



Distr.
RESTRICTED
AHG/SEM/SSC/84/1
1 November 1984
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Meeting on Social Structural Changes in Dominica
Roseau, Dominica
10-12 December 1984



SOCIAL STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN DOMINICA

Prepared by
The Social Development Unit
of the
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA Office for the Caribbean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER I : THE CARIBS OF WAITUKUBULI	1 - 11
CHAPTER II : THE EARLY SETTLERS	12 - 19
CHAPTER III : OBSTACLES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXTERNALLY ORIENTED ECONOMY	20 - 29
CHAPTER IV : PLANTERS AND MERCHANTS	30 - 40
CHAPTER V : BLACK SETTLERS, MAROONS AND ENSLAVED	41 - 51
CHAPTER VI : INCOMPLETENESS OF THE CLASS STRUCTURE	52 - 65
CHAPTER VII : TOWARDS STAGNATION - NINETEENTH CENTURY ECONOMY	66 - 79
CHAPTER VIII : THE MULATTO ASCENDANCY	80 - 96
CHAPTER IX : THE ECONOMIC RETURNS OF POLITICS	97 -117
CHAPTER X : AN EXPORT-ORIENTED PEASANT ECONOMY	118 -140
CHAPTER XI : PRESENCE AND DECLINE OF THE COUNTER-PLANTATION SYSTEM	141 -183
CHAPTER XII : THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF ROSEAU: ISSUES	184 -207
CHAPTER XIII : CONCLUSION	208 -225
Bibliography	226 -230

THE CARIBS OF

WAITUKUBULI

On the fifth anniversary of Associated Statehood with Britain, 3 November 1972, the Government of Dominica issued an important publication entitled Aspects of Dominican History^{1/}; the foreword by E.O. Le Blanc, Premier of Dominica, begins as follows:

"KNOWLEDGE of a country's past is vital to enable its people to satisfactorily mould the present, and effectively plan the future. (...) At this important stage in our development when we celebrate our National Day, November 3 1973, an occasion which is of special significance to us, marking as it does the Fifth Anniversary of our attainment of internal self-government; an occasion when we should review our past performance and chart our future objectives, it is important that we are aware of our history".

On 3 November 1493, - nearly 500 years ago, history also records the discovery by the original inhabitants of the island of European people on their shores.

In the same publication, Douglas Taylor assessed the situation of the Caribs in no uncertain terms:

"They were an energetic race then and powerful (...) but today the few remaining Carib Indians are a doomed people, soon to add the bones of their culture to the fast mounting heap left in the wake of civilisation".^{2/}

"Unfortunately, no one in the island takes the slightest interest in these, the last of the first found American people."^{3/}

^{1/} Aspects of Dominican History, Government Printing Division, Dominica W.I. 1972.

^{2/} Douglas Taylor, "Columbus Saw them First", Aspects of Dominican History, p.1.

^{3/} Douglas Taylor, "The Island Caribs of Dominica, B.W.I.", Aspects of Dominican History, p. 66.

These quotations are included in these introductory lines to emphasize that the survival as a distinct ethnic minority of the most heroic Carib community bears testimony to a solution of continuity which has not been bridged during nearly five centuries of actual contact and intercourse. They illustrate how Dominica and the Dominicans participate in, and seem, in the same process, able to shield themselves from relationships with the outer world. The 3 November is an ambivalent landmark: a day of mourning, for it recalls a genocide; and a day for commemorating a glorious achievement of the society.

The history of the Dominican Caribs preludes the history of the island's peasantry, which will be referred to at a later stage. Both histories originate within a regional frame of reference and end up in quasi self-centred village communities with contacts beyond the horizon with the Orinoco and other remote places, but limited interchange with immediate neighbours. They therefore exemplify the dislocation and rearrangement of the geographical space, by artificially scattering human groups and organizing them in a balkanised milieu which remains uncontrollable from their standpoint.

The reading of Dominica's history indicates that there exist in the country levels of social relations, which evolve concomitantly, influence each other, and yet remain separated by a world of meanings. Social togetherness is built of interlocked practices, corresponding to different rationales. In spite of their simultaneity within a uniform island-state (colonial or otherwise) and in spite of their reciprocal influence, not all of these practices are consistent with a nation-building process and the emergence of a cohesive national ethos. The Dominicans of today appear as the net result of these inward and outward oriented social negotiations, the numerical significance of the Caribs indicating the unquestionable prevalence of outward oriented trends.

It is recorded that the population of Waitukubuli - as Dominica was originally known - prevented any settlement of the Europeans for nearly two centuries^{4/}. Three basic processes are implied in this observation: reference to the insertion of the island society into a regional frame of relations, to its

^{4/} L. Honychurch, The Dominica Story, Letchworth Press Ltd., Barbados, 1975, p.16.

performance at international level and to the articulation of a self-centred social organization.

Dealings of the Carib society with the Spaniards and other Europeans showed clearly its potential for concerted regional action. The importance of the Dominican leadership (or of the leadership located in Dominica) grew proportionately as the Spanish empire widened. The indomitable population became for the invaders an unbearable nuisance. In 1519, the island was included in the bishopric of Puerto Rico; the inhabitants had presumably to provide tithes. An all out war was declared against the Caribs, and an expedition organized to free "island like Dominica for Spanish settlement". The would-be governor of Dominica was "soundly beaten" by the Caribs in 1525^{5/}.

At the beginning, from 1514, with Pedro de Avila, 1525 with Antonio Serrano and throughout the sixteenth century, sailors and colonial authorities would harass their superiors, requesting resources to exterminate the population. The Caribs in turn would even attack vessels in mid-ocean, so much so that

"An order (was) issued granting all Spaniards permission to wage war upon, enslave and sell duty-free, the Caribs inhabiting the eastern islands from Dominican to Trinidad".^{6/}

The extermination of the Caribs became more urgent to the Spaniards, as colonisation was progressing in Central and South America.

By the 1530's, the fleet from Spain to Central and South America would call at Dominica for water and wood. From 1543 onwards, a convoy system was established to deter enemy attacks, and the island was chosen as the necessary stop on west bound voyages. There, boats going to Mexico (New Spain) would separate from those heading towards South America^{7/}.

^{5/} J. Boromé, "Spain and Dominica 1493-1647", Aspects ..., p.69.

^{6/} Ibid., p. 17.

^{7/} Ibid., p. 69.

The importance of Dominica for European navigation brought the territory into the centre of European rivalries.

"The course Columbus had taken from Spain on his second voyage (September-November 1493) was so good that it was used by sailors until steam replaced sail in the middle of the nineteenth century".^{8/}

On a Caribbean self-centred frame of reference was then superimposed a competing role in the international world, located beyond the understanding and thereby out of the control of the inhabitants.

The Caribs could not possibly be victorious in their resistance to foreign settlement. They were opposing each European state individually, and all of them together. The international and world-wide organization which was evolving was uncompromisingly repugnant to a self-centred regional organization based on the principles and norms of the local society or societies. Inversely the Caribs were as equally repulsive to any European presence. Having lost their battle, they became known as savages. As rivalries among European countries increased, the situation of the Caribs became more precarious.

"In 1562, the still greatly harassed residents of Puerto Rico successfully petitioned their cabildo (or Town Council) for a declaration of war on the Caribs of Dominica and other isles".^{9/}

Submission made in 1571 revealed both the strategic importance of the island and the excellence of the resistance organized regionally and locally, by its inhabitants. It was proposed at that date to subdue the

"Indians, to bring settlers and to station permanently four boats of fifty tons and two of twenty to protect Spanish shipping and forestall 'lutherans' from colonising".^{10/}

The Caribs had to face confrontation on two fronts, the aggressiveness of the 'lutherans' and the fervour of the 'catholics'; both 'lutherans' and 'catholics' were longing for total genocide.

^{8/} L. Honychurch, *op. cit.*, p.16.

^{9/} J. Boromé, *op. cit.*, p.72.

^{10/} *Ibid.*, p.73.

While Spain, which had already dislodged the Arawaks from the larger islands of the region, could use Carib territories as calling points, other invaders started to settle the small islands one after the other. During the 1620's, St. Kitts and Nevis had fallen; by the next decade, Antigua, Montserrat, Guadeloupe and Martinique were occupied. Dominica - the "natural fortress", the "springboard for Carib attacks" - was besieged and converted along with St. Vincent into a last refuge.

These developments cast some light on the sophistication of the Caribs' way of living. First of all, it becomes clear that their adamant resistance to the Spaniards fit into an expanding regional organization of Carib space. The two hundred year long war was supported by a set of relations between all Caribs living in what the European-centered toponymy christened Leeward and Windward Islands. Institutions and instruments of this regional political organization, gravitating around Dominica, are not known. Most accounts are limited to community and island-wide systems, which, from available evidence, were secondary in the new dynamics of change resulting from the sudden and unwanted arrival of Europeans. Carib villages should be conceived as "cells" within island societies which appear in turn as "provinces" of a larger whole encompassing the "Eastern islands".

This became obvious as soon as there were sufficient European resources for seriously considering the colonisation of Carib territories. Joseph Boromé points out that France "planted her flag in Dominica" (1635) and made a treaty with the Indians (1645). The same author reports that during the time of Spain's predominance in the region, the Caribs of Dominica were divided into two groups, each one occupying what the Europeans called the Windward or Leeward side. He further adds that "each (group) was ruled by a chief sometimes from the same family, who enjoyed largely advisory powers".^{11/} As time went by, the Windward Caribs established a separate alliance with French representatives, while the Leeward ones linked themselves with the British.

"Landing in Dominica in October (1697) (Colonel Tobias Frere from Barbados) took the precaution of concluding a treaty with some Basseterre Indians. (...) The Capesterre Caribs, loyal to France, were miffed at not having been consulted by their Basseterre countrymen before the treaty had been signed".^{12/}

^{11/} Ibid., p.68.

^{12/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects p.80.

It would appear therefore, that villages on the island were articulated into two "federations" and both federations were supposed to have a common or at least a concerted "foreign policy". Moreover, in 1660, a treaty with the Caribs was signed by the English and the French, promising that Dominica and St. Vincent would not be settled by either country. Even though it took only three years for France and Great Britain to break their word^{13/} the very existence of the treaty reveals a united Caribs front, a confederation of Carib territories.

It also becomes clear that Spain in the previous century was not facing a group of disorderly savages nor was Louis XIV referring to disaggregated villages inhabited by primitives as they claimed. For the Caribs to fight from Puerto Rico to St. Lucia, regional military actions had to be organized. Weapons and means of transportation had to be provided; soldiers recruited and distributed in battle formation. A certain division of labour and specialisation of tasks must have existed, backed by a body of knowledge and military technology complex enough to challenge the European powers during two centuries. And above all, an awareness of Carib identity was necessary to ensure cohesion among what was in fact one Carib nation.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, the expanding self-reliant organization of Carib space became progressively circumscribed in two single territories - Dominica and St. Vincent. The following question put to a missionary, Phillipe de Beaumont, by a Carib around 1655, further testifies to the local concept of a "national territory":

"What is to become of the poor Carib, must he go and live in the sea with the fish?"^{14/}.

At no point in time was Dominica/Waitukubuli an isolated Rousseauian paradise. Moreover, conflict and alliance, consensus and cohesion bound the whole Carib nation in one single political formation. A set of incomprehensible international relations, centred around European needs and projects, forced the people to retreat to Dominica. But even during this process of retreat, a series of important social and political alternatives were selected to ensure the survival of the nation.

^{13/} Ibid., p.80

^{14/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.21

First of all, in the seventeenth century many of the Caribs were enslaved in the emerging plantation system, and one of the products of the intercourse so established was the son of the English Governor of St. Kitts, the Indian Warner, who later became a Carib Chief and was in the employ of the British as Deputy Governor of Dominica. Secondly, since the process of setting up the Eastern Caribbean plantation economy had a peculiar dynamism of concentration of wealth in a few hands, the dispossessed of the new system would follow the Carib path and seek refuge in Dominica. The King of France, Louis XIV informed that:

"The Caribs (...) (would) harbour among them runaway slaves that are too lazy to work and thus ruin the King's subjects".^{15/}

Finally, a number of desperate Europeans, unable to find their way in the plantation islands, would gradually infiltrate Dominica, initiating various undertakings, servicing the plantation economies. Louis XIV opposed these initiatives in 1680,

"lest it incite the remaining Caribs to continuous war or voluntary exile in St. Vincent where they could unite with the already distressingly large body of Indians and maroon Negroes to prey on French Commerce"^{16/} .

Together with the first Europeans came their priests, who were quite instrumental in stimulating the 1660 treaty assuring the Caribs that Dominica and St. Vincent would remain uncolonised^{17/} . Not much resulted from these commendable efforts, but they do indicate the basic issue facing the Carib and an alternative of development which was discarded by the Europeans. Under much pressure deriving from the implementation of French and British policies, Dominican Caribs were enticed to side with one or the other. It was becoming increasingly difficult for them to repel the European forces or to deal en bloc with the internationalization of the archipelago. New alliances emerged, the most remarkable one being their joint venture with the British against St. Lucia in 1664. The Caribs however, maintained their independent military power and those of Dominica raided Antigua in 1674, and Antigua and Montserrat in 1676.

^{15/} Ibid., p.23.

^{16/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects ... p.82.

^{17/} L. Honychurch op. cit., p.21.

As customary, violent reactions from the Europeans were blamed on the Caribs who seemed unable to understand their manifest destiny! In 1683, the King of England acknowledged "the necessity of destroying those Caribbe Indians" and authorized one Stapleton to undertake his "Indian hunting". Damage in Dominica was limited but her ally St. Vincent suffered heavily. Three years later, French and English officials signed a treaty whereby the island was recognized as neutral. L. Honychurch noted, however, that that neutrality should be interpreted as Dominica becoming a "no-man's land of battle".^{18/}

Even though Father Labat noted that in 1700, the Caribs were still in control of Dominica, at that point in time they had realised that their fate was sealed. A mass suicide took place in the cave now known as "la caverne des indiens". In 1647, the number of Caribs was estimated at 5,000 and at the end of the century there were only 2,000 in 1713, they were thought to be 500 and in 1730 there seemed to be only 400.

Taking into account the geographical characteristics of the country, the successful fight put up by the maroons against much more organized military forces at the end of the eighteenth century, and also the small number of European population before the 1750's, one cannot explain satisfactorily this abrupt decline in the total Carib population. Two or even five thousand people should have found a way to accommodate themselves in the interior, unless they did not wish to survive side by side with the newcomers. Migration of the Caribs to the Orinoco region, referred to by L. Honychurch, is not unrelated to the repugnance of the original islanders to entertain intercourse with the conquistadores. Another possible explanation proposed by the same historian is the incidence of new diseases brought to the islands by the Europeans.

In any event, during the first half of the eighteenth century, the territory was virtually emptied of its indigenous occupants. Yet the remaining Caribs were still fighting. It is reported by the same L. Honychurch, that in 1722, the arrival of more and more Frenchmen caused the Caribs to panic and forced them to quit Dominica. A few years later, when there were supposedly only a few Caribs left, the head of the settlers, Le Grand, discovered a plot

^{18/} Ibid., p.24.

orchestrated by an alliance of Dominican and Vincentian Caribs^{19/}. Finally, mention is made of an alliance and maroons in 1785^{20/}.

A review of the history of the Caribs up to the eighteenth century reveals, that from their initial contacts with the European colonial powers, the island and its population were given a place in the midst of the network of international relations geared towards extraregional needs. In response, there was or there emerged a self-reliant regional organization. The ensuing struggle, during which the Caribs were defeated, cannot be adequately reported upon in an island by island account.

The struggle between the Caribs and the outsiders did not, and in fact could not result in the modification of the regional system by the international one. There were no alternatives and no durable compromises. These struggles were indeed a battle of nations, and attempts by the Europeans to co-opt one or the other Carib group, or efforts by the Caribs to seek alliance with one or the other European powers ended up invariably in the same cul-de-sac: extermination of the defeated, antagonism being nurtured by the mutual repulsion of the contending communities, by the incompatibility of their respective laws of development.

The present historiography does not deal with the Carib nation as a whole and the nature and characteristics of their two hundred year old region-wide political organization is not yet unearthed. The case of the Dominican Caribs illustrates the strength with which a regional outlook can be rooted locally, as well as the degree of antagonism that can exist between regional interests so articulated and world-wide interferences in this microcosm.

It is safe to say that by the eighteenth century, the Caribs had been eliminated from the making of the official history of the island. No reference to them has been found for the nineteenth century. Some limited information is available for the

^{19/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica" Aspects ... p.82.

^{20/} Government of Dominica, Dies Dominica, Public Relations Division, Dominica 1972, p.11.

twentieth century and will be summarised at the conclusion of this chapter.

At the end of the eighteenth century, approximately 232 acres of land were set aside as a Reserve at Salybia and given by the administration's surveyors to the Caribs^{21/}. This area was "increased at the expense of the Crown domain" and the Reserve enlarged to about 3,700 acres^{22/}.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Carib population presumably amounted to some 400 souls, sufficiently distinct from the rest of the Dominicans and organised according to a separate of norms and principles. Even though it was never defined legally who was a Carib and had access to the Reserve, no conflict emerged on this ground.

When in 1930 the local police raided the Reserve in search of some presumed smugglers, the population interfered and prevented their arrest. In the riot which ensued, the policemen were duly beaten, four Caribs were wounded with gunshots, two of them dying subsequently. A Royal Frigate was called on the scene and made a demonstration of force, prompting the Caribs to withdraw to the interior of the island for a while. The Commission of Enquiry into these disturbances exonerated the police force and decided to degrade the Carib chief. Such decisions were disregarded by the Carib population who refused the substitute to their traditional chief proposed by the Government^{23/}.

A rather recent study by Nancy Owen informed that the Caribs, numbering in 1975 some 1,500, i.e. 2% of the island's population continue to stress their ethnic identity, even though their isolation has been greatly reduced^{24/}. The author believes that they are "culturally more similar (to their non-Carib neighbours) than to their aboriginal forbears". They have lost their physical distinctiveness, and behave according to norms and values not much different to the "rural lower class afro-dominicans". Their religion - Roman Catholicism - their language, their dwellings, and agricultural enterprises are alike. It is further suggested that the reason they continue to stress their distinctiveness, is due to economic, social and political advantages, deriving from the exclusive collective ownership of the Reserve's land.

21/ L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.90.

22/ Conditions in the Carib Reserve and the Disturbances of 19 September 1930, Dominica, Report of a Commission, July 1931. H.H.'s Stationery Office 1932, p.7.

23/ Douglas Taylor, "The Island Caribs of Dominica". Aspects ... p.61.

24/ Nancy Owen, "Land, Politics and Ethnicity in a Carib Indian Community" Ethnology Vol. 14, No. 4 London 1975, p.p. 385-393.

It appears nonetheless, that certain "anomalies" still persist; a Carib woman from the Reserve married to a non-Carib loses her rights and privileges, while a male remains free to marry non-Carib women, she and her offspring being entitled to reside on the Reserve. This procedure is not totally inconsistent with the accounts on the traditional marriage relations ^{25/}.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the Dominican Government has connected the Reserve with the limited network of highways, built two primary schools to service the population, and taken steps to upgrade the health conditions.

Nonetheless, Owen concludes:

"Despite improvement in their circumstances, the Caribs are far from being assimilated into the Dominican society. (...) They are still regarded as a distinct group by other Dominicans. (...) Most Afro-Dominicans have little regard for the Indians whom they view as very shy, secretive people prone to drunkenness and capable of outbursts of violence. (...) In short, the Caribs still occupy a low place within Dominican society, however, they still continue to possess advantages which other rural peasant farmers lack" ^{26/}.

^{25/} Douglas Taylor, "Kinship and Social Structure of the Island Carib", Aspects ... p.p. 18-43.

^{26/} Nancy Owen, op. cit., p.391.

II

THE EARLY SETTLERS

Among the underprivileged and exploited people running away from the plantation islands, special mention has to be made of the Africans. It has already been pointed out that Dominica offered a safe harbour to enslaved people who extricated themselves from bondage.

"Even before the European occupation of the island, Negro slaves had escaped to Dominica or been captured by the Caribs from settlements on other islands. When the French arrived, there were already a few Maroons living in Carib villages or in their own settlements in the forest" 27/.

There are not much data on social organization of these first blacks who settled in Dominica previous to the occupation of the island by the Europeans. Honychurch records that many early French settlers had to request the authorization from Carib chiefs to establish themselves. One may infer that this was also necessary for the Blacks, escaping the plantation societies with not much resources. It would follow that these early "maroons" had to learn a lot from the Caribs to adapt many of the local techniques to their own way of living. Their settlements should have been similar to the Carib villages, at least in their external aspects. The same historian notes that:

"In the safety of the mountains (the Maroons) built huts, planted gardens and even raised small livestock such as chickens" 28/.

It is also interesting to emphasize that by mid-century, it was found necessary to forbid the purchasing of boats constructed by "runaways" on pain of confiscation^{29/}. It would seem therefore that some interchange was developing between the independent Blacks and the European settlers, and moreover, that these Blacks did not confine themselves to the "safety of the mountains".

27/ Honychurch, op. cit., p.53.

28/ Ibid., p.53.

29/ J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763" Aspects ... p.86.

The relationship between the independent Blacks and the white community deserves some reconsideration and will most certainly provoke new historical research or new interpretations. Normally, the word "settler" is reserved for the Europeans, while independent Blacks are conceived as "runaways". Not all Europeans who embarked in the American adventure were noble conquistadores, high officials in some king's navy or rich planters. Europe was plagued by national and international conflicts, and the greater visibility of the latter should not obscure the relevance of the former. The fabric of what was to become Dominican society is not understandable without this data.

The seizure of the Eastern Caribbean brought the Caribs in contact with a multitude of European "runaways" to whom the opportunities offered within the plantation islands - even though attractive when compared to what they experienced in their mother countries - were far from glamorous. The new social structures which emerged around the plantations generated their own series of inequalities, affecting indentured and poor whites, freed coloured people as well as enslaved Africans.

"These early (European) settlers (basically wood-cutters) were a rough hardy group and little organised rule or justice prevailed. (...) It was a society in which only the toughest survived. Their houses were of roughly sawn timber with thatched roofs of roseaux and palm branches and one or two rooms. Settlements were strung along the coast in the isolated bays and flat coastal areas (...)"^{30/}.

All sorts of outcasts drifted to the island of their own volition.

Some of these pioneers "were rather a bad sort", and the achievement of peaceful intercourse among these "grass root entrepreneurs" was a real performance.

Reference is made by J. Boromé of a "somewhat Hobbesian atmosphere of bellum omnium contra omnes"^{31/}, and it is known that up to 1749 the French Governor of Martinique was inviting buccaneers to become cultivators^{32/}.

^{30/} Honychurch, op. cit., p.25.

^{31/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects ... p.82.

^{32/} Ibid., p.85.

The colonization of Dominica was not sponsored overtly. It was carried out by private individuals their sole resource being their audacity and ingenuity. It "had not cost France one sou"^{33/}. Besides the prohibitions or at least the indifference of the administrative authorities, the pioneers had to face the opposition of the planters of Barbados and Martinique, trying to prevent any diversion of metropolitan resources earmarked for assistance to the plantation islands. They had to negotiate some acceptable modus vivendi among themselves, to cajole the Caribs, and defend themselves against the pretence of the French, if they were British, or of the British if they were French. In fact at some point in time, they seemed more inclined to deal with pirates than to search for official sponsorship^{34/}.

Any possible difference between African and European settlements up to 1740 approximately, derived basically from the need faced by the Blacks, to maintain themselves at a safe distance from the neighbouring plantation systems and their authorities, inasmuch as they were black. Individual whites might have had problems with "forces of order", but the activities of the white settlers, as a community, were complementary to the plantation economy and welcome. Activities of the black community were by definition a challenge to enslavement and tended to be more inward oriented. Besides this fundamental point, Whites and independent Blacks during the first half of the eighteenth century should be considered both either as settlers or as runaways in their self-motivated efforts to inhabit Dominica.

"Most of the small farmers in Dominica before 1740 did not need and could not afford many extra labourers. Their holdings were worked by family and friends paid in kind. Apart from limited supplies of coffee, cotton, cocoa and tobacco, their main cash crop was ground provisions for feeding slaves in the larger French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. These islands also provided Dominica with a trade in timber needed for building ships, carts, gun carriages, mills, houses"^{35/}.

^{33/} Ibid.

^{34/} Ibid.

^{35/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.26.

It is important for the understanding of the basis of social intercourse in the island to bear in mind that Whites and Blacks had to rely on their own inventiveness to survive, originating a set of social relations between the two communities and with the Caribs, on which at a later date would be superimposed attempts to establish a plantation system.

During this period, France's patronage - via Martinique - was extremely discreet, and based on the idea that even though the King did not own the territory, the people living there were still his subjects. They elected a settler - who incidentally was living on a plot of land granted to him by a Carib Chief - and who in turn was recognised as Commander by the Martinican authorities (1728)^{36/}. In 1730 there were not yet any European settlements. A missionary who visited the island at that date reported having "found 500 persons living scattered, isolated - everyone in his woods, no village (...) "^{37/}.

From 1735 onwards, the Governor of Martinique appointed two successive representatives and established an embryo of administrative, judicial and military system. "Obedience (to the new Commander) was won through strict order"^{38/}.

"To encourage the development of plantations by reassuring security of persons and property, (the Governor of Martinique, 1749) organised the militia companies (...) dividing the island into eight districts and assigning to each, for the most part, a captain, a lieutenant and a sub-lieutenant"^{39/}.

From that point in time, more resourceful settlers took residence in the island, among them the Jesuits who organised a rather large and complex estate at Grand Bay. From 1730 to 1743 the total population under French control multiplied fourfold, and from 1743 to 1763 it increased from 3,030 to 7,890 inhabitants^{40/}.

The number of enslaved Blacks, living in these settlements, kept increasing as one approached the second half of the century. "Free negroes" in this context were very few and this is quite understandable, if they could just walk out and set up their own villages. The number of enslaved increased from 425 in 1730 to 5,872 in 1763, while the number of free Negroes augmented from 30 to 300 during the same period. Compared to the number of Whites in these settlements by 1730, there was

^{36/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects ... p.82.

^{37/} Cecil Goodridge, "Dominica - The French Connexion", Aspects ... p.153.

^{38/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.28.

^{39/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects ... p.85.

^{40/} Ibid., p.84

nearly one enslaved per white, and three per white in 1763. If one remembers that some white planters, the Jesuits for instance, had up to 194 enslaved in 1763, the ratio of three enslaved per white is inflated and remains highly indicative of the type of agricultural and forestal exploitation existing during the period.

J. Boromé records around 1750, several trends prejudicial to the establishment of a plantation society. People were encouraging the enslaved to flee to the mountains, in order to force their masters to sell those remaining at cheaper prices. It was found necessary to forbid the selling of absconded enslaved and to discourage manumission^{41/}. Honychurch mentions also that since there was much extra land available in Dominica, the enslaved would make their own provision grounds to cultivate small crops and raise some domestic animals^{42/}.

Provision grounds were found mainly on the largest estates in the Caribbean, since small planters did not have enough land (nor their enslaved enough time) to take advantage of such facilities. A small planter would normally prefer to buy the food requirements for his enslaved on the market, while using his productive capacity to the fullest extent possible. The 5,000 residents counted in 1754 - two-thirds of them being enslaved - were living on the periphery of the island on plots varying between four and twenty carrés (one carré was roughly equivalent to three and one-fifth English acres)^{43/}. Hence the multiplication of provision grounds in Dominica and the development of Sunday markets furnished by the "negroes from the plantations"^{44/}, gave a further idea of an arrangement between enslaved and masters which differed from the normal plantation societies.

Another distinctive feature of the pre-1760 society is the fact that most enslaved seemed to have been West Indian born. If they were African born, no socialisation process could have ensured their participation in a plantation system, however modified, without the extensive use of brute force. The early Dominican society was not exempt from such use. In 1735, the militia had three hundred men, and in 1744, five hundred of them^{45/}.

^{41/} Ibid., p.86.

^{42/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.27.

^{43/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects ... p.97.

^{44/} T. Atwood, The History of the Island of Dominica, West Indian Studies No. 27, F. Cass, London 1871 pp. 179-180.

^{45/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects ... p.85.

One can safely assume, however, that the rules of the (plantation) game were known by enslaved and slave owners, and negotiations to secure a workable arrangement in a new context could be carried out. This common understanding would also be at variance with normal behaviour in plantation islands, where lenient masters would experience more loss of labour due to marronage, than the savage and brutal ones^{46/}. In Dominica, there is definite evidence to the contrary. Atwood noted an increase in the number of "runaways" due to the "impolitic" behaviour of incoming English settlers and wrote with reference to the selling of the Jesuit estates to these planters:

"Many of the negroes so purchased from the Jesuits, either from their attachments to them, or dislike of their new masters, soon after betook themselves to the woods with their wives and children, where they were joined from time to time by others from different estates"^{47/}.

It would appear therefore, if the enslaved could, in probably the most advanced plantation of the mid-eighteenth century Dominica, organise some form of family life, with no need to maintain a guerrilla war - as was the only avenue open to family life in other Caribbean islands - that marronage was not called for before 1763. In fact, when the British took over, the enslaved totalled 5,872, of whom 2,113 i.e. more than a third were children^{48/}. There does not seem to have existed an actual state of war between independent black settlements and European ones. Black settlements became "maroon societies" after the passage from French to British occupation in 1763, when the ensuing guerrilla war developed, particularly against the British plantations. Meanwhile, rapport between enslaved and masters looked less inhumane than in other Caribbean islands.

"Dominica's economy was also responsible for the closer relationship between slave and master, whites and coloured. This island with its small estates of mixed crops, differed greatly from the vast thousand acre estates in Barbados, Jamaica or Martinique. (...) It was after the 1760's during the expansion of British estates that slavery in Dominica developed rapidly in line with other sugar islands"^{49/}.

^{46/} J. Fonchard, Les Marrons de la Liberté, L'Ecole, Paris 1972, p.157.

^{47/} T. Atwood, op. cit., pp. 226-227.

^{48/} J. Boromé, "The French in Dominica, 1699-1763" Aspects ... p.94.

^{49/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

The previous developments were unrelated to any particular characteristics of the individuals carrying out these social practices. They derived from the structural arrangements in which these individuals evolved. This is clearly stated by the historian J. Boromé:

"The development of Dominica and the other neutral isles would have gone along more rapidly, if inhabitants of the French islands had not heard the word 'evacuation' ringing in their ears for over forty years. The more daring souls who, undeterred by risky land tenure, took up residence on the neutral isles, lived in the hope of the Governor-Generals at Martinique and the Ministers in France could avoid the dread contingency and eventually set the isles on a firm colonial basis. They were doomed to disappointment"^{50/}.

Technically, Dominica belonged to the Caribs up to 1763 when at the Treaty of Paris, British occupancy was acknowledged by France. The set of economic relations, consistent with colonial development and particularly with plantation colonies, derives from clear political patronage allowing a limited number of investors to impose an order to suit their own interests. During the first half of the century, Paris and London had been issuing constant instructions to carry out mutual evacuation of Dominica. France would excel in using delaying tactics, but she would all in all find it impossible to establish the political structures of colonial oppression^{51/}.

Public order in Dominica would be negotiated among the European settlers, who would also welcome direct instructions from Martinique since these ensured the supply of arms and ammunitions. But with an increase in British pressure, the would-be planters would sometimes learn that "they were not under the King's protection"^{52/}, while as soon as the pressure diminished, their demands would receive attention. Moreover, during the Seven Years' War, they would have to withdraw to the woods with most of their belongings, invading thus the territory of the so-called maroons - or to abide by the demands of the British by reverting to an election of their own leader, assisted by a Council of Notables and a judicial system, independent of that of Martinique^{53/}.

In this context, therefore, independently of their individual preferences, either because the bulk of the white population was "rather of a bad sort", or because the French could not always challenge the British, or because the British

^{50/} J. Boromé, "The French in Dominica, 1699-1763" Aspects ... p.88.

^{51/} Ibid., pp. 88-94.

^{52/} Ibid., p.90.

^{53/} Ibid., p.92.

requested it as a guarantee of neutrality, social order had to be based on an internal consensus, not necessarily codified in texts of law, which had to be consistent with colonial and metropolitan ones. Up to 1763, external sponsorship was too weak or too fickle to allow anything durable which was not grounded on self-reliance.

A few years before official cession to Britain, the economic panorama is described as follows:

"There was no expansion of land cultivation because of the uncertainty of tenure that caused so many to anxiously await the outcome of peace talks in Europe. Still, owners dutifully tendered their 6,069 acres of cleared land up some mountain slopes and in patches here and there around the coast, notably at Roseau, Loubière and Grande Baye. By 1763 they were producing 1,690,360 pounds of coffee, 271,650 of cacao, 17,400 of cotton and 9,973 barrels of manioc. The population numbered 1,718 whites, 500 free Negroes, 5,872 slaves of which 3,145 were working adults and 2,113 children, and 50-60 Carib families"^{54/}.

^{54/} Ibid., p.94. The population data referred to what has been called in the text European and Carib settlements. Allusion to the Independent Blacks are scanty. In any case, it is doubtful that the number of "Free Negroes" included more than the emancipated living in the European settlements.

III

OBSTACLES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN
EXTERNALLY ORIENTED ECONOMY

The incorporation of Dominica into the British Empire in 1763 resulted in a reorientation of political, economic and social activity on the island. The Crown became the sole owner of the island's assets which were basically the land and its location. An observation of the use made of these newly acquired resources assists in understanding the colonial history of the country, and particularly its political and social fabric, which will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

The vanquished Caribs were totally dispossessed. Their legal status with respect to the land during the second part of the eighteenth century is not clear. The fact is that at the end of the century, a Reserve was created, and at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was enlarged "at the expense of the Crown domain". One would expect that the concept of land appropriation operating among the Caribs would differ from the Western idea of ownership rights. In spite of the possible implication of this difference for the exploitation of the soil, the colonizers were far from being concerned by the issue.

No indication is found as to the relationships between the Black population and the land they occupied prior to 1763. On the arrival of the British the Blacks might have been considered squatters or "Frenchmen"; but reports of armed conflicts with the authorities suggest that they were seen as potentially enslaved or so-called runaways or maroons.

The situation of the Caribs also obtained for the French settlers, who by virtue (or maybe by misfortune) of not being British, lost their ownership rights and became tenants or lessees.

In fact, the very Western idea of ownership rights was encroached upon and subordinated to "higher principles". In this connection, the seizure of Dominica differed in every economic aspect that mattered from what obtained in St. Lucia, a few decades later. St. Lucia was conceived as a conquered or ceded territory and supposed to be ruled by local laws. It would appear that Dominica was viewed as belonging to nobody before the British capture. The Crown therefore had a free hand in organizing the country. The most striking

indication of its concept of Dominica's economic future may be seen in its policy to limit plantation acreages on the initial sale of lands to lots of less than one hundred acres, when readily cultivable, or less than three hundred when in woods and in need of being cleared before exploitation^{55/}. These acreages were small in comparison to the 1,000-acre estates in the other islands. The net result of this policy was obviously to limit the viability of plantation development, rendering impossible economies of scale to be gained by the exploitation of large estates. In other words, the Crown had no intention of making of Dominica an important producer of any colonial staple.

This policy orientation was not at variance with the propensity of the British subjects to settle in Dominica. There was an apparent lack of interest on the part of the investors because of the fragility of the defence of the island, especially as it was situated between two French territories. An indication of this disinterest was reflected in the slow rate of land sales. Between 1764 and 1767, a total of 11,217 acres were sold. "This amount was exceeded by the sales in Tobago for that year (1767) alone^{56/}." Land sales, however, increased in 1768, the highest sales being recorded in 1771^{57/}. It will be seen, in the next chapter, that the owners were not necessarily settlers.

LAND SALES

1768	-	12,000 acres, almost double that of the previous year
1770	-	14,472 acres
1771	-	20,401 acres
1772	-	16,518 ¹ / ₂ acres
1773	-	5,144 ¹ / ₂ acres, the year in which all arable land had been disposed of ^{58/} .

The initiation of sugar production was of major importance after 1763. Even though the annexation of the island came late in the sugar era, attempts were still

^{55/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.34.

^{56/} B. Marshall, Society and Economy in the British Windward Islands, 1763-1823, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica 1972, p.24.

^{57/} This came as a result of the recommendation for a separate governor for Dominica, with full control over defence. The first British settlers had petitioned for this administrative change.

^{58/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.31.

made by British interests to utilise its virgin soils to boost British West Indian sugar production. The effect was to disrupt the diversified nature of agricultural production which had evolved during the previous six decades, in spite of the insecurity of tenure in a neutral island. It is worth noting that this diversity did not include sugar. Although the small planters may have been interested, "the authorities in Martinique long frowned on the idea"^{59/}. The interests of the sugar planters in the other French islands prevailed to prevent such competition arising in Dominica, especially as a surveyor's report stated that "it contained more cultivable land than Martinique"^{60/}. On the other hand, the uncertainty of the title of the island (i.e. French or British) prior to 1763 prevented the inhabitants or other interested persons from investing the considerable sums necessary to initiate sugar plantations.

For a very short period the British planters successfully undertook sugar cultivation in the river valleys along the windward coast. Within a decade (1763-1773), sugar reportedly topped export lists, exceeding the sale of cocoa and coffee^{61/}. In spite of this success, the growing of sugar cane never monopolised agricultural land since many planters cultivated both coffee and sugar cane.

In fact after about a decade of increased economic activity following the cession of the island to Britain, there was an economic decline. Sugar and agricultural exports in general showed a downward trend after 1778 as numerous obstacles emerged in the last twenty years of the century. Sugar production decreased during the period of the French occupation, 1778-1784, because British settlers reportedly abandoned their plantations. Atwood attributes this abandonment to the too ambitious attempts of the British settlers to exploit the land for quick profit. The estates apparently

^{59/} J. Boromé, "The French and Dominica, 1699-1763", Aspects ... p.84.

^{60/} Report by Rossain, Surveyor General of the French Windward Islands in the 1730's, quoted by J. Boromé, Ibid., p.85.

^{61/} "In St. Vincent and Dominica where sugar was neither produced nor exported before 1763, the British planters concentrated so keenly on this crop that it topped the export lists in 1773 with coffee and cocoa dropping to second and third places". B. Marshall, op. cit., p.49.

proved too difficult to establish and maintain. Atwood reports the existence of no more than fifty sugar estates by 1785, "above thirty estates" having been abandoned. There was also a high degree of absenteeism by English planters and as a result their estates were not well managed. This adversely affected crop production. Around this time maroons also posed a threat to the existence of estates. In the late 1780's there were reportedly not enough cattle or enslaved to support sugar plantations - "from whence in a great measure is to be attributed the small quantity of sugar exported from this settlement to England".^{62/}

In 1787 there were increases in sugar duties from 12s 4d to 15s per hundredweight. According to Marshall the British imposed a reduction of bounties and subsidies on British West Indian sugar in 1793, in order to capitalise on the high prices in Europe and reduce the price of sugar on the British market, and opened it up to foreign sugar supplies.^{63/}

But prices were so high that some profit was made. Further increases in demand after 1793 was a stimulus to planters to raise their levels of production.

"The increase in shipments from Dominica and Tobago in this period is testimony of the eagerness of planters to capitalise on this situation"^{64/}.

