them to organize themselves into unions. Payne kept several meetings in Bridgetown and other parts of the island. The authorities decided to put a stop to these

developments by deporting Payne on the grounds that he had given false information to immigration officers when he entered the island Barbados. Payne had declared that he was a Barbadian. The authorities said he was Trinidadian. The truth is that Payne had been born in Trinidad to Barbadian parents. Grantley Adams appealed against the deportation, which still went ahead.

Riots broke out in Bridgetown and on sugar estates, automobiles were pushed into the sea, stores were ransacked and the police volunteers killed 14 and wounded 47 of the rioters. Grantley Adams emerged as Labour Leader and the Barbados Progressive League was formed. Trade union laws were also passed.

### **British Guiana**

In British Guiana, there were several strikes and demonstrations in 1935 on various sugar plantations mainly by former Indian indentured servants. The main demand was for increased wages. The strikes were spontaneous, widespread and determined. They lasted on and off through September and October. Following the advice of a Commission of Enquiry, the workers formed in 1936 the Manpower and Citizens' Association which became registered as a trade union in 1937. The main leaders were Indians who were in favour of collective bargaining rather than strikes and riots. There were further protests in 1938 and 1938. In the outbreaks of 1938, the union negotiated with management and urged workers to return to work on the assurance that their demands would be met. As a result, they were able to secure wage increases.

### **Jamaica**

Labour unrest in Jamaica began in August 1937 as well, when a demonstration of unemployed workers and ex-servicemen in Kingston was broken up by the police using batons. Then, in May 1938, violence erupted at the Frome Sugar Factory owned by Tate and Lyle, and when strikers attacked the estates officials, the police opened fire killing 4, wounding 9 and arresting 85. The disorder spread to the Kingston Waterfront where a general strike was called. Mobs paraded the streets attacking shops and cars and the police again used force and 8 were killed, 171 wounded and over 700 arrested. The leading labour figure in the Jamaican riots was Alexander Bustamante.

## **CARIBBEAN SOCIETY, 1900-1985**



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in your country, you can examine whether the materials used or the ways, for example the roofs are designed, adhere to this principle.

By the 18th century, wood-shingled houses had become common. The walls of these houses were made with spider-like two-by-four planks pressed against a triangular roof. In the bigger houses, four-poster beds with mosquito nets were the usual furniture, along with mahogany side tables and mahogany rocking chairs with wicker seats. A unique piece of Caribbean furniture was the planter chair, which had a wicker seat, a round back and long arms that swung out so the planter could put up his legs while a servant pulled off his leather boots.

In the 19th century, cast iron was used to make the first kind of pre-fabricated houses, but these generated too much heat for the Caribbean climate. The influence of the colonial can be seen in many of the old buildings, such as St Nicholas's Abbey in Barbados, which has columns with a veranda, curved arches and four chimneys – a style which is totally inappropriate to the Caribbean in terms of scale or comfort. The houses in Barbados owed much to their British heritage, having Gothic lines and an enclosed veranda, but with delicate fretwork and rectangular shutters that were a Caribbean addition.

### Activity 9.2

Find out about the Barbadian chattel house. How were these houses built? What was unique about them? How has this style of architecture influenced houses today?

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