By 1797 however, the result of all these policies was a glut of sugar in the West Indian colonies and a reduction in the price of the commodity. Needless to say, this contributed to Dominica's depressed economic state.

The planting of coffee, which was introduced into Dominica by French settlers in the early occupation of the island and which remained its most important crop was superceded by sugar only by the end of the first decade following the cession of the island to Britain. Climate and topography were more suited to the crop than to sugar cane, but English settlers concentrated on the production of the latter. Within the British colonial empire it was economically disadvantageous to produce coffee since the product was not in high demand on this market, and as a result excise duty was high. Planters therefore depended on re-export to Europe

^{62/} T. Atwood, op. cit., p.18.

^{63/} B. Marshall, op. cit., pp.90-91.

^{64/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.9 In 1792 sugar production was only 3,000 hogshead of sugar.

for the sale of the produce. The demand and supply situation on the European continent was, therefore, of vital importance to the coffee producers. One can attribute the survival of the crop to the persistence of French settlers, although the British also introduced coffee on their estates. The main areas of coffee plantations during the eighteenth century were in the south of the island around Soufriere and in the north around Colihaut and Capuchin.

Coffee harvested on the plantations entered Europe through the intermediary of English merchants based in Dominica. After the introduction of the free port system, coffee was treated as a good originating from a "foreign country".

"... all produce entering Great Britain from the island was to be deemed foreign and taxed, accordingly. The exceptions were sugar and rum produced by the newly settled British planters in Dominica ..."^{65/}.

This disposition was a great disadvantage to coffee production and coffee planters. It indicates the limited bargaining power of those planters, as well as a basic characteristic of colonial economic policy namely anything not produced by British born subjects was foreign. This policy aimed at favouring them and not at providing for development, not even for plantation development.

Under these circumstances, a decline in Dominican coffee production was not surprising. A number of other factors could also have caused it. Among these was the serious competition which Dominican coffee faced on the European market in the early years of the decade. Added to this, in 1774, there was a fall in coffee prices due to the increase in duties levied. In that same year it was reported that bankruptcies of coffee producers were the order of the day^{66/}.

There was apparently a revival of production by the late 1780's. Atwood's description of the island at the time estimates the existence of two hundred coffee plantations. These estates were apparently very productive.

"It is computed that, one year with another, there are between four and five million pounds weight of that article produced, and exported annually from that island to Great Britain where it fell from £41 15s to £51 5s per hundredweight"^{67/}.

One explanation for the growth in coffee production lies in the high price the crop fetched on the international market, and the low price of sugar in the same

^{65/} F. Armytage, *The Free Port System in the British West Indies*, Longman Green and Co., London 1953 p.43. Further reference to the Free Port Systems are summarised from the study of Armytage.

^{66/} B. Marshall, *op. cit.*, p.58.

^{67/} T. Atwood, *op. cit.*, p.81. See also Sir Francis Watts, *Report on the Agricultural Conditions of Dominica with Recommendations for their Amelioration*,

period. Coffee acreages would therefore have increased in preference to sugar cane.

Cocoa was the other major crop grown by French inhabitants, but its production was on a much smaller scale. Only limited quantities were exported and the crop declined in the latter half of the century, apparently because of its low market value at the time.

The ups and downs of the international market contributed to the lack of development of plantation agriculture in the island under its new colonial master. Since Dominica was a country of small estates, her planters were among the first to be affected. As early as 1772 the expansion of agricultural enterprises was halted. The financial crisis in Britain adversely affected those merchants who supplied capital to planters. Planters, therefore, found great difficulty in obtaining credit to maintain payments on their lands or to repay their loans; coffee planters in particular could not afford to purchase labour after 1774.

"Ever since the financial crash of 1772, the Dominican proprietors were pressed with demands from their creditors to repay loans advanced, and this they could not do".

"A year later (1776) when it was time to pay installments on lands purchased from the Commissioners, the islanders were unable to meet them and begged that they be reduced".^{68/}

A decade later (1787) there was a continued situation of economic distress.

"... reports were all of distress, of the burden of mortgages, of estates sold for debt"^{69/}.

In summary, the support of the colonial authorities to the development of the island's agricultural potentials was rather dubious. To Britain, Dominica was an economic liability. Its soil and weather conditions were unsuitable for sugar cane. Moreover available flat arable land was limited. The entire central area was very mountainous, leaving only valley and coastal plains for sugar cane cultivation. It has been mentioned that these natural conditions were more favourable to the cultivation of coffee and cocoa.

Bulletin Office, Dominica 1925 p.10, which estimates the existence of 291 coffee estates in 1792, from which time, production though high, is said to have started a gradual downward trend.

^{68/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.58.

^{69/} Parry and Sherlock, A Short History of the West Indies, MacMillan, London 1966, p.140.

In addition to the obstacles already summarised, the island suffered a series of hurricanes in 1779, 1780 and in 1787; during this last year, there were three hurricanes. The 1787 hurricanes apparently destroyed the island's crop of sugar and coffee together with all the ground provisions. To that list of calamities must also be added the fire which destroyed Roseau with resultant losses amounting to over £200,000^{70/}.

Before the seizure of Dominica by the British, its importance was rated on the basis of the military strategy relating to the French colonial territories. After 1763, its main assets continued to be its geographical position, interpreted now in the framework of metropolitan trade policy. It laid in the role Dominica could play as an entrepot for commerce with foreign customers, normally inaccessible to British merchants. Its perceived importance in this policy strategy was indicated by the creation of two free ports on its territory: Portsmouth and Roseau.

The passing of the first Free Port Act in 1766 coincided with the period of highest development of the plantation system. These dispositions aimed in actual fact at institutionalising smuggling, by attracting bullion and raw materials from Spanish and other foreign colonies and providing them with British manufactures. One can distinguish three focal points in the British Caribbean: Jamaica for the northern part of the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America; Dominica for the surrounding French islands; and Grenada later assisted by Trinidad for the Spanish Main. Hostility between France and Britain in 1793 divided this development of trade relations into two periods. During the first, the movement of raw materials en route to British enterprises was predominant; in the second the tendency was gradually reversed and the free ports were used mainly to distribute British manufactures on the "foreign" markets.

The establishment of free ports in Dominica meant that the island became part of a large scheme of expansion of British trade. Unfortunately, even in this area, the island could only achieve a modest place. From 1793 onwards there was not much point in trade with the French islands, either because Martinique was taken over by the British or because of the need to isolate Guadeloupe, springboard of the French Revolution in the region. In consequence the relevance of Dominica in the free port system faded out rapidly.

Nevertheless a closer look at the development of the system, as far as Dominica is concerned, gives some insight in the circumstances of the colony and highlights its location on the frontiers of the colonial empires.

^{70/} T. Atwood, op. cit., p.49.

Initially the free port regulations were inimical to economic production in Dominica, except for sugar. For instance, from the inception of the free ports there was much concern for the planter interest in Jamaica. The produce of the Jamaican planters was protected by restrictions on trade with foreign countries in all produce being grown in that island. In Dominica there were no such safeguards.

"The two ports in Dominica, Prince Rupert's Bay and Roseau, could admit any product of the foreign West Indies, including sugar, coffee, pimento, ginger, molasses and tobacco, all of which were prohibited in Jamaica".

"In Jamaica, several important safeguards were made for the sake of the planting interests. Sugar, coffee, pimento, ginger, molasses and tobacco (all products grown in the island) were forbidden to be imported in foreign vessels"^{71/}.

In fact the free port policy greatly curtailed the agricultural export economy in Dominica, i.e. its result was "to restrict a fertile island to the role of a mere entrepot"^{72/}. Seven years after the introduction of the system (1773), coffee and cocoa grown in Dominica were admitted on the same terms as sugar, but at that point in time the island was about to drop out of the system for a decade.

Free port trade was allowed to develop in Dominica during a decade approximately and it increased trading activity in the town of Roseau, this is especially reflected in the increased number of merchants and the general population growth. Armytage argued that the system was not successful. Accounts of sugar exported from Dominica in 1773 in comparison to that produced in the French islands showed that only small amounts were sold to the British merchants in Dominica^{73/}. On the other hand, much smuggling continued^{74/}. Moreover by 1778, the effect of the American war was to cripple the trade - "the system practically ceased to function"^{75/}. From 1778-1784 the French occupied the island and direct trade with Britain was forbidden while trade with France and her allies was restricted.

"During the five years and a quarter, the time that the island of Dominica was in the possession of the French, it was resorted to by no vessels from Old France; nor was any of the produce of the English plantations exported to that kingdom during this period; ..."^{76/}.

^{71/} Frances Armytage, op. cit., p.42.

^{72/} Parry and Sherlock, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

^{73/} F. Armytage, op. cit., p.44.

^{74/} Parry and Sherlock make the same point. "The Act had little effort in drawing French sugar into British warehouses, except smuggled French sugar which Dominica planters marketed as their own". Parry and Sherlock op. cit., pp. 133-134.

^{75/} F. Armytage, op. cit., p.45.

^{76/} T. Atwood, op. cit., p.155.

Other means of export to Britain was done at great cost to the proprietors.

It was not until 1787 that the ports were reopened for trade after the repossession of the island by Britain in 1783/1784. Only six years of trade were allowed (1787-1793) when war again curtailed trading activities. The war was in fact ruinous to the free trade in Dominica because of prohibitions on trade with French colonies. By the end of the century the possibility of developing some commercial activities in Dominica together with a sizeable merchant class was cancelled forever. More often than not, the distressing performance of Dominica - by European yardsticks - on most grounds of economic organisation is attributed to natural factors. Its mountainous topography and its position in the path of hurricanes are blamed for most failures experienced by the inhabitants and used as a justification for the limited availability of British financial resources. Surely the island was not the ideal terrain for producing sugar cane. Yet coffee could not take hold of the economy. The real issue is however whether investments necessary to develop the territory were too voluminous and subject to too much risk, or simply untimely.

It would be difficult for the non-Carib Dominicans to acknowledge the peculiar way in which the aborigenes had won their war against the European invaders. Their two hundred year old resistance slanted the evolution of the country toward a marginal course from which it had never recovered and has very few prospects of recovery. The whole question of the insertion of the island into the world economic and political system has been affected ever since; and it is necessary to view the establishment and deployment of colonial rule against this background.

The evolution of a European oriented economy in Dominica had been in the following quandry. When the time came to organise its exploitation according to European patterns, resources eventually available for this purpose would be allocated after an assessment had been made of their impact on recurrent military expenses assigned for the protection of existing plantation societies. Furthermore, the plantation system being then in full bloom, the opening of new areas to cultivation had to yield returns which could compare to the rate of profit prevalent throughout the system. In fact expected returns from Dominica would have to compensate largely for the eventual decrease in the allocation of capital earmarked for the established plantocracies, in order to justify the overruling of their objections. So with or without suitable geographical circumstances, Dominica would have had to overcome more obstacles than any other Caribbean island in order to secure economic development according to European standards.

Therefore the only asset of the island which was readily exploitable - always within a European oriented development - was its geographical position. Now it became impossible to give a long term economical use to its location, since by the time the European rivals had cornered the Caribs and by the time one of them could unequivocally claim and assert its ownership of the territory, long standing trade relations between them were impracticable. They could only relate for the purpose of defeating each other.

Hence the sole alternative left for Dominica's participation in the Western world was its usefulness as a military base. In periods of confrontation there would be no conditions for economic investments in the island. The hinterland remained untouched. When the metropolitan country was not at war with its neighbours, as obtained during the XIXth. and XXth. centuries, the garrison was so reduced that no real advantage accrued to the territory, and the hinterland was still ignored. It is in this context that the Dominicans could on their own organise some development of their land, and only in this context that the difficult geography of the island can be seen as a deterrent to sustained growth.

IV

PLANTERS AND MERCHANTS

Plantation development was stimulated in Dominica after 1763 when the island became British under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. It has already been noted that at this point in time most plantation islands were fully organised and rivalries between France and Great Britain for an hegemonic position in the Caribbean were at their highest point. The questionable predominance of Britain in this part of the region and its occupation of a relatively unexploited territory located between two French strongholds reveals certain underlying characteristics of colonial island societies. Among other characteristics, such as the subordination of economic to political concern^{77/}, the importance of national affiliation in the arrangement of these societies, and more precisely, the predominant role of ascribed loyalties in the emergence of cohesive economic *élites*, must be highlighted.

Even though the geopolitical situation of Dominica is seldom overlooked^{78/}, it is not commonly related to its poor economic achievement. A major hindrance to development seems to be located in the type of international relations affecting the country.

After the 1763 cession of the island, all lands in the territory became the Crown's property. The policy enacted then gave a clear indication of the general thrust towards political control as opposed to economic exploitation. The newly acquired lands were sold at public auction to British subjects throughout Britain. The buyers were, in a significant proportion, speculators who had no intention of cultivating the land, but to use "their title deeds to borrow money in Britain and hopefully sell land at a profit"^{79/}.

^{77/} "As it was, Dominica was forced in the early days to develop one crop, sugar, for which the land was not particularly suited, while crops like cocoa and coffee which might have done better in hilly country, were neglected". F. Armytage, op. cit., p.43.

^{78/} "If Dominica had value at all during the century after the European incursion, it was primarily a strategic one, as it lies almost in the centre of the great crescent of islands comprising the Lesser Antilles". B. Cracknell, "Caribbean Island with a Problem". Royal Geographical Society, London, Nos. 6 and 7, 1971, pp. 463-470.

^{79/} L. Honychurch op. cit., p.34.

Absentee ownership was very common and managers and overseers were not of the "best character".

"It is no wonder that the estate goes to ruin and destruction"^{80/}. Most British planters who took residence in Dominica, were not in a position to establish viable enterprises. Their land allotments being limited, they only had access to insufficient capital resources. This, added to their inexperience of the milieu, resulted in accelerated bankruptcies.

"By this imprudent conduct of such of the new settlers, after they had spent considerable sums of money which they had borrowed on their plantations so situated, (in unsuitable areas), and having lost a number of negroes and cattle by the dampness of the climate in those places, together with the difficult and laborious roads to them, they were at length driven to the necessity of abandoning their possessions to the mortgagees in Europe"^{81/}.

These new settlers were then overwhelmed by debts; their mortgagees "being merchants in England"^{82/}.

"seem to be disposed to let their land remain in the same neglected, abandoned situation they have been in these several years past, to the great hindrance of the prosperity of that valuable island, as well as their own detriment"^{83/}.

Finally, to really have access to land resources and to manipulate freely their economic value, the would-be planter had to be of British nationality, other considerations being secondary.

"French settlers already on the island were not allowed to dispose of their lands without the permission of the Governor and had to pay an annual rent on every acre they owned"^{84/}.

^{80/} Ibid., p.43.

^{81/} T. Atwood, op. cit., pp. 75-75.

^{82/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.216.

^{83/} T. Atwood, op. cit., p.34.

^{84/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.34.

French planters of Dominica, were seen, and actually saw themselves, as enemies of their British counterparts.

"When Dominica was ceded to Britain, French influence had been paramount for nearly one hundred years. The more wealthy of the old French inhabitants, who sold out and retired from the colony, bore but a small numerical to those who elected to remain and who soon afterwards, under the denomination of new or adopted subjects, early formed a strong party, who set themselves in opposition to and at variance with the British-born subjects who restored to Dominica as purchasers of Crown lands. They were not granted any of the privileges which were extended to them in Grenada, such as being nominated to the Council or elected to the Assembly in limited numbers. This discrimination had the effect of increasing their animosity and with undisguised anxiety they continued to look forward to another war and recapture"^{85/}.

To the prohibition for adopted subjects to participate in decision-making bodies, were added further impediments as far as the administration of justice was concerned.

"The too-hasty introduction of English legal system and efforts to restrict the administration of justice to the English-speaking section of the communities raised doubts as to whether there was much concern for a proper administration of justice"^{86/}.

The relevance of national affiliation was further reinforced in 1784 with the so-called "American loyalists", the "Dominican" planters having urged the British Government to offer Crown lands and other concessions to those who opposed the independence of the American Union^{87/}.

Dominica had no special agronomic virtue as far as sugar cane was concerned but the country had resources and tradition in the production of coffee. Cocoa was another plantation crop adapted to its topography. Now if one could imagine the country divided into large flourishing coffee or cocoa plantations, i.e. organised as a plantation island, a class of planters with some degree of political

^{85/} C. Goodridge, "Dominica - The French Connection", Aspects ... p.155.

^{86/} Ibid., p.158.

^{87/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.52.

bargaining power could have emerged, demanding from the colonial authorities the sharing of their total hold with local interests allied to corresponding lobbies in London, or elsewhere. Investments to enslave a sizeable labour force and to ensure at the same time, the geopolitical function of the island would have been several times higher than what was needed for a destitute economy. So much so, that this rising plantocracy would not have been solely of British stock.

Therefore, while the opposition between enslaved and free population remained the fundamental element of the colonial political structure, a conflict between British and French planters developed as a secondary but relevant set of contradictions. The relations between the two main European groups in Dominica closely reflected the rapport between the respective metropolitan countries. "Foreign" Frenchmen would visit "adopted Frenchmen" and spy on British military installations^{88/}. Dominica had, according to Goodridge, an internal enemy of much greater physical force than the dependable subjects of the Crown:

"From 7 September 1778 to 4 January 1784, the colony was again placed under the government and laws of France and those gentlemen who were new subjects the day before, became (...) the most hostile and violent of Frenchmen"^{89/}

During the restoration period, the French enacted a series of retaliatory measures, tending to draw the British population to a subservient position apparently more pronounced than the one they knew before their victory. It went to the point that during the fire in Roseau of 16 April 1781, French soldiers would assist primarily French residents. Every measure was taken to make the British uncomfortable^{90/}. It would be understood that many of the

^{88/} J.A. Boromé, "Dominica during French Occupation 1778-1784", op. cit., p.103.

^{89/} C. Goodridge, op. cit., p.155.

^{90/} "Fearful of plots, (Duchilleau) had private letters opened, forbade more than two Englishmen to assemble in any place, and went so far as to order them to extinguish lights in their house after 9 p.m. and not to walk in the streets without carrying a lighted lantern that their movements might be followed." J. Boromé, "Dominica during French Occupation 1778-1784". Aspects ... p.106.

French planters were, to say the least, deceived when they had to return under British rule:

"Many of them sold out and went, with Spanish permission, to Trinidad"^{91/}

It is important to look more closely at this internalization of metropolitan rivalries, which is quite uncommon in the Caribbean societies, and at its eventual consequences. Discrimination against French or British planters would have been unnecessary if rivalries between the mother countries had not been so acutely felt. Such an impact of external relations on the makings of a local society appears to be related not only to the strategic position of the territory, but also to the concrete nature of these relations at a given point in time.

Actually, and in the same Caribbean context, wealthier planters in St. Domingue^{92/} did not hesitate to call upon Britain to safeguard their economic interests, endangered by France's political evolution. Moreover, French planters in "Ste. Lucie la Fidèle" did not challenge British supremacy with such vehemence once the takeover was completed and their property rights guaranteed. Differences between the behaviour of Dominican planters and their counterparts in St. Domingue and St. Lucia relate to the events surrounding the Revolution of 1789 and the early and monetary abolitionist stand of Republican France. The title of "Ste. Lucia la Fidèle" was due to the action of French soldiers and "maroons". Profoundly anti-abolitionist, St. Lucian planters were satisfied that after the British seizure the island would be ruled under the pre-1789 laws. In the case of St. Domingue, the "betrayal" of the planters during the 1790's was also consistent with their material interests and the basic social structure of slavery plantations.

Now, evidence of the attachment of the French-born planters to their mother-country are all prior to the French Revolution and remain consistent with the same material interests. After this breaking point, attempts by Victor Hughes, representative of the Republic of Guadeloupe, to reconquer the island of Dominica were supported by only a few "adopted subjects" and failed miserably. When the basic material interests of the planter class were threatened by the questioning and even sporadic suppression of enslavement by France French planters rapidly dropped their ascribed loyalty and accommodated British rule. Dominica received a large number of these so-called royalists from Martinique and Guadeloupe.

^{91/} Ibid., p.114.

^{92/} "The French inhabitants of Dominica are more numerous than the British and (...) have the most valuable coffee plantations in that island". T. Atwood, op. cit., p.216.

Inversely, while France and Great Britain shared basic policies in respect to the enslaved, their rivalry did not foster any misgivings in the political loyalties of their respective natural subjects. Both European countries promoted and protected the property rights of their national and dependable subjects.

In the circumstances of Dominica, the laws stated the privileges and immunities of the nationals and were intended for all of them, without distinction between planters and non-planters. Discriminations against non-nationals (planters and non-planters) were enshrined in such laws and thereby legitimised.

Since the whole island population was not divided along the nationality issue, both sets of judicial precepts would encompass the conditions for enslavement and emancipation. The situation of enslaved and freed men were not much different under one or the other legal system. The common denominator of the nationals of one or the other colonial state being their race, changes in social order under British or French rule referred to which type of whites were entitled to benefit fully from the global exploitation of the local resources - including the enslaved. Reference was also made to the extent to which concessions were made to freed persons.

This pattern of behaviour, far from heightening the role of economic interests, put them in the position of an intervening variable in the explanation of Caribbean social practices. Indeed French or British planters did not settle in Dominica primarily because of their political allegiance. but their economic expectations could only materialize thanks to the political backing available to them. The primacy of the political structures was essential for setting up the fabric of plantation societies and for their smooth ruling.

One difference between Dominica and other island societies emerged from these considerations and was due to the moment and characteristics of the intermetropolitan struggles. In the formation of Dominican social structures, on the one hand, the division of the whites into natural and naturalised subjects was highly significant because the interplay of material interests did not intervene to force whites of different national allegiance to form an alliance against other members of their own community, namely against the political and administrative authorities.

On the other hand French and British born planters might have been opposed to each other, but they never departed from the main policy of their respective Home Governments with respect to the enslaved and freed persons. Therefore, Dominica never experienced a longlasting and obviously self-interested alliance between any sector of the white population with the black or mulatto population^{93/}. The cleavage between Whites, Browns and Blacks remained entrenched in daily practices, and inter-ethnic relations having an enhanced visibility appeared more prominent and of greater impact in the interplay of social factors than in other islands of the Caribbean.

Another difference between Dominica and other Caribbean countries is the fact that a continuum of social strata did not actually evolve among the whites. Petty planters became "Grand Blanc" on the local scenery, as far as their access to the decision-making process or their aspiration to such an access was concerned. The description of the white community of the early years of the nineteenth century by Governor Provost leaves no doubt on this matter:

"The island's inhabitants were in general men of small landed property (...) whose incomes compel them to reside in the colony and the remainder, mostly clerks, and attorneys or agents to merchants and planters in the mother country. (...) (The community consisted of) persons with very few exceptions from the House of Assembly and occupy the other important offices in the community"^{94/}.

It follows that a continuum of overlapping colour strata did not evolve. Poor whites and mulattoes never actually shared the same social ladder since all whites were salvaged by opportunities offered in the administration of the colony. This will constitute the germ of conflicts which will characterize the XIXth. century. This course of action which obviously was not unrelated to the lack of differentiation in the economic system, created a propitious milieu for the emergence of the mulattoes as a specific pressure group. At the same time it enhanced the underlying agreement against the non-whites, and exposed the racist character of colonialism. In Dominica, distinctions between race and class conflicts would not be obscured by interpersonal relations.

^{93/} These statements will be qualified in the next chapter.

^{94/} B. Marshall, op. cit., pp.344-345.

Finally, and in an inter-determinate fashion, this arrangement of social relations eased the functioning of the island as a strategic stronghold, and by the same token, was a consequence of such a role. Colonial decision-making was not modified by pressure groups emerging from a set of local relations.

While Great Britain was rather timid in modifying the economic structure of Dominica, it took a series of rather bold steps to capitalize on its strategic position for the development of metropolitan trade. In 1766, three years after the Treaty of Paris, the first Free Port Act was passed in Parliament^{95/}. Some connection between a flourishing trade and the development of the territory hosting the emporium could have been expected. It was a matter of enjoying:

"to the extent of the trade all the advantages of the foreign colonies without being exposed to the expense of establishing and protecting them"^{96/}.

Indeed, the inclusion of Dominica in the emerging network of Free Ports brought a substantial increase of activity to the island.

"Between 1771 and 1773 the population doubled its numbers, owing, wrote the Lieutenant-Governor, 'to our advantages of situation for trade and commerce'. (...) All classes in Dominica were benefiting from the free port system, and all could unite in asking for its renewal (when the first Act expired in 1773)"^{97/}.

Unfortunately, not much transformation resulted from the passage of goods through Dominica. The merchants never established themselves in the island. They developed no sense of loyalty towards the host country, and contrary to the planters,

"their personal interests can seldom have been as completely involved in the general state of the West Indies"^{98/}.

^{95/} "The intention in opening free ports had been to extend the sales of British manufactures, and receive in return raw materials produced in foreign islands". F. Armytage, op. cit., p.58.

^{96/} Ibid.

^{97/} F. Armytage, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

^{98/} Ibid. p.7.

Atwood noted an aversion to forming matrimonial connections among the white population of that period. He attributed this aversion to the idea that "voluntary exile" to which the Europeans submitted themselves was believed to last only for a few years^{99/}.

Indeed, the relative buoyancy was ephemeral; as soon as the hostilities of the American Revolution commenced, trade came to an end. Atwood observed:

"Merchants, tradesmen and others withdrew themselves to places where the trade and commerce were more brisk, and the planters (...) were driven to abandon (their new estates) or to postpone the further advancement of them"^{100/}.

While the merchants started their desertion, the English planters were left with less access to capital and severe difficulties in realizing their produce and soon ran away from the pressure put on them by the "maroons" and the French during the 1778-1784 occupation.

"The English subjects in this island are reduced to near half their number that they were in it shortly after the restoration, and the generality of them at present seem disposed to quit it, by reason of the ruin of their trade and after disadvantageous circumstances which they labour under"^{101/}.

In conclusion, among the beneficiaries of the colonization of Dominica from 1763 to the end of the eighteenth century, three groups of interests can be distinguished: the Crown, the merchants and the planters. It appears that policies enacted by the Crown related basically to geopolitical pre-occupations, and secondarily to facilitating the development of trade and commerce. Agricultural development and more generally the establishment of a viable economic venture in the island did not seem to have been of any specific concern. Trade and commerce stimulated by the Free Port Acts were in fact de-linked from the Dominican economy, in spite of some eventual use by the locals of facilities servicing metropolitan needs.

^{99/} Atwood, *op. cit.*, p.210.

^{100/} Atwood, *op. cit.*, pp.106-107.

^{101/} Ibid. pp.280-281.

There were therefore no economic conditions for a group or an embryo of social class to clearly differentiate itself from the rest of the population, while managing, under the sponsorship of the colonial authorities, the basic institutions responsible for economic exploitation. From these early times, a definite cleavage developed between the political interests of the British government and of its representatives on the one hand, and the economic pursuits of the population on the other hand. The Crown never became involved in the economic affairs of this colony.

Among the inhabitants, the merchants were the closest allies of the Crown. Contrary to what is commonly observed in other colonies, particularly at the heights of their economic exploitation, these merchants did not play a role of intermediaries between the local producers and metropolitan interest groups. Their business was located on the lines of exchange linking the regional - and in fact "foreign" - producers to the metropolitan manufacturers. In these circumstances the population of merchants did not take root in the country and emigrated as soon as a decline in their activities became irreversible.

Normally, planters were strongly dependent on merchants for capital investments and realization of their products. In Dominica, plantation development being minimal, the underlying conflicts between planters and merchants lost any striking visibility. Merchants and planters had in fact no similarity nor conflict of interests. They could in London compete for the enactment of policies more suitable to their respective needs, and discrepancies did emerge on this political ground. But once the rules of the game were laid down, i.e. once the basic policy of the British vis-à-vis Dominica was adopted, both groups pursued their economic interests without interfering one with the other. This uncommon relationship derived from the functioning of the Free Port and the role given to the island in the international division of labour.

The planters of eighteenth century Dominica must be disaggregated into two significant sub-groups - the British and the French. While the British occupied themselves in the production of sugar, and the French were dedicated mainly to growing coffee, no specific economic conflict could hamper their development into a plantocracy. The strife in the planter class originated in their national affiliation and in the impact of ensuing loyalties in the ruling of a colony considered as a strategic stronghold by their respective mother-country.

In other words, not only was the whole economic set up of Dominica closely conditioned by the political projects of the British or the French governments vis-à-vis the island, but the avenues open to the social groups for the control of the resources available in it varied according to their respective usefulness in the pursuance of these objectives. It is not being questioned whether the political objectives of the European governments had an underlying economic raison d'être in Europe; neither is it proposed that the motivation of the plantocracy was not of an economic nature. But as far as the fabric of the Dominican society was concerned, it seems clear that political dictates constituted the fundamental frame for economic performances. Political structures must be viewed in the emergence of Dominican social structures as the basic or infrastructural layer upon which economic relations inserted themselves.

Similarly, the local system, not being geared towards the economic advancement of its dominant groups, individuals comprising them would tend to migrate towards more suitable milieux, leaving the management of the economy to second class entrepreneurs. The social structure, instead of being organised around the interests of an economic élite, would evolve around key institutions responsible for the implementation of metropolitan main political strategies.

BLACK SETTLERS, MAROONS AND ENSLAVED

There is evidence of Blacks settling in Dominica before the introduction of enslavement in the island. Many writers following the official historiography, would refer to them erroneously as "runaways" or "maroons", but would carefully refrain from using the following appellations in relation to White runaways: Criminals, indentured or simply destitutes of the European societies. Black settlers must be distinguished from enslaved who migrated to Dominica with the first French planters. A peculiar set of relations referred to earlier, seems to have evolved between this original group of Blacks, the enslaved and the French communities.

Some witnesses and chronicles, attuned to the cultural frame of reference of their time, reported on the practices of "French slaves" as opposed to those of the "British slaves" entering the island after 1763. It would seem that:

"In the good management of slaves the French planters,
I (an English writer of the period) think it is generally
allowed, are superior to the English"^{102/}.

Atwood's writings would stress the difference in attitude of the enslaved before and after the British conquest^{103/}.

^{102/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.27.

^{103/} T. Atwood, op. cit., p.506.

B. Marshall, following Atwood, reports that:

"(...) these slaves disliked their new masters and so they took off to the woods with their wives and children and were joined from time to time by others from the neighbouring estates. In the woods they formed themselves into companies headed by chiefs and showed their hostility to the British presence in the island by making surprise attacks on the plantations, in which they destroyed property and killed the white settlers" 104/.

According to Cecil A. Goodridge, quoting from a document written at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

"The slave population in Dominica numbered almost 30,000 and most of them who had by purchase become slaves to British proprietors, as well as those of them who had remained the slaves of the adopted subjects, having been reared and bred under French habits, the French language and the Catholic religion, all of which generated prejudices unfavourable to their Protestant masters" 105/.

In this same order of ideas, Honychurch states:

"The French slaves took advantage of the change in power in 1760's and during this period the first large numbers escaped from the French estates" 106/.

It is utterly confusing to divide the Black population into those of French and of British nationality or allegiance. The need to revise these eighteenth century common sense ideas, derives clearly from reports of those such as the "slave-priests" who had closer contacts with the enslaved. Serious doubts were cast on their apparent process of creolisation under the aegis of one or the other group of Europeans, at least in relation to the religious components of this process.

104/ B. Marshall, op.cit., p.506.

105/ C. Goodridge, "Dominica - The French Connexion", Aspects ... p. 156.

106/ L. Honychurch, op.cit., p.53 (Our emphasis).

Fr. R. Proesmans, CSsR, collated a series of testimonies on the activities of "slave priests" in an article entitled "Notes on the Slaves of the French", which ends with a paragraph taken from the writings of a slave priest on the Results obtained with the Slaves. The superficiality of any special French treatment and doubts which assailed the Ministers of the Roman Catholic Church are exposed:

- "1. The majority do not come to the Instruction or receive the sacrament;
2. To make them say their daily prayers, their masters have to order (several) to be flogged;
3. Twelve to fifteen women slaves go to communion; and
4. And there is still hesitation should we give it to them" 107/.

There is no doubt that the distance between the enslaved and the slave-masters, as recorded by Proesmans, could have been bridged with the passage of time, particularly in a conflictless and idyllic situation. This was not the case in Dominica. As a haven for "runaways" of all creeds and colours, the island would be the target of established plantocracies. Its own planters and would-be planters would localise this conflict by dividing themselves along lines of political and national loyalties. This cleavage among the slave-owners and would-be slave-owners would affect the running of the institutions set up for enslavement and would give special characteristics to the environment in which the enslaved workers would have to deal with oppression. But at no point in time could the modification in their circumstances make the captives protagonists of these cleavages. A close look at available data reveals beneath the surface, the commonality of interests shared by all planters, irrespective of their nationality, as well as the rationale for the practices of the enslaved.

107/ Fr. R. Proesmans, CSsR, "Notes on the Slaves of the French", Aspects ... p.172.

The apparent acquiescence of the enslaved to his situation, hinted at by the application of seasoned and creole slaves - the enslaved by French planters being supposedly more adequately seasoned - has never prevented these planters from securing their monopoly on the use of violence. The planters were armed and the enslaved not. Individual planters had not only access to weapons and ammunitions, but a militia of freed men would be organised and regular troops would be made available by both metropolitan countries as basic requirements for implementing the enslavement of the bulk of the population.

Now in a colony where rights of the metropole were in fact under constant challenge, it derived a series of modifications in the implementation of the classic model of slavery plantation. All planters were not on equal political footing, as in any normal plantation society; some would participate in the decision-making processes, while others, could not by virtue of being "adopted subjects" of one or the other metropolitan authority. As far as the daily use of legitimate violence was concerned, planters falling in the category of "adopted subjects" were faced with a certain number of limitations. Their recruitment in the militia was also subject to national definitions.

One becomes aware of these subtleties of the eighteenth century Dominican society, in view of special measures enacted in times of severe crises:

"Duchilleau (Governor in 1778) had the difficult task of making of Dominica a little Gibraltar, (...). His instructions called on him (...) to hasten the immediate fortification of the island, maintain a strong garrison, establish military hospitals, form a militia of French inhabitants, forbid the English to assemble, ... disarm those without real estates, require all not well known to deposit their arms with leading residents in each parish in case of British attack, and prohibit any slave from carrying arms"^{108/}.

Severe economic inequalities derived from the political ones which divided the planters along national lines. French planters favoured by less political support would have smaller plantations and less capital than their British counterparts. The latter had better access to what became Crown Lands after 1763 and had better credit standing in view of their secured ownership rights. Certain patterns of behaviour in the rapport of the French with the enslaved, characteristic

^{108/} J. Boromé, "Dominica during French Occupation, 1778-1784", Aspects ... p.105 (Our emphasis).

of the island society during the first half of the century, could persist beyond that period in which the Black settlement or so called "maroon societies" were not molested.

However, Dominica being in any case a second class colony and its average planters rather modest ones, the enslaved benefitted from what could be considered as special treatment from their petty masters, British and French alike. This special treatment did not actually originate from some unique "savoir-faire" - neither the British nor the French deserve any second place on this ground. It derived from insufficient political and international trade back-up to provide them with enough labour force even for their second-rate enterprises and to supply them with adequate weaponry for ensuring their monopoly on the use of violence necessary to force the workers to perform according to classical plantation norms.

The evidence for this asseveration is to be found in the fact that the enslaved could with the complicity of the masters accede to freedom, by-passing existing regulations. Planters would hide "runaways" and utilize their services in their own compound, to an extent which made it necessary to pass an Act in 1773, granting free access to plantation premises to persons searching for "runaways". It even became imperative to admit the evidence of enslaved against whites in the courts.

"However, this Act (1775) and others did not have the desired effect, and in the last decade of the eighteenth century more stringent measures were enforced, in which economic regulations and the admittance of slave evidence against whites were employed, because of apparent lack of co-operation by some of the free population"^{109/}.

In this chapter as in the previous ones, allusions have been made to the need for clear external sponsorship to implement a policy of enslaving a large number of workers. The troops dispatched to Dominica were more concerned with regional conflicts than with warfare against the local population^{110/}. The possibility of distracting such troops from their prime endeavour would vary according to the relative position of the metropolitan country on the

^{109/} B. Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp.298-299.

^{110/} "Disregarding French pleas for economy, (Duchilleau, Governor of the island under French occupation) drove ahead with plans for forts and roads. He employed engineers, pressed slaves into service, and called in all heavy arms and ammunitions" ...) L. Honychurch, *op. cit.*, p.49.

international and regional scenario. Troops available to the French colonial authorities being more limited, these authorities would realise savings on the costs of their war with the British by seeking an alliance with the Black settlers and the actual maroons. Atwood is clear on this point:

"They (the "runaways") were not, however, often guilty of any material mischief, and had never committed murder till the reduction of the island by the French; but soon after that happened, the depredation of the runaways began to be of a very serious nature; for they robbed and destroyed the property, and at length killed some of the English inhabitants. Previously they had been engaged by the French for defending the island - they were furnished with muskets and bayonets and with the same provisions as were allowed the French soldiers (...)"^{111/}.

The "savoir faire" of the French authorities did not relate to their superior mastery in the art of enslaving a population, but to a circumstantial tactic in their attempt to colonize the island. In Dominica as elsewhere in the Caribbean, as soon as France would dispose of the required resources, she would promptly crack down on the "maroons" and the same Duchilleau is a good example of this mastery in the technique for colonizing a country.

Similarly the French petty planters of Dominica before or after the British occupation, would strive to render enslavement within their estates less costly than maronage. Failing this, they would behave towards the enslaved as any British planter and would not rely on alleged favourable attitudes towards them. This is documented by Boromé, and the accounts of Honychurch on "The Fighting Maroons"^{112/}, also reveals beyond doubt the basic structure of the Dominican society, as an institutionalized, sometimes open, sometimes covert, war between two contending groups: the actual enslaved and would-be enslaved (the Black settlers) on the one hand, and the planters and would-be planters (the Freed persons) on the other.

Both British and French had one common enemy whom they referred to as the Maroons. Bernard Marshall quotes the Governor of the island who in 1785 described them as "an internal enemy of the most alarming kind". They were also referred to as "an imperium in imperio"^{113/}.

Between Black settlers and enslaved an obvious rapport existed of which planters were aware. Their practices and those of the colonial authorities reveal that they

^{111/} T. Atwood, op. cit., pp. 227-228.

^{112/} J. Boromé, "Dominica during the French Occupation, 1778-1784", Aspects ... p.112, and L. Honychurch op. cit., p.52 and foil.

^{113/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.507.

considered all enslaved as potential "runaways" unless they were to be freed according to the norms of the plantation system, and inversely, a person born in a Black settlement would be seen as a de jure enslaved and treated as a runaway.

Therefore, in the concrete circumstances of day to day living in Dominica, the enslaved had at their disposal several avenues to negotiate better treatment or, more exactly, to avoid some of the ordeals of enslavement. These means originated in the unsettled political domination of the island. To capitalize on these dysfunctional aspects of this specific colonization process that they experienced, the captives had obviously to rely on their own initiatives and abilities. The pursuit of these self-reliant undertakings constitute the cradle of a given anti-colonial outlook, the structural space in which a national culture began.

A proper reading of the exploits by the Dominican enslaved is fundamental to dispel a deeply rooted confusion which obscures the understanding of the Caribbean standpoints. As recorded, the original group of enslaved in Dominica was in a large proportion West Indian born: they were creole or to say the least, seasoned enslaved.

"Few slaves came directly from Africa to Dominica before the 1769's. The prosperous sugar islands of Barbados, Antigua, St. Kitts, Guadeloupe and Martinique were far more attractive to the slave merchants. Slaves brought to Dominica in the early days were transhipped from these larger trading centres and many who came to the island were already West Indian born"^{114/}

The pattern of rebellious behaviour established by these originally seasoned enslaved and which drove them to establish themselves as independent settlers, "maroons" or "squatters" continued throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1785 they threatened "to destroy every English estate in the island"^{115/}. Approximately half of the enslaved belonged to the British "whose plantations in particular are but thinly furnished with them". In fact, on Dominican plantations there were less "field negroes" than other categories of enslaved (presumably)

^{114/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.27.

^{115/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.509.

"house slaves" and skilled slaves as masons, carpenters, coopers ...)^{116/}.

The same Atwood proposed that one-third to two-fifths of the enslaved on each estate worked as "field negroes". If most plantations in Dominica were small when compared to those of the sugar islands, and if most enslaved were attached to non-predial activities, it can safely be argued that they experienced less hardships than in other Caribbean territories.

As for the minority of "field negroes" one would be tempted to conclude that their exposure to other Caribbean situations, i.e. their seasoning or socialisation particularly in the domestic service, would make them less adapted to life on the plantations proper:

"Many of them (the British) brought negroes who had only been in the capacity of domestics; some, those who were banished from other islands for their crimes, and others purchased negroes just brought from Africa, for the purpose of their new estates. These were immediately set to work, to cut down massy, hard wood trees, to lop and burn the branches, clear the ground of roots, and to labour at difficult though necessary business, for which they were by no means qualified"^{117/}.

The argumentation of Atwood does not stand, for most African born enslaved were by no means qualified for work in any plantation island. Yet they did it under duress imposed in the other islands. Furthermore, it was possible after the liberation of the captives in Haiti, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia to re-enslave them.

The eventual acculturation of the enslaved to the conditions of domesticity, or their previous experience in a free society was totally irrelevant to account for their behaviour. The enslaved chose a set of practices according to their viability. In Dominica, there was a possibility of manipulating the conflicts dividing the planters, together with the possibility of establishing independent village societies. Such opportunities were open to all enslaved, both creoles and creolised, domestic and "field slaves". Contrary to that situation, in some other islands the only practical solution was to act as a creole or a creolised and so did the enslaved.

^{116/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.43-44.

^{117/} T. Atwood, op. cit., p.224-225.

If as settlers or so-called "maroons" it may have suited the interests of the Black population of Dominica to side with the French army, as enslaved - since in any case they were not permitted to carry arms - they seemed to have remained prudently in a non-committal position, when the crisis exploded. When the French army disembarked, according to J.A. Boromé:

"panicky women, children and negro slaves darted through the streets and waded through rivers to reach places of safety outside of town"^{118/}.

But even as settlers or "maroons", the population evidenced its pursuit of objectives rather different from those of the French. For it became necessary during this same occupation to dispatch French troops against them so they would remain "relatively peaceful"^{119/}.

The basic response to slavery plantations of this predominantly creolised, relatively well-treated set of enslaved is best summarised in the words of a certain W. Atkinson, who in 1782 pointed out that "example has hitherto no good effect upon them"^{120/}. They had their own way of dealing with oppression. They became so powerful after the French occupation, that they posted in Roseau an affiche offering a reward for the head of the Governor "dead or alive". An interesting feature of their fight in those days (1785) was their alliance with the Caribs^{121/}.

"The colonial society lived in constant fear of slave risings and the threat of maroons who had escaped to freedom in the hills"^{122/}.

After a fierce British offensive in 1786 the "maroons" were defeated. But class conflicts between the enslaved and the "maroons" on the other hand,

^{118/} J. Boromé, "Dominica during French Occupation, 1778-1784", Aspects ... p.104.

^{119/} Ibid. p.112.

^{120/} Quoted by J. Boromé, Ibid.

^{121/} Dies Dominica, op. cit., p.11.

^{122/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.39.

and the free population on the other, were further reactivated following the disorders provoked by the French Revolution and the achievement of emancipation in the French territories. During the summer of 1793, Dominica received between five to six thousand royalist refugees from Martinique alone.

"All but the negroes were admitted lest they should spread pernicious doctrines among the British slaves"123/.

These precautions were of no avail and the struggle of the "maroons" lasted until the second decade of the nineteenth century.

"The eventual suppression of the maroons should not however detract from their achievement. Indeed they kept up the most effective resistance to enslavement and to white domination of the island. It is clear that their actions were directed to no other end than the overthrow of the white ruling class and they saw that this could only be done by an alliance with the plantation slaves who were the most subjected group in the society. Instead of openly confronting the whites they preferred to use surprise attacks (...) and for a period of thirty years they kept them terrified and preoccupied and some of them who had estates in the interior parts of the island had been forced, because of their activity, to abandon them"124/.

There were two types of Negro marrons (Neg maon) as the black settlers were called in Dominica. The classical type who lived in isolated but fortified villages before 1786 and after 1802 and who were properly settlers; and the bandits who organized themselves between these two dates and could strictly speaking be conceived as "maroons":

"The woods of Dominica were no longer safe, for the maroons (after 1786) ... For the rest of the century, the maroons never dared to assemble in any great numbers together; but flying from place to place in the woods, were either killed, taken or surrendered themselves"125/.

As different from the roaming rebels, the black settlers lived in self-contained communities, the organization of which contradicted in every point the plantation system:

123/ C. Goodridge, op. cit., p.155.

124/ T. Atwood, quoted by B. Marshall, op. cit., p.515.

125/ L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.55.

"By 1785, a string of maroon camps had developed in the centre of the island. Each was led by a chief and at this time there were thirteen major figures ... These camps were also inhabited by women and children ..."126/

"... In 1785 the Mountainous interior which the maroons inhabited abounded with fastnesses, places of concealment and roads which were almost impassable. In addition, there was a rivulet of water on almost 'every acre' and 'great plenty of ground provision in all parts'. In 1800 when three detachments of the 9th West Indian Regiment penetrated a part of this country, they discovered 300 acres of cleared land 'fully stocked with all kinds of provisions'...

...Previous to that, Officers reported having seen ... 'as fine sugar canes as on any estate in the country'. The mountainous interior therefore not only provided the maroons with a haven which was almost inaccessible to the whites, but also with all the articles necessary for their subsistence"127/.

It is correct to assume that in times of warfare these communities would tend to merge with the maroons, strictve sensu.

The fact that this counter-plantation system was set up in Dominica by seasoned or creole enslaved puts in a very peculiar light most literature related to the process of creolisation. Creolisation when made synonymous to resignation and acceptance of enslavement is but one alternative which may be chosen presumably by native or African-born Blacks. But once attention is paid to the social structure of a country; the behaviour of the enslaved is better explained by the rapport de force between the protagonists of plantation slavery, than imputed attitudes of the enslaved.

126/ Ibid. p.54.

127/ B. Marshall, op. cit., p.506-507.

VI

INCOMPLETENESS OF THE CLASS STRUCTURE

The history of Dominica during the eighteenth century offers an excellent opportunity to observe the assembly of the components of a Caribbean society, the context in which a class structure emerged from their differentiation and the extent to which the ensuing class relations encompassed the daily activities of individuals and groups so differentiated. During the first half of the century, three groups of people lived on the island: a few survivors of the genocide perpetrated against the Caribs, a few independent Blacks, and a number of whites and mulattoes mainly, but not exclusively, of French origin, accompanied by predominantly creole enslaved. These groups experienced different forms of isolation and autonomy, inconsistent with their actual relations with the outer world.

All indications are that the first two groupings were racially homogeneous, while the third was multi-ethnic. The Caribs would presumably tend to safeguard their way of living, while the independent Blacks would start a new society, distinct from the European plantation model. There is no clear indication as to the extent to which Blacks and Caribs interacted. One can only assume that they lived in separate villages in some kind of tribal organization. Forms of inequalities differentiating the Caribs and the independent Blacks are not known and most probably did not flourish and thus have not been institutionalized in their village societies. In any event, it is doubtful that this eventual system of stratification referred to economic privileges. Moreover, these bore no relevance for the societal fabric in the making.

Individuals living in the third grouping - the multi-ethnic coastal settlements - were separated along class lines. The slave-owners belonged to different European countries or nation-states, and were generally referred to by this affiliation. Their settlements could safely be characterized as the European sector of the emerging island society; it embodied within its inner fabric the bases for class exploitation through legal ownership of other people's labour force. Nonetheless, by the very nature of these early developments favoured by no clear sponsorship from the colonial empires, the slave-owners did not constitute an organic group capable of imposing unilaterally their interests on the enslaved. It is not recorded that the treatment of the enslaved during the

period under observation could transform into a social concern their "desertions" to the independent Black settlements.

It seems therefore difficult to trace during these formative years an inner process of change oriented towards the formation of an embryonic dominant social class^{128/} with island-wide perspectives. Coercion and inequalities operating within the three significant components of the emerging society were sufficiently restricted so as not to affect the relationship between these components.

At a local level and in spite of the existence of an exploited group of enslaved, life in Dominica was largely organized around self-reliant economic activities up until the 1760s. The type of activities and the range of manipulation of the products so obtained, as well as the potential of such undertakings for securing a given level of living varied according to one's participation in one or another group of settlers. The significant island-wide cleavages run along these nations or tribal lines, and thus the relevant concept to understand and describe the society in the making is the concept of settlers. The three groups of settlers did not yet constitute a societal unit and no overall structure had emerged from their interrelations. The island harboured then three distinct societies.

Nonetheless the processes of unification were well en train and the bases for a commonality of views and for the creation of a cohesive social system were laid down since this period. The adoption of a lingua franca, and the setting up of owner-operated multipurpose agricultural institutions remained, until the present days, witnesses of these early developments. Colonialism interfered with these processes and made the enactment of the model of society embodied in these early contacts impossible.

Caribs, independent Blacks and European settlers were equally self-reliant or at least in a position to achieve self-reliance. Relations between these groupings seemed rather peaceful. Except for the plot by Vincentian and Dominican Caribs, which was unravelled rather peacefully, no violent internal conflict was recorded after 1722. It appears that one can then distinguish analytically a sector of social life where none of these groupings enjoyed any privilege with respect to the other before the 1760s.

^{128/} By dominant class is meant a group of individuals entertaining institutionalized relations aimed at the implementation of a project of social organization, designed to preserve their interests using the resources under their control or at their disposal.

This sector comprised activities framed by local parameters.

Now in view of the very importance of the settlements in which they were inserted, the inhabitants of Dominica did not interact on the basis of their sole individual ability and worth. They related only as members of a given group of settlers. On the one hand, it can be accepted that in certain circumstances, the three groups of settlers had equal opportunities, and that differences in individual performances arose within each group according to their separate systems of stratification. This represented only part of the social reality.

On the other hand, the very existence of three groups of settlers remits the analysis to extra-territorial relations. Each group was not only exposed to inter-island connections, but actually belonged to a larger social unit and their self-representation derived from a region-wide society or more exactly from region-wide social categories. One may propose that one of the primary elements of a commonality of views among the inhabitants of Dominica was the shared idea that local relations were taking place within a regional and differentiated space. This larger and all-embracing set of relations being propitious to some and dangerous to others, the awareness and subsequent assessment of its characteristics by the early inhabitants would influence some dimensions of their day-to-day living and would be in actual fact the origin of patterns of inequalities constitutive of their island-society, while at the same time alien to local parameters of social intercourse.

Extraterritorial relations, as they cut across local practices, i.e. as they were internalized by the inhabitants of Dominica, must be seen as the milieu of the mechanisms producing social inequalities and class conflicts, consistent with the kind of regional integration fostered by colonialism. Activities framed by locally originated parameters were conducive to compromise and arbitration. Conflicts and dissension built into them did not develop to their fullest. These self-reliant activities by the residents of Dominica were evolving in a context of conflictive relations between nation-states, the rationale of which was totally alien to these activities as such. Changes at the interstate level would affect the outcome of daily practices, i.e. the range of manipulation of the products of such practices. Residents had no means of influencing the relations between nation-states with interests in the Caribbean, nor of foreseeing the direction of eventual modifications at this level. Let alone could they sponsor any alternative which would suit local interests. Their current

behaviour would then be guided by an awareness of the possibility of modifications at the referred level and not by an actual forecast of these modifications.

To understand the principles of social intercourse during the formative period of this Caribbean society, it seems useful to note the specificity of some concepts commonly used nowadays to refer to similar phenomenon and to avoid transposing them to the historical period under study. The idea of international relations alludes to what is happening outside a national space of interaction, which may or may not affect such a space. The context in which the early Dominicans were living does not bear much similarity to this vision of a national or internal versus an international milieu. The country was the "national" territory of no specific grouping, except in nominal terms, of the Caribs. It is therefore not possible to contrast any set of "national" or internal relations to external or foreign affairs.

One may indeed distinguish self-propelled undertakings as opposed to dependent ones. Conflicts between the then existing nation-states and most in particular those opposing France and Britain in their relations with Dominica, aimed at establishing a dependent colonial system in the island. This system framed any undertakings and the rapport between these nation-states cut across the island population. In other words, each group of settlers, willingly or unwillingly, was a component of the inter-nation system and not of a national space distinct from an international or foreign one. Self-reliant activities of Dominica's residents, who were merely minor actors in the inter-nation system, had no impact on this system, although directly affected by it.

Inter-nation relations were self-evident for the Caribs. They had found no grounds on which they could entertain some lasting dialogue with the Spaniards, the British or the French, in terms that were consistent with their self-concept and what they must have conceived as their rightful prerogatives. The independent Blacks opposed the Europeans (including the Coloureds) on similar ideological grounds, but their presence on the island implied some negotiation with the Carib nation for the use of the land they occupied. Whites and Coloureds who settled in Dominica entertained identical relations with the Caribs for the use of their territory, and at the same time, if they were of French origin, they had to be aware of the English authorities responsible for neighbouring territories, or, if they happened to be British, they had to be on their guard against the French authorities.

During the period prior to 1763, the equilibrium of forces between the different nation-states called for the relative neutrality of the island, which in turn made the

need for self-reliance imperative and inescapable. This structural arrangement explains why the possibility for the French or the British settlers to dominate one another or to dominate the Black and Carib settlers could not be actualised.

It should be emphasized immediately that although the residents of Dominica had from this early period reached some form of consensus in a setting which might appear French oriented, there was no relation between this and France's policies under the Ancien Régime nor the trends which led to the 1789 Revolution. Martinique and Guadeloupe are sufficient evidence of what should be expected from both royalist and revolutionary versions of France's national ethos of France. Forms of evenness evolving before the British occupation derived from mechanisms of survival put into motion by the settlers themselves, while patterns of inhumane exploitation and class struggle derived from actual or potential external connections - French or otherwise.

The eventuality for the British or the French colonial Empire to secure possession of Dominica during the Seven Year War (1756-1763) would have implied for the different groups of settlers readjustments of their daily practices in opposite directions. The residents were, in spite of their relatively peaceful inter-action, parties to the conflict. As long as it lasted, Caribs and Blacks would not be molested. Both French and English nationals would need to ensure the possibility of seeking refuge in the interior under the control of these settlers. Now the pre-eminence of any group of European nationals depended on the issue of the war, the conclusion of which was a prerequisite for the establishment of an efficient system of inequalities.

Therefore the rivalry opposing the nation-states was a parameter qualifying the social choices of the three groups of settlers. The aggravation of the conflict would condition the development of self-reliance and foster a tendency toward the emergence of inequalities based on individual achievements. On the contrary, the solution of the war was a requirement for the arrangement of a system of inequalities based on social values operating among the contending parties and favourable to the component of the European settlers to which ensuing status could be ascribed.

In other words, it is in this dimension where making a living in the island was framed by the terms of its relative neutrality, which derived from the conflict opposing the metropolitan countries, that the significant social groups within which the individuals evolved are defined as communities of settlers, aggregated according to their national or pseudo-national affiliation. Through

an observation of this dimension, one arrives at the articulation of a first layer of structures. Relations carried out at this level bore no similarity to those of the established plantation societies, and were oriented towards the creation of an underlying pattern of equalitarianism, or of a system of differentiation based on individual achievements.

When self-reliance had to be stressed, the individuals appeared aggregated in more or less autonomous communities, entertaining a set of relations which should be conceived as forms of social negotiations oriented towards the reproduction of each village community in its entirety and specificity. For these negotiations to be carried out, a form of consensus had to evolve, that is to say, certain commonality of norms and principles for interaction has to be possessed. This is alluded to when one refers to an emerging society in Dominica before 1763. It is at this level that one also finds the germs of a national territory, the home-country of these groups of settlers.

But the settlers were part of a larger context, organized according to a series of norms and principles inimical to self-reliance. Information on their behaviour reveals that they were aware of this fact. This explains the observation of seeds of class struggles within the island prior to the institutionalization of colonialism. Superimposed on the first layer of structures, one recognizes then an embryonic second layer deriving from the broader frame of action and actualized in Dominica through the systematic infringement of the Treaty of Neutrality and the repeated ill-disguised refusal of the Governors-General of Martinique to obey the instructions on mutual evacuation by both English and French settlers.

Efforts to capitalize on class exploitation or to protect oneself from class exploitation developed more fully after 1763. By focusing on the rearrangement of Dominica's resources according to the objectives of the colonial empire, one becomes aware of the areas of social life where the system of inequalities fostered by the metropolitan countries could not in actual fact be implemented. It has been seen that the colonial masters did not or could not seriously interfere with the economic system of the island. The social consensus deriving from the efforts towards self-reliance, even though subordinated to the political and strategical concerns of the metropolitan countries, was poised to be reproduced indefinitely. The second half of the century was then characterized by the predominance of a class structure, laid upon the social cohesion of communities organized along a set of suppressed indigenous principles.

In other words, one observes in Dominica, from the earliest stage of European interference, the development of a class structure, which at the end of the eighteenth century had not embraced or significantly modified all social and economic practices taking place in the territory. Within the framework of this overall dominant structure, the population continued to carry out a series of activities according to the rationale embodied in the first layer of structural relations identified earlier.

It is important to register how national affiliation and ensuing ethnic identification were of paramount importance during this century, and how in fact a peculiar system of class conflicts derived therefrom and not vice versa. The population was aware of the impending changes in the power relations and knowledgeable of the leeway provided by the inconclusiveness of the international struggle. Since the three groups of settlers were involved willingly or unwillingly in these conflicts, economic inequalities among them and within the European settlers germinated from this political arena and not from their differentiated economic performance.

The likelihood of a reversal in the political fortune of the great powers explains the actual truce between the three groups of settlers and between Europeans of different nationalities. Their economic projects however had to cater for viable alternatives once the truce ended. British or French settlers could expect to win or lose in the power struggle, Black and Carib settlers had no alternative but to prepare for seclusion or at least for withdrawal: not only in the physical or geographical sense, but seclusion or withdrawal from the institutions to be established after the conclusion of the political conflicts and observable in embryo within Dominica or in full blossom in the neighbouring islands. This therefore was a basis for the divergence in their cultural outlook.

While the perspectives of an American adventure might have lured the Whites out of the hopeless conditions they were facing in Europe, and while the opportunities opened to them and to the Coloured in the established plantation societies were hardly more acceptable, they chose to launch in Dominica independent and self-reliant economic ventures servicing these plantation societies and indirectly the European ones. Hence life in a European settlement, in spite of its economic structure and potential conflicts with the planters of Martinique and Barbados, was a continuation of the plantation system and of European societies. As a result of European societies being torn by intestine conflicts, the economic

actors in Dominica adopted a pattern of behaviour suited to that circumstance: their approach to social intercourse in the island privileged the political factors and not the organization of an economic infrastructure capable of containing and influencing the interplay of political forces.

The case for the other ethnic segments of the population was quite different. The relevance of ethnic parameters in framing the development of social inequalities and the scope and perspectives of their basic economic practices is best seen by paying attention to the qualitative difference in realizing the output of, say, a European and a black woodcutter. For the same activity, organized according to identical management pattern (family production), both woodcutters would never enjoy the same returns. The isolation of the European woodcutter although it might have been real, was not necessary, and however poor his community might have been, it could aspire to evolve according to the dominant forms of production. This woodcutter could and would then realize his production through exchange or barter with any other island of the Caribbean.

The independent Black settlements in the interior of Dominica needed to entertain relations with the outer world, particularly to acquire weapons and replenish the community arsenal. But these relations would tend to be processed through the intermediary of the European settlers within the framework of the societal consensus emerging from the need for self-reliance. The concept of independent Blacks - as distinct from freed or emancipated Blacks - and hence the legitimacy of a Black settlement, being alien to the plantation milieu, the isolation of these settlements was necessary, even though it might not have been actual. The independent Black woodcutter, as distinct from an emancipated Black woodcutter, could not become a planter, and his community would never be in a position to become rich since he was prevented from having access to money and capital markets. The labour of an independent Black and the savings of his community could not be transformed into capital investments. Political limitations, enshrined in the legal definition of Blacks, would then closely determine their economic achievements. One is therefore justified in concluding that in Dominica economic inequalities derived from political inequalities or from the power relations between the different ethnic groups.

Since the dominant regional system was based on the enslavement of Africans, the independent Blacks had also in it some natural allies. They could maintain subversive contacts with the system. This eventually would be taken into account

by the European settlers for the choice between different alternative courses of action. When during the Seven Year War (1756-1763), the French settlers were momentarily forced to behave according to the Treaty of Neutrality, they rationalized their resistance by arguing that it would "prevent evacuation of an island that runaway Negroes from neighbouring islands might then convert into an unconquerable Guinea".^{129/} It is clear therefore that irrespective of any social consensus emerging in Dominica, the seed of class conflicts was transferred from the international context to the local set of interactions via racism. One is not arguing that race conflicts are prior to class conflicts in any context. The point is being made that in Dominica and probably in the entire Caribbean where the class structure derived from the European pattern of social relations, social classes have emerged after and as a consequence of race relations evolved outside the Caribbean by the European colonial powers, (and eventually as a consequence of class relations in Europe).

As for the Caribs, it is recorded that they also would carry out some marginal exchange with the French islands in procurement of rum and other foreign produce. When one remembers, however, that the alternative of a mass suicide appeared to them as an acceptable solution to their ordeal, one may safely assume that in their mind, the process of isolation was increasingly perceived as an irreversible trend.

As a corollary to the previous analysis, it would appear that a second element of commonality of views between the inhabitants of the island was the awareness of the paramount importance of political relations in shaping the society. The fact that the European settlers in particular the would-be planters, had access to the plantation economies organized by their respective mother-countries opened the possibility for negotiating some sponsorship which was to be discreet at the beginning but later becoming total and overt. This alternative would justify the expectations towards a dominant class position by either of the two important national subsectors among the European settlers.

For a dominant class to emerge, it would have to rely on the intervention of the corresponding national political forces. The space for class formation was at no point in time a setting where economic achievement was rewarded,

^{129/} J. Boromé, "the French and Dominica, 1699-1763" Aspects ... p.92.

rather it was an arena of power relations external to the territorial society in the making. Class formation was therefore subordinated to the relevance of national affiliations from which economic achievement would follow. Virtual intervention and actual support from the outside upset the equilibrium between the communities of settlers and fostered the development of social inequalities.

This specific dimension of social intercourse is usually more visible to traditional historiography. It nonetheless covers only one aspect of Dominica's history and is insufficient to unravel the complexity of its social structures. Moreover, another set of class conflicts evolved at the same time and hampered the functioning of the intended model of social relations.

Firstly, it has been hinted that the constant threat of evacuation and the possibility for Dominica to become either French or British would impinge on the performance of the would-be planters and enhance the risks of an option based on higher degrees of exploitation of actual enslaved and virtual enslavement of the so-called maroons. The European settlers had to keep open their option of retreating to the mountains in the event of military attacks from the unfriendly expeditions. They could not then antagonize the independent Blacks, nor unduly increase the exploitation of their enslaved unless their political situation improved substantially.

Secondly, (due to the political influence of the Martinican and Barbadian planter's lobby) logical and legitimate aspirations for evolving from the servicing of the established plantation economies to the achievement of full-fledged plantation development could not materialize. In other words, the aspirations of Dominican would-be planters clashed with the interests of actual planters in the neighbouring islands. This suggests the source of some sort of nationalistic sentiments, totally consistent with internal class exploitation, and antagonistic to similar dominant groups in the neighbouring islands.

Thirdly, it has been seen that neither Britain nor France was interested in the territory because of its agricultural potentials and that their assistance in the economic field remained less than adequate. Recurrent experience of the negative response from the metropolitan countries underscored the difficulty for the European settlers to accede to a clearly dominant class position, which by the same token would have enhanced the importance of the internal consensus oriented towards self-reliance and imprisoned these settlers (especially the French ones whose external sponsorship was notably weak after 1763) within a set of circumstances demanding some form of egalitarianism.

One can then diagnose the elements of double standards in the outlook of the would-be planters, especially those of French descent; these standards developed fully during the nineteenth century and explained the hinge-like role of the planters in the ruling of the territory. On the one hand these planters expressed a clear conviction of the unfairness of the circumstances which prevented them from leading a proper class system, and on the other they endorsed by their behaviour the adequacy of self-reliance - and ensuing egalitarianism - to these peculiar circumstances.

It was therefore the task of these would-be planters to transmit to the non-white settlers the demands on the territory implied in the arrangement of international forces. They were, however, more of a menace than a real dominant class: an impersonation of the political economy of the plantation system and at the same time the impotent engineers of the system. Since the system was a racist one, and since they played this role of "apocalypse horsemen" inasmuch as they belonged to different nation-states, on the one hand their eventual class position emerged indissolubly linked to their ethnic and nationally ascribed peculiarities, and on the other their political primacy was an immediate consequence of these ethnic and national characteristics.

Inversely, in response to the practices originating at the level of the international political structure and oriented towards the establishment of a plantation system, and also in response to the development of plantations in neighbouring isles, the Blacks whether independent or enslaved tended to react as a social class in the making. The formation of the oppressed class among the few inhabitants of Dominica took place with reference to this international world, and not in connection with locally oriented phenomena.

In colonial situations, the development of self-propelled economic initiatives was accidental. The case of Dominica derived from its ambiguous position as a politically neutral island during the first half of the century. The relations of dependence evolving after 1763 did not destroy nor eliminate the activities aimed at satisfying local needs; they merely relegated them to a secondary position. The development of self-reliant activities and organizations appeared from the very beginning inversely proportional to the advancement of European-centered ones and not superseded by them. In fact, given the repeated failure to establish plantations after the British seizure,

Dominica remained an "economically neutral island": production in the territory would be of no consequence to the colonial powers, the sister-islands, their plantocracies and merchant classes.

Now self-reliance in the Caribbean, particularly in Dominica, is not meant to be anonymous with self-sufficiency and subsistence. Self-reliant, that is self-propelled activities of the local population, had extraterritorial implications from the very outset. An overflow of Dominican inward-oriented activities would be distributed to the neighbouring islands in exchange for articles needed by these same locally-based activities. A set of inter-play of international influences in the Caribbean.^{130/}

The passage from a settlement colony to a pseudo-plantation colony shows how ambiguous dominant influences in the formation of the society derived from the policies of the French and the British military establishments. Both establishments would strive to bring the resources of the island within the projects of their respective governments. Within these metropolitan policies, whose implementation was necessary for the emergence of a locally rooted plantocracy, military considerations had a clear priority over the question of economic advancement. Participation of the Dominican society in the Caribbean plantation system through the intermediary of a local dominant class was then frustrated, not only because of the confusion arising from an indecisive power struggle, but because of the very reason for that power struggle. External sponsorship produced a strong but stunted military and administrative machinery capable of controlling the island without delivering the counterpart services and infrastructural works bequeathed by the colonisers whenever economic exploitation was their prime concern.

External patronage creates, wherever local development is muzzled, the necessary conditions for class differentiation. In Dominica, it allowed the corresponding national sector in the European settlements to initiate practices on an island-wide basis. Dominant class positions derived from ascribed character-

^{130/} An effort will be made to reserve the term inter-island milieu or region to Caribbean self-centered activities while the word international will be used preferably when reference is made to activities, organizations, arrangements of social groups in the Archipelago, sponsored by and servicing the colonial powers.

istics of prime importance for the establishment of colonial order. Concretely ethnic and racial characteristics as well as national affiliation constituted the central elements for the functioning of the society. Similarly, the cleavage between the bulk of the population and the tiny administrative élite became unbridgeable within this form of colonialism insensitive to individual achievements.

In view of the simultaneity in the Dominican context of an inward-oriented economic system with an outward-oriented political one, the whole process of the articulation of social classes remained incomplete. The unpredictability of the shifts in power relations between the colonial empires hindered the efforts towards self-reliance. Inversely, alternative economic practices to uplift the general living conditions in the island could develop fully only if they were to be consistent with political orientations originated beyond the concern of the actual economic actors of the locality.

These two overlapping structural arrangements coexisted in Dominica: the locally centered one which never delivered its built-in political dimension, and the European centered which was initiated in the international political space, but which never thoroughly transformed the economic fabric of the society. Ethnic, national and class values intermingled, motivating apparently contradictory practices which may be classified according to the structural ladder to which they were related. Economic practices significant for daily subsistence and renewal of the society became relegated to the sphere of private and community life, while political control, deriving from the world-wide policy of the imperial master, failed to establish an institutional infrastructure consistent with the empire's economy.

Taking into account the conflicts in which European slave owners, enslaved and independent Blacks were involved, particularly after 1763, it seems fair to suggest that the primacy of external political interference over economic achievement was not only a social fact, but a guiding principle of social choice and a basic element in the culture of the emerging society. It must have been perceived that contending social classes did not evolve from an endogenous process, but was created thanks to the political patronage of the colonial states. This perception of external dominance seems to pervade class antagonism throughout the nineteenth century.

The practices of the different colonial empires aimed at a basic objective of capitalizing on class exploitation, which they arranged:

- 1) by sponsoring the access of their nationals to a dominant class position; and

- ii) by providing them, through the slave-trade, with a sufficient number of enslaved labourers.

Since the inhabitants of Dominica were not a central figure in that system, they enjoyed some leeway to exercise their self-reliance. This exercise was made in the context of and in opposition to the basic policy of the empires.

It is also fair to conclude that the areas for realising self-reliance were laid down by an inversion of the imperial scale of values. Ethnic, national and class loyalties in that order would be the parameters for social consensus - distinct from what usually emerged in a well exploited plantation island but yet far away from a cohesive national ethos - bringing together all Dominicans. It will be noted during the nineteenth century, that the challenges to the colonial authorities will be stronger, as they rely on deeper levels of loyalties.

VII

TOWARDS STAGNATION - NINETEENTH CENTURY ECONOMY

It has been seen that the British had no interest in organizing a flourishing economy in Dominica during the eighteenth century. The development of trade which derived from the establishment of the free port system, did not last. The island, therefore, entered the nineteenth century with a productive system which was backward in terms of the patterns prevalent in the colonial world. Moreover, during the nineteenth century, England initiated the transformation of its economy and oriented its activities towards the larger countries of the globe. The Caribbean as a whole lost its previous importance^{131/}, and consequently Dominica sank into almost total oblivion.

The outward-oriented economy progressed from a state of depression to one of stagnation, with minimal periods of economic recovery. The predominance of small farms made it impossible for the island as a whole to withstand the changes in the international market on which planters and merchants were totally dependent for a return on their export crop, even though the flexibility of these multi-crop ventures assisted in postponing total bankruptcy. At different times coffee, sugar, cocoa and limes took precedence over each other to each some income for the proprietors and provide temporary relief of the economy. The two main crops, coffee and sugar, on which the externally-oriented economy was based, underwent drastic decline, the former by the third decade of the century, the latter towards its end. An effort will be made to describe the process, which eventually resulted in the paralysis of the Dominican plantation economy.

^{131/} "Even when the expansionist forces reasserted themselves in the 1840s and 1850s, the British West Indies were not immediate objects of interest ... Such unconcern was increased by the declining economic importance of the islands and by the British government's completion in the middle of the century, of its demolition of the seventeenth-eighteenth century mercantile structure. This remodelling of Britain's trade and shipping policy was a product of a profound change in her economic situation, and of her relationship with her colonies - especially the West Indies". C.J. Bartlett "A New Balance of Power: the nineteenth century", in E.V. Gouveia and C.J. Bartlett, Chapters in Caribbean History 2, UWI, Caribbean University Press, re-impression, 1973, P.66.

The decline of Dominica's free port trade at the end of the eighteenth century continued into the nineteenth. The outbreak of war with France in 1803 curtailed economic relations with Martinique and Guadeloupe and damaged Dominica's importance in the economic geography of the region. The island's economic activity further dwindled as a result of the new orientation of British trade towards the Spanish colonies. By 1808, Dominica's role as an international entrepôt was obsolete and its ports were no longer considered part of the free port system. This meant the end of British economic interest in the island.

Parallel to this involution, the weakness of Dominica's plantation system which was apparent in the lack of specialization of its agricultural enterprises, worsened during the nineteenth century as perennial tree crops took precedence over seasonal cultivation. The economy seemed to shy away gradually from labour intensive ventures and their implied industrial relations, and developed some form or organization half-way between cultivation and simple collection of fruits.

At the beginning of the period under review sugar cane was a main crop however small the acreage devoted to it. Production data show periods of increased output, within a general movement towards total decline as they approached the end of the century. Besides, production was minimal when compared with that of the rest of the British West Indies.

DOMINICA'S SUGAR PRODUCTION FOR YEARS 1815, 1828, 1882, 1894^{132/}

Year	Dominica's Sugar Production	Total Production of British West Indies	Dominica's Production as % of total
1815	2,205 tons	168,077 tons	1.3
1828	2,497 "	202,396 "	1.2
1882	3,421 "	315,138 "	1.1
1894	1,050 "	260,211 "	0.4

^{132/} Data derived from E. Williams, From Columbus to Castro - The History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969, André Deutsch, London 1970, p. 368.

From 1799 to 1807 sugar prices on the international market were depressed and this resulted in the slump in production. Throughout the second decade, the industry was frequently affected by hurricanes (1813, 1814, 1816 and 1820). As a result Marshall recorded a decline in production to 2,500 hogshead of sugar in 1819.^{133/} There was a concurrent reduction in the numbers of the enslaved labour force.^{134/} During the five years prior to emancipation, nonetheless, Sewell recorded some recovery. He refers to these years as the period of greatest prosperity - achieved as a result of the enslavement of the population - with an average annual export of 6,000,000 lbs. (2,697 tons).^{135/}

In the immediate post-emancipation period, 1835-1838, sugar production reportedly declined by 33 percent as compared with the years 1831-1834. By contrasting 1831-1834 to 1839-1842, a further decrease of 26 percent is registered.^{136/}

The decline of the estate system in the island followed closely the termination of the period of enslavement. Apprenticeship did not prove very successful, since it was very difficult to have a hold on the labour force in a territory where many acres of unused land were available. The already depleted labour force withdrew from the estates with immediate effects on production. The cultivation of sugar cane and the other export crops suffered substantially.

The ex-enslaved established themselves on their own, producing provisions for subsistence and local consumption; but as the 1897 West India Royal Commission Report reveals, these labourers worked part-time on the estates for wages. It is worth noting that wages in Dominica during the middle decades - 1850s and 1860s - were bigger than in other islands because of the scarcity of labour. High wages were the only means of maintaining a somewhat steady supply of labour on the estates.

^{133/} "In Dominica the repeated hurricanes made the soil very sterile". B. Marshall op. cit., p. 105.

^{134/} The depletion of the enslaved labour force is referred to later.

^{135/} W. Sewell, Ordeal of Free Labour in the British West Indies, London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. 1968, p. 161; E. Williams, op. cit., p. 339.

^{136/} W.L. Burn, Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies, J. Cape, London, 1937, P. 12.

During the 1850's, the sugar industry showed some revival. Both Sewell and Williams make references to the year 1858 to show the relative prosperity of that period.^{137/} In 1858 production reached 6,262,000 lbs. (2,796 tons) which was higher than the average production of the pre-emancipation years; this increased production is attributed to the higher productivity of free labour. The reference to free labour could mean the productivity of wage labour as well as the production of sugar cane by peasants on their own plots. Peasant production of the crop was a very common feature in the island.

It is difficult to assess how long this period of increased prosperity lasted. Data available for the 1860s do not provide a clear understanding of the state of the sugar industry. One Dominican planter, who was interviewed by the Royal Commissioners, referred to 1865 as a period when the sugar industry was comparatively prosperous but sugar was not even then a paying industry.^{138/} Another interviewee, however, stated that the industry declined since 1866.^{139/} Yet, the Watts Report provides data for 1875 in which year sugar supposedly represented 79.5 percent ^{140/} of the total value of the island's products. This could mean that although crop production had decreased, sugar still remained the most important export staple.

In 1890, the percentage of sugar in total export was still 43 percent. It dwindled nonetheless to a small share and in 1896 represented only 15 percent. The situation of sugar planters was described as "stagnation and ruin".^{141/} Only two estates produced sugar exclusively and acreage

^{137/} Williams, op. cit., p. 339 and W. Sewell, op. cit., p. 161.

^{138/} Report of the West India Royal Commission, London, H.M. Stationery Office 1897, Appendix C, Part IX, Dominica P. 127. Interview with a proprietor. This report is hereafter referred to as the Report of the West India Royal Commission, 1897.

^{139/} Ibid. p. 135.

^{140/} Sir Francis Watts, Report on the Agricultural Conditions of Dominica with Recommendations for their Amelioration, Bulletin Office, Dominica 1925, p. 11 (Hereafter referred to as the Watts Report). Data as presented in various reports are not always consistent. There is some variation. One finds it surprising that sugar was still so important.

^{141/} Report of the West India Royal Commission, 1897, P. 128.

under cane was 975 acres out of 30,000 acres of cultivable land. In the Royal West India Report 1897, it is clear that the export of sugar in 1896 was minimal - "616 tons of raw muscovado sugar and 229 tons of centrifugal".^{142/} The industry was in a very primitive state. Only common muscovado sugar was produced in addition to quantities of rum. By this time, it was realized that there was no need even to attempt the recovery of sugar cane, since the export economy had switched to other crops.

"Since, however, Dominica has never been so great a sugar producing colony, as most of the others, and sugar exports now only form 15 per cent of the value of the whole, it is unnecessary to discuss the question of taking special measures, as far as Dominica is concerned, to re-establish the sugar industry there".^{143/}

Dominica was the first of the islands "where cultivation (of sugar cane) fell in desuetude"^{144/}. The general decline is attributed to similar reasons adduced during the previous century: firstly the mountainous terrain of the island and the consequent difficulties in cultivation and transportation and secondly, in Dominica the multiplicity of small factories and the primitive methods used increased the cost of production. In addition to the topography of the island the lack of capital prohibited the creation of large central factories. As a result, the depressed prices offered for sugar on the international market made Dominican grown sugar totally uncompetitive. Added to this, the yield per acre was very low as compared to other British West Indian islands.^{145/} In a memorandum submitted to the Royal Commission

^{142/} Ibid.

^{143/} Ibid. p.50, para. 395.

^{144/} The Watts Report, p.11.

^{145/} "With all possible coaxing our own soil will not, except on a very few estates, yield per acre the paying quantity of sugar". Great British Parliament, Report of the Royal Commission appointed in December 1882, to Enquire into the Public Revenues, Expenditures, Debts and Liabilities of the islands of Jamaica, Grenada, St. Vincent, Tobago, St. Lucia and the Leeward Islands, London 1884, Shannon Irish University Press 1971, Part III, Appendix mm, Digest of Evidence. Interview with small proprietor/civil servant/merchant. This report is hereafter referred to as the Report of the Royal Commission 1884.

in 1897 one finds repeated descriptions of the wanton exploitation of Dominica's "virgin soil".

"The object was to get as much profit as possible out of the estates, with a minimum expenditure of money for keeping up the fertility of the soil, and for manufacturing the sugar and its by-products. Very little capital was laid out on improved machinery, for the extraction of a greater proportion of cane juice, and thus much sugar was left in the canes ... The common muscovado sugar was the only kind made in the island, and the employment of scientific principles in the manufacture of a high-grade product was unheard of on Dominican estates".^{146/}

Finally, the planters were able to switch to alternative staples as particular crops fetched higher prices on the international market.

The other export crop, coffee, faced a series of setbacks during the eighteenth century. It continued, however, as an important product in the early part of the nineteenth century, in spite of the decline in total volume of production. During the first two decades, low prices as a result of the glut on the coffee market in addition to damage by hurricanes, accelerated the deterioration of the industry. Within four decades - 1790s to 1830s - coffee production dropped from between four and five million pounds to 1.6 million pounds,^{147/} perhaps less; production in 1792 amounted to an estimated 4 to 5 million pounds; in 1823 2,177,559 pounds, and in 1833 1,612,528 pounds.^{148/}

All data on the nineteenth century posit that one of the reasons for the rapid decrease in coffee production was an attack of "blight".

^{146/} Report of the West India Royal Commission 1897, p.123.

^{147/} S. Grieve, Notes on the Island of Dominica, Adam and Charles Black, London 1906 pp.39-40.

^{148/} Reports by the West India Royal Commission 1897 however, give a production figure of 973,754 lbs. of sugar in 1838. This may be a more reliable figure if the decline set in around 1825, but it certainly reflects a steep decrease from 1823 production figures, p.125.

Reportedly, the attacks of blight which started by the end of the third decade of the century caused failure of the crops by 1835.^{149/} In 1832 coffee was 32 percent of Dominica's exports. The Watts Report put the production level by 1848 at about 100,000 - 120,000 lbs.^{150/} The West India Royal Commission Report (1897) however, mentions other possible reasons which contributed to the decline of coffee - political disturbances, restrictions of the slave trade and the superior profit arising from sugar.^{151/} It is noticeable that starting from 1829 the periods in which "blight" is mentioned are years just prior to emancipation. The year 1829 falls within the period 1820-1832 in which there was increased sugar production. The decline then could have been due to the opportunities taken by the planters to increase sugar acreage at the expense of coffee, (especially as 'the price of coffee was more depressed prior to 1831 - relatively than sugar').^{152/} This switch in emphasis was an established practice in times of good sugar prices since, as observed, most planters in the island grew both sugar and coffee. The lack of interest in coffee at the time meant that planters could not take advantage of the high market prices in 1831. The decline continued after emancipation.

Coffee exports for the last decade of the nineteenth century show the fluctuations of production. In the year 1884 coffee production reached a low of 1,081 lbs, perhaps as a result of the hurricane of 1883, rising gradually to 9,591 by 1888, and continuing a slow upward trend to 25,786 lbs in 1896.

^{149/} W.L. Burn, op. cit., p. 173.

^{150/} The Watts Report, p. 10.

^{151/} These arguments are also substantiated by a report of 1875, by H. Prestoe, a government botanist of Trinidad referred to in the Watts Report.

^{152/} Minutes of interview with the Secretary of the Committee of West India Merchants in London in the Report from the Select Committee on the Commercial State of the West India colonies, London, House of Commons, 1832, Shannon Irish University Press 1971, p.36.

As regards cacao Sewell noted that the crop was cultivated in preference to coffee and sugar in the post-emancipation period.^{153/}

"As sugar declined in value, cacao happily rose in price and its cultivation was taken up by many persons when the sugar estates began to fall".^{154/}

Before emancipation the maximum annual production was 9,000 lbs., but in the post-emancipation period, around the middle of the century, 125,000 lbs. were exported.^{155/} By the mid-1880s the value of cacao exports ranged between 20 per cent and 25 per cent of the total exports of the island. Towards the end of the century, production of the crop was gradually increasing. One of the problems with cacao estates, however, was their limited capacity to give employment to the labour force.

The situation was the same for limes, which became the second most important export crop in Dominica after the failure of coffee and sugar. The introduction of lime cultivation occurred in the latter half of the century, reportedly in the 1860s and the crop acreage was expanded in the 1870s. By 1875, the crop began earning greater profits than sugar cane and coffee and was being widely introduced on coffee estates. The production of lime and lime juice gained rapidly in importance and by the end of the century became the leading export of the island. Circumstances had forced the Dominican planters to find an alternative crop to fill the gap created by coffee and sugar in the export-oriented sector. An interesting development, however, was the use of old cane mills to process limes.

"In their own works, the estates concentrated the juice and many of the old steam crushers and boilers can still be seen on some estates ...".^{156/}

^{153/} W.G. Sewell, *op. cit.*, p.162.

^{154/} *Ibid.* p.125.

^{155/} *Ibid.* p.162.

^{156/} *Report of the Royal Commission 1884, Part. III, Appendix mm.* Interview with Dr. Nicholls.

The system allowed the planter owning the mill to profit more from the relationship with smaller farmers, since smaller planters sold their fruit to mill owners, who were in fact larger producers.

Lime production helped to save the export-oriented sector of the Dominican economy in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.

"The cultivation of limes did more than anything else to tide over the distress caused by the collapse of the sugar industry in Dominica".^{157/}

According to information presented to the Royal Commission in 1897, although the value of the products from lime was high and the cultivation profitable, very few (planters and labourers) participated in the income derived from the crop.

"Only a few planters however, made money out of limes whilst their neighbours, hoping against hope for the resuscitation of the sugar industry, were being ruined".^{158/}

The cultivation spread, however, when it was realized that other by-products from the fruit, especially the essential oil was also of some value. The profitability of the crop in Dominica encouraged a British company, Messrs. Rose and Company of Leith and London, to purchase an extensive lime producing property on the island in the early 1880s. The company was the manufacturer of products derived from limes and therefore their introduction into the island meant that they were in control of production of the crop there and undoubtedly created marketing arrangements with smaller lime producers. Data reveal clearly the increasingly important role of lime production in Dominica's export economy, although, in general, the value of exports decreased gradually towards the end of the century.

^{157/} West India Royal Commission Report 1897, op. cit., p.125.

^{158/} Ibid.

It is now apparent that numerous factors had inhibited the development of the Dominican export-oriented economy in the nineteenth century. These included, during the first three decades, war with the maroons, natural disasters, international war, added to the general instability of the European markets and all had the effect of depressing the Dominican economy. The great loss of the enslaved between 1808 and 1821 through sale on transfer to the other islands was an indicator of the lack of prospects in the island. In 1828 it was reported that

"In Dominica, for instance, even the most productive estates were scarcely giving the owners any return on their investments and the others could not even meet operating costs." 159/

The extremity of the depression forced the Dominican planters to send a petition to the colonial government lamenting their economic distress. This trend continued in Dominica throughout the century. Planters found themselves in a constant state of indebtedness which was reflected in decreased productive capacity. Undoubtedly, British merchants soon lost interest in investing in the island, since profits were not forthcoming.

Throughout the century there is repeated reference to a lack of capital in the island. The majority of Dominican estates were encumbered and the relationship between merchant and planter meant that the latter was obligated to consign all produce to the merchant, through whom he would obtain all his supplies and his freight. 160/ Such a relationship would explain the lack of money which affected the island during the whole century. The report in 1832 attributed the economic distress in the British West Indies to the high predominance of mortgaged estates.

"The prevalence of these mortgages ... as not merely a symptom, but a pregnant cause, of the accumulated body distress." 161/

Undoubtedly therefore, Dominica's plantation economy in the post-emancipation period continued to deteriorate. The generally low market prices of sugar meant

159/ B. Marshall, op.cit., pp. 109-110

160/ The relationship is referred to in the Report from the Select Committee on the Commercial State of the West India Colonies, 1832, op.cit.

161/ Ibid. p.18.

that very little was earned for the island. By 1884 in the Minutes of the Report by the Royal Commission ^{162/} it is acknowledged that money was scarce in Dominica.

"People have no money to spend. Estates work only three days."

"The greatest want of the country is to be opened up, so as to give employment to labour. Why not get loans here as in other places? At present only a few merchants support the place." ^{163/}

Income in the island was then dependent on cacao and a small amount of limes, the former being grown largely by peasant farmers.

Abandonment of estates became a common occurrence in Dominica during the nineteenth century. In many cases estates could not be sold because of the low value of the land and were simply abandoned. One proprietor revealed that of his ownership of 100 acres only 15 acres were in cultivation and one estate had not been visited for nine years. ^{164/}

Apart from the lack of capital to pursue plantation development, abandonment of estates was blamed on the lack of roads in the island. The lack of infrastructural development throughout the century is evidence of the lack of interest on the part of the colonial government even in the externally oriented sector of the island's economy. An interviewee in 1882 lamented that he had known estates thrown out of cultivation for want of roads. ^{165/} Another admitted that "his greatest trouble was want of good road and (he) had made repeated applications without getting anything done." ^{166/} Yet another referred to "the present tracks" - "the conditions of the roads in Roseau is a disgrace to any country claiming to be at all civilised ... ^{167/} A clearer understanding of this lack of infrastructural development is made by a Dominican proprietor and civil servant.

^{162/} Report of the Royal Commission 1884, Part 111.

^{163/} Report of the Royal Commission 1884, appendix mm p. 138
Interview with a storekeeper, March 1884.

^{164/} Ibid. p. 139. Interview with a proprietor.

^{165/} Ibid. p. 140. Interview with the editor of the "Dial".

^{166/} Ibid. p. 139. Interview with a proprietor.

^{167/} Ibid. p. 140. Interview with a merchant/attorney.

"Our roads are no better than they were in the days of slavery, some are worse." ^{168/}

This is reported five decades after emancipation (1884).

The Report of the Royal Commission of 1897 revealed a greater stagnation in the economy of the island. The island's revenue declined as the market prices of the major crops of cacao and limes continued to fall. The stage was being set for a decline in the production of these crops in the twentieth century, as values decreased. The abandonment of estates continued and the majority of estates remained encumbered. Much of the land remained undeveloped and unexploited and there was a high rate of underemployment of the labouring population and a lack of money in circulation at all levels of the society.

The population trend during the nineteenth century is one of the most obvious indicators of the economic state of Dominica. The general economic decline in the island was reflected in the stagnant and eventually decreased population as the depression became established and was reinforced. One of the most important elements upon which the plantation economy was based, that is enslaved labour, was rapidly depleted over three decades. In 1794, Dominica's enslaved population was an estimated 30,000. ^{169/} During the pre-emancipation period large numbers of the enslaved were removed from the system by sale, transfer, exportation or death. Planters could not afford to maintain many of their enslaved labour force in times of economic distress. Some enslaved were therefore sold while others were removed by their owners to more prosperous islands.

"Between 1808 and 1821, a total of 799 slaves had to be sold for debt and 2,197 were removed by the owners chiefly to Demerara and Trinidad where prospects were more promising." ^{170/}

^{168/} Ibid. p. 143. Interview with Mr. Fadalle, Provost Marshall.

^{169/} C. Goodridge, "Dominica - The French Connexion." Aspects ...
p.157.

^{170/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p. 110.

"(...) the heavy exportation of slaves from the island started in 1808 and increased as the sugar industry became more and more unprofitable." 171/

Between 1816 and 1819, an estimated total of 5,000 slaves reportedly died from famine or diseases connected with it. 172/ The years 1812-1818 were difficult ones when the island was devastated by numerous hurricanes which decreased food supply and interrupted trade, causing a disruption in supplies. By 1884 the enslaved labour force had been reduced to 14,175, that is, about half its size. Based on compensation claims, put forward by Dominican slave owners, Williams' estimate is even lower - 11,664 at emancipation. 173/

In the post-emancipation period, planters could hardly afford to hire wage labour since there was a shortage of money in the island. Consequently the numerous types of labour contracts between planters and labourers could not satisfy the labouring classes' needs for money. A general solution was emigration of Dominica labour force.

The inability of the plantation economy to thrive in Dominica and the subsequent abandonment of estates were associated with a depletion in the numbers of "whites" in the population. There was an estimated population of 1,361 whites in 1813 174/; by the middle of the century (1844) the numbers were reduced to approximately 855; 175/ and by 1884 whites formed only 1.3 per cent of the population (289). 176/

Throughout the nineteenth century, the export sector of the Dominican economy proved that it would not withstand the general depression of prices on the international market and it was apparent that regenerative economic activity was highly dependent on that sector, through which capital would filter (in terms of money) to estate owners and to the labouring population.

171/ Ibid. pp. 241-242.

172/ Ibid. p. 227.

173/ E. Williams, op. cit., p. 283.

174/ B. Marshall, op. cit., p. 390.

175/ W. Sewell, op. cit., p. 161.

176/ Report of Royal Commission (1884) Appendix zz.

The decline of coffee and sugar, the two main crops, also meant the decline of the productive factors which contributed to the viability of the plantation economy. The result of the depressed market prices was lack of capital inflow to the island. The repercussions of this were numerous: for example the system of wage labour could not be maintained, and the labour force on the estates therefore dwindled as did the number of planters. Another interesting development in the post-emancipation period was the limited development and subsequent decline of the peasant economy as the stagnation of the plantation economy progressed. In a following chapter, this association will be explored, as well as other consequential development in the social and political structures.

VIII

THE MULATTO ASCENDANCY

One of the distinctive features of the Dominican society during the nineteenth century, when compared to other Caribbean societies, was the rise of a mulatto oligarchy. This development appeared linked with a nation-building process, that is with the perception and initial organization of the Dominicans as a differentiated national entity. It is also accompanied by a counter-tendency - oriented towards the increasing control of all internal affairs of the colony by the British Crown, that is the gradual implementation of Crown Colony Government. The ambiguity built into these changes and into the diverse opportunities they encompassed, was further increased by an inter-connection of class and race conflicts, which originated from and guided practices which were not necessarily compatible.

The importance of national loyalties in the formation of dominant planter and merchant groups during the eighteenth century has been retrieved following testimonies of contemporaneous chroniclers of the epoch and of modern historians. It can be summarized in the following simple terms: Such persons who belonged to the metropolitan country which seized the island were the only ones entitled to privileges and immunities: the others, considered as "adopted subjects" and eventual enemies, had to face several discriminatory measures.

Very little data on the century deal with the situation of the free coloured people. According to Atwood, they were chiefly of French extraction, and their migration was due to racial discrimination to which they were subjected in the French colonies. Their motives to migrate did not differ then from those of the poor French whites; additional racial discrimination, which they might have found unbearable, played the role of overt "push" factor in their country of origin.

Atwood also mentioned the remarkable "idleness" and "insolence" of the coloureds, together with their competitiveness in small trade and petty commerce, traits which usually belong to urban people. He added to his presentation that:

"There are, however, some of them who are natives of the island, who have good coffee plantations." 177/

It would seem that the first planters to have lost their linkages with any

177/ Atwood, op. cit., p.220.

"mother country" were the free coloureds, and it may also be assumed that the same occurred among the urban people dedicated to other activities.

In 1822, the coloured people formed an organization

"To secure the abolition of all laws which deprived (them) of the benefits and privileges of subjects as enjoyed by other free inhabitants".^{178/}

This move was aimed at counteracting the unabated hostility of the local whites. In 1830, the local legislature rejected "a directive from the Home Government to concede political rights to the free coloureds".^{179/} Nonetheless in 1831, with the passage by the British Parliament of the "Brown Privilege Bill" they were granted full social and political rights. From that point on and for two consecutive generations, the Dominican coloureds controlled the majority of "electives" to the local Assembly. Significantly enough, their main organ of expression was a newspaper called The Dominican. Also in quite an illustrative manner, the newspaper conveying the views of the whites was entitled The Colonist.

Opposition between "The Dominican" team and "The Colonist" team was at the centre of conflictive practices taking place in different areas of intercourse. Three relevant areas can be distinguished - urban/countryside relationships, relationships between "educated" (read exposed to British colonial outlook) and "uneducated" and interethnic relationships - all of them subsumed in the basic field of interaction formed by the latent struggle between the emerging nation and British colonial interests. Opposing class relationships between estate owners and West Indian and London merchants will be analysed in the following chapter.

^{178/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.205.

^{179/} Ibid. p.208.

The participation of Dominica in the British Empire had two facets - one political, the other economic. In view of the frailty of the economic system, that is of its lack of intersectoral linkages and above all of its isolation within the regional and the imperial economy, conflicts tended to become more visible at a political level. It is from this order of interaction that efforts were made to achieve the formulation and implementation of suitable economic policies by the British Government. Finding themselves in the impossibility of controlling the main economic parameters of social organization, those who identified themselves as Dominicans had not much leeway to negotiate the political hold on their country. Contradiction between embryonic national interests and colonialism implied negotiating a re-orientation of the economic fabric of the society with the British or some other metropolitan power; by so doing the frontier of any political dissension and the viability of an attempt to organize the nation with a minimum degree of autonomy was ipso facto established.

The urban/countryside relationships originated in the type of linkages between the colony and the metropole. Dominica was not a plantation island and the development of trade through the Free Port System faded out as soon as the British manufacturers gained direct access to foreign markets. The island remained then as a mere strategic stronghold in the Empire. At first approach, Roseau and Portsmouth appeared as modest villages. In fact, during all the nineteenth century the British did not add much relevant urban improvement to what the French had bequeathed since the eighteenth century:

"The Administrator who took over Dominica in September 1891 (...) observed: 'Roseau contains 7,000 inhabitants (...) with the exception of two or three main thoroughfares, all the streets are paved with cobblestones dating from the French days, while the lighting only consists of a few kerosene oil lamps'.^{180/}

These "villages" fulfilled urban functions or more precisely the role of cities responsible for the organization of their hinterland. In view of the peculiarity of the local economic system, the impacts of these cities on their zones of influence did not evolve beyond administrative and political interferences. Based on a depleted economic system, the material interests of both planters

^{180/} Honychurch, op. cit., pp.81-82.

and peasants had a diminished significance, compensated by an increased role of the "citizens", that is of the power base of the political representatives of the population.

It is relevant to highlight how the vision of a Dominican nation emerged beyond interests rooted in the limited interplay of economic forces. The concept of Dominican as used in the nineteenth century public life was associated with the enactment of the Brown Privilege Bill and referred basically to those who in fact enjoyed full political rights. It meant, not precisely the inhabitants of the island, but alluded to those who represented them and spoke in their name. It translated then the relative bargaining power of city dwellers and other "citizens".

Much of the ambiguity deriving from this restricted perception of who were Dominicans, needs to be untangled. In 1898, when the "electives" objected to the system of Crown Colony Government, a young English planter retorted what would have seemed obvious:

"(He) ridiculed the idea that the electives represented the people (in a population of 26,841, comprising 9,000 males, barely one quarter of the 612 registered voters had troubled to go to the polls in the last election) ..."181/

The evidence of this arithmetic escaped the "electives" (those who could be appointed by elections) and their supporters. The power base of these "electives" was quite comfortable with the de facto and de jure limitations to the exercise of political rights. It will be seen in fact no proposal was formulated to enlarge that power base. It was not perceived that the 27,000 inhabitants or the adult males among them were capable of voting and being elected.

The fact that it seemed natural that the politically active persons should represent the totality of the population could be explained by the existence of an area of social intercourse where class and urban interests overlapped. As for the whites upon whom the Brown Privilege Bill was forced, they not only questioned the right of the "electives" to represent the people, they also could not see the usefulness of a separate, responsible and representative government.

181/ J. Boromé, "How Crown Colony Came to Dominica", Aspects ... p.135.

The whites of Dominica, together with the Colonial Office championed during most of the nineteenth century two interrelated campaigns, which incidentally put in evidence the overlapping of urban and class interests within the global context of the conflicts opposing the emerging nation to the British Colonial policy. They tried to establish a single chamber government integrated into a federation of Leeward (or Windward) islands. The native mulatto oligarchy with their urban power base waged an unfettered war against these campaigns, to which they opposed the maintenance of a two-chamber system within a separate and responsible government.

Traditionally, a two-chamber system constituted the basic formula of colonial government. The Executive was assisted by a Council, consisting of appointed members, and a House of Assembly comprising "nominees" and representatives of the people - "the electives" - chosen by the freeholders in each parish.^{182/} The number of nominees and electives would vary, but the composition of the Assembly would follow this pattern.

At the beginning, only British-born whites were eligible for full participation in the political process, and French naturalized subjects could only vote.^{183/} During the early years of the nineteenth century, the criteria to enter the House of Assembly were: to be free, white, over 21 years of age, natural born or naturalized subject, protestant and having at least 80 acres of land or business in the capital, producing an income of £100 per annum.^{184/} In 1824, Government and Council had to accept the participation of the Roman Catholics (read: French Creoles) in the Assembly, because few British whites possessed the property qualifications.

"There were four Roman Catholic merchants and 56 proprietors and in all they possessed 48 coffee and 15 sugar estates and 3,134 slaves. But it was not until 1839 that they were given privileges equal to the British subjects".^{185/}

^{182/} T. Atwood, op. cit., pp.197-198.

^{183/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.103.

^{184/} Ibid. p.199.

^{185/} Ibid. p.203.

As seen already, in 1831 with the Brown Privilege Bill, the free coloureds achieved equal rights with the whites and being more numerous they soon controlled the Assembly. Now the privileged white community being swamped by the coloureds soon adhered to the alternative formula of a single chamber government incorporated into a General Assembly and Council for the Leeward Islands Federation. This proposal was put forward since 1837 by Governor Colebrooke.^{186/}

The idea of a single legislative chamber comprising a limited number of members all nominated by the Crown, that is Crown Colony Government, reappeared in the 1860s and it is significant that

"such suggestion (was) made locally by William MacIntyre a prominent white attorney prompted by the London firm of Burnley, Hume and Co. as well as other English owners of large Dominica properties whose interests MacIntyre represented".^{187/}

Under much pressure, the mulatto oligarchy retreated toward a solution of compromise, viz: a single Legislative Council divided into equal numbers of nominees and electives. This constitutional change was achieved while the members of "The Mulatto Ascendancy" were in the minority in the Assembly. It may be added that the presence of Her Majesty's Warship "AURORA" assisted in deterring the wave of popular manifestations. At the next opportunity the electorate expressed their feelings by returning a large majority of electives chosen from among the Mulatto Oligarchy to the Council. The words of their leader, George C. Falconer, at the opening session deserve to be remembered even though those words were hardly prophetic:

"My mission is to crush this House, and it shall be crushed".^{188/}

Similarity and conflicts of interests which characterized the interplay of practices between the different urban groups and the mulatto oligarchy on the one hand, and the opposition of these groups on the other

^{186/} J. Boromé, "How Crown Colony came to Dominica", Aspects ... p.141.

^{187/} Ibid. p.122.

^{188/} J. Boromé "George C. Falconer", Caribbean Quarterly 1960, Vol. VI, .p.13.

hand, can be exposed to a certain extent by analysing the position of the Mulatto Ascendancy towards its power base and the main policy measures which seemed to have ensured for two generations the loyalty of the electorate, or at least the wrath of the expatriates. At the same time, the global context in which the local conflicts evolved will be readily apparent.

Concessions to the "Roman Catholic" and "naturalized" subjects, the rise of what became the "Mulatto Ascendancy", together with the efforts of the expatriates and colonial authorities to impose Crown Colony Government and to absorb Dominica's administration in a federation of Leeward or Windward colonies, must be assessed against the type of whites who did accept the Dominica adventure. It so happened that the nineteenth century was not much different in this respect from the previous one. These rather poor heirs, viewed by The Colonist newspaper as "the more respectable classes of society", totalled 1,261 persons in 1813, nearly half of them living in the parish of St. George (where Roseau is located) and 79 in the parish of St. John (where the second city is to be found), the rest of the white population being distributed in the remaining eight rural parishes.

It has been seen that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the representative basis of colonial government was subject to racial and religious qualifications. After the passing of the Brown Privilege Bill, it could have been expected that land ownership qualifications would become more prominent than racial and religious ones. Beyond the formal requisites, however, there was an unspoken understanding which revealed a fundamental characteristic of the social system and showed that other factors - in a context of economic deprivation - were added to the land ownership qualifications for distinguishing among those who participated efficiently in the institutionalized struggle for power.

In the next chapter, some trends, even though frail, toward national unity operating around mid-nineteenth century are described. While class recriminations of the "Mulatto Ascendancy" and national demands would orient social practices toward island-wide solidarity, the probability of achieving upward mobility through the political ladder had an impact in the opposite direction, suggesting an unavowed acceptance of colonialism by the mobile groups. Main avenues of social mobility located beyond

economic achievement, exacerbated the rifts between urban and rural areas and added to the complexity of the situation.

The principle of colonial institutions being the exclusion of the bulk of the population from political participation, the prudence of the mulatto leaders in trying to increase the number of "citizens" becomes a relevant issue. During the second half of the century the "electives" proposed on different occasions an enlargement of the electorate by reducing the franchise. According to their proposal, it would suffice that a freeholder would swear to his qualification as a proof of the right to vote, and would show titles as a proof of a right to hold office.^{189/} The British Government did not oppose the proposal frontally, but requested in response the establishment of a registry of voters to determine their qualifications.

"Many members of the Assembly opposed such a step, knowing full well that some of them held land they had never seen or occupied, while others, on the eve of elections trotted out fictitious conveyances that temporarily transferred property from buyers to themselves".^{190/}

It follows from the proposal that more than landownership qualifications as a factor to distinguish voters and non-voters, parameters which determined the acceptability of the "word" of a freeholder, would be responsible for such distinction. Those who were able to manipulate properly and with the connivance of the community existing qualifications, were in the habit of voting and being nominated. So the proposal was hardly related to an increased participation in the institutionalized political interplay; it tended mainly to regularize a de facto situation.

Now, if people who had not the necessary qualifications used to vote and to be nominated, and if the British Government, by simply requesting and not imposing, a registry of voters, acknowledged its awareness of the situation, one wonders who then were excluded from institutionalized political participation.

^{189/} J. Borcmé, "How Crown Colony came to Dominica", Aspects ... p.121.

^{190/} Ibid.

The Colonist described in the following terms the House of Assembly under the "Mulatto Ascendancy".

"(The House is) mostly composed of men who are entirely ignorant of the first principles of government, and whose only reason for going there is to aggrandize themselves, and to bring ruin on the more respectable classes of society. They are uneducated, ignorant and revengeful, and most of them have neither status or property in the Island. The majority of these would-be legislators, is made up of journey-men printers and tailors, bankrupt shopkeepers, a blacksmith and a few fourth-rate planters. Very few of them articulate English decently and still smaller number are able to write it with any degree of accuracy and propriety".^{191/}

The quotation is particularly relevant and deserves close analysis, since it reveals how the mastery of language is one of the most ancient and pernicious forms of distributing rewards in Caribbean societies. The characteristics of the "electives" were contrasted to those of two actors, one barely referred to, the other notably absent. The first ones, placed at the top of the social ladder were native speakers of English: the British-born local whites. The Colonist took it for granted that "these more respectable classes of society" were acquainted with the "first principles of government". It actually meant that they were conversant with the ultimate principles of colonial government. The other strata, notably absent, comprised those who spoke no English at all, the recently enslaved blacks who occupied the bottom level of society, lived principally in the rural areas and constituted the appalling majority of the colonized people. The status of those strata was ascribed; for the local whites downward mobility was as impracticable as upward mobility was for the rural blacks.

The area of achievement - as determined by the colonial order - was located between these extremes. It was occupied by a continuum of urban groups whose degrees of proficiency in the dominant language closely conditioned the prestige of the occupations accessible to them. A reduced ranking of occupation is presented in the The Colonist's statement, which started with the journeymen printers and tailors, bankrupt shopkeepers and blacksmiths to end up with fourth-rate planters.

In the perception of The Colonist, language was not only placed as a paramount discriminatory factor of social stratification, but also as a

^{191/} Ibid.

strong indicator of the attitude to accept such a scale of stratification. To the inability to articulate English decently were associated the following: being uneducated, ignorant, revengeful, having no status or property in the island. Inversely, fluent English speakers, and particularly those who could write it properly, were endowed with several virtues, among others they were expected to be conciliating (that is not revengeful).

The revengeful lot - found "insolent" by Atwood - had grouses, and The Colonist acknowledged that they were in a position to aggrandize themselves and to modify social order by bringing ruin on "the more respectable" ones. In contemporary sociological vocabulary, it would be said that they controlled some avenues of upward mobility and could therefore achieve a better standing. The milieu of eventual achievement, which disturbed The Colonist, was the House of Assembly.

Taking into account the actual threat exposed by the newspaper and which according to its own testimony was carried out by persons who could hardly articulate English decently, one is satisfied that recognition was given to another set of knowledge and another form of education fermenting beyond the English language reservoir as bequeathed to the local whites. This would explain how pseudo-anglicised achievers could threaten the more respectable classes of society.

English culture, as it prevailed in nineteenth century Dominica was manipulated from two different angles by the native population. It was enacted by the "still smaller number able to write the language with any degree of accuracy and propriety". And it was also practised by those who had an exposure to and an understanding of the main parameters of this cultural frame, without any "decent" proficiency in the language which normally conveys such exposure and understanding.

Given the proposed urban-based Dominican culture, as a source of social objectives distinct from those shared by the local whites, the group of pseudo-anglicised people constituted the power base of the "electives", those who did vote and were motivated enough to do so, even when they were devoid of the prescribed qualifications. They must be considered as the first contribution to an enlarged set of citizens operating within the institutionalized colonial arrangement. On the same basis of an eventual Dominican culture searching for adequate instruments to implement locally formulated goals, the natives

who "articulated English more decently" would virtually play the role of "electives" and finally those of them who mastered the language and its orthographic rules have access to the leading posts in the community.

It is significant that the political arena of the nineteenth century - the Assembly and the press - was dominated by two major figures who received formal education then outside of the island. The first, Charles Gordon Falconer, learnt English in Barbados where he was born and lived for 20 years before settling in Dominica in 1839. He was also a Methodist preacher and a school teacher. His influence on the political scene lasted at least until 1870 when he accepted a post in the colonial civil service. The second, William Davies, son of a Welchman, was born in Dominica in 1840. "He attended college in Winchester, he became an incisive speaker with an ornate and brilliant style". From 1881 when he first entered the Legislative Assembly to the passing of the Crown Colony Act at the end of the century, he fought The Guardian, the newspaper under his editorship for the main political and economic objectives of the coloureds.

The existence of a cultural continuum of immediate empirical reference was further revealed by the close family ties which evolved among the Mulatto Oligarchy, linking to those called by The Colonist fourth-rate planters and bankrupt shopkeepers, the "still smaller number able to write English with some degree of accuracy...". These ties made of the pressure group a quasi-clan affair. Falconer, as political leader, was "unfailingly aided by personal ties"; his followers were perceived by the opponents as "The Family Party", "The Methodist Clique", "The Mulatto Ascendancy", etc.

"(In July 1854) there sat among the coloured members of the Assembly the sharp-minded and sharp-tongued editor of The Dominican, Charles Gordon Falconer, his brother-in-law (from the well-to-do Bellot family), his half-brother (C. Herbert), a nephew of Falconer's sister and assistant editor of The Dominican (Thomas Trail) and two men amenable to Falconer's desires (John Hopkins Fillan, a rising merchant and William Johnstone)" 192/

In 1880, when the group was headed by William Davies, its composition followed the same pattern, indicating the intense and constant personal

192/ J. Boromé, "How Crown Colony Came to Dominica", Aspects..., p. 121.

interaction among its members. It will also be noted, the recurrence of the same surnames.

"The electives were James W. Bellot, brother-in-law of William Davies and son of Galvan Bellot, owner of estates and a Roseau store; William Davies; Henry Hamilton, a small shop proprietor of Roseau; A.R.C. Lockhart, an estate owner; A.A. Riviere, an estate owner and Portsmouth merchant; and D.O. Riviere, proprietor of a shop in Roseau". 193/

Such were the "electives" representing the people in the Legislative Assembly. Needless to add that they voted as a bloc and checkmated constantly their opponents - generally whites who sat in the House in the Capacity of "nominees" of the Colonial authorities.

Now the concrete exclusion of the bulk of the population - the countryside - either by the formal requisites of the electoral processes or in simple practice, was recuperated in the rhetoric of the representatives to the House of Assembly through a series of proposals favouring apparently these same excluded persons, while entitling the Mulatto Ascendancy to an entrenched fame of being "liberals". For the newspaper The Colonist, the Mulatto Ascendancy also pictured the 'destructives' and according to J.A. Boromé, "vain attempts were made to stigmatize Falconer as a socialist". 194/

A review of the "liberal" legislation which infuriated the conservatives gives the scope of the open-mindedness of the Mulatto Oligarchy.

"(...) Falconer, in summarizing the legislative accomplishments of a typical year, 1858, catalogued a new poor law, an asylum for lunatics, a permanent grant to the infirmary, an increased police force, the completion of a Government House and the repairing of the Custom House". 195/

In 1880, William Davies organized the Party of Progress and fought for "progressive legislation as the establishment of a grammar school and compulsory education". Moreover, his party, following the Falconerites, opposed any measure like federation with the Leeward or the Windward Islands, "which was not considered in the interest of Dominica". 196/

193/ Ibid. p.144

194/ J. Boromé, "George Charles Falconer", p.13.

195/ Ibid.

196/ J. Boromé, "How Crown Colony came to Dominica", Aspects ..., p.126.

One finds it difficult to perceive the reason for such a strong opposition of local and metropolitan whites to these "liberal" measures - and to find out precisely what the "Mulatto Ascendancy" intended to destroy through their eventual enactment. Actually proposed measures were not exaggeratedly progressive and there were instances where it seemed far from clear whether the Colonial Government or the mulatto oligarchy was more favourable to progressive legislation. In 1874, a Medical Act requiring all medical officers to reside in their districts instead of living in Roseau was opposed by both "electives and nominees".

There are strong indications that the local whites and the Colonial Office were not exactly opposing such timid promotion of welfare services, per se. The issue was quite different: the coloured oligarchy favoured by an urban-based electorate, had been obstructing any increase in local taxation - even earmarked for the upliftment of the conditions of living of its constituency - while pressuring the British Government to invest resources for the same purpose. Quite understandably, the local whites could not have an interest in channelling metropolitan assistance to boost the political influence of their opponents. Their support went to the Crown Colony Government formula, that is to say, towards the strengthening of metropolitan patronage, from where they drew the legitimacy of their dominance. This interpretation would explain the opinion of The Colonist that the main goal of the mulatto electives was to bring ruin on the more respectable classes of society.

The liberalism of the mulattoes consisted therefore in using resources within their reach - excluding their own resources - to finance their hold on the Legislature. Their opposition to Crown Colony Government appears in that light as an opposition to the deepening of colonial dependence, but not to colonialism as such. Colonial subordination seems to entitle them to receiving grants-in-aid. On that basis, being 'self-sufficient' and 'self-reliant', that is having control of "a separate and responsible government", they would organize the economy and the society properly.

Finally, and logically, the opposition of the "Mulatto Ascendancy" to Crown Colony Government was accompanied by a tendency towards economic isolation. In 1870, an Act to establish a telegraph system almost failed to be approved by the Assembly.

"Beneath the hostile arguments lay the conviction that the telegraph would open the island to capital and enterprise which would smash the 'power patronage of the local oligarchy and, even more important, make resistance to federation impossible'". 197/

Thirty years later, William Davies submitted a letter to the 1897 Royal Commission on the Sugar Industry, and the first point he made was to plead against opening to the world economy which he viewed as harmful to the country.

"Questions have been propounded dealing with coffee, limes, cacao, and other, at present, minor products, I wish to warn my countrymen against giving in reply, either on paper or viva voce, any information which after publication in a blue book may induce tropical agriculturalists elsewhere to embark in a competition with us (...). I hope the foregoing will be deemed sufficient to prevent any Dominican planter from summarizing the results of his lime, coffee and cacao business for the benefit of the Commission, and the enlightenment of strangers abroad". 198/

In spite of the persistent opposition of the Mulatto Ascendancy, Dominica became a federal colony within the Leeward Islands grouping in 1871. From the testimony of the British Government, federation did not solve the problem of the isolation of the island, which proved that the oligarchy had some good reasons to refuse the formula.

"In the colonial office, C.A. Harris thought that were it not for the generally retrograde character of such a step it would be almost as well for Dominica to save its federal contribution. I doubt if it adds a single iota to the island's prosperity - the federation has left it pretty nearly as isolated as before, and it has certainly added to its burdens". 199/

197/ Ibid. p.124.

198/ Report of the West India Royal Commission 1897, Appendix C, Part IX, Dominica, para. 514.

199/ J.A. Boromé, "How Crown Colony Came to Dominica", Aspects ... pp. 143-144.

With Federation, not only did the political position of the mulattoes suffer greatly, but the local whites also found themselves relegated to a second class position on a lower social stratum in comparison to their other Leeward counterparts. The point of view of the Mulatto Ascendancy were increasingly shared by "unofficial nominees", that is to say, nominees holding no office within the Colonial Government. Boromé notes that native Dominicans would receive third-rate appointments in the federal administration, while Antiguans and Kittians would be sent to occupy high positions in Roseau. Moreover, since the Federal Government was experiencing increasing difficulties in finding loyal nominees among the Dominicans to support its views in the local Council, residents of other islands would be dispatched to Dominica to play such a role.

"Dominica (was perceived) as a puppet in the hands of the wire pullers in Antigua". 200/

If one adds to this the fact that the plantocracy of Antigua was white, the position of these "isolationist liberals" becomes at the start, quite understandable. Other reasons will be presented at a later stage.

At the end of the century, the economic situation of the island, which was already bad, reached the point of crisis. It was decided in London,

"to offer Dominica imperial aid with Crown Colony Government or no imperial aid with continuance of the present Constitution". 201/

Pressures to accept a deepening of colonial relationships became unbearable; and in view of its powerlessness in the face of direct colonial control of local resources, the oligarchy brought into the open the underlying assumptions of its objectives and plan for future society.

The existence of a distinction between the mulattoes' interests and those of the island as a whole, was clear to the British. In 1896, a member of Parliament opposed a grant-in-aid to Dominica arguing:

200/ Ibid. p. 124.

201/ Ibid. p. 134.

"the money asked for would not aid the poor people, but the planters, a 'wealthy, idle, lazy ... drunken lot'". 202/

In 1898, the Colonial Office stated in the House of Commons:

"that the island lay largely in the grip of an 'oligarchy' of planters and shopkeepers (whose) disinclination to impose more taxes on itself and its friends capable of paying could no longer be countenanced." 203/

The underlying ideological assumptions of the plan for future society which emerged from the practices of the élite, were in fact contained in its very appellation of Mulatto Ascendancy, during two consecutive generations. This appellation hinted at the racist character of the whole social organization. Such a characteristic became more and more an object of overt reference during the process of imposition of Crown Colony Government. In 1886, C.A. Harris of the Colonial Office stated:

"A coloured clique is the worst form of tyranny that could be endured: it is inimical alike to the negro and white and by the former race it is hated". 204/

In turn, when 1895 Governor Flemming proposed Crown Colony Government to the local Assembly:

"William Davies, greatly alarmed now personally took the editorship of The Guardian, announced the fundamental issue to be one of whites and non-whites, declared a race war, and swore he would sooner see Dominica reduced to ashes than lose its Legislative Assembly". 205/

Now, when the resolution accepting Crown Colony Government-cum-financial aid passed with the support of a coloured man, the racist ideology of the dominant oligarchy blossomed unconstrained:

202/ Ibid. p. 133.

203/ Ibid. p. 134.

204/ Ibid. p. 146.

205/ Ibid. p. 135.

"(The Guardian) termed him 'lickspittle' and the most justly abused and despised coloured man throughout the length and breadth of Dominica, who would go down in history as 'the mulatto' who lent himself to the vile job of aiding the suppression of the rights of his race'. He sat in his seat ... like a brown diamond in a caucasian setting, (and) simply nodded his head like a Chinese doll, together with other government dummies, in approval of the measure". 206/

It will be remembered that "the right of the race" was contained in the Brown Privilege Bill. It will also be noted that in W. Davies' diatribes, one race was absent. The self-appointed Dominicans took no note and made no allusions to the Blacks: even the diamond was "brown". In their ideological frame of reference, opposition to the colonial empire reproduced apartheid, putting in evidence the limitations of their project of nation-building.

In conclusion, social transformation in nineteenth century Dominica was conditioned by the fact that the country was located on the very margin of the British Empire. It was in this context that room was made for a Mulatto oligarchy to cope with the political scenery. The oligarchy had to struggle against the whites for the control of the colony, but in this conflict, little room was left to cater for the interests of the black population, except by expressing some moral support from time to time. It will be seen in the next chapter that this oligarchy had scant economic endeavour where some common interests with the black labourers could be shared. Hence even though the mulattoes considered themselves as Dominicans, these "Dominicans" could not enter in history at this point in time for they were lacking in substantive - economic, political and ideological - linkages with the masses. The Dominican outlook and cultural frame that they evolved in their struggle for power did not acknowledge the potentials of the rural and black masses, and therefore did not depart fundamentally from the dictates of the Empire.

IX

THE ECONOMIC RETURNS OF POLITICS

A. Perception of the Dead-end Street

In the description of the economics of the eighteenth century, the role of the coloured people and other freed men remained inconspicuous, since, with few exceptions, they were occupied in subaltern trades. Their subsequent control of landed properties was not a result of any sort of competitive behaviour let alone any vocation of agriculturalist, but rather a consequence of abandonment by the white planters. Being basically tradesmen, they normally took residence in towns. Marshall observes the following pattern of spatial distribution at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

"In 1813, Dominica had a total free population of 3,111 souls in its ten parishes, but only two of these parishes contained towns, St. George with the capital Roseau, and St. John which contained Plymouth. (sic) In these two urban parishes was concentrated 57% of the total free coloured population. The parish of St. George had a total free coloured population of 1,613 souls or nearly 50% of the total population. And of these only 392 were living outside the precincts of the capital Roseau which accounted for nearly 40% of the total free coloured population of the island."207/

As has been seen, the cities of the country were not characterized by any buoyant economic activities; basically they fulfilled administrative and political functions. City dwellers especially the coloureds provided loyal supporters for such political platforms which promised increased rewards for urban activities. This slant in the local political objectives would counter-balance the influence of the few planters who belonged to the mulatto strata.

From the "idleness and insolence" of the mulattoes, perceived by an eighteenth century observer to their actual dominance of local political relations, one has followed the evolution and failure of a peculiar alliance of urban and rural interests. It was acknowledged that the mulattoes constituted a specific strata in the Dominican society characterized by a common drive to

207/ B. Marshall, op. cit., p.379.

control local administration. An attempt will be made in the following pages to explore further the reasons for the upsurge of the previously mentioned alliance, the secondary role of the planters within the group, and the failure of this élite to secure their main objectives.

Sharp economic inequalities, which did not surface in the accounts of the nineteenth century conflicts, separated the mulattoes dedicated to urban-based crafts from the estate owners of the same racial group, in spite of their similar aspirations in relation to the political and administrative direction of the island society.

"In Dominica ... the free coloureds as a class owned 3,548 slaves in 1820 which was roughly one-third of the island's total slave population. They also produced in this year, one-fifth of all the sugar and coffee grown in the island. But the majority of the produce was grown by a small élite of large planters who later pressured the whites and the British Government for the removal of the disabilities they suffered. In all 3,548 slaves were owned by a total of 309 individuals out of a total of over 3,000 ..."^{208/}

The first free coloured planters originally appeared in the production of coffee, which at the end of the eighteenth century was the main economic activity in Dominica.^{209/} During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, production declined steadily until the industry was virtually destroyed. It is generally believed that the destruction of coffee plantations was due to the spread of the coffee leaf miner, commonly called blight. Nonetheless, in 1875, the Government's Botanist, H. Prestoe of Trinidad, rejected this view and proposed the following causes

- "1. The unsettled and turbulent character of the proprietary body at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century.
2. The reckless clearing of the forests from 1780 to the present time (1875), but specially up to 1830.
3. The high price of sugar.
4. The acquisition of land, chiefly in coffee by persons without means and without a knowledge of the coffee cultivation as it was carried on formerly.

^{208/} Ibid. pp. 372-373.

^{209/} The Watts Report, op. cit., p.10.

5. Extensive squatting on Crown lands, abandoned, or partly abandoned estates".210/

Unfortunately, the author of these lines did not comment on the five explanatory elements he proposed. The thrust of his argumentation nonetheless invites the conclusion that destruction of coffee plantations could have been momentary but not definite. Caribbean plantation agriculture had flourished with numerous absentee landlords; therefore, even if the new owners were turbulent and inexperienced, their enterprises could have developed had the conditions existed for such development. Now gradually and up to 1897, all absentee metropolitan landowners except two of them, abandoned their properties. The reason inciting them to this decision could not have been too different from the one which explained the failure of coffee production and as a matter of fact indeed the failure of Dominican commercial agriculture. The falling away of coffee cultivation was related to the maintenance of a cause contained in Item 4, viz. the acquisition of land by persons 'without means'; that is with no capital nor means to secure it. Besides, England was not a large consumer of the product which faced numerous difficulties on the international market.

The coloured planters were aware of the difficulties caused by their lack of capital and the consequent limitations to their entrepreneurial capabilities. They presented the 1897 West India Royal Commission with repeated testimonies in this respect. They insisted on the need to establish in the island a land mortgage bank (crédit foncier) of the kind operating in neighbouring Guadeloupe and Martinique, and pointed out that such a proposal tabled previously in the Legislative Assembly, was defeated because "it would interfere with the interests of the West India merchants".211/

"The only bank in the island does not lend money on mortgage and the local merchants are unable or unwilling to do so".212/

This seems to indicate that while land in Martinique and Guadeloupe had some economic value to warrant a mortgage, as far as Dominica was concerned, the imperial

210 Ibid. p.10.

211/ Report of the West India Royal Commission, Appendix C, Part IX, op. cit., para. 522.

212/ Ibid. para. 511.

banking interests were not convinced of such value. In fact the neighbouring islands had the necessary (material and institutional) infrastructure for the exploitation of existing land, while this initial investment was never made by the British Government in the island of Dominica.

Actually, the planters' main problem related to the cost of timidity of the capital at their reach, since it was not impossible to find capital in London which would be risked against future crops. The practice of the London merchants was to lend money on a short-term basis, whereas there was need to introduce new crops or to expand others than sugar cane (lime, cacao, coffee) which did not produce returns until five, nine or ten years.^{213/} Besides, the rate of interest was prohibitive and a surcharge had to be added for the West Indian intermediaries.

"The West Indian merchant is the channel through which is doled out whatever portion of English capital is to find employment in these colonies, and the usual procedure is as follows. The merchant in London borrows on his credit, money at one and a half, two or two and a half percent in the open market, and lends the same to the planter on mortgage at six! Besides this six per cent, there are other commissions on the turnover and 'pickings' which swell the total percentage to 10 and 12, and in some cases to 15. Now, if the planter were to try to borrow from the original capitalist at 4 per cent, to their mutual advantage, he would not be allowed, because the capitalist would, before investing, resort for information to the ring of West Indian merchants whose interest is to act as middlemen between the two".^{214/}

William Davies, leader of the planters during the latter part of the century, tables before the Royal Commission a letter on the "subjects of Enquiries",^{215/} where he in fact distinguished four different conflictive areas and acknowledged in the process that in all four, the planters would be losing their struggle unless Metropolitan Government came to their aid. From his own testimony:

"There is no shirking the confession that, as a class, (the West Indian planters) were conservative to a degree and by no means over-enterprising".^{216/}

^{213/} Ibid.

^{214/} Ibid. para. 514.

^{215/} Ibid.

^{216/} Ibid.

So much for their fame of liberal minded persons! The production of sugar cane according to the same Davies, under the cost prevailing in the islands had produced enough savings to the "mother country", for her not to impose on them the unfair competition of subsidized beet sugar from the European continent. The first area of conflicts was then the contradiction between the interests of the metropole and those of the colony.

"The West Indian landed interest has been made the victim of the selfishness of the British public and of the fiscal policy of the British Government".^{217/}

The remedy for this would be to countervail the bounty by imposing "a direct duty on all sugars receiving a bounty on exportation". Then it would be necessary to tackle the second and third areas of conflict constituted by the divergent interests of planters and refiners, and of planters and local merchants. Davies was of the opinion that the planters should be able to deal directly with the "consuming public". Refining and distribution should be placed under their control by providing them with capital, instead of having them knocking at the door of the "middlemen" and most particularly of the "ring of West Indian merchants".

In this event, they would only have to overcome their last obstacle: the London merchants. The state itself should "supplant the London merchant" as money-lender.

"The ruin of the planter being complete, the resuscitation of the industry must commence from the foundation, and the British Government is the fons et origo malorem,^{218/} restitution and help must proceed thence (...), The first step for the British Government to take is the total or partial demolition of the National Free Trade fetish ..."^{219/}

Davies' letter was a clear confession of the inability of the planters to operate within a market economy. His argumentation rested on a concrete theory of imperialism. Refiners, local and London merchants had ceased to be partners in the same economic venture, and were perceived as useless parasites enriching themselves at the expense of the planters. Their

^{217/} Ibid.

^{218/} Fons et origo malorem - the source and origin of misfortune.

^{219/} Ibid.

perceived impotence in the interrelations with these class enemies was expressed as a set of lamentations punctuated by occasionally insulting outbursts which held not a single threat of retaliation. The state which protects the interests of such enemies is made "the source and origin of all misfortune".

"No other country but Great Britain would so long remain a supine spectator of the gradual extinction of an important industry in one of its possessions or have exulted with cynical selfishness on the fact that one of the dependencies of the mother country was being annually 'sweated' to the extent of half a million pounds, which is the modest estimate of the saving to the national pocket by obtaining sugar under cost of production from these islands".220/

The savings made by the British public, thanks to the prevailing cost of production in the Caribbean - and the 'sweat' was not primarily a planter's perspiration - were not anymore available for investments in the region. In keeping with the principles of the "Free Trade fetish" private and public capital could be put to better use elsewhere. The planter class had lost their former allies; and the Dominicans, by taking over from the absentees, had localised the decision-making process, perhaps because there was hardly any economic decision to be made, except the very one taken by the absentees. Another witness offered the following comments which are illustrative of the point.

"Most of the largest sugar estates belonged to absentee proprietors ... The absentee proprietors, after several years of working the estates at a loss, decided to abandon the cultivation of the cane, and to sell their properties. And, in time, the sugar estates passed into the hands of local men, some of whom, working on the old lines, with insufficient capital, essayed the accomplishment of the impossible task of 'making sugar pay' ". 221/

It should be stressed that while the withdrawal of the absentees could be viewed as an entrepreneurial decision based on an evaluation of a given situation, the acquisition of their wrecked estates and their exploitation beyond any economic rationale does not suggest a behaviour based on an assessment of viable economic alternatives. In any case, to the argumentation of Davies, the British could retort that the source and origin of West Indian misfortune, was in due course, the source and origin of West Indian grandeur - as a planter would define it; the

220/ Ibid.

221/ Ibid. para. 511.

total sum of both arguments being that the planter class could not operate without metropolitan sponsorship. Davies was aware of that necessity when he wrote:

"If these remedies are not applied ... in despair, the whole of the West Indies will have to turn to the United States for help, as the paramount power in this continent. Failing justice from Great Britain, we must try to shame the Britons into doing their duty".^{222/}

The issue should be subject to further inquiries into the economic history of Dominica, but available data point to the impossibility of the planter class to generate, by its own initiative, merchandise of interest for the international market. The system did not provide for savings and re-investments. Capital had come from abroad, and hence returns ended up abroad, leaving hopefully enough in the country to ensure a vegetative reproduction of the local society. In such circumstances, the economic life was abandoned to the control of the "ring of West Indian merchants", servicing with not much risks, the limited demand, generated mainly by the salaries paid within the public service.

The fierce opposition to Crown Colony Government and to federation depicted in the previous chapter must be seen in the context of the deepening economic stagnation of the country. The coloured oligarchy formed by estate owners and emerging merchants possessed more treasures than capital. They were rather poor and the holding of public offices appeared as their most lucrative industry.

The Royal Commission, enquiring if there was an agricultural society in the colony, was answered negatively, and the witness volunteered the following comments:

"There is now no bond of union amongst the planters ...; but in the present condition of affairs, (an agricultural society) would have to be subsidized by the Government, at all events for a time, ... I doubt if sufficient paying members could now be got to provide an income necessary for importation of books and periodicals and for the expenses of hiring a room for the meetings of the members".^{223/}

^{222/} Ibid. para. 514.

^{223/} Ibid. para. 511.

This poverty must, however, be qualified, and in so doing, one comes back to the same issue:

"Living is cheap", stated another witness, "but there is no saving".^{224/}

The case of the most prominent leader of the "Mulatto Ascendancy", Falconer was rather pathetic, and the following quotation must be read against the background of the fact that Falconer married into one of the richest families of the island:

"Death removed an office holder and Administrator Bulwer ... nominated Falconer as Colonial Registrar. The salary, modest enough, was welcomed by Falconer who, though a good businessman, had remained relatively poor ... Incompatibility of duties, official and journalistic, moved him to resign from active participation in the fourth estate".^{225/}

Avowed political objectives such as defense of the prerogatives of the people's "electives", of internal autonomy, separate and responsible government, and the like, were not disassociated from these material facts in the minds of their protagonists. In 1887 Davies and others organized the Dominica Patriotic League "which had as its chief aim: 'to bring about a truly representative form of government' ".^{226/} The league also wished

"for the native-born West Indians equal rights and privileges in all other respects with the inhabitants of Great Britain, especially in competing for the prizes of the local Civil Service".^{227/}

^{224/} Ibid. para. 513.

^{225/} J. Boromé, George Charles Falconer, op. cit., p. 16.

^{226/} J. Boromé, "How Crown Colony came to Dominica", Aspects ... p. 128.

^{227/} Ibid. p. 144.

B. Isolation and Emigration, the easiest way out

In these circumstances, one would expect to observe an uncontained development of peasant economy, particularly among a population which inherited from the Caribs and the first Black inhabitants traditions of settling the interior in the framework of autonomous free village societies. The history of the Black population of Dominica reveals nonetheless rather unsuccessful attempts in this direction.

The enslaved population of Dominica at the beginning of the nineteenth century is estimated at approximately 30,000 souls.^{228/} By 1813, according to B. Marshall, there were 7,544 enslaved in the parishes of St. George and St. John and 12,416 in the totally rural parishes. The same historian notes that in the former districts, headed by Roseau and Portsmouth, the ratio of enslaved per white reached 11 to one, against 26 to one in the latter. In Roseau only, the historian reports 421 whites and 2,137 enslaved, i.e. some six enslaved per white.^{229/}

With abolition of the Slave Trade during the first decade of the nineteenth century, labourers became scarce and fetched high prices. Since a special provision allowed an owner to travel with four enslaved as personal attendants,

"The Dominica and Grenada planters especially, abused this section (of the law) in order to supply slaves to Trinidad and other colonies which were prepared to pay high prices for them".^{230/}

Exportation of enslaved seemed to have started from 1808, so that the number of them per square mile was 62 in sharp contrast with other islands such as Dominica which did not host classical plantation societies. For instance, in Grenada, one could count 200 enslaved per square mile, in St. Vincent 130, and in Tobago 108.^{231/}

^{228/} C. Goodridge, "Dominica - The French Connexion", Aspects ... p.156.

^{229/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.390.

^{230/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.65.

^{231/} B. Marshall, op. cit., pp.241-242.

According to the Select Committee on the State of the West Indian Colonies, 1806-1849, in 1826 the country had 15,392 enslaved.^{232/} In the circumstances of a declining enslaved population, the passage of apprenticeship went nearly unnoticed in Dominica.^{233/} According to Augier and Gordon, the enslaved population amounted then to 14,180.^{234/} As previously mentioned, Williams recorded a lesser number of enslaved, namely 11,664 of them.^{235/} From these data, he calculated an average of 11 enslaved per owner and found that claims involving less than 10 enslaved amounted to three-quarters of the total number of claims. Williams also noted the high proportion of enslaved in non-productive activity, the ratio - one domestic enslaved to nine field ones - being far less than that observed by Atwood a few decades earlier.

This trend, probably modified during the short-lived recuperation of sugar at the end of the 1830s, seems to indicate that as far as Dominica was concerned, enslavement was purposeless. The type of social relations it implied and which proved to be economically advantageous for both the planters and the colonial authorities of the region, gave no results worth mentioning in this context. It would have appeared to the Dominican Black as a mere power relation without any immediate and perceptible economic rationale. Slave owners were just unable to utilize productively an available labour force they fully owned. It was obviously not a problem of the negative attitude to work of the enslaved. In those times, as in the contemporary world, he who owned labour and could not utilize it productively had to sell it to earn a living, unless he could establish a viable form of self-employment and a self-propelled venture. Exports of enslaved by Dominican planters do not differ theoretically from the selling of labour force on today's labour market.

In a country with land in abundance, attempts at developing a peasant society, initiated during the eighteenth century, were pursued with more determination during the nineteenth century, under more favourable conditions.

^{232/} Report from (the) Select Committee on the State of the West India Colonies 1806-49, Appendix 13, p.460 in British Parliamentary Papers, Select Committee Reports and Correspondence on the Trade and Commerce of the West Indies, 1806-1849 Shannon, Irish Univ. Press. 1971.

^{233/} W.L. Burn op. cit., p.363.

^{234/} R. Augier and S. Gordon, op. cit., Table 83.

^{235/} E. Williams, From Columbus to Castro ... p.283.

In Dominica, however, efforts to establish a self-reliant peasant economy failed on two counts. Before emancipation the maroons were unable to withhold the hinterland they had conquered and to negotiate some workable solution with the colonial society. This must have weakened the position of the former enslaved, because peaceful occupation of uncultivated land also ended up in de-population and bankruptcy.

The enslaved population of the island suffered severe blows during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. In 1812 more than 75 enslaved freed themselves from Castle Bruce estate. The total number of maroons was then estimated at 800. The maroons were active up to 1815 in the parishes of St. Joseph, St. Peter, St. Patrick and St. David, that is to say, in most of the country. Their fortified camps were located in the most varied places such as Woodford Hill, Hampstead, Rosalie, Tabery, Pointe Mulatre, Rivière Claire, Morne Anglais, Layou, Colihaut, Dublanc, etc. Fifteen different chiefs headed the various groups of maroons and among them, it is acknowledged that one Jacko spent over 40 years in the forest.^{236/} It is no wonder that the development of maroon activities took place in the surroundings of the British owned sugar estates:

"It was only after the British firmly took hold of the island that major sugar estates were planted. The larger British plantations developed in the broad river valleys along the coast. To the north there was Hampstead, Hodges, Blenheim, Woodford Hill, Londonderry, Melville Hall and Hatton Garden, while the plantations of Castle Bruce, Grand Marigot, Rosalie and Tabery dominated the Windward Coast".^{237/}

Efforts of the authorities assisted by the population of freed men, that is the mulattoes, to suppress the maroons had to match the strength and determination of the latter. The whole social system was threatened by marronage.^{238/} In the second decade of the century, assistance had to be requested from the Regional Commander in Barbados.

"The authorities (in London) were astonished that the system of internal security which worked elsewhere failed in Dominica and despite the colony's anxiety, they declined to give any immediate permission for the Regulars to be used".^{239/}

^{236/} In this respect see Honychurch op. cit., pp.62-63.

^{237/} Ibid. p.141.

^{238/} B. Marshall, op. cit., p.505.

^{239/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.62.

As maroon activities grew stronger, boosted by "deserters" from the Black Regiment, orders were given for their "ruthless extermination". The architect of the genocide, Governor George Robert Ainslie, was "called back to England to answer for the severe measures he had taken ...".

"Although he had been recalled, Ainslie's plans were still followed and the most decisive blows on the Maroons fell after his departure".^{240/}

Not much data have been found on the situation of the enslaved population between 1820 and emancipation. It has been noted that the few years preceding emancipation are considered as the best times for sugar cultivation in the island. In the post-emancipation period, Dominican labour fetched higher wages than labour in other Leeward Islands.^{241/} This situation must be read against the information supplied by Alfred C. Leevy in "The Labour Situation less than One Decade after Emancipation". He noted the flourishing of provision grounds in the country.

"The profit of which (provision grounds) often proved to an industrious negro much more valuable than wages of the estate for the whole year. Strange as it may seem, these vegetable products ordinarily fetched very high prices on the market. One reason for this was the large scale exportation of yams, for instance, to the larger, more prosperous islands such as Trinidad and Barbados where the soil was less favourable for their growth".^{242/}

In spite of the fact that the peasantry should have access to virgin soil - even through squatting - and that provisions had traditionally enjoyed a regional market, development of a peasant society seems to have reached an early saturation point, precipitated by a remarkable climate of insecurity. The year 1844 witnessed what was known as la guerre nègre, and referred to the violent reaction to the census by the population in several parts of the island - south of Roseau, Colihaut, Canefield, Point Michel, Grand Bay. This census was perceived as a first step towards re-enslavement. Martial law had to be proclaimed, regular troops, police and militia men, and Her Majesty's navy entered into action to control the situation. The rebellion was placated not without several deaths to be deplored and even the suicide

^{240/} Ibid. p.63.

^{241/} M.A.H. Tempany, Superintendent of Agriculture, Agricultural Labour Conditions in the Leeward Islands, Bureau de L'Association Scientifique Internationale d'Agronomie Coloniale, Paris // p.5.

^{242/} Government of Dominica, Dies Dominica, Roseau 1972, p.34.

of an inhabitant surrounded by a militia.^{243/} All in all, the events reflect the cleavage between the former enslaved and their actual project of development on the one hand, and on the other, their perceived helplessness in relation to the authorities.

In 1856, some squatters on the Batalie Estate were faced with two alternatives: to pay a nominal rent or to be evicted from their plots. Their opposition provoked riots which incensed the temper of the population. The elected members of the local Assembly under the leadership of Falconer,

"called on squatters throughout the island to stick to the land on which they had settled and resist any move to eject them".^{244/}

The local forces of order could not deal with insubordination, and when the Governor, with reinforcements sent from Antigua, wished to be transported to Batalie Estate, boatmen at Roseau refused to provide assistance. In the end the matter was solved to the satisfaction of the estate owners. But the solidarity between boatmen, rural squatters and members of the Mulatto Ascendancy revealed - as the first recorded alliance of various classes against the colonial authorities - the existence of an area of national cohesion developing around the issue of landownership.

In a related fashion riots sprung up in 1893, the tenants opposing the administrative authorities on the issue of taxation. One person in La Plaine had to face eviction since he was not in a position to pay his dues to the State. The villagers rose to his defense and once more the authorities had to seek the support of a warship to bring them under control. Four persons were killed and several wounded in the process. This incident, which occurred a few weeks after the police had brutally cracked down on masqueraders insisting on including Ash Wednesday in the Carnival festivities, also achieved the unification of all social classes and received much publicity in the press.

These elements of national mobilization should be linked to the adamant stand of the Mulatto Ascendancy against increases in land taxation, together with their relentless acquisition of properties from bankrupt absentees. One could, on this basis, infer that during the nineteenth century a broad

^{243/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.74.

^{244/} Ibid. p.75.

consensus emerged in an effort to secure a hold on land as basic national patrimony. Since there was no scarcity of land opposition between landless peasants and estate owners never developed to the extent of overshadowing the antagonism with the colonial masters; so Blacks and Mulattoes did not enter in open conflicts on this issue. On the contrary, together they expressed, either through 'riots' or through the local Assembly and the Press, their resentment to what was perceived as harrassment and encroachment by the colonial authorities.

Finally, the census of 1891 showed a population of 26,841 inhabitants, less numerous (by 1,370) than ten years earlier, and significantly below the early nineteenth century estimates of the enslaved population alone. J.A. Boromé mentions that during the 1890s the emigration to the gold mines of Venezuela and French Guiana was even more important than during the previous decade.^{245/} According to the West India Royal Commission Report, in 1897, it was alleged that 7,000 Dominicans were living in deplorable conditions in Venezuela.^{246/} This amount, added to the 1891 population would represent 20 per cent of the total population at the end of the century. The testimony of a prominent proprietor and planter cast some doubt on the exact figure^{247/} but in the year 1896 alone, more than 1,200 Dominicans migrated to Venezuela and Cayenne.^{248/}

In consequence, the availability of manpower for any local agricultural venture was maintained. But in this context of lack of capital, several types of labour arrangements (family and community work, métayage, together with peonage in addition to salaried work) took shape and were manipulated facilitating production beyond the rationale of market economy.

^{245/} J.A. Boromé, "How Crown Colony Came to Dominica", Aspects ... p.132.

^{246/} Report of the West India Royal Commission 1897, op. cit., p.50.

^{247/} Ibid. Appendix C, para. 513.

^{248/} Ibid. paras. 533-534.

"Besides the larger sugar estates, there were a great number of small holdings cultivated in sugar canes. These were the sugar properties of the peasant proprietors, and they varied in area from a few acres up to fifty or more ... The cane mills worked by cattle were of very low power, and only a small proportion of the juice was extracted and that was made into the worst kind of sugar. As, however, the labour was usually contributed by the owners and their families, who placed little value on their time, sugar was made by the peasant proprietors after many larger estates had stopped working".249/

Peonage did not appear in Dominica in its neat characteristics and even if it were rather common, it did not seem regulated. It emerged as the use of other people's labour force against no stipulated form of payment and no recourse in cases of breach of contract. A Roman Catholic priest testifying in 1897 stated that:

"65 men, formerly bailiffs on estates, have lost their situations without any kind of compensation. They were not working for wages, but cultivating land for the owner, growing cocoa for the estate and ground provisions. They were evicted from their holdings without payment for the cocoa. The cocoa trees planted by them remain among the bushes and are getting lost and destroyed".250/

Another witness, famous and knowledgeable about the island, Dr. Nicholls who was a native, planter, barrister-at-law, several times elective member of the Legislative Assembly, confirmed the situation and added more details:

"The planters were lamenting better days, but they were paying higher wages than now, their estates were encumbered. Plenty labour was and is available; wages were and are paid both by the day and by the task; ... It has been customary for labourers on sugar estates to rent land, or to have land allowed them free ...; the rent was paid in labour, for instance, a day's labour a month ... The custom has been to grow canes on the métayer system, giving one-third of the produce for use of the mill machinery".251/

Remarkably the description of the economic situation of the people resembles those of the very planters as far as their specific type of poverty was concerned. The priest mentioned earlier, who lived in Dominica for about 20 years and was well acquainted with the condition of the poor among whom he did his apostolic work, considered:

249/ Ibid. para. 511.

250/ Ibid. para. 538.

251/ Ibid. para. 512.

"their condition (of the poor) worse now than formerly; a great number are in want, not in want of food in the country but almost anything else; not many earn wages; ...252/

The similarity of the basket of food at the disposal of both the rich and the underprivileged in Dominica, indicates first of all a sizeable output of peasant economy. But above all, it enhances another fundamental characteristic of the Caribbean societies during the nineteenth century, which persists to a large extent in contemporary times. It is noted that "a great number are in want, not in want of food", but of wages. It follows paradoxically, that peasant society in Dominica could not flourish and reproduce itself indefinitely precisely because the plantation society was collapsing. The previous quotation continues as follows:

"Wages have decreased principally owing to the fall in the price of sugar, also because landowners have no money to cultivate their land; the peasant cultivators are distressed, they do not cultivate their land, they prefer to go to Cayenne and work for wages".253/

This urge for "salaried" work in Dominica within the plantation economy, far from auguring ill for the peasantry, must be viewed as a functional requisite of a peasant society and one of its pillars. There is no contradiction in this proposition, as seen by the witnesses to the sittings of the 1897 Commission themselves. Moreover, people wished to earn "wages", but they did not complain of lack of work or so-called unemployment. It would be convenient, *en passant*, to analyse more closely certain contemporary situations and to try to understand on different bases the negative attitudes of the Caribbean man vis-à-vis salaried agricultural work as a permanent form of organization of the workers' life, when there still exists possibilities, even though precarious, of independent entrepreneurial activities. The present level of endemic unemployment seems to result from a disencounter between a real demand of manpower and a supply of labour force, available but reluctant to commit itself in the conditions of proletarianisation operating in the market.

"It is not easy to get the people in Dominica to work regularly on estates; at Portsmouth an attempt was made to get some land into cultivation rapidly, this had to be abandoned owing to the irregularity of the labour supply, they could get 100 men one week

252/ *Ibid.* para. 538.

253/ *Ibid.*

and the next week very few could come; the people are not pressed to work by necessity; they complain of want of wages, but will not work regularly when wages are offered".254/

Apparently while the planters were in need of capital, the peasants longed for "wages". It is clear that there is a quid pro quo to clarify. In fact, and this seems relevant to understand the Caribbean situation, what is called wages in the context of plantation and other market economies, becomes capital for the peasantry. Having no access to any credit institution, the peasants used monetary earnings to fulfil the function of investment. It is the need for such "earnings" that is mistakenly taken for want of "wages". Thence, assumptions of the behaviour of these "wage-earners" in economic models based on principles of a free market, only assist in magnifying an original error.

The previous quotations suggest the lack of money circulation as the main cause of emigration. In spite of the de-population process, evidence collected by the Royal Commission underlined repeatedly that the depression in the sugar industry was not due to a want of labour. Actually immigration from Barbados was considered in the context of settlement on new lands and not with the purpose of increasing the supply of agricultural salaried workers.

Another notable Dominican summarized this issue for the benefit of the Royal Commission of 1897 in the following terms:

"Mr. Pemberton stated that many of the population had been driven out, and that those who remained are impoverished; the population has gone down by about five or six thousand, and the people are now very poor; minor products do not put money into circulation like the cultivation of cane ... There is a great desire among the people to settle on the land, this (is) a country of peasant proprietors, but they all want work to supplement their production by wages, they come to the estates to work, and their holdings are not as a rule, too far off for this".255/

It has been argued that Caribbean peasantry is basically dependent upon outsiders for the provision of its instruments of production. The Amerindian peasantry for instance, had solved the problem of consumption goods together with those of capital goods within its own society. Peasants in the Caribbean

254/ Ibid. para. 541 (Our emphasis)

255/ Ibid. para. 513.

as newcomers to the world economy, and artisans emerging from amongst them, had not had the opportunity of producing their instruments of production. They had to rely on other economies and therefore to be involved in the processes of exchange of their produce against non-agricultural goods; capital goods, and to an extent maybe as important, manufactures necessary for their daily life.^{256/}

The implication of this is a constant need for money - including hard currency. These peasant economies cannot operate without a cash crop or access to the production of cash crops, and cannot be self-contained and isolated systems. In fact, they flourished whenever their links with other forms of production were established through the circulation of money.

If a certain quantum of instruments of exchange with the outer world is not provided for, a process of emigration is triggered. One can even conceive of a case where a successful peasant economy, by its very success, provoked some degree of out-migration in order to provide for the remittance of cash. A study by André Corten on the case of the Haitian migrational flow towards the Dominican Republic proved that those migrants are not recruited mainly among the landless rural dwellers, but among the peasant proprietors, and in the purest tradition of the island of Dominica, the basis for migrating remained (at least up to mid-1970s) the procurement of cash.^{257/}

^{256/} J. Casimir, "Aperçu sur la Structure Economique d'Haiti", América Latina Rio de Janeiro 1964, 8(3) pp.48-49.

^{257/} André Corten, "Haiti: Estructura Agraria y Migración de Trabajadores a los centrales Azucareros Dominicanos", M. Acosta et al. Azúcar y Política en la República Dominicana, Santo Domingo, Ediciones de Taller 1976, 2nd Ed. pp.85-145.

C. Conclusion

Dominica was a colony. It is beyond doubt that the rationale for Britain to conquer and retain it was its strategic position. In other words, the economy of colonizing Dominica never belonged to the field of economics, and the gain of this particular colonial enterprise was of a political nature. Hence the basic activities producing "returns" to the British Empire consisted of the establishment and maintenance of a workable political and administrative system.

The conflicts of economic interests, that is to say, competitiveness for securing major economic advantages, switched from the field of economics to the area of politics. White planters, around two per cent of the total population at the end of the nineteenth century, opposed coloured ones in spite of their commonality of interests in the limited field of economics. Coloured planters allied with their relatives - the coloured merchants, in spite of divergencies in this same narrow field of economics. The lure of upward mobility, based on the racial and racist connotations of this arrangement, facilitated the mobilization of coloured tradesmen and artisans against the whites, ignoring the presence of large masses of blacks. A project of national unity would take shape, and an ambiguous opposition between the interests of the "mother country" and those of its "adopted subjects" developed during most of the nineteenth century, alongside with an island-wide effort for controlling land resources.

It is not a discovery to postulate that the mode of insertion of the colony within the empire must be maintained as a primary element of explanation of social intercourse evolving therein. In his remarkable letter describing the class position of the West Indian planters, William Davies, leader of the Mulatto Ascendancy during the decline of its political power, put it rather clearly to the West India Royal Commission of 1897. Davies referred to the economic aspects of the problem which were escaping the control of the local oligarchy concurrently with the progression of imperialism. The main economic conflicts would arise increasingly in Dominica's relations with the Empire. The internal political aspects under the control of the oligarchy were becoming irrelevant for achieving an unchallengeable economic pre-eminence.

In parallel, the oligarchy which had hoped to become a dominant planter class ended up as a ruling élite. At the beginning, it displaced the whites who, during the first decades of the nineteenth century, were the only persons eligible for nomination to the Legislative Assembly and then fulfilled the role of spokesmen of the administration in the capacity of "official nominees". At the end of the century, the mulattoes were again in a position to displace the whites, and shared with them the opportunity of being spokesmen of the colonial authority. They rose to these positions through strata mobility and not in their individual capacities, since the latter option became possible after the adoption of the "Brown Privilege Bill".

Visible political dissension between whites and mulattoes obscured a more profound conflict between the citizens and the politically inactive population. The city - as the lieu and cradle of citizenship - emerged as being such because of its imperial connections, which prevailed in the end. The spurts of national unity were aborted because they lacked the support of economic practices which could generate a shared project of nation-building.

As a corollary, the rift between the citizens due to their differentiated participation in the economic fabric of the society became secondary in the deployment of their daily practices. The demand for responsible and autonomous government against the alternative of Federal Government controlled directly by the Crown, became a significant divisive element among the citizens (whites and mulattoes) in the search (by both ethnic groups) for a key position in the realization of the colonial venture, as proposed by the United Kingdom.

The limitations of the Dominican national project during the nineteenth century, that is the frontier of political dissension between the Dominicans of the period and the colonizers, coincided with the margins of viability of the island's economic system. Acknowledgement by local planters of the conflicts with manufacturers, import/export merchants and colonial authorities, pointed to the awareness of the exploitation to which the country was submitted. Some elements logically emerged for a national outlook distinct from the colonial one; but the issue of independence at any cost never arose.

The opposition to the "colonial power" - which is not called a "mother country" - took a different turn from what evolved in the Spanish Main. In this particular case, alternative metropolitan powers were anxious to capitalize on divergencies between Spain and her former colonies. In Dominica, the conflicts between "nationals" and

"colonists" had no external sponsors and could be diffused by the different avenues of upward social mobility based on racial and cultural characteristics. A system of political and administrative rewards closely linked to positions assigned to different ethnic sub-groups ensured the dominance of a light-skinned elite and served as a sop to its unfulfilled economic aspirations. Formal and informal requirements for access to these rewards were incompatible with the realization of the initial national project which had collapsed.

This workable solution between the mulatto oligarchy and the colonial authorities ignored the circumstances of the peasant and black population. Without any channel of institutionalized political expression, or the power to oppose the arrangement of colonial forces on other grounds, the peasantry chose to migrate with the hope that remittances could be sufficient to activate its separate world. Migration was forced upon it, in view of the failure of the plantation system of the island and the inability of the economic elite to set up viable productive ventures. Isolation, nonetheless, was not built into the peasant society, and appeared to have originated in the political arrangement fostered by the Empire and in the accommodation of the oligarchy to the colonial objectives. These developments set the pace for the formulation of an alternative project of nationhood, which did not surface during the nineteenth century.

AN EXPORT-ORIENTED PEASANT ECONOMY

The economy of Dominica retains in the twentieth century many of the characteristics evolved during the previous century. It remains centered on one export crop at a time, produced in conditions which prevent competitiveness in the procurement of in-puts and in the realization of out-puts; hence the need for continued protection and privileged treatment. From the incapacity of the system to generate a demand on the free market for the goods it supplies, derives a state of constant readiness to reallocate existing resources according to the whims of the international market and to obstruct the movements of productive factors. The requirement for this sort of flexibility from the productive apparatus militates against any cumulative growth and defeats attempts at modernization. The frailty even of successful export-oriented ventures is heightened by their increasing reliance on disaggregated owner/family-operated units of production. Self-employment evolves as the pre-dominant - though occasionally disguised-form of institutional arrangement for agricultural resources.

It appears that contrary to what is observed in most countries, the framework in which Dominica's economic organizations are operating, far from calling for gradual concentration of capital, including the application of science and technology, and labour resources, provides the rationale for the opposite trend. The ambiguous fortune of political negotiations with the aim of lessening the effects of unfavourable terms of trade seem to dictate a priority need for malleable small scale operations to share and absorb the gradual bankruptcy brought about by the steady downfall in relative prices of agricultural commodities. The ability to switch, whenever necessary, to supply agricultural goods appealing to a set of foreign consumers is ensured by preventing the accumulation of fixed capital in the productive sector.

The swiftness with which labour is required to reorient itself towards profit-making ventures makes it impossible to organize large masses of dispossessed rural workers. Traditional owner-operated organizations cater for additional seasonal manpower which is paid for on a task by task basis and cannot evolve towards more complex forms of labour division. Similarly,

large productive units consistently avoid contracting manpower for given periods of time thus retarding the development of unionized industrial relations. Trade-unions remain an urban phenomenon, while producers' associations when limited to rural residents are remarkably weak.

The major feature of the twentieth century is the progress made in the tertiary sector by private investors. The distribution of cash crops on the international market provides most opportunities for lucrative business. Innovations in the service sector hardly induce any betterment in the rest of the economy. The possibility of stimulating a productive system so constrained by the worsening terms of trade is non-existent in view of the foreign origin and the outward orientation of capital operating in it.

Giving the failings of the private service sector, the state machinery without any source of income other than taxation and foreign assistance, is bequeathed with the responsibility of promoting agricultural development and by the same token, has become the centre of most social conflicts. During the previous century social negotiations tended to oppose the colony as a whole to the British authorities. They focused on the form of participation of the élite in the ruling of the territory. For most of the twentieth century society has evolved without registering any overt conflict with its rulers. After World War II, following a region-wide movement and the broadening of the world-wide market economy, the colony moved towards self-government and political independence. Most social unrest exploded during the 1970s. This will be described subsequently; the present chapter examines the evolution of the export-oriented economy.

A. Infrastructural Development

The state of communication infrastructure is a reliable indicator of the progress made by the economy of any given country. In this respect, Dominica has lagged behind. Although it is the largest of the Windward

Islands in the Eastern Caribbean, its topography, climate,^{258/} lack of investment interests have to date militated against "growth" in a vein similar to that of smaller islands, more amenable to estate agriculture on an extensive scale.

Large areas of the island have remained inaccessible during much of this century. With the decline of the limited estate agriculture and the general lack of interest of the United Kingdom in the island infrastructure development has been neglected. This neglect was evident in the late nineteenth century and the situation has varied very little during the course of the twentieth century.

A report of 1918^{259/} referred to the haphazard nature of road-building and to the lack of maintenance of roads in the island, and recommended the creation of bridle paths in the valleys to open up productive areas. At the time of the Watts report in 1925, coastal communication was minimal. Vessels serving the Windward coast were non-existent. Large property owners possessed their own sea crafts for transport of their products but smaller property owners suffered from a lack of such transport. One can understand the negative effect on the productive capacity of small holders - a situation of enforced self-subsistence.

In 1939, the infrastructure remained under-developed. The island is referred to as being one of the poorest, only seventy miles of motorable roads existed and that included a road of 29 miles which had just been completed with assistance from the Colonial Development Fund. Even then,

^{258/} The Watts Report (1925) and the West India Royal Commission Report presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, July 1945, hereinafter referred to as the Lord Moyne Report. These reports dispel the notion that Dominica is extremely fertile and has great potential for agriculture. Watts stated that heavy and frequent rainfall rendered agricultural operations difficult and cleared land infertile after short periods of use. The Moyne Report also maintained that much of the land was not easily available for agriculture and that shifting cultivation might have contributed to erosion of most of the hillsides. Later reports were not available in order to substantiate the above.

^{259/} The reference is made to a report prepared by Mr. Bell (Director of Public Works, Trinidad) in 1918 quoted by F. Watts in his report (1925) op. cit., p.20.

it was difficult, if not impossible, to get from the north to the south of the island by road.^{260/}

Insufficient data on other aspects of economic infrastructure does not allow further detail on its development, or lack of it, during the following decades. During the first half of the 1970s the decline in production and earnings of export agriculture did not assist in modifying the dilapidated condition of the island's infrastructure.^{261/} Subsequently, in the interim period 1975-1979, prior to independence (1978) there may have been some minor development. But whatever progress took place in the latter part of the decade would have been nullified as a result of the devastation of hurricanes in 1979 and 1980. A United Nations team reported in 1982 that:

"... the island's development had not only stood still since 1977, the year of independence, (sic), but if anything it had gone backwards." ^{262/}

Nothing was left untouched by the hurricane of 1979. Agriculture, industry, transport and tourism, electricity and water supply were all disrupted. The banana crop was totally destroyed as well as a large percentage of coconuts and citrus.

It has been emphasized that Dominica's recession was even without this climatic factor evident:

"Hurricane David did not conceal the fact that the island's social and economic infrastructure had been deteriorating for most of the decade". ^{263/}

Most analyses emphasize the deficiencies of the road system as well as the high costs involved in the building and proper maintenance of roads as obstacles to economic development. In the case of Dominica, a good road system is necessary to secure access to untapped resources at present

^{260/} "The system such as it is, therefore falls short of providing adequately through communication by road, between Roseau, the capital and Portsmouth, the second town of the island, and the Administrator has therefore to make this journey by sea". The Lord Moyne Report, p.407.

^{261/} World Bank, Economic Memorandum on Dominica, 18 May 1981, p.1.

^{262/} Article in "The Courier" - "Dominica Getting into Forward Gear", February 1982.

^{263/} Ibid.

controlled by the state. It could also ease the situation of farmers working on marginal lands or on farms of uneconomical size. The lack of such a system is however, an integral part of the social environment being examined and does not explain its performance.

J.A.N. Burra notes that approximately 92% of the population lives within half a mile of the coast. Most private lands with sea frontage consist of large estates:

"Behind the plantations and between them, small holdings fill in the gaps. The main Crown Lands occupy the interior behind the private lands". 264/

Therefore when one considers the question of resources under exploitation, the deplorable state of the roads is not the issue at stake; the difficulty was, rather to set up a proper system of communication infrastructure by sea. In other words, with or without a road system, the state of the economy would have been the same, given its form of management these last centuries.

"It cannot be overstressed that if private lands are put to good use, production will rise without recourse to a very heavy feeder road programme, as there are thousands of acres lying derelict within a mile or two of existing and planned roads". 265/

The reason that private lands were not put to good use therefore seems more important than the deficiencies of both land and sea communication infrastructure in explaining the island's state of economic development.

In his Report of 1921-22, Wood states:

"In my judgement expenditure upon the construction of new roads, or even any great improvement of existing ones, is out of the question so long as the financial out-look is so bad, and, unless steps can be taken to improve the markets for Dominica's special products, I do not see

264/ Report upon Land Administration in Dominica, Roseau, Dominica, August 1953 (mimeo).

265/ Ibid. p.40.

much hope of immediate further development in what is today the least developed of all the British West Indian Islands". ^{266/}

B. Agricultural Development

Trends in export agriculture during this century generally mirrored major developments in the nineteenth century: the economy did not overcome monoculture.

"Historically ... there have been a number of episodes of growth and decay of industries based on particular crops, e.g. cocoa, coffee, sugar and limes, each rising to a peak then declining and leaving remnants of small production. When factors have become favourable some of these have at times experienced resurgence in production to again take a significant place". ^{267/}

The cumulative expansion of export agriculture continued to be constrained by forces which the society could not overcome: complete subjection to volatile international markets and total impotence in relation to hurricanes and heavy rainfalls or alternatively to periods of drought. It will be seen that Dominica's inventiveness did not manifest itself in achieving growth, but rather in creating mechanisms to shield the social system against possible restructuring deriving from the constant eventuality of economic collapse.

The major crops of the previous century - sugar and cocoa - declined gradually to a state of insignificance, while lime production took precedence. On the one hand, cocoa production peaked by 1907 and went into a downward trend by the end of the second decade. This was concurrent with the increase

^{266/} The Hon. E.F.L. Wood, M.P. West Indies Report, London. His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921-22, p.77.

^{267/} J.B. Yankey in Small Farming Study in the Lesser Developed Member Territories of the Caribbean, Weirs Consulting Services Ltd. (prepared for the Caribbean Development Bank) 1976, Vol. 1 (a) Country Reports, p. 363.

in value and the production of limes.^{268/} One source explains the decline of cocoa by 1917 as a result of storms affecting the island in 1915 and 1916. F. Watts attributes the downfall to three reasons:

a) the low price obtainable in the international market; b) the general lack of suitability of the cocoa tree to the island; and c) the competition of West African cocoa.^{269/} At this time, the crop was grown mainly by peasants and small proprietors.

On the other hand, exports of sugar by 1906 were "hardly worth consideration". The crop suffered from neglect as the production of limes gained in importance and value and as a consequence sugar estates were either sold or abandoned, the latter solution being predominant. With the low price of sugar during the 1920s there was no return to its cultivation. The West Indian Sugar Commission (1930) referred to the fact that sugar had almost entirely disappeared in Dominica.^{270/} It is also stated that "No sugar had been produced in Dominica for many years".^{271/} By the end of the decade (1930s) the Moyne Commission makes no mention of Dominica in its discussion on the sugar situation.

268/ Cocoa/Limes Export Value 1897, 1907, 1917:

	<u>Cocoa</u>	<u>Limes</u>
1897	£ 9,307	£ 18,721
1907	48,950	77,407
1917	8,842	204,899

Data derived from Bell, Young and Nicholls, Notes on Dominica and Hints to Intending Settlers, 1919, p.12.

269/ The Watts Report, p. 9, Dominica, 1925.

270/ Report of the West Indian Sugar Commission, Part IV, London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1930, p. 25, para 5.

271/ Ibid. p. 47, para. 114. Perhaps reference is made to the export of sugar.

Within the first three decades of this century lime production soared so that Dominica became known as the world's largest exporter of limes. Of the four islands of Dominica, Saint Lucia, Montserrat and Grenada, where limes were produced in great quantities for export early in this century, only in Dominica did the crop gain such pre-eminence as the leading export crop. The value of lime and lime products increased from 26.1% of total exports at the end of the 19th Century (1892) to dominate the island's exports by the middle of the second decade of the 20th Century. At that time such products represented over 90% of the value of total exports.^{272/}

In spite of its apparent prosperity, the industry was beset by serious problems during the period referred to above. F. Watts reported that in 1903 there was a drop in production caused by serious drought as well as an attack of scale insect.^{273/} Then followed a rapid recovery and stable levels of production. However, in 1915 and 1916, the crops were severely affected by disastrous storms.^{274/}

In addition to the above-mentioned reversals, external factors came into play. The island's export trade in fresh limes and lime products was severely hampered by metropolitan countries' trade policies. The imposition by the United States of trade prohibitions on Dominican limes during the War caused a decline in the island's trade in green limes by 58% between 1914 and 1920 (from 45,000 barrels to 19,000 barrels).^{275/} Britain, which imported the island's fresh lime juice and cordial for its Navy and Army, favoured the more competitively priced Sicilian lemon juice (against the Dominican products).

The report by E.F.L. Wood (1921) described the economically depressed state of Dominica at the end of the second decade of this century as its export economy became severely compressed as a result of these internal and external factors.

^{272/} The Watts Report, p. 4 paras 6 and 7. Watts is careful to point out, however that statistical returns collected for those years are misleading and are not always representative of actual production, i.e., some years production may be carried over to succeeding years (as may be the case for 1917).

^{273/} Ibid. p. 3.

^{274/} Ibid. p. 9.

^{275/} The Hon. E.F.L. Wood, op. cit., p. 51 where 1914 to 1920 is referred to as a period of bad trade for Dominica.

"While all the British West Indian islands are suffering to a greater or lesser extent from economic depression brought about by the present slump in trade all over the world, no island is suffering more acutely than Dominica."^{276/}

Details of the economic situation during the third decade reveal further depression. Lime was dealt another blow by an attack of wither-tip disease occasioned by the fungus "Gleosporium Limetticolum (Clausen)" which spread rapidly and affected almost all the estates in the island in 1922. The effect was immediate, resulting in a slump in production. Recorded production values for the years 1922 and 1923 reveal a reduction of 32% within that two-year period. Actual production of limes fell by 43%. This attack of "blight" marked the beginning of the decline of limes on a large scale as occurred with coffee during the third decade of the nineteenth century. Drought in the years 1923 and 1924 may have contributed to a further deterioration in production (by 23%) between 1923 and 1925.

In 1925 the economic situation was depressed to such an extent that it warranted an official investigation into the island's agricultural conditions, with a view to providing recommendations for a revival of suitable export crop(s) in order to sustain the population.^{277/}

"During the depressed years of the 'thirties' agricultural production was stagnant".^{278/}

Nevertheless the world depression of the 1930s contributed to the inhibition of any revival of the island's export economy. A combination of factors - low prices, plant diseases and hurricanes in 1926, 1928 and 1930 - meant a virtual halt to the island's limited productive capacity for export agriculture.

During the second World War, export agriculture could not progress; but by the 1950s lime production had been drastically scaled down to account for just over one-third of the total value of domestic exports (1953).^{279/} At that time 3,500 acres, 450 acres and 900 acres respectively were devoted to limes, oranges and grapefruits.

^{276/} Ibid. p. 50 (our emphasis).

^{277/} The Watts Report.

^{278/} L. Honychurch, op. cit., p.101.

^{279/} The Citrus Industry, mimeo. 1955 (unpublished document).

The demise of the lime industry paralleled a gradual shift towards the production of grapefruit; the cultivation of this staple was promoted, resulting in a further decrease in acreage devoted to limes - from 3,500 acres to 1,000 acres between 1953 and 1974.^{280/} Later records (1976) show that limes had dropped to sixth in importance among export crops.^{281/}

Initially, very few Dominicans participated in lime production; subsequently, however, there was increasing of both peasant and estate owners. A number of factors contributed to this increased participation. Firstly, limes were perennial and hence provided constant cash income to growers. In the case of the small holder, it was noted that he was:

"... an important contributor to the trade and since it (was) a cash crop which (bore) all year round, his lime trees (were) an important cash crop to him".^{282/}

Secondly, the general ease of cultivation meant that it needed very little labour - a situation favourable to both estate owners and peasant farmers. Thirdly, the security of marketing arrangements further ensured increased participation.

The industry was totally dominated by Messrs. Rose and Company, a subsidiary of a British firm, with all the characteristics of vertical integration typical of multinational firms. This involvement occurred at all levels of the industry from growing to exporting to the parent firm. The firm's operations in the island began in the early days of the lime industry (the end of the nineteenth century). On the one hand it established and assured marketing arrangements for the products, and by so doing contributed to the long history of the industry in the country. On the other hand, it ensured a minimal value retained at the local end of the industry and a maximising of profits to the parent company. Within the Dominican economic situation, however, that minimal revenue seemed to represent economic survival.

^{280/} Ibid.

^{281/} AID Survey, Agricultural Development in the Eastern Caribbean, 1977.

^{282/} Weirs Agricultural Consulting Services, Small Farming Study in the Less Developed Member Territories of the Caribbean _____ prepared for the Caribbean Development Bank, 1976, p. 398.

The structure of the industry was such that the growers sold their crops to processors who fixed the prices for lime oil and lime juice on the basis of a price structure agreed to by the foreign firm. The processing plants varied from small (those of local individual estate-owners) to large (owned by Rose and Co. Ltd.).

As previously mentioned, the production of other citrus - grapefruit and oranges - outstripped limes in terms of acreage and quantity. A stimulus to production was the establishment of a citrus packing plant by the Colonial Development Corporation. Marketing arrangements were further facilitated by the creation of a marketing firm by locally based Dominicans. The existence of the firm and its provision of transport for the produce encouraged the expansion of these crops around the latter part of the 1950s. The citrus industry continued to play an important role in the island during the 1960s until the mid-1970s and still remains a contributor, however modest, to Dominica's exports.

Other agricultural products contributed to Dominica's export earnings, during the first half of the twentieth century. They nevertheless did not achieve the predominance of lime and lime products. Vanilla was introduced during the first decade, and by the end of the 1940s this spice had reached third and second place in importance among the export crops. Coconuts, bay oil, avocado pears and mangoes also had their share in the foreign trade, particularly after the Second World War.^{283/}

While the production of citrus was declining, banana was on the rise. Its introduction and eventual supremacy accompanied a profound transformation of the Dominican society. Emphasis will be put in this chapter on the economic aspects of the changes.

The potential of the banana industry was discovered in 1917. It was at the time a minor agricultural branch "producing for local and inter-island consumption".^{284/} In 1921, export of bananas totalled 2,944 bunches as opposed

^{283/} See Yankey, A Study of the Situation in Agriculture and the Problems of Small Scale Farming in Dominica (Phd. Thesis), University of Wisconsin, tables XXXVI and XXXVII, pp. 138 and following.

^{284/} J.B. Yankey, A Study of the Situation in Agriculture pp. 123-124 except otherwise indicated, data on the development and impact of the banana industry are borrowed from this study.

to Jamaica's 9,949,460. Watts (1925) forecasted that viability of the trade in Dominica depended on some form of inter-dependency with other islands:

"Dominica possesses neither the land, the men nor the shipping facilities to undertake such a business alone, if anything is to be done it will have to be in association with similar enterprises in neighbouring islands".^{285/}

In 1939, Lord Moyne reported that bananas were extensively grown in Dominica as well as in other Windward Islands.^{286/} Between the Watts and Moyne Reports, a transnational company had intervened. In 1933, the Canadian Banana Co., a subsidiary agency of the United Fruit Co.^{287/} expressed interest in the bananas produced on the island, and as a consequence, the Dominica Banana Association was established as a Statutory Body in 1934.^{288/} With World War II, the operations of the Canadian firm came to an end, and the dissolution of the Dominica Banana Association was contemplated. In 1948, another foreign company, Grayson Shipping Lines of Florida, came to the rescue; but arrangements for the resuscitation of the industry became effective only in 1949, when Messrs. Brand and Sons of Liverpool initiated the process which led to the creation of Geest Industries (BWI).

The "Banana Boom" was sparked off in 1950 by a fifteen-year market contract between Geest Industries and the Dominica Banana Association. Upon its expiration, a new agreement was negotiated in 1964 and remained valid until 1970. Thereafter, every year the contractual market arrangements were renegotiated.^{289/}

During the first five years, "a scale of fixed, but increasing price levels" was agreed upon. From 1955 onwards, the price was to be fixed periodically

^{285/} The Watts Report p. 14 para. 78.

^{286/} The Lord Moyne Report p. 20 para. 32.

^{287/} Ibid.

^{288/} J.B. Yankey, A Study of the Situation in Agriculture pp. 123-124 except otherwise indicated, data on the development and impact of the banana industry are borrowed from this study.

^{289/} J.B. Yankey, A Study of the Situation in Agriculture p. 123 and followings.

i.e. it was allowed to fluctuate Yankey noted:

"The price is to be based on the market price paid by green ripeners of bananas in the United Kingdom. The price is therefore influenced by the forces of supply and demand in the export market." 290/

To ensure that foreseeable fluctuations in the selling price did not jeopardise the industry, "a Banana Price Assistance Scheme" was established covering five years of the contractual market arrangements.

"The objective of the Banana Price Assistance Scheme was that a Price Assistance Fund would be established in Dominica to which the banana industry would contribute in time of good prices and upon which the industry would draw when prices were uneconomically low (...) Should the fund be insufficient to cover withdrawals it was agreed that the territorial government of Dominica would make interest-free loans to the industry, up to specified limits. Four-fifths of such loans were to be provided by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom." 291/

A new Banana Price Assistance Scheme negotiated for the period 1961 to 1963 was far less favourable than the previous one. Subsequently negotiations to secure some measure to stability broke down as the producing territories considered the measures put forward by the United Kingdom to be unsatisfactory. Therefore before the end of the fifteen-year period, the market contract guaranteed only the purchase of the commodity, not its price.

As a result of the original incentives to produce banana, there was some surcharge in the use of land for agricultural purposes. Before 1950, land tenure in Dominica was characterized by a few large estates and a multiplicity of small farms. Some arable land was still under the control of the Crown. By the end of the 1940s, the demand for land led to the eviction of a large number of tenants established on large estates while the government took measures to distribute small plots to farmers and would-be farmers until the agricultural frontier of the country was practically reached. The basic pattern of land tenure scarcely changed, but the use of the resource and of the manpower applied to it was diverted to the production of the export crop.

290/ Ibid. p. 129.

291/ Ibid. p. 130.

Banana production reportedly increased in volume five times between 1950 and 1956. Data for the twelve-year period 1957-1969 reveal that production increased from 17,325 tons to 57,677 tons.^{292/} The value of banana exports in 1961 represented 8.5 times that of 1950. Two million EC dollars of income to growers in 1957 equalled hardly a third of the revenue for the year 1969.

The decline of the industry started in 1970, concomitant with the need to negotiate the contractual market arrangements every year. After reaching over EC\$6 million in 1969, income fell, according to the Annual Reports of the Growers' Association, to just over EC\$4 million in 1970; and thereafter, it continued to decline for about 4 years until the middle of the decade. The volume of production registered in 1975 was the lowest attained for fourteen years (27,117 tons)^{293/}, an increased income was nevertheless reflecting high prices on the world market. Similarly revenue of EC\$13 million accrued to the growers although production only reached 37,181 tons.

By 1970 the United Kingdom market was opened to banana imports from other Commonwealth countries with consequent impact on prices. The Windward Islands share declined gradually between 1969 and 1974 from 55.3 percent to 34 percent of the United Kingdom banana import market.^{294/} The loss of competitiveness in the UK market was blamed on the quality of the product and the levels of productivity; and numerous strategies were devised to redress the decline. During the first few years of the 1970s, a Five-Year Plan proposed by the British Development Division, the Windward Islands governments and the Windward Islands Banana Growers' Association (WINBAN), was designed and undertaken to improve crop production and fruit quality. In addition, the depressed state of the industry occasioned an enquiry by a Management Consultant Firm, the recommendations of which, added to the development programme, effected some recovery in production.

This recovery was however shortlived due to a severe drought in 1977, leaf spot disease and the subsequent devastation brought about by two severe

^{292/} Dominica Banana Association, Annual Report, Dominica 1977, p. 3.

^{293/} Ibid. p. 2.

^{294/} Dominica Banana Growers Association, Annual Report, 1976 p. 5.

hurricanes, in 1979 and 1980, and strong winds in 1981,^{295/} all of which created a crisis at the start of the 1980's. In February 1982, the Dominica Banana Association turned to the government for assistance to avert collapse.^{296/}

The entry of small farmers, attracted by regular cash income, into the banana industry had important repercussions on the production of food for the domestic market. Early in the century, the island was well supplied with food grown primarily by the peasants.

"The holdings furnish the principal part of the food of the people; the products being used just to provide the food of the owners, the surplus being disposed of in the markets of the towns and villages throughout the island."^{297/}

At that time Dominicans participated in an inter-island trade of fruits and vegetables with Antigua, St. Kitts, Montserrat and Barbados, as well as Guadeloupe and Martinique. Thereafter, poor infrastructural development added to restrictions caused by marketing problems contained this trading.

"One of the greatest disabilities experienced by the peasants lies in the difficulty of marketing their produce, together with the risk of over-protection, of perishable products, such as vegetables and fruit, the local markets for which are small and may be over-supplied, while the overseas markets can only be reached at rather irregular intervals and not without difficulty."^{298/}

Neglect of domestic agriculture by the government only enhanced the attractiveness of the marketing arrangements which facilitated the spread of banana. So much so that there was a growing tendency towards a halt in the production of food crops for local and regional markets. First of all, by the end of the 1940s some estate owners had evicted their tenants in order to allocate the land they occupied to the productions of banana.

^{295/} The island has been affected by hurricanes in three consecutive years earlier in the decade: 1970, 1971 and 1972.

^{296/} Trinidad Guardian, 8 February 1982.

^{297/} The Watts Report, pp. 17-18.

^{298/} Ibid. p. 18.

"During this period of widespread evictions, the displaced tenants moved into Crown lands for garden plots, but the first effect of the notices to quit from the estate lands was a shortage of food crops experienced in the local market".^{299/}

Subsequently, small scale farmers also withdrew from the production of food crops for the local market, maintaining their kitchen gardens primarily for their family needs. There was a reduction in acreage devoted to local fruit and vegetables between 1946 and 1961; it fell from 6,300 to 4,000 acres. Bartel notes since the first half of the 1960s, an increase in the price of some food items.^{300/}

The island now imports a large amount of its food. In 1976, the food import bill totalled EC\$16.2 million or 33 percent of the total import bill. Moreover, whereas the country was a net exporter of food, by 1980 the reverse obtained. More and more the earnings deriving from the export of bananas are becoming insufficient to purchase food from abroad for local consumption.

Exports and Imports of Food in Dominica

(EC\$m) ^{301/}

	<u>Exports</u>	<u>Imports</u>
1970	9.4	7.4
1975	21.1	14.2
1980	10.5	25.7

A World Bank Report nonetheless registers some improvement in the output of domestic food crops for local consumption and inter-island trade.^{302/}

^{299/} J.B. Yankey, A Study of the Situation in Agriculture, pp. 57 and 58.

^{300/} "(...) The Supply of locally grown fruits and vegetables in the local market which has traditionally been furnished by the surplus from rural kitchen gardens has been restricted already by the increased emphasis on banana production in which the whole family can participate, with a remarkable increase in prices of some local food on the market". National Income Statistics of Dominica p. 5, para. 15, quoted by Yankey, A Study of the Situation in Agriculture, p. 60.

^{301/} S. St. A. Clarke "Production of Food for Consumption and Export: the need to achieve Optimal Balance", ECLA, CDCC/PWG:A/83/1, October 1983.

^{302/} World Bank Report 1981, p.4.

C. Industrial Development and Tourism

Whereas other Caribbean islands have sought to diversify the base of their economies over the past two, or two and a half decades, in order to reduce the high reliance on agriculture, Dominica's attempts at so doing have been of minor significance. Lacking mineral resources, the obvious choices, following the example of other Caribbean countries, are those of manufacturing industries and tourism. In both these areas, Dominica has achieved little - and not for want of development plans and proposals emphasizing such priorities.

The industrial sector has remained underdeveloped. The manufacturing sector contributes approximately 4 percent of the island's GDP and provides employment to less than 7 percent of the labour force.^{303/} It is interesting to note, however, that of existing industries most are locally owned and are mainly involved in agroprocessing (coconuts and citrus), along with the production of garments, crafts, building materials, rum, cigarettes and soft drinks - all labour-intensive industries. Unfortunately this sector did not escape the effect of the 1979 hurricane which caused great set-backs.

Entry of foreign-based firms have been limited in Dominica because the island lacks the basic requirements for exploitation by these firms. The pool of labour exists, but infrastructural development is poor and the political climate has been unstable over the past decade. As is the trend, expansion of industrial development in the Caribbean has been preceded by the establishment of Industrial Development Corporation which have a specific role to play in encouraging foreign private investment into the islands, as a base for the development of an "industrial sector". Even in this "development", Dominica has lagged behind - at least two decades. The mere fact that the Industrial Development Corporation has never operated^{304/} is an indicator of the lack of assiduity shown in encouraging foreign investors to the island.

^{303/} Ibid.

^{304/} Article on Dominica - "Bottling the essence of unity", Interview with Prime Minister Eugenia Charles. The Courier, African Caribbean and Pacific European Community, Jan/Feb 1982. The article states that the Industrial Development Corporation existed on statute books, but has never operated to create policies and incentives to encourage industrial development.

On the other hand, the tourist industry, on which many other Caribbean islands depend for foreign exchange, has also been of little significance for Dominica. The island does not offer the preferred traditional attractions of the Caribbean as advertised by the metropolitan-based airlines and travel agencies; and to attract tourists to its natural yet different environment, would require considerable expenditure on promotion; this is an expenditure Dominica could ill afford for developing another fragile economic sector.

D. Labour Force

David Wood of the Dominican National Planning Organization notes the limited rate of growth of the population during the period 1946-1976 and points out the incidence of "considerable fall in the fertility rate" as well as "the continued high levels of emigration".^{305/} The information, read against the background of "the banana boom" beginning in 1950, suggests from the start that social mechanisms were at work to prevent the effects of banana bonanza from trickling down and being so distributed that the society could capitalize on the additional income in order to satisfy the values and aspirations of its population.

Indeed, the migration flows of the 1960s were "almost entirely restricted to the 15 to 44 age-group".^{306/} In spite of an expected decline in such flows due to the closure of some metropolitan outlets, it would not seem, according to Wood, that the movement has abated. From the constant drain on the adult population, at a rate of approximately 800 persons a year in the 1960s and 1970s against a total population varying between 60,000 and 70,000 people, resulted a remarkable predominance of the under 15-year old age group, which represented 45 percent of the total population in 1960 and 50 percent in 1970.

The repercussion of these phenomena on the social system a decade later, when these youths initiated their economic life, is well known. The demographic scenario could be described as follows: On the one hand, during the quarter century from 1946 to 1970 (the decline of the industry started in 1970) the labour force grew only by 500 persons; in other words it more or less remained constant. From 1970 onwards, with the new entrants, it increased by 3.5 percent per annum. On the other hand, during these same twenty-five years, one observes a constant aging of the working force in agriculture: the proportion of males over 35 years of age represented 50 percent of this population in 1946; the percentage increased to 60 percent

^{305/} David Wood, The Manpower Situation in Dominica, 1946-1976, National Planning Organization, August 1978, mimeo.

^{306/} Ibid.

in 1960, and reached 65 percent in 1970.^{307/} The young people who grew up during the banana boom were reaching the labour market at this point in time. It is no wonder then that a deep-seated malaise in the society's management of its human resources was manifested in the social disturbances of the 1970s.

In the same vein of ideas, David Wood calls attention to the fact that:

"The trend in the level of employment in Dominica has been downwards over the last 30 years (previous to 1976), (...) The decline in employment has been particularly noticeable since 1970 - the same period that witnessed a rapid growth in the number of young people joining the labour force".^{308/}

In 1970, there were 1,500 wholly unemployed workers. The figure in 1976 increased to 4,700.

Withdrawal from the labour force, a characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s, affected above all female workers; actually, the behaviour of the female labour force constitutes an interesting aspect of the evolution of the employment situation. Total female employment from 1946 to 1976 declined by 30 percent while male employment increased by 4 percent. Among the adult female population not at school, withdrawal from the labour force was particularly important for those of 25 years of age and over. It may be noted, also following Wood's indications, that one is in fact observing the number of employed and not exactly the employment situation. Since, from 1960 to 1970, "only two-thirds of employed women and approximately three quarters of males in employment worked 10 or more months a year".^{309/} In other words, if one were to focus on the equivalent man-months spent at work by the employed, the "dramatic increase in unemployment levels" would have appeared even worse.

"Female employment in agriculture fell by just under 60 percent between 1946 and 1970, and male employment is slightly over 25 percent".^{310/}

This drop in employment corresponds basically to a shift from agriculture to the services. Its expansion in the service sector (trade, restaurants and

^{307/} Ibid. p. 19.

^{308/} Ibid. p. 9.

^{309/} Ibid. p. 13.

^{310/} Ibid.

hotels, C.S.P. and financial services) was more noticeable for men; while employment in manufacturing, construction, utilities and transport declined from the 1940s to the 1970s - the decline being steeper for females.^{311/}

One must note then that whatever factors were affecting the workers in Dominica from 1946 onwards were of more serious consequences for the female labour force. The steep decline in the employment of women during the whole period, their retrenchment in the agricultural sector and the withdrawal from the labour force particularly those of child bearing age, have to be related to the subsequent arrival on the labour market of large numbers of young people during the 1970s. Now it so happens that the male youth raised by this generation of women severely affected by unemployment spearheaded the social disturbances of the 1970s, in particular the "dread resolution" as will be seen in the next chapter. At this level of our knowledge of the Dominican situation, one cannot draw any firm conclusion, but it is difficult not to pay attention to the global and unitary character of the social processes alluded to and to the challenges deriving for Caribbean social sciences.

Wood offers the following explanation for the much more severe incidence of increasing unemployment in the female labour force: changes in crop patterns (less pickers of fruit were needed), changes in technology (weeders were replaced by the use of weedicide), changes in the composition of the capital (more intensive use of it), and changes in the utilization of the labour force (allotment of estate lands to tenants for production of banana instead of an increase in contract work). These several factors all point to a "saving" of the labour force.

These changes in the utilization of the labour force are of consequence for this monograph, and a more detailed analysis will be attempted in the next chapter. It should be noted en passant that work on the estates has evolved from pseudo-salaried relationships to the multiplication of pseudo-independent farming.

^{311/} The Credit for this analysis of the female labour force which is far from usual goes to David Wood, not to the author of this monograph.

** C.S.P. - Community, Social and Personal Services.

"(In the case of employment on estates) the reason for the decline in female employment has probably not been so much that the land has gone out of cultivation but that the crop pattern has shifted from citrus and spice (.....) towards small-holder banana production where the labour force tends to be predominantly male".312/

One is tempted to offer the following correction to the quotation: "where registered labour-force tends to be predominantly male". It appears that the new form of labour utilization - small-holder banana production - has forced working women to offer their services to the productive system as part of the family unit. If this assumption is correct, it is not surprising that a regression towards a dependent status, however mild, would tend to force the female labour force out of the labour market altogether. Moreover, the data on employment in agriculture seem to indicate that returns within this form of "small-holder banana production" was not sufficiently rewarding even to retain the male sector of the labour force.

"The number of young men going into agriculture (...) fell by half over the period 1946-1970. In the 1950s the number of young men going into agriculture was roughly equal to the number of retirals from the working force. However, in the 1960s the new entrants fell short of the number of retiring by approximately 500. Additionally roughly 1,200 adult men withdrew (as opposed to retired) from the working force in agriculture in the 1960s. We suppose that many of these men will have migrated".313/

The aging of the labour force in agriculture may be evidence of the much celebrated negative attitude of youth towards this activity. But it is surely an indication of the impossibility for owner-operated (read father/mother operated) family farms to absorb new entrants (particularly unpaid or virtually unpaid family workers. It is a known fact that young adults - especially females - cannot demand a given level of remuneration within a Caribbean peasant venture, let alone could they aspire - as a right not a concession - to some participation in the farm's decision-making process, irrespective of their level of qualification and experience.

312/ Ibid. p. 16.

313/ Ibid. p. 18.

Nonetheless, while this disengagement from agriculture as a main source of employment is being observed, the involvement in industry remains paradoxically unchanged:

"Something like 18,900 persons of the working age of Dominica were classified by the Agricultural Census as being 'employed' in agriculture. However we estimate that only about one-third of this number work full-time in agriculture or depend principally on agriculture as a source of livelihood. Thus most of the working force in Dominica (which we estimate at about 20,000) have some involvement in agriculture. There are, in a sense, two occupational structures in Dominica, the structure of primary or main occupations - such as described by the Population Censuses, and also a structure of secondary occupations from which additional income is derived and about which we know very little".314/

It is clear that the author is considering agriculture as an occupation and the two occupational structures referred to bring the reader back to the discovery of L. Comitas on occupational multiplicity in the Caribbean. Since "most of the working force in Dominica, have some involvement in agriculture", one is justified in conceiving this society and its economy, as an export-oriented peasant economy or society. Indeed a peasant society need not comprise only peasants, in the same way that a capitalist society is not composed of only capitalists. There is an underlying set of non-official and unseen institutions regulating this ever-present involvement in agriculture upon which rests the visible Dominica, the everyday society string for modernization. It appears that will be the challenge for future social studies on Dominica. It constitutes the economic infrastructure and pervades the whole society, its politics and its culture.

314/ Ibid. p. 25.

XI

PRESENCE AND DECLINE OF
THE COUNTER-PLANTATION SYSTEM

In Dominica, the economy being traditionally centred around agriculture causes the interplay of economic interests to gravitate towards the issue of land ownership and land use. These interests may be manifest in open conflicts, only if they meet on certain grounds and are forced to enter into some form of negotiations. The market is normally the arena where economic interests are arbitrated. In the case of Dominica, the output of the society is only of marginal interest for the world market. As a result many of the factors of production are allocated and managed according to a rationale which also corresponds marginally to the principles of market economy; the output of the country reaches the world economy via different mechanisms and economic interests involved in this process are arbitrated outside of the market, namely in the sphere of political activity.

In absence of a free enterprise economy and unless specific mechanisms are deliberately institutionalized to replace the interplay of market forces, the allocation of labour force to remunerative activities bears only incidental relations with the principle of competition. In these cases, inherited and/or ascribed positions are of far more important consequences to the welfare of the individuals than their personal achievements. In consequence, the underprivileged of necessity have to seek refuge in some forms of subsistence and self-centred activities in order to survive, until they can obtain the necessary instruments of pressure which would enable them to offset the political impediments to institutionalized negotiations, especially free competition. This entails a major change in the organization of the society. In Dominica the attainment of universal suffrage in 1951 must be considered as a turning point setting in motion a whole process of transformation to be concluded.

Meanwhile, the fluctuations of the world economy had limited consequences for the internal organization of the day to day activities of the population. The primary social unit - the family - encompassed both the privacy of the inhabitants and their economic production. In the absence of deliberate policies, the proportion of resources in manpower and available land dedicated to

subsistence economy, varied in the long run with the interest or lack of interest of the actors on the international market to impose the principles of market economy or to relieve the local productive system from the need to abide by such principles.

Up to 1951 and within the circumstances being described, the focus of economic interest of the majority of the population was the production of food crops (and shelter) to meet the need of individual families. They would also have to produce a given surplus to be exchanged for capital and consumer goods necessary for developing kitchen gardens which they had no cultural or material base to fabricate themselves.

This kind of peasant economy has been typified in previous study on Haiti as a counter-plantation system to signify that the attempts of the peasantry to withdraw from gang-laboured plantation and to diversify its economy are seen alongside with its cultural practices. Language, family and kinship, and religion are presented among other institutions as distinct components of the counter-plantation system.^{315/}

As long as some land was made available through one or another form of tenancy, the potential conflicts between owners of estates and landless peasants could not easily surface, given the lack of institutionalized channel of political expression which framed social relations in the colonial setting.

During nearly 200 years (1763-1951), there became institutionalized a workable arrangement between estate agriculture specializing basically in export goods, and small-scale farming dedicated mainly to domestic food crops. The distribution of land was skewed; but since large estates and mini-farms were put to different type of uses^{316/} the evolution of existing economic structures took place without any major social unrest.

^{315/}"Cf. Jean Casimir, La Cultura Oprimida, Mexico, Nueva Imagen, 1981.

^{316/} In 1925, the striking feature in agriculture was the relatively large number of small scale farmers which existed (...) There is clear evidence here that the majority of farmers by then were operating on small acreages of land. The principal crops of small scale agriculture during the period 1900-1950 were mainly domestic food crops as against export cash crops in the case of estates, the principal of which was lime." (Yankey, op. cit., p. 100.)

In any event, these conflicts would have been related to the distribution of land resources and would have been dealt with in political terms and not according to economic principles.^{317/} Indeed, the country has been spared of so called riots and upheavals. Moreover, the lack of participation in the labour issues that rocked the Caribbean during the 1930s is not unrelated to this peculiar mix of social interests and social forces. In fact the Dominican work-force was not employed, i.e. contracted, in agriculture. It occupied itself in agricultural endeavours, and had no patron with whom to quarrel.

The introduction of bananas on a massive scale at the end of the 1940s brought about a fundamental change in the working arrangement referred to, by forcing the whole population to enter the market economy as consumers. The basic needs of the population for food and shelter did not change, but the possibility of satisfying these needs by the kitchen garden or through exchange of provisions so obtained, was gradually destroyed, as evidenced by the increase of import bill particularly relating to food. The extent of these changes is quantified by Yankey's study of small scale farmers.^{318/}

The common denominator between commercial and subsistence agriculture remains the absence of a labour market, and consequently the predominance of self-employed farmers in the productive system. The present quandry of this peculiar system is the entry of the labour force into the market economy as producers of commodity, i.e. as suppliers of labour force to be contracted. In other words, a system regulated beyond free competition for allocating resources and income has to be found and institutionalized.

^{317/} As occurred in Castle Bruce and Gran Bay in the 1970s.

^{318/} Ibid. p. 59. "The study puts in evidence that in farms established before the Banana Boom, 68.7% of the farmers produced for subsistence at the beginning, while none of them did so after the boom. Of the farms established after the introduction of banana, only 3.4% were dedicated to subsistence crops during the first year of production, and logically none of them would do so in subsequent years".

Land and colonial social policy

In the Caribbean it would be difficult to find a national motto - more appropriate to the ethos of the people it addresses than "After God, the land".^{319/} The devotion of the Dominicans to the land is probably an expression of a need to have access to the resource necessary for surviving in a milieu devoid of economic options outside agriculture and of the formidable efforts requested from nearly the totality of them to gain and to secure this access. It should be understood that the policy of land distribution enacted by the British in pursuance of their colonial objectives was an instrument to distribute the different social groups they found in the territory according to concrete patterns of social stratification. Such a policy was necessarily consistent with a given social philosophy and consequent strategies which in the final analysis was functional to the colonial relationship. Conversely, in the effort to extricate itself from bondage, i.e. in the national-building process, the population had gradually to create areas of self-expression and self-determination. An institutionalized system of land tenure and land use at variance with the objectives of the British and beyond their reach developed as a result of these attempts to overcome the stringencies of colonialism.

It will be remembered that the Crown had established its ownership rights over the whole territory and only British subjects were allowed to acquire land in the country. "Adopted subjects" had to suffer much discrimination in this respect. Subsequently, in the nineteenth century as plantation agriculture failed to prosper in Dominica, estates owned by expatriates were abandoned and an urban group, comprising basically coloured creoles, acquired these estates.

It will also be remembered that before emancipation small-scale farmers or peasant labourers were independent blacks and maroons, "squatting" - according to the colonial norms - on Crown lands. After emancipation and always in the context of an impossible development of the plantation system, other forms of tenancy beside squatting, - share cropping, tenant farming and even free-hold tenancy - added some variety in the rural setting. Up to 1950, however, the colonial state sponsored

^{319/} The motto reads: "Après Bondiè, c'est la ter". Honychurch translates "After God, the Earth". In his book *The Dominican Story* (p.110) the concept earth seems far more removed from a peasant outlook, than that of land.

no specific land distribution scheme in favour of the rural masses.^{320/}

Reference to the workable arrangement in operation up to 1950 i.e. that the small scale farmers used to produce domestic foodcrops while the estate owners specialized in export crops, is an allusion to the fundamental dualistic character of the society. In the light of its land policy the Crown eliminated the bulk of the population from the colonial political scenery by the establishment of a franchise. Hence ownership of large estates (i.e. legal access to lands originally owned by the Crown), cultivation and trading of export crops (i.e. participation in the international market economy) and exercise of political rights as well as access to all official institutions, were an integrated endowment defining social dominance. Participation into the world economy through the exploitation of estate lands facilitated by the Crown was matched with participation into the world politics and culture through the politics and culture of the empire. Conversely subsistence economy, estate work, illiteracy and exposure only to local culture became the lot of the persons - the large majority - deprived from a voice in political matters.

One may therefore quite safely suggest that the cleavage between land-lords and peasants has been stable throughout the colonial history of Dominica and that it followed the lines established by the British. There is a definite continuity in the evolution of the dominant and dominated classes of the territory at least from the end of the Napoleonic wars up to 1951.

In fact the whole social system evolved around the issue of landownership and it is not clear whether land is a tradeable commodity in Dominica. At least

^{320/} J.A.N. Burra notes however: "Crown land squatting is a fairly recent development. In 1915 permission was given to the people to cultivate Crown lands as an insurance against food shortage, which might be the result of shipping losses from "U" Bat attack. No record can be found of any proclamation giving permission, similarly permission was not withdrawn in 1918. As a result an entire generation has been allowed to practice shifting and permanent agriculture on Crown lands for almost forty years. Prior to 1914 bailiffs controlled illegal practices on Crown lands. The post was abolished in about 1915. Op. cit., p.13.

its transfer from one owner to another has to overcome such practical and institutional barriers, that one can hardly think in terms of a market of landed properties (outside of the urban areas). This difficulty for transferring land across class divisions cannot be overlooked. On the one hand, given the extreme dispersion of small plots, those eventually put to sale, could only be attractive to small scale farmers. Estate owners were rarely in a position to consolidate and expand their properties by acquiring land bordering their domain. On the other hand, as Yankey points out, it is very difficult to conceive the fractioning of large estates and their selling to a myriad of small scale farmers.^{321/}

In economic analysis positing the maximization of profits as a universal goal, the collective ownership of land by an extended family, - the family property system, - is understandably dismissed as pernicious to rational allocation of resources. By rational allocation of resources is meant consistency with a market economy. J. N. Burra states categorically that family land is the cause of the greatest land waste in the island.^{322/}

In 1966, the survey by Yankey of small scale farmers showed that 73% of small scale farmers interviewed occupied land under freehold system of ownership against 27% of tenants. Among the freeholders, 33% were operating totally or partially on land made available according to the family property system.^{323/} As for the acreage distributed under this system, the same author found:

^{321/} Ibid, p. 219 "(...) In the case of private lands which are mainly owned by large scale farmers, there are institutional barriers to the sale of such lands. These lands are mainly held as a hedge against economic uncertainty or as a means to gain prestige and to hold economic power in the community. When there are sales of land held by large scale farmers, the buyers are generally among landlords. Consequently the majority of the potentially productive lands which are unutilized are unavailable to existing and potentially small scale farmers."

^{322/} Ibid.

^{323/} Op. cit., p.181.

"From the total number of small scale farms established during two distinct periods of time, 1900-1948, - the period of subsistence small scale agriculture - and 1949-1966, the period which marked the commercialisation of small scale farms, 58 per cent and 42 per cent respectively of small scale farms were occupied under freehold system of ownership with customary rights (family lands) during both periods."324/

It would therefore seem that even though a minority of farmers (17%) operated exclusively on land belonging to their family, a sizeable proportion of land available for small farming happened to be family land, even after the distribution of Crown lands undertaken during the first half of the 1950s.

Custom determines that the alienation of one's rights to a family land can only take place in favour of a member of one's own family. Small land owners are not free to dispose of their properties thus the entire community prevents a further concentration of land prejudicial to the population of small scale farmers. From a sociological point of view and irrespective of its implication for an increase in the economic output of the country, a perpetuation of the family property system indicates a basic attitude which, in fact, pervades the society as a whole.

Taking into account the different forms of tenancy caused by the colonial policy of land distribution, together with the regular seasonal employment of small scale farmers on the estates, it follows that the dominant and dominated classes have been involved in a very peculiar system of social relations. To accompany the deployment of these forms of interaction, it must be kept in mind that in the colonial setting, oppression and resistance are inseparable. The frailty of Dominica's plantation system allowed more leeway to the development of a counter-plantation system; the traditional economic idleness of large portions of privately owned estates gave more room to collective administration of the family's assets. But plantation and counter-plantation, legal and customary ownership rights cannot be de-linked in the social fabric, except for analytical purposes.

The underprivileged were never completely subservient. On the one hand, they produced goods which they had to turn over to the landlords, who in turn distributed these goods on the external market; on the other hand, the rural population remained sufficiently autonomous to decide on the allocation of the

324/ Ibid.

resources destined to satisfy its own needs. Besides, while operating within a super-imposed cultural frame which regulated the exercise of political power, the population preserved a sphere of knowledge expressed in a linguistic corpus under its exclusive control. It administered in all sovereignty significant areas of family and community relations, together with this sort of prolongation of family and community life constituted by multi-crop small scale agriculture.

Both subservience and self-reliance, domination and liberation resulted from this peculiar mix of economic, political and cultural relations. Asymmetric articulation with the economy of the metropolitan country and with the international market economy evolved without destroying, and even re-enforced the political isolation of the majority and their self-contained economic and social institutions.

Finally, it would appear worthwhile to research the extent to which out-migration, endemic since the nineteenth century, could be considered as an answer to the colonial strategies of development. Out-migration would be, in the same vein as the family property system, the subtraction from the basket of resources available to the local dominant economy, of a proportion which is subsequently located beyond the reach of the colonial authority. The principles regulating the amount and frequency of monetary remittances would then be seen as evidence of some unknown norms and values used by the community to ensure the loyalty of the migrants. These remittances would be in the same relation to the economic output of the society, as the produce of the multi-crop farm was in relation to the produce of the estates. The suggestion is the more appealing because small scale farming deriving originally from squatting on Crown lands and emigration have in common the seizure by the individuals of their freedom of movement. In both cases, the state in Dominica may take note of the events but it cannot control them directly, or reduce their occurrence by persuasive measures.

The landlords and their estates

J.A.B. Burra summarizes the social structure of Dominica in the 1950s by stating that the country was still attempting to function with a plantocracy and a peasant-labour system of society.^{325/} This situation rests on deep historical roots and deep-seated vested interests. It is unnecessary to underline that the land reserved in the colonial

^{325/} Op. cit., p.7.

policies of the eighteenth century for the British subjects were the best lands of the island.

"Through public land distribution policies of that period (1763 to 1967) estate lands are lands of good quality. They are situated on the coast or the valley in land from them with access to road and sea systems of communication with the market."^{326/}

In 1961, the large scale farmers, established on properties of 100 acres and over, owned hardly more than 1 per cent of the total number of farms in the country. Yet they controlled an overwhelming proportion of the potentially productive land for agricultural development, approximately 55%^{327/}.

Farms occupying an area less than 100 acres represented 98.9% of the total number of farms and covered 46.6% of the total acreage of land in farm. Among these farms, a group of medium size farms - of more than 10 acres and less than 100 acres - represented 8.3% of the total of farms and an area of 22% of the land in farm. The power of the landlords may be visualized by contrasting their estates to the area available to the multitude of mini-farms - 90% of all farms - of less than 10 acres in extent. These mini-farms occupied an area less than 25% of the land in farm in the country.

Yankey, who reports these data, adds that the skewed land distribution worsened after the Banana Boom.^{328/} J.M. Marie noted that, contrary to what is observed in many Caribbean countries, foreign ownership of land is not particularly significant in Dominica, only 1% of the land in farm^{329/}.

In Dominica, the landlords do not seem to need the totality of their estates for productive agricultural undertakings. Yankey points out that "by 1960-1961, approximately fifty (50) per cent of lands in farms were in

^{326/} Yankey, op. cit., p. 111.

^{327/} Ibid. p.216.

³²⁸ Ibid. p. 111.

^{329/} Estates owned by foreigners have nonetheless a size of 450 acres in average. (Watty Frank, "Alien Land Ownership and Agricultural Development Issues, Problems and the Policy Framework". Proceedings of the 5th West Indian Agricultural Economic Conference, 1970, quoted by J.M. Marie, op. cit., pp. 44-45).

an unproductive state".^{330/} According to J.M. Marie, 65% of the area occupied by large farms are not cultivated, against 49% of farms of 5 to 50 acres in extent and 3% of farms of less than 1 acre in extent.^{331/}

It would have been possible to argue that the proportion of land allowed to lie fallow is in accordance with practice and technology at the time, if patterns of production on large estates would evidence some superiority when compared to what obtains on intensively exploited small farms. Most observers choose to relate this waste of scarce resources to the negative attitude towards agriculture displayed by the landlords and the meaning of land ownership as an indicator of status. J.A.N. Burra states categorically:

"There is no alternative but to recommend the introduction of a land tax upon lands classed as Agriculturally productive which are unworked. The tax should be such as to either encourage idle and absentee landowners to work the land or to sell it."^{332/}

J.M. Marie argues:

"Because ownership of large tracts of land is important in determining the social status and political influence of individuals in these (plantation) societies, there is a tendency to invest in land beyond the managerial capacity of the family, with the result that the rate of under-utilization of land increases over time."^{333/}

Although in Dominica land ownership is indeed linked with social and political preeminence, from the golden times of plantation economies in the eighteenth century to the contemporary world, there is no relation between the managerial capacity of landed families and the exploitation of their estates. Management was then and still is a commodity which is usually contracted by the owner of any given capital. Hence the psychology of the landlords does not really explain the derelict situation of agricultural land. It has been seen (Chapter III) that they were unable to attract the necessary capital resources to organise their economy otherwise.

^{330/} Op. cit., p.215.

^{331/} Op. cit., p.44.

^{332/} Op. cit., p.38.

^{333/} Op. cit., p.48.

J.M. Marie also underlines the fact that the shortage of labour, created by the land distribution scheme during the first half of the 1950s cannot be adduced to give account of the under-utilization of land resources. He quotes a survey establishing that only a minority (14%) of large farms experienced labour shortage mainly of a seasonal nature. Moreover, the same survey indicates that workers have a preference for employment on large farms. Therefore these farms would normally be the last unit to suffer from shortage.^{334/}

In his analysis, Yankey notes that rural people in Dominica have two economic opportunities: to be full-time or part-time farmers, or to be full-time or part-time agricultural workers. He observed between 1949 and 1966 a shift from wage employment to self-employment and concludes.

"that there is a strong judgement by rural people for full-time or part-time farming and the problem of land scarcity in the future will arise as small scale farmers moved into poorer quality of land."^{335/}

In the opinion of the same author, the increased demand for banana provoked an increased demands for land; the state replied to this by modifying its traditional land policy and making land available to actual and potential farmers; landlords proceeded to evict their tenants (1949) and once the predominance of bananas was established, offered again small plots to tenants. Yankey remarks, in the same line of Burra's observation in 1953, that:

"The sale of Crown land has been considered slow and thus supply of land has not satisfied the demand for land. In view of that estate agriculture has provided small scale farmers with a source of private land for farming through the system of land tenancy."^{336/}

Available studies are not sufficient to clarify the issue which emerges from these observations. Obviously around 1950 there was a re-allocation of productive factors. The difficulty resides in enquiring why among various alternatives of management of scarce resources, a specific one, - the land tenancy system - was favoured. Given the monopolization of the best lands by the landlords and their willingness to rent part of their estate to the underprivileged small scale farmers on the one hand; and given the high cost

^{334/} Op. cit., p.46.

^{335/} Op. cit., pp.217 and fol.

^{336/} Ibid. p. 107.

of production of small scale farming on freehold land on the other hand, the case seems made for comparative studies to determine the relationship between the output and returns from tenant farms on good quality land and from freehold farms on marginal land. One fears that the profits the tenancy contract offers to the tenants are based on the average return obtainable from high cost cultivation on freehold farms on marginal lands. Should this be correct, the income of a landlord would grow higher as more expensive farming takes place on more and more inappropriate farmland.

In fact nearly 20 years after the introduction of bananas on a massive scale, estates were exploited in a large measure through the use of tenant farmers:

"From a sample survey of estate agriculture (sample contained 30 per cent of the total population of estates) in 1967, approximately 50 per cent were occupied by tenants with average size farms and number of tenants as listed below.

- i) 67 per cent were occupied by tenant farms under 1 acre in extent;
- ii) 33 per cent were occupied by tenant farms of 1 to 5 acres in extent."

The number of tenants occupied on the estates of the sample survey was distributed according to the following percentages:

- "iii) 46 per cent were occupied by 1 to 10 tenants;
- iv) 40 per cent were occupied by 11 to 50 tenants
- v) 14 per cent were occupied by 51 and over tenants."^{337/}

The system of land tenancy for absorbing labour force has a three-fold advantage. It allows the eventual use of the labour force of the entire family of the tenants, without the intervention of an employer, i.e. with no potential conflicts typical of industrial relations. Besides, it provides the country with a sort of "landed proletariat", aggregated by family units, each one of them facing the landlord in isolation. Finally negotiations are maintained within the political arena, since the position of the landlords derives from their ownership rights and bears no relationship to their economic achievements. In a colonial setting, it is socially less onerous to enforce law and order than to abide by the principles of free enterprise, since these principles are endowed with a dynamic of change subversive of colonial economic management.

^{337/} Op. cit., p.110.

In any event, the evidence at hand shows that the landlords are few, they are not foreigners, they control most of the land suitable for farming, half of them exploit this land through tenants, and they leave idle most of their estates. One suspects that, instead of putting all their estates to cultivation, they have a vested interest in fostering at national levels, the development of uneconomical owner-operated farms. This would allow the fixation of returns acceptable to tenants at lower and lower levels, while increasing the cost of the tenancy contract, i.e. the price paid to the landlords. For such a mechanism to operate, available land must be made scarce. This scarcity seems to be achieved by using one's property rights to keep idle large proportions of privately owned estates. It will be shown subsequently that the constant variations in the sheltered prices of bananas and their general tendency to decline, have caused profits to originate in the expansion of trade and not of production proper.

Small Scale Farming or Task Work

The Caribbean society is best considered as a counter-plantation system in order to underline that its creation and development have taken place within and in opposition to the dominant plantation system. It is implied in this line of reflexion that the opposition between these two forms of production may also be viewed as a structural arrangement, which defines the classes involved and which individuals are not free to modify.^{338/} The present chapter looks into the dynamics of this binary societal arrangement within the circumstances of Dominica.

One may recall that enslavement of the population in Dominica plantation economy was accompanied in many instances with the authorization granted to the captives to use small plots of land as kitchen gardens or provision grounds. Then, after emancipation, these peasants in embryo, as tenants and sometimes outright freeholders, together with the former maroons established themselves on the fringe of the area occupied by the estate. While taking care of their gardens, they sought seasonal employment in the production of export commodities, whenever estate agriculture embarked on such ventures.

^{338/} For an elaboration on the implications of this arrangement for economic analyses, see Eric B.A. St. Cyr, "Some Fundamentals in the Theory of Caribbean-Type Economy" Dept. of Economics, U.W.I., St. Augustine, June 1983, (mimeo).

Dominican peasants therefore have always worked frontier lands. At present the situation is the same. Yankey notes that these small farms are located "in remote areas, often accessible only by rough tracks over difficult terrain". Moreover a small farmer nowadays usually operates several farms, with severe consequences for its labour time wasted walking along mountain trails.^{339/} To the adverse consequences due to small size and dispersion, one must add the fact alluded to previously, that land available to small scale farming is generally of the worst quality.

It follows, when one comes to focus on the production of bananas, that:

"Banana productivities have been low in Dominica in comparison to that of foreign competitors on the world market. (...) With total production increasing at relatively low levels of productivity, this suggests that growth in agriculture, so far, has been made possible mainly through the cultivation of more lands in export crops, particularly bananas".^{340/}

In Dominica approximately 52% of the farm acreage is cultivated in bananas. Small scale farmers have produced most of the crop, since the beginning of the boom, in spite of their minority share in the total cultivable land.

"By the end of 1952 (...) almost 60% of the output of bananas for export comes from peasants, and possibly half of this is from squatted land."^{341/}

J.M. Marie witnesses the same situation in the 1960s:

"Production of bananas in major producing and exporting countries is primarily undertaken by large farm units, but in Dominica the growth of the industry was due principally to the activity of the small farmers. According to the West Indies Census of Agriculture of 1961, farms of 24 acres and under had 62 per cent of the banana stools while farms of 100 acres and above had only 28.7 per cent of the stools on the island."^{342/}

^{339/} "Approximately 57 per cent of the small scale farmers interviewed in 1966 (...) occupied more than one plot of land for agricultural production. Because of the distances which are travelled by small scale farmers from one plot of land to the other, a high proportion of time and effort of small scale farmers which could have been spent in productive activities on the farm is lost by so doing in the process of farming." Yankey, op. cit. p.177.

^{340/} Ibid. p.52.

^{341/} J.A.N. Burra, Report on Land Administration in Dominica, p.26.

^{342/} Op. cit., p. 19.

The situation may have deteriorated if the tendency of small farms to grow smaller and smaller remained unchanged:

"The absolute number of farms of all sizes increased by approximately 17 per cent between 1946-1958. However the number of farms between 1-5 acres in extent increased by 37 per cent whilst the acreage increased only 10 per cent."^{343/}

It is no wonder therefore that Dominica is a high cost producer of bananas. Since the self-employed small scale farmer is working on marginal lands and since the degree of protectionism on the external market has been decreasing from 1955 onwards up to the point that only the purchase and not the price of bananas is guaranteed (as shown in the previous chapter) one would find it very difficult to understand what is preventing the total collapse of this high cost producing sector, if attention is not paid to the local relations of production.

As usual the income generated by the peasant/farmer is smaller than that of any category of individuals engaged in the industry. From the data presented by J.M. Marie, it can be seen that the average net return per acre per year being U.S.\$41.00 and 75% of the farmers operating exploitations in the bracket of less than 5 acres, their annual income does not exceed \$200.00. A grower receives approximately 14% of the FOB cost of a metric ton of banana. The exporter on the contrary is paid 20% of this cost, according to a report of FAO quoted by J.M. Marie.^{344/} Following the same source, the economist notes that the cost of production of bananas before harvesting is imputable in more than 60% to imported inputs such as fertilizers, materials, plant protection, and only in 39% to labour.

The level of income of the majority of banana growers is sufficiently low to create some concern, since the welfare of the society as a whole is

^{343/} Yankey, *op. cit.*, p.31.

^{344/} FAO, *World Banana Economy*, Rome 1971, p.42.

closely related to the quality of life of its single largest group of production workers. Vasantha Narendran of CARDI proposes:

"The approach to the pricing of bananas of the small farmer seems to be the source of the evil. All other agencies that operate in the banana industry are in a position to negotiate and obtain adequate remuneration. The farmer, on the other hand, is in no position to negotiate prices and receives only what remains."345/

There is indeed an issue one cannot overlook: why a high cost producing country is expanding its production by opening marginal lands, when the best ones remain idle? It is important to underline that part of the problem resides in the mechanism through which new technology and innovations in general are injected into the production of the fruit without involving the growers as a distinct interest group. The point can be made by focusing the range of action of the various agencies operating in the industry. At this moment of the analysis it is more appropriate to determine the nature of the insertion of the small scale farmer into the banana industry.

In 1978, Wood discussing the structure of employment by occupation noted that changes in employment reflect those occurring in the overall industrial structure of the country.

"One sees a decline in the numbers engaged in agricultural occupations while employment in production* and related occupations has remained fairly constant. The main growth occupations have been in the professional and technical, clerical and sale worker groups reflecting, once more, the increase which has taken place in employment in the service sector."346/

If the analyst is correct, a fundamental change is in process in Dominica. While the country is reaching the frontier of agricultural land, agriculture as such threatens to disappear from the industrial structure of the country as an independent primary sector and the farmer to be absorbed as an artisan attached to the commercial subsector. An industry is a branch of activity which can grow towards more and more complexity due to its internal dynamics. It is often assumed that in a market economy this dynamics is derived from a tension between capital and labour. As labour strives for better remuneration, capital moves towards more sophistication, eliminates unnecessary manual labour and at the same time absorbs more qualified manpower. In the process, technicians and professionals

345/ V. Narendran, "Socio-economic Survey of Dominica Small Farms", Dominica CARDI, 1981, mimeo. p.17.

346/ David Wood, "The Manpower Situation in Dominica 1946-1976" National Planning Organisation, Roseau, August 1978, p.21 (mimeo.).

* Excluding agricultural workers.

find more and more relevant roles in the industry, which gradually becomes highly technological and scientific.

It is quite obvious that this process could not take place in the Dominican setting, since capital tends to be administered, as will be seen subsequently, by the Dominica Banana Growers Association, while the farmer remained responsible for the allocation of labour time. Therefore science and technology reach the farm through the good offices of the Banana Association and not through the deliberate decisions of productive enterprises.

Since most bananas are produced by the self-employed working on minuscule plots, there is no room in the process of agricultural production for the absorption of technicians and professionals nor for capital accumulation. Hence the structure of employment described by Wood. The small holder behaves like a seamstress contracted by the confection industry. The dynamism of the confection industry does not reside with the seamstress and there is no possible avenue for individuals involved in such trades to keep abreast of modern developments, let alone initiate them.

It must be mentioned en passant that it cannot be surprising that the "seamstress-like farmer" tends to withdraw from banana production and that qualified or at least literate youth prefer to choose other professions. This trend obviously makes it even more difficult to change the tendency to produce banana at higher and higher costs. Agricultural production in this sub-sector is thus converted into a trade rapidly becoming obsolete and reserved for senior citizens. To make matters worse, note must be taken of the fact that the firm "contracting" the "seamstress-like farmer" is not a fabric or a manufacture but a commercial undertaking, monopolising the export of bananas and the import of inputs (fertilizers, materials for plant protection, pesticides).

In the present circumstances characterised by the demise of domestic food production, the insertion of the peasant or self-employed farmer in agricultural production is transformed. Yankey notes pertinently:

"(...) an export crop can provide a remunerative alternative to food production beyond that necessary to feed the family. This is because a guaranteed market for farm products provides the opportunity for higher expected incomes to meet basic needs and growing aspirations of rural people as they entered into a broad market economy."347/

The entrance of the small-scale farmer into "the broad market economy" modifies the structures for satisfying the basic needs of the rural population as well as their aspirations. One must, however, look closely at this "revolution of aspirations" when it is anti-economical. Basic needs for food were previously met on garden plots and/or exchange of surpluses produced within a peasant economy, that is to say within a peculiar arrangement of productive factors whereby land and labour were more relevant than monetary capital. Nowadays, the export crop ensures the acquisition of hard currency which is in turn used to meet the high bills for imported food. It would seem that the policy measures protecting banana production tends to increase the inflexibility of the present arrangement, making it more and more difficult for the small producers to retreat towards multi-crop farming.

The problem is not to rediscover that in principle market economy must destroy and absorb peasant subsistence farming, but to identify the concrete socio-economic mechanisms which, in the case of Dominica, have resulted in checkmating the self-reliant satisfaction of basic needs for food. For, as Yankey states:

"The increasing export of bananas (...) and the decreasing quantities of food supplies - root crops, vegetables and fruits available on the domestic market, indicates the trend towards an expanding export agriculture and a declining domestic agriculture. It is evident that the forces which made for growth of export agriculture - export market demands and organized marketing arrangements - did not have the same effect on the production of the staple foods and vegetables."^{348/}

This seems an important enough issue for empirical research. The hard fact is that the small-scale farmer is increasingly cornered in a position where he has to depend more and more on his production of an export commodity in order to acquire larger and larger proportions of consumer goods necessary for his survival and reproduction. Several social mechanisms^{349/} have been operating to avoid this varied production circulating on the market and above all making it economically irrational to distribute anything but export crops.

^{348/} Op. cit., p.55.

^{349/} Including legal impediments, as discussed in the next section.

In recapitulating, one observes that: 1) alternative productive choices for the small-scale farmer are disappearing rapidly; 2) the small-scale farmer does not negotiate the price of his produce on the market; and 3) he does not negotiate the price of inputs into his main line of production. He therefore receives at the end of a productive cycle an income which indeed ceases to be of the same nature of that of a self-employed entrepreneur.

It has been seen that mini-farmers and the landless have always been available for piece-work on larger estates. Obviously, as for any other worker, pay is due if the tasks one is hired for are fulfilled. Parallel to the retreat of multi-crop farming, the area of autonomous decision making of the small farmer has decreased. He is less and less in a position to allocate freely any significant resources at his disposal and he has to specialize increasingly in the production of bananas, according to a function-production dictated by the Banana Association. It follows then that the dominant mechanism to absorb labour force in the Dominica banana production should be conceived as a development ad absurdum of traditional piece or task work, whereby the labourer is paid for the task he is contracted for, irrespective of the time he and/or his family invest in completing the contracted work. The novel and aggravating circumstance, unknown to the traditional plantation worker, is the apparently inescapable need to purchase larger proportions of food on the market of imported goods. One comes back to the concept of a "seamstress-like farmer" and of agricultural production as an obsolete trade, subsumed within the commercial activities.

A substitute to market relations

In 1934, a Banana Association was created to organize the gathering of the fruit in order to profit from contracted arrangements with transnational marketing agents. The Dominica Banana Growers Association (DBGA) is an enterprise distinct from the farms administered by the growers and in which these growers may or may not have participation. Article 3 (1) of the Banana Ordinance of December 1961 states that the DBGA

"shall be invested with the authority in accordance with the provision of this Ordinance to rehabilitate banana plantations and stimulate production, to market and control the disposal of all bananas produced in the colony of Dominica and intended to be exported therefrom and in addition to control the disposal of all bananas not intended for export but intended to be used

either wholly or partially as an ingredient in any manufactured product and to have the general management and control over all matters relating to banana disease throughout the colony." ^{350/}

There is general agreement, since the Watts Report of 1925 that given the large number of producers of bananas the Association was necessary to take advantage of opportunities on the external market. For instance J.M. Marie proposes in 1979:

"Because of the large number of farmers involved in the banana industry, it was essential that they were organised to take advantage of the contract (...) . With the advent of the contract the Association became the primary agent directing and influencing the course of development of the banana industry in Dominica. (...) The Association was primarily concerned with the marketing of bananas."^{351/}

The Banana Act goes further and implies that there is need for this special type of firm if the product is to leave the sphere where the surpluses obtained from the kitchen gardens normally circulate. It places the production of bananas for both export and local industrialisation under the control of the Association. Article 3 (1) of the Ordinance institutionalized the separation of two markets: a market for domestic agricultural food products seen as a prolongation of peasant subsistence economy, and a market for commercial agriculture viewed as a prolongation of the worldwide market. The Banana Association is created as a linkage mechanism between the two systems of production/consumption.

In fact, this Article served to destroy any possibility for the kitchen gardens to compete with each other in satisfying even a local industrial demand for the fruit; and by so doing, made it impossible for small-scale agriculture to evolve into a modern system of farming. While the total production of bananas was being stimulated by the interplay of market principles, the output of individual producers was being kept away from any influence of the principle of competition.

^{350/} The Laws of Dominica in force on the 31st. Day of December, 1961 Chapter 75, Banana, part 11, art. 3 (1).

^{351/} Op. cit., p. 18, our emphasis.

By legislative decree, the operators of kitchen gardens were being denied access to any economic achievements imputable to their own and self-reliant industry. By placing the DBGA between the agricultural producers and the eventual development of an agro-industry related to the sub-sector, the latter alternative was being cancelled once and for all. For an agro-industry to transform part of Dominica banana production, it would have to produce higher returns and with less risks than what was readily available through contract arrangements with the transnational marketing agents. Therefore the unforeseen consequence of Article 3 (1) was to ensure that the administration of the total output of bananas would always have the upper hand over the delivery of the output, or in other words, to ensure that merchants would always have precedence over agricultural or industrial producers.

It should be noted en passant that even though attention is focused here on the class relations deriving from these economic facts, it must be kept in mind that at the beginning of this chapter it was suggested that the Dominican society is a binary arrangement of two structures asymmetrically related on social, political and cultural grounds. The advent of bananas is cautiously adding an economic bridge between these two worlds without affecting the inherited asymmetry.

The "monopoly" on commercial bananas enjoyed by the DBGA cannot be treated as a position achieved by eliminating less endowed competitors. Moreover, and contrary to normal monopolistic profit seeking, the relations between price and volume of transactions are non-existent in the collection of bananas for market operations. In the same way that the term "monopoly" creates much confusion, words commonly related to this concept and used to refer to the transactions between the Association and the growers obscure the nature of these transactions. In the Act itself, reference is made to the "seller" of bananas and qualification for membership to the Association is based on the transference - presumably against payment - of ownership rights on certain quantities of bananas to the Association. But the Association does not actually "buy" the island production for "resale". This impression which is conveyed in most reports is an illusion.

The Association "controls the disposal of all bananas". Between the delivery of bananas to the Association and payment to the owner for the goods comes an important intermediate step: the very alienation of such goods in favour of a third person. It will be readily apparent that the owners of the merchandise or of the factors of production used in its production cannot withdraw from the transaction in the case where the price offered for the alienation of their property rights does not satisfy them. One is not even observing the case of a monopsony; and payment made to growers and "sellers" of bananas is anything but a market price as will be illustrated. It bears more relations with the cost allocation within division of large enterprises. On this basis, the Banana Act can be viewed as a decision of parliament to cancel the principles of market economy in the production and internal circulation of commercial bananas.

Payments for the total output of bananas are calculated on the basis of the so-called Green Market Price (GMP), that is to say the price of bananas delivered to ripeners in the United Kingdom, minus the contract costs of the marketing agent (Geest W.I., Ltd.). This payment to the Association is known as the Basic Price. The Association, in turn, deducts from the Basic Prices its current expenses, namely: administrative expenses, packing and internal transportation, leafspot control, fertilizers advanced to growers, other credits and their supervision, and various other contributions, most important among the costs of an insurance scheme. What is left constitutes the payment to the grower.

While the grower's farm is legally an enterprise distinct from the Association, the grower does not complete his cycle of production until the bananas have reached the United Kingdom market. Therefore the activities of both the Association and Geest W.I., Ltd. are part of his cycle of production. Transferences of value from the farm to the Association and to Geest, and vice versa, are not regulated by price mechanisms, but by agreements between the parties involved in the process of "disposing" of the product.

It is evident, on the one hand, that the Association faces no risks and that its activities can hardly be classified as entrepreneurial undertakings. It is also clear, on the other hand, that the grower has to cope with so many uncontrollable variables that at the end of a given productive cycle he may end up owing money to the local and the international intermediaries. To prevent the occurrence of such situations which would simply force marketing agents out of business and oblige growers to revert to multi-crop cultivation, several measures have been designed and

were referred to in the previous chapter. This set of measures represent the degree of "protection" to the banana industry granted by the Government of the United Kingdom.

The reason for the Government of the United Kingdom protecting the trading of Dominica banana needs not be researched in the present study which is not centred on the international relations of the island. The interesting point to clarify is the nature of the Dominica Banana Growers Association as a "body corporate" responsible for the trade and for maintaining in operation the source of the trade. The history of the Dominica Banana Association, which celebrates 50 years of existence in the months to come, would indeed be an excellent subject matter for research in Caribbean institution-building. A historical perspective allows the observer to search beyond the formal characteristics of the Association, and to give account for its shortcomings.

"The marketing of bananas is highly organized. The Association and the purchasing company through the mechanism of the marketing contract, combining to provide all the elements of a good marketing system. These include shipping, internal transportation, market information, the reconciliation of price and quality with only part of the internal transportation being the responsibility of the individual farmer. (...) Two of the major problems facing the banana industry are the quality of the fruit and the high cost of production. The Association has been actively seeking ways to reduce cost of production and increase the quality of the output".^{352/}

While taking note of the formal characteristics of the Association, as well as its aims and objectives, one must address the net results of its actions. In this endeavour, two reports^{353/} requested by the Government of Dominica, - one during colonial times, the second after independence, - put in evidence certain recurrent results, which may or may not be acceptable from administrative and legal points of view, but which, in a sociological analysis, have to be considered as a normal behaviour precisely because they were recurrent. These reports will be presented in turn.

^{352/} J.M. Marie, op. cit., p.56.

^{353/} Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Conduct of the Operations of the Board of Management of the Dominica Banana Association, August 1958, mimeo. The document will be referred to by the name of the Commission Chairman, R. Milton Cato. An Evaluation Report of the Dominica Banana Industry, Government of Dominica, 1981, mimeo. The Report was produced by a Task Force chaired by Dr. J. Bernard Yankey. It will be referred to as the Evaluation Report.

The Dominica Banana Association was created as an association of merchants. It maintained this characteristic during twenty years. Up to 1952, it had less than 80 members, 75% of them residing in Roseau or nearby. After 1949, with the expansion of banana cultivation, participation in the industry suffered important modifications which called for a change in the structure of the institution. Gradually, the membership of the Association increased and at the same time Roseau, the capital of the country, lost some of its preeminence vis-à-vis the Northern District which delivered 60% of the fruit exported to the United Kingdom between 1954 and 1958. In 1958, the Association comprised 1,537 members, of whom 1,106 were from the north and 431 from the south. It would appear at first glance that the growers had gained preeminence over the merchants who had founded the Association.

A class conflict developed between growers and merchants but was slightly obscured by the fact that merchants, as any other Dominicans, also had interest in agriculture as landlords. The 1958 Milton Cato Commission of Enquiry into the Conduct of the Operations of the Board of Management of the Dominica Banana Association depicted the situation as an open "war" between sections of the Board of Management of the Association.

"The division is generally agreed to be one of the Northern district against the Southern district. We have been able to trace this division to certain principal causes, viz:-

1. The resentment of certain members to the agitation (...) to enlarge the membership of the Association, and to break up the monopoly which was being enjoyed by a few members from the South who were elected to the Board of Management from year to year and most of whom controlled the buying of bananas for their private profit.
2. The complete lack of land communications between the Northern District and Roseau, coupled with a deliberate neglect by the Roseau office to keep any form of liaison with the North.(...)
3. The complete disregard by the Board for the contribution the North was making towards the industry, and their failure to make some provision for representation on the Association and on the Board for the Northern growers."354/

While the Cato Commission of Enquiry defined the members of the Board of Management from the South as persons "controlling the buying of bananas for their private profit",

the most vocal representative of the growers from the Northern District described them in a Memorandum to the Commission as "a class of old members a few of whom were engaged in the buying of bananas from growers and selling over to the Association as their own produce". They were also described as "some members of the ruling class".^{355/}

One can immediately foresee from these words that the conflict implied a challenge to the ruling class. It evolved and was solved in political terms. Actually the representative of the Northern growers referred to earlier was a member of the Legislature,^{356/} and since the franchise was abolished and universal suffrage enforced from 1951 onwards, it may be said that changes in the organisation of the banana industry were concomittant with a reformulation of the country's political system.

The first steps taken by the Northern growers to have the Association function in their interests were the securing of a majority on the Board of Management in 1953 and directing the Executive Secretary of the Association to carry out measures consistent with such interests. The Executive Secretary ignored these decisions and consequently procedures for his dismissal "for dereliction of duty and gross insubordination" initiated. By 1957, the Board had endorsed the recommendation to dismiss him. However, since the Secretary of the Association "holds his appointment at the pleasure of the Governor in Council", no action followed this decision in view of the opposition of the Governor.

In the meantime, the Roseau-based merchants initiated a counter-offensive to prevent the Northern growers from gaining control of the Association. Legislation was passed dividing the country into two zones allocating to each zone three representatives on the Board of Management. Those with the nominees representing the government would have maintained the dominance of the commerce of Roseau in the affairs of the Association.

Three elements can be noted in these exchanges: first, a distance between the Banana Association and its members; second, some degree of autonomy enjoyed

^{355/} Ibid. App.2, p.1.

^{356/} V.J. Francis Mourillon, The Dominica Banana Industry from Inception to Independence, 1928-1978, Tropical Printers Ltd., W.I., p.18.

by the administration of the Association vis-à-vis the Board of Management and sanctioned by the colonial government; and third, the use of legislative power to perpetuate the economic privileges of the élite.

In the first instance, since there was no real economic criteria for discrimination, a political decision established a bias in favour of the merchant class in the original qualifications requested for membership in the Association and its Board of Management. The Commission of Enquiry noted that:

"All owners of one hundred banana stools or sellers of not less than fifty stems of bananas per annum are eligible for membership of the Association, but the qualification of a member for election to the Board shall be the sale of not less than two hundred stems of bananas within a period of 12 months immediately preceding the date of election."357/

The Commission of Enquiry recommended - and government subsequently endorsed the recommendation - to equate qualifications for membership to the Association and to its Board.

In the second case, it so happens that the government participates on the Board of the Association. Moreover, the officers of the Association held office at the pleasure of the Governor of the Colony. The Commission of Enquiry found it out of place that the colonial government intervenes to such an extent in the administration of the industry.

Finally, the Commission of Enquiry clearly suggested that steps taken to safeguard the vested interests of the established élite were irrational.

"We find it difficult to understand why resort had to be taken to special legislation for this purpose since had the growers in Zone B (the South) been sufficiently interested and responsible they could have joined the Association and ensured that their point of view was well represented and respected."358/

The character of the Association as an interest group using basically political influence to secure economic privileges, and its collusion with the colonial government are further evidenced by the mismanagement of funds in contracting and

357/ The Milton Cato Report, p.4.

358/ Ibid.

promoting employees of the Association, buying and transporting bananas from the growers, purchasing and selling fertilizers, implementing capital investments, and operating pest control schemes. The findings of the Commission were damaging for both the administrative staff and the Government, and cases of downright theft of Association funds were recorded. With respect to the Management of the Association, the Commission noted in one instance:

"At the end of 1975 debts owing by buyers amounted to 32,082.56 in the North and 9,979 in the south, (...) A large percentage of the above sums were 'lost' in circumstances which warranted criminal action and it is regretted that the persons responsible did not see fit to initiate such action."359/

As for the part played by the Government in the crises, the Commission concluded with severity:

"We were astonished to find that in spite of the clearly unsatisfactory state of the Association's affairs Government abandoned its responsibility for carrying out the Association's Audit without ensuring that any alternative arrangements were made.

It is no wonder that in these circumstances the accounting system broke down completely and that certain members of the staff left as they were without proper supervision performed their duties in the most unsatisfactory manner.

We would like to point out that during the period under review various Government Officers were ex-officio members of the Board but these officers took little or no steps to influence the Board members nor to bring forcibly to Government's notice the chaotic state of affairs."360/

It seems evident that the cleavage between production and marketing, or in terms of the present analysis, between the interests of the growers and merchants, were solved at this juncture by the Cato Commission of Enquiry, the recommendations of which were subsequently embodied in "An Ordinance to Regulate the Production and Marketing of Bananas, 18 June 1959." A clash of economic interests emerged and was solved through the interplay of political forces and arbitration as economic negotiations were hardly useful in the process. It was a discussion on the need to abide by economic obligations - which is a matter of acknowledged rights and commitments - not the give and take which characterises the arbitration of economic interests.

359/ Ibid., p.14.

360/ Ibid., p.3.

These conflicts did not involve the agricultural workers and their quality of life. The Dominica Trade Union (DTU) tabled a memorandum, but the summary of recommendations by the Commission contained no reference to the plea of the plantation workers. These workers had not initiated the conflict and whether they were concerned or not, they played no active part in its evolution and solution.

Moreover, small scale farmers as such did not seem to be concerned. The class conflict opposed merchants and growers and more specifically Roseau-based merchants and Northern growers. This fact calls for some elaboration. Indeed following the observations of Yankey one may accept that increased demand for bananas triggered a demand for land which was partly satisfied by distributing Crown properties to small farmers. It must be underlined however that the land so distributed was far from being of the appropriate quality for banana production.

One may also observe that the élite of the country, Northern growers and Southern merchants alike, did not seem overly committed to increasing the production of bananas. Influential growers and rich merchants had not used their profits to invest in their own estates, nor their influence to enact legislation promoting banana production. Considerable areas of large private properties remained uncultivated.

J.A.N. Burra reporting on Land Administration recommended without much success:

"There is no alternative but to recommend the introduction of a land tax upon lands classed as Agriculturally productive which are unworked. The tax should be such as either to encourage idle and absentee landowners to work the land or to sell it."361/

Therefore even though a reading of the Milton Cato Commission of Enquiry Report reveals a class conflict between growers and merchants, it does not seem that the growers opposed the merchants for the sake of their interests as producers. A closer look at the crises faced by the industry, indicates that there was more interest in controlling the Association than in increasing the production of bananas to take advantage of favourable marketing circumstances when they existed.

The logical conclusion would be that a sheltered market for banana did not primarily induce the élite to produce and sell more bananas, but to exercise more

361/ Op. cit., p.38.

control in the sale of bananas. Higher returns were obtained not from the export trade as such, but from tighter controls on trans-actions. In this event the issue of low or high cost of production of the fruit became a secondary matter and consequently the suggestion by J.A.N. Burra to tax idle land missed the point and fell into oblivion.

If the growers who had provoked the crises in the industry during the 1950s were more interested in rationalizing the support services to the industry than in using appropriate land to expand the productive system, it follows that more returns must have been generated in these services than in production. The Association, having initiated its activity as a commercial concern, remained geared towards maximizing exports and imports (of inputs for the industry). Hence the growers, by challenging the Roseau-based merchants, were simply aiming at securing part of the profits to be derived from the export-import trade, returns from local production per se being insignificant if not in-existent.

This explanation is corroborated by the fact that some major recommendations of the Cato Commission are still outstanding issues. The Commission proposed to solve open North-South war by creating District Branches in order to foster the involvement of all growers. It in fact changed the very name of the Association from Dominica Banana Association (DBA) to Dominica Banana Growers Association (DBGA).

"We feel that the restrictions imposed by this system of zoning will tend to perpetuate the very undesirable rift which at present exists between the North and the South and we recommend that the Board undertakes to establish District Branches throughout the island. These Branches should be established in every area where there is a sufficient membership to warrant the formation of a Branch which will be entitled to send a specific number of delegates to the Annual meeting of the Association (...)."362/

This recommendation which follows the practice in St. Lucia and St. Vincent was done with the declared intention of ensuring that the views of the growers were channelled to the General Assembly of the Association, that their will be

362/ The Milton Cato Report, p.4.

manifested in the elections to the Board of Management and that information and instructions from the organs of the Association be conveyed without delay to all growers.

Nonetheless the rift between the Association and its "constituency" remained unchanged for more than two decades after the introduction of this innovation. The Task Force chaired by J.B. Jankey, the Report of which will be analysed subsequently, noted that these Branches were not fully operational, when at all in existence:

"This leaves a gap in the flow of information from the Association to the grower and generates a festering mistrust that has been existing between Management and staff of the Association and the growers. This has resulted in negative attitudes."^{363/}

As for the efforts of the Cato Commission to reduce Government interference in the industry and to give to its management a business-like direction, developments which took place from 1958 to 1981 showed that banana production seems too vital a part of both the political and economic fabric of the country for the Government of Dominica to take some kind of laissez-faire attitude vis-à-vis the industry. Guidance or interference on the part of Government continued unabated as if it were a fundamental feature of the development of the industry.

The growth of the banana industry was described in the previous chapter. It would be recalled that between 1957 and 1969, income accrued to growers multiplied three fold. At the same time, it was seen that the country experienced an unprecedented flow of out-migration during the 1960s, resulting in a remarkable aging of the population occupied in agriculture. It was also pointed out that the decline of the industry started in 1970 when the United Kingdom opened its door to other Commonwealth low cost producing countries. Finally note was taken of a series of natural disasters which devastated the island's economy, after the ravages caused by the propagation of leaf spot disease and by severe drought in 1977. Such is the context in which the Government of Dominica appointed in August 1981 a Task Force for the "review of all aspects of operation of (the) Dominica Banana Growers Association (DBGA) from January 1, 1978 - July 31, 1981".

^{363/} Op. cit., p.61(a).

The "Evaluation Report of the Dominica Banana Industry" produced by the Task Force is quite different from the document put forward by the Milton Cato Commission of Enquiry either because the crisis faced by the industry was not of the same nature - (its political undertones were not as acute as in 1958) - or because much progress had been made and the organization of the industry was far more complex. The Task Force seems more concerned by management issues.

Nevertheless the Evaluation Report shows how certain hardcore problems persisted for almost two decades. The development of the banana industry is portrayed as the results of the interactions between six different actors: workers, growers, management and staff of the Association, Board of Management (transformed in 1972 into a Management Committee), government and Geest Industries. Of the last actor, not much is said and will be related here; while one may dispose of the first one in a few lines. Reference is made to the strikes of the women carriers in 1978 and to the fact that the workers at the Boxing Plants were unionized. Labour as such is still not a differentiated component of the industry and it does not seem to have a specific impact on the choices affecting the course of agriculture. The fact is that the Task Force did not see fit to register any peculiar position the workers might have put forward nor to suggest measures to satisfy their interests. It is safe to state that they played - as a collectivity and irrespective of their eventual dissatisfaction - no active role in the arbitration of the various social demands made on the returns obtained from the banana industry.

One would expect that the banana growers would be at the centre of all activities in the industry and perhaps they are. The Evaluation Report, however, highlights two curious conflicts: one between the growers and the industry as such, and a second between the growers and the Association. The Task Force, in expressing how "disturbed" it was by the fact that some growers employed on the staff of the Association were using their position to indulge in deplorable malpractices, made these remarks:

"The continuation of such a situation (conflict of interests of operational staff who are active growers) certainly serves as no example to the farmer who is trying hard or who needs to be persuaded to meet the objectives of the industry."^{364/}

^{364/} The Evaluation Report, p.27, our emphasis.

The problem seems to be rooted in the inconsistency of running a monocrop economy with multi-crop farmers or peasants. A peasant has another frame of reference and his own norms for allocating available resources. Moreover, his normal preference for poly-cultivation is strengthened by the increasingly limited income he received for the sale of bananas. The Evaluation Report attests that:

"Fertilizer and other inputs supplied to farmers by the Association are also used in the cultivation of other crops. As a result the Banana Industry does not derive the full benefits from the inputs distributed to farmers."^{365/}

Since there still exists a very large group of marginal producers,^{366/} expenses incurred to service them cannot produce significant yields. Unavoidable failure in this respect adds to the lack of credibility of the management of the industry. This can be exemplified by the investments made to control the leaf spot disease, which have not given the expected results, not only because of shortcomings of an organizational nature, but also because of a series of problems inherent in the cultivation of marginal farms.

"This (failure) has had a demoralising effect on the affected growers and generated lack of confidence among the farmers in the ability of the Association to handle the industry."^{367/}

This sentence encapsulates much of the nature of the Dominica Banana Growers Association. It is not an organization of growers who handle their farms, but an organization created in order to handle the farms operated by the growers. It may or may not be able to perform, irrespective of the know-how of the individual grower. The proposition made earlier that small scale farming was a development ad absurdum of task work is corroborated. Even if the Association had not been geared since its inception towards marketing bananas and did not have only as a secondary purpose the production of the fruit, the hiatus between the actual producer and the management of his own affairs by the Association would have persisted. As implied in Article 3(I) quoted earlier, the Association is presently performing as if it were an institutionalization of the rift between subsistence

^{365/} Ibid., p.49.

^{366/} Ibid., pp.41-43.

^{367/} Ibid., p.8.

economy and its whole cultural framework on the one hand, and market economy and its global frame of action on the other hand. The Association is not striving to make the self-employed farmer a full fledged modern entrepreneur, nor at fostering the transition from a peasant outlook to a worldwide vision of economic flows.

The Evaluation Report distinguishes between top and middle management. With respect to the higher echelon, a diagnosis of incompetence is arrived at:

"For an industry of such dominant economic importance and extensive scale of operations, it lacks the expected Management team with strong technical base, tested managerial experience and the level of stature to execute action promptly and effectively, particularly as this requires competent and trusted relationship with farmers, DBGA work force, other agriculture field staff, agriculture service institutions, particularly WINBAN*, and Aid Donors such as USAID, BDD, CIDA and others."368/

Misappropriation of funds encountered in 1958 did not lessen and management still experienced serious difficulty in disposing of money in an orderly and accountable manner. This is evidenced in the payment on an acreage basis of subsidy to farmers affected by hurricane:

"The acreage for which the amounts were paid (...) was grossly overstated by approximately 40%"369/

The Task Force sees the urgent need to bring the lack of financial accountability in the operational system of the DBGA under control: the staff of the Association appears as a bureaucracy operating on the one hand in the absence of a system of accountability and on the other hand free from pressure originating from its constituency.

* WINBAN: West Indies Banana Association which aggregates all the national banana associations.

368/ The Evaluation Report, p.21.

369/ Ibid. p.7.

"Management identified the present poor financial condition of the Association and the dishonesty that pervades the system as the two critical problems of the industry. If the lack of financial accountability within the operational system of the DBGA is not brought under control immediately, whether it be public policy in unrealistic price fixing, callous actions of some growers and negligent behaviour of field staff; no financial institution or Aid Donor will feel comfortable in providing any meaningful financial support for the improvement of the industry. Both Management Committee and Association Management must together get to grips with that deeply-rooted problem of malpractices within the industry by executing a programme to reduce or eliminate them. These are costing the Association over 1.2 million per annum."^{370/}

The Evaluation Report describes at length wastage and malpractices by the middle management. At the Boxing Plants, considered the "heart" of the industry, "worker productivity is low, discipline is poor and accountability is lacking." "Deliberate cheating"^{371/} takes place in recording purchases, selection and weighing of the fruit. Staff of the Association, who are also active growers, profit from their position precisely to mock the established norms of quality and to attend to their private interests in collusion with the Boxing Plant personnel.^{372/}

The paradox which strikes the Milton Cato Commission, of the autonomy of management proper vis-à-vis the Board of Management, still persists. The Board of Management stands as an actor distinct from management itself. Its role is described by the Task Force in the following terms:

"This component of the structure of the DBGA stands at the apex of the organisation. It is principally designed to provide leadership and control over the affairs of the Banana Industry. Consequently, it must be held responsible and accountable for performance, particularly the crucial aspects of the industry, i.e. target production of marketable fruit, maintenance and improvement of fruit quality as necessary, financial viability of the Association, ability to service debts and maintenance of credibility to borrow, and recruitment of quality management and field operations staff."^{373/}

Now even though well informed and aware of the problems of the industry, the Management Committee is unfit to ensure the implementation of its decisions and seems unable to direct and guide the doings of the administration.

^{370/} Ibid., p.19.

^{371/} Ibid., pp.13 and 27.

^{372/} Ibid., p.56.

^{373/} Ibid., p.17.

Moreover, the Management Committee is in turn ambiguously linked to the Government which intervenes at will at all levels of the affairs of the industry. The interests of the Government are obviously quite varied in an activity which represents the backbone of the economy. Its interference varies from the level of price fixing to the decision to modify the entire structure of the Association. In 1972, it dissolved the Board of Management, replacing it by a fully appointed Management Committee, followed by one "comprising 3 elected persons by banana growers, two appointed by Government and two ex-officio members."^{374/} Therefore, the character and composition of the highest authority in the Association rest on a decision of the political directorate.

Finally the industry is totally dependent on the marketing company, Geest Industries (WI) Ltd. The Task Force reports among the "critical and specific weaknesses and deficiencies":

"The ability of the Association to be convinced of the reasonableness of Geest Industries (WI) Ltd. expenses in spite of professional examination."^{375/}

It has no control over the "green market price", the costs of the marketing company and "it is hardly an exaggeration to state that the Association has no control over the price paid to it".^{376/} Conversely what the farmer receives from the Association seems to vary at random in relation to what the Association obtains from Geest. One can safely propose a curious equation with respect to payments: the growers are to the Association, what the Association is to Geest Industries.

The guidelines proposed by the Evaluation Report of 1981 aim at instituting several levels of self-management, each one with an adequate safeguard for the different actors in the industry:

- In order to control wastage and malpractices, the Report relates that in the 1980-1981 Budget Address concern is expressed that the farmers should be directly involved at the level of district branches.^{377/}

^{374/} Ibid., pp.16-17.

^{375/} Ibid., p.61.

^{376/} Ibid., p.34.

^{377/} Ibid., p.8a.

- The Report proposes without reserve:

"Additional Boxing Plants are required and should be managed and operated by growers. The DEGA should therefore not increase its direct involvement in management operation of Boxing Plants and in fact should gradually phase out as far as feasible." 378/

- The Task Force suggests a reduction in Government interference in the affairs of the industry and full autonomy for the Board of Management in price fixing.

- The role of the Board of Management is further described as a central decision-making body:

"Whatever the grouping is called - be it Board of Management or a Management Committee - its core function must be to provide leadership to the industry in the development and implementation of well defined programmes to achieve specific targets under varying conditions faced by the industry. In particular, it is required to give direction in sustaining financial viability of the Association and grower and to prescribe specific and general policies to obtain these results." 379/

- Taking into account the composition of the Management Committee i.e. a body of elected representatives of Growers and Government officials, if it is in a position to fulfill the role described by the Task Force, it will determine specific and implementable targets, i.e. the equivalent of an explicit sub-sectoral plan. Its determinations will certainly be indicative for growers and mandatory for the administration of the Association.

Finally the Task Force in fact proposes that negotiations be initiated towards achieving some participation in Geest decision-making system:

"Since the operation of the marketing company seemed profitable given the present price to grower vis à vis the cost of production, question arises concerning the possibility of growers' participation in aspect(s) of the profitable operations of the industry. We recommend that such a possibility be investigated, with specific reference to equity participation in shipping on the part of WINBAN." 380/

378/ Ibid., p.15.

379/ Ibid., p.17.

380/ Op.cit., p. 33

In summary, the production of bananas by the growers, the gathering of the fruit by the Association and the marketing by Geest Industries, are articulated into a system that is sufficiently novel to warrant theoretical research and the formulation of the flows of goods and human resources into a model, bold enough to by-pass existing economic and sociological propositions. The point seems made that the allocation of resources during fifty years of existence of the Dominica Banana Association is not processed in accordance with the principle of market economy. One has to admit to a certain freeness in the appropriation of resources owned in principle by the collectivity of banana growers. This demands constant government intervention to introduce corrective measures. In so doing, the advice of technocrats is invariably sought.

The recommendations put forward by the two groups of experts in 1958 and 1981 seem to hesitate between proposing some form of self-management at least up to the level of District Branches and Boxing Plants, harmonized by centrally planned set of guidelines emanating from the Management Board and implemented by the employees of the Association. In fact in absence of the market as an institution responsible for the arbitration of conflicting interests, an economy can only operate rationally thanks to an explicit plan. The production of banana in Dominica bears more similarities with centrally planned systems than with a free enterprise system, or alternatively it could be considered as a loosely managed division of a multinational enterprise.

An analysis of the Dominica Banana Growers Association cannot take for granted the overt intentions of the Association to produce more bananas at less costs. It must focus on the net results of the fifty years of existence of the Association. From the data unearthed by the 1958 and 1981 groups of experts and taking into account the analyses relating to land use of the largest and most fertile farms, one has some difficulty in taking seriously the intentions of the Association as far as volume and costs of production are concerned. One cannot explain very

easily why so much investment is made to upgrade the output of farms of uneconomical size and/or operating on marginal lands, while the best land remains idle. There are increasing doubts about the intention of the Association, when one considers that the expenditure aimed at improving the quality of the fruit and at reducing its costs of production are determined unilaterally by the Association itself and deducted from the income of the ill-equipped farmers.

This practice has lasted since 1949, i.e. more than 30 years. It seems appropriate to argue that the Association has successfully protected its merchant characteristics and has been more zealous in enlarging the difference between the average income accrued to the growers and the Basic Price, than in reducing the cost of banana production.

Conclusion

Class relations as described in this chapter are slanted towards phenomena in the banana industry, the largest and most organized agricultural sub-sector. Forceful expression of various urban interests took place during the 1970s and will be recounted in the next chapter. Nonetheless, urban interests are built into the analysis presented so far. This is due to the fact that rural Dominica lacks a dominant class administering its relations with the outer world.

Before 1950, inequalities in Dominica were expressed basically through the distance between social groups, the country did not evolve a single set of asymmetric relations between all social actors which would have resulted into a social system integrated culturally, politically and economically.

As a consequence of its deficient participation into the world economy, a separate development of each social class followed the integrated system of class exploitation implemented by the British during the eighteenth century. Social distances took the form of cultural differences articulating two different ways of life. However, the marginalization of Dominica within the Western Hemisphere gradually resulted in the dominant classes borrowing solutions from the culture and outlook of the dominated ones. The art of living out of insufficient resources was developed by the local underprivileged and did not derive from a progressive dissemination of colonial culture. The development of common denominators between the opposing social classes constitutes the core of Dominica's nation-building process. On this basis one understands why colonialism and liberation could evolve side by side in the island.

The development of the banana industry after 1950 is inserted in the context of a "workable arrangement" between the two segments of the island society. The link it established eroded the segmentation of the social fabric. Nonetheless this segmentation was not acknowledged by the dominant classes. Deliberate attempts from 1934 to 1958 at harnessing the country's resources to profit fully from the opportunities open on the international market were an expression of belief held by those who created and sponsored the Dominica Banana Association that the country was an integrated system operating to their advantage. The process for the statement of the dominated to be discussed as a valid proposition is not yet complete.

Latent social conflicts became visible as a consequence of re-arrangements of economic factors set into motion by the Banana Boom. These conflicts were manifested initially as a divergence of interests between Northern growers and Southern merchants;

but gradual transformation of the peasant into a new type of self-employed - the seamstress like farmer - devoid of bargaining power, opened the possibility for growers exposed to import-export trade to challenge the position of the Roseau-based merchants. The original rift developed into a short lived "war" between traditional merchants and new ones. It also appears as a struggle between old members of the ruling class and newcomers, or between the capital city - Roseau - and the second city - Portsmouth. The conflict was solved by a modification of the marketing institution, and a rapprochement between the two cities.

The detachment from the totality of growers of a sub-group capable of acceding to the Banana Association without transforming its original structure as a marketing firm, calls for more specific research to clarify the various types of growers, their ability to understand information circulated by the DBGA and to express their views in the meetings of the Association (and in Parliament).

The small growers entertain a peculiar type of class relations which confine them to working either on mini-farms rented from the landlords or on privately owned uneconomical size farms, generally located on marginal lands. They have no more decision-making power in the running of their farms than the full-time task workers have in the management of the estate on which they work. The produce of their activity circulates on the market through channels outside of their control and their access to the DBGA is limited.

In the legal dispositions relating to the DBGA, there has not been found any element which could prevent a grower from participating fully in the organs of the Association. The difficulty for the small grower to interface with the large ones, due to the prevailing cultural cleavages must have prevented a joint defence of their collective interests. The large growers, speaking on behalf of the small ones, found an avenue towards the riskless role of intermediary, provoking then a disassociation of supposedly common interests.

Landlords inherited the best lands. They are an urban group and share with other urban dwellers the running of all official institutions. It can be said that the city through their intermediary owns the best part of the countryside. Roseau and Portsmouth as administrative and commercial centres,

always enjoyed a large degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the hinterland. These cities rule and administer the development of agriculture in Dominica. This seems perfectly natural to members of Parliament, administrators, and all self-appointed educated people.

On the one hand, the cultivation of bananas assisted in establishing a bridge between the dual components of the society and, in so doing, created conditions for accelerating the nation-building process. On the other hand, however, in the institution which could have spearheaded this alternative evolution, vested interests based on existing social cleavages were reactivated to prevent progress towards higher degrees of social cohesion. Inherited social distances separated the various growers and the world of the small growers from that of the import-export merchants and allied interest groups, and created a vacuum observable in the lack of accountability in which the organs of the Association had operated since their inception. These distances became the basis for asymmetric relations favouring those groups in a position to retain illegitimately the economic returns obtainable from the banana industry.

Endemic malpractices became customary form of appropriation of the community's assets. Up to the 1980s the Board of Management of the Association, in spite of its awareness of these malpractices, remained impotent to implement corrective measures. This process of accumulation of economic resources was perceived as illegitimate and resulted in mistrust and resentment and fostered negative attitudes among all those concerned.

Class exploitation took a very peculiar and uncontrollable shape and could not be institutionalized since it materialized through objectionable practices. Similarly the degree of exploitation (perceived as unfair by the majority and as very clever by the minority) was not negotiable openly. Attempts to enshrine rigid political control in the legal system and to have it sanctioned this lack of negotiation, met with resistance, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Malpractices, identified by the groups of technocrats in 1958 and 1981, which can be defined as lawless access to economic returns, constitute the visible side of class exploitation. They vary from outright theft or cheating to processing inaccurate insurance claims. However, an economy and an orderly society cannot operate if the distribution of rewards follows a lawless pattern. Assuming that one sets aside the reprehensible activities condoned by the Management of the

Association - on occasion with the blessing of the political authorities - and assuming that this behaviour could be accounted for by the dishonesty of a few culprits, it is still not clear that the Association could have met its declared objectives. The key issue which would defeat its original and avowed intentions would remain the ability to magnify artificially its administrative expenses and the volume of fertilizers and pesticides required together with their costs. The Association was operating without any form of economic competition or control.

The present study suggests that the import-export trade inserts itself in the Dominican economy, as prime mover of the production of bananas and determining the rate of profits obtainable from it, without the intervening of a market system. It is proposed that this covert relationship between merchants and producers constitutes the centre piece of class conflicts in Dominica; the most dynamic sector of the economy - the service sector - seems sufficiently autonomous to establish unilaterally the average return of capital invested in the agricultural sector.

Conflicts of class interests do not refer to a person to person relationship or to the meanness with which an underprivileged citizen is robbed of his due. What is being stated here is that there exists a structural relationship operating beyond the good or bad intentions of the individual, and this allows greater returns to the administration of the banana trade than to the production of the fruit. The modernization of family production appears then unthinkable, in view of the vested interests entrenched in the service sector. In this context, where political, economic and cultural dimensions are involved, forms of self-management of District Branches and of Boxing Plants, (both rural-based institutions) proposed since 1958, face insurmountable difficulties to get even off the ground.

These obstacles are implicitly identified in both the Cato Commission Report and in the Yankey Task Force Evaluation Report. The organization of the production and marketing of bananas is labouriously evolving toward a centrally planned activity to be tempered by proposed forms of self-management. If the recommendations of both groups of technocrats were to be fully implemented one would expect that self-management at the level of District Branches and Boxing Plants would indirectly raise the issue of manpower planning, i.e. of the excess or scarcity of labour force for the tasks required in each rural District.

The issue of manpower planning is not catered for and appears of utmost importance in the context of Dominica. The investment of most of the country's resources in the banana production has forced the population to integrate the worldwide market, severely reducing the viability of multi-crop subsistence economy. Nonetheless, the polarization of Dominica's resources by the international trade has not been accompanied by the articulation of a market economy within the country. Merchandise originating from the sub-sector analysed including labour time is not exchanged directly against payment. As a consequence, the producer, ill at ease in negotiating the value of his bananas, finds himself even farther from the possibility of negotiating the value of his labour time.

In these conditions the workforce becomes very vulnerable to the attraction of external labour markets, where negotiations of wages are duly institutionalized. In other words, it seems logical - and further study should clarify the point - that in the absence of a labour market or of an institution to fulfill similar functions, the labour force in agriculture tends to migrate. With the integration of the economy fostered by the development of the banana industry, the conditions in which the largest single group of producers works set the pattern for absorbing manpower in the rest of the economy. A process of depopulation is triggered.

One may conclude that thanks to the important step in the nation-building process brought about by the development of the banana industry, most social groups are now in close contact and their interests are so interrelated that the basis is laid for an intense social dialogue aiming at self-reliant development. However, the integrated economic system evolved with the expansion of the banana industry is quite different from current market economies. The tardiness in completing the institutionalization of a set of social relations adapted to this specific form of production is imputable to the traditional cleavages separating the two basic classes of the country: the dominant class comprising the urban based landlord/merchant/member of Parliament/Government officer/higher and middle level management, on the one hand, and the rural seamstress-like small farmer on the other hand. The bridge between these two classes is still in the making.

XII

THE SOCIAL PREDICAMENT OF ROSEAU

To study the social structural relations in any given city, there are a whole theoretical tradition and accepted methodologies. One is expected to describe the classes and strata living in the city, to relate these groups to the functions of the urban apparatus, to analyse the sources of capital and its mechanisms of reproduction and expansion, the sources of social power, the characteristics of income distribution, and so on and so forth. These reflections are usually illustrated by detailed statistics on population movements, labour force, education and other social services. Further data on the links between these various aspects of urban life and worldwide developments assist in explaining the history of the city and of its inhabitants and in understanding its impact on the countryside.

An approach to the social structure of Roseau in the framework of traditional theories and accepted methodologies prevents the researcher from identifying the key structural relations on which the Dominicans have some control and explains the more easily observable urban phenomena. Moreover, these theories and methodologies, while very useful in codifying the presence of the outer world in the country, are basically European biased, because they posit from the outset that there exists a capital city because one agglomeration bears that name. They omit to consider that such an agglomeration has been chosen by the metropolitan country for some purposes that may not have been fulfilled. They further assume that as a capital, the agglomeration is the head of its hinterland, which sometimes does not always bear close scrutiny.

This monograph is making the point that Roseau has a history, and in the unfolding of its history, it is becoming a capital city. As a matter of fact, the present chapter suggests that the 1970s are the period in which the capital of Dominica has been created as the sociological point of convergence of influences originating both from the countryside and the outer world. This decade is a turning point in a nation-building process, sparked, and at the same time stifled, by colonialism. It is therefore implied in the

chapter that the distinctive characteristics of Roseau and of the country as a whole are rooted in concrete and identifiable efforts of the nation to overcome colonial dependency. The process is not unilinear and the first part of the chapter recounts the main social disputes; the second part offers some hypothetical explanations of the conflicts experienced during the decade and signals further studies, beyond the scope of the monograph, which are needed to appraise fully the peculiarity of the capital city.

The following table presents chronologically the events of the decade which warrant attention, along with the Acts passed by government during the same period. Some of these events may have been omitted due to the limited time devoted to field interviews.

<u>Events</u>	<u>Legislation</u> ^{380/}
	1968
	The Seditious and Undesirable Publications Act No. 16.
1971 - 16 December	
Disturbances at the Supreme Court Building and its environs in Roseau	
1972 - 15 January	
Farmers' Demonstration	
1972 - 1 March	
Portsmouth School Demonstration	
1972 - 17 March	
Disturbances at St. Mary's Academy	
1972 - July-August	
Rebellion of workers at Castle Bruce Estate	
1973 - June.	
Civil Service Strike (22 days)	
	1973
	The Civil Service Act No. 30
	Public Order Amendment Act No. 18.
1973 - 1974	
Numerous violent acts against whites in Dominica.	
Pursuit of "Dreads" by Police and Defence Forces	

^{380/} Gupta Supersad, An Analysis of Selected Legislations in Caribbean Societies in Dominica MSc. Thesis. U.W.I. St. Augustine, 1977 (mimeo).

1974 - March-April
Revolt at Grand Bay

1974
The Telecommunications Act
No. 25
The Prohibited and Unlawful
Societies and Associations Act
No. 32
Amendment Act No. 36

1975
Industrial Relations Act
No. 35

1976 - June
Civil Service Strike (6 days)

1976
Amendment to Industrial Relations Act No. 35
The Police Amendment Act No. 29
Public Order Act No. 35
Praedial Larceny Amendment Act
No. 32

1977 - September
Civil Service Strike

1977
Amendment to Industrial Relations Act

1978
Farmers' Demonstration

1979 - 29 May
Mass Demonstration

1979
Proposed bill of May 1979
Bill for an Act to amend
the Industrial Relations Act
of 1975

16 December 1971
Disturbances at the Supreme Court Building
and its Environs in Roseau 381/

The events leading up to these disturbances were said to have begun prior to 1971 with the passage of two pieces of legislation in the Houses of Parliament. Two Acts passed in 1968 were perceived as being of a repressive nature:

1. The Seditious and Undesirable Publications Act;
2. The Aliens Landholding Act.

381/ Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances at the Supreme Court Building and its Environs in Roseau on Thursday 16th December, 1971, by E.R.L. Ward, Roseau, Government Headquarters, 20 June, 1972.

The former restricted freedom of the press and freedom of speech with particular reference to criticism of the Government; it also allowed for an invasion of privacy of personal mail. The latter gave a limited definition of "persons belonging to Dominica", which tended to exclude those of Dominican parentage born outside of Dominica from the right to some aspects of landholding; this in a country of a very high percentage of emigrants. Public protests caused the Act to be amended in 1969.

Of more pertinence to the escalation of population tension was the proposed Roseau Town Council (Dissolution and Interim Commissioner) Bill. This Bill apparently sought to curtail some of the powers of the Town Council giving more control to the Central Government. The opposition party which controlled the Town Council was responsible for the ensuing protest demonstration in order to prevent the passage of the Bill in the House of Assembly. It was heavily supported by diverse sections of the community: the trade-unions, the Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers' Association.

The crowd that assembled at the Court House (used as the House of Assembly) on 16 December 1971 was described then as the largest ever seen in Roseau. It was estimated between 3000 to 5000 persons. Activities in the town were at a standstill, the commercial sector, schools and the port were closed down for the day. Although the crowd was not violent there were some instances of confrontation with the Police - a force of 50. There was eventually an actual takeover of the Court House by the crowd.

15 January, 1972
Farmers' Demonstration^{382/}

The downturn in the banana industry began in 1970. In response to this and the general economic situation, farmers mounted a massive demonstration in Roseau in order to bring their plight and that of the banana industry to the government's attention.

^{382/} Documented information was unavailable on these demonstrations. Details were gleaned from interviews conducted in Dominica in July 1982 and from mention in the Report on the Disturbances at the St. Mary's Academy, cf. next footnote.

1 March 1972
Portsmouth School Demonstration^{382/}

This demonstration which occurred in Portsmouth was in protest to the low status of the Portsmouth Secondary School as compared to the secondary schools in Roseau. There was apparently a lack of secondary school places as well as problems of physical accommodation and poor staffing among others.

17 March 1972
Disturbances at the St. Mary's Academy^{383/}

Students of St. Mary's Academy, one of the four urban-based prestige schools in the island, reacted to the irrelevance of the educational policies of the school, i.e. the strict discipline and a curriculum unsuitable to the needs of the Dominica students - particularly with respect to compulsory participation in courses of religion. The school was owned and administered by Roman Catholic priests who at that time were all foreigners.

More immediate incidents contributed to the explosion of student protests. These were:- 1) an incident in which a student was kicked by one of the Brothers; 2) the reported dismissal of a teacher because of his mode of dress; and 3) general objection on the part of the Brothers to the 'afro' hairstyles of some students.

It was apparently a total rejection by students of the concepts of education as provided by the School, this being perceived as the enactment of white domination on the minds and actions of young Dominicans. The Black Power doctrine was put forward as a valid alternative.

Demonstrations involved students of all socio-economic strata but generally the leaders were from Dominican Families of the upper strata. The disturbances generated much interest in the capital Roseau. The trade-unions became involved in defence of the dismissed teacher whom they felt was being openly discriminated against by the school administrators. The conflict abated with the Brothers' departure from Dominica.

^{382/} Documented information was unavailable on these demonstrations. Details were gleaned from interviews conducted in Dominica in July 1982 and from mention in the Report on the Disturbances at the St. Mary's Academy.

^{383/} Government of Dominica, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances at the St. Mary's Academy, Roseau, 1972.

July - August 1972
Rebellion of Workers on
The Castle Bruce Estate.^{384/}

Castle Bruce Estate covered 1300 acres of land and is located on the east coast of the island adjoining the village of Castle Bruce with a population of approximately 3000 (1974). In 1948, the estate, was purchased by the British Commonwealth Development Cooperation (CDC); organized cultivation began ten years later with crops of coconuts, cocoa, limes, grapefruits and bananas.

In the early 1970s with the problems facing the banana industry, the estate phased out bananas and increased cultivation of grapefruit and coconuts, both less labour-intensive than bananas. This eventually resulted in a decrease of the labour force. (This trend of cultivation is seen later on the Geneva Estate).

Castle Bruce Estate, like most other estates, monopolized the best farming land in the area and hence was the main source of employment to the villagers. The size of the workforce on the estate was 200 to 250 workers. At the time of the rebellion villagers were being paid below the official minimum wage of \$4.00 a day.

In June 1972, the manager of the Estate was ordered to retrench a large number of workers, and refusing to do so, was himself dismissed (July). The workers of the estate went on strike to protest his dismissal and subsequently offered to purchase the estate and work it collectively. The result of this was mass dismissal of workers and a closure of the estate.

In August, under union representation the workers accepted retrenchment in return for settlements of wages and a reduced workforce on the estate. In December of the same year, the estate was acquired by the government in an effort to reduce the continuing pressure by the workers, who in the meantime had formed themselves into The Castle Bruce Co-operative. The Co-operative faced numerous obstacles in achieving registration which was only accomplished early in 1974. In May of the same year, land was leased to the registered co-operative. It is important to note that the supporters of the Castle Bruce workers were mainly urban youth.

^{384/} Background on the Castle Bruce Rebellion was derived from Caribbean Dialogue Vol. 2, Nos. 5 & 6, June/July 1976. New Beginning Movement and Race Today Collective, Toronto, Canada.

June 1973
Civil Service Strike

By the 1970s the Civil Service Association included all civil servants, public officers, teachers and nurses. The first major confrontation between the government and the Civil Service was a 22 day strike on the issue of arbitrary transfer and apparent demotion of a staff member.

Subsequent to the strike, the government introduced the Civil Service Act which sought to restrict freedom of speech, movement and association of public officers. A Public Order Act was also passed around the same time. The Act defined public procession, prohibited certain types of procession and made it compulsory to obtain permission for such from the Governor.^{385/}

1973 - 1974
"The Dreads"

During the years 1973 and 1974 there were a number of incidents of violent attacks on whites living in Dominica or on vacation. These attacks were all blamed on the "Dreads", an unorganized non-cohesive movement of young people which had mushroomed in the island since the early 1970s. Subsequently, two "Dreads" were arrested on charges of murder.

The "Dreads" were easily distinguishable by their outward appearance specifically the wearing of "locks". They were originally groups of individuals seeking a new way of life outside of the existing social context. In retrospect, they may be classified into two very distinct groups, one now referred to as "Rastas", the other as "Dreads". The similarity is their attire, the differences their behaviour and attitudes.

The "Rastas" are presently perceived as quiet, unassuming young men and women pursuing subsistence agriculture and adhering to a certain philosophy of life derived from the Rastafarian Cult of Jamaica. The "Dreads" or people to be feared, were so termed because they were said to have committed acts of violence against members of the farming population and other crimes such as praedial larceny. They were perceived as a threat to the general public. It is apparent that they became involved with the cultivation and trade of marijuana within and outside the island. It would seem that they had connections with, and acted as traders in alliance with, prominent "respectable" Dominicans.

^{385/} Gupta Supersad, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

In November 1974, the Prohibited and Unlawful Societies and Associations Act was passed and outlawed the "Dreads". This Act violated all the rights of persons so described, identifiable by their peculiar hairstyle. It granted "Dreads" no bail on arrest, prevented such persons from holding jobs in the Civil Service as well as others who associated with them and above all protected anyone who killed a "Dread".

In the same year, the Telecommunication Act No. 25 was passed. This Act affected broadcasting of radio and television programmes. It gave the government the power to stop or interfere with transmission of any direct telephone or telegraph communication, which appeared dangerous to the security of the state. It also gave the government the power to censor public programmes and public communications.^{386/}

March - April 1974
Revolt at Grand Bay^{387/}

The Grand Bay area, along the south-east coast consists of a number of villages and hamlets with a population of a few thousand. The majority of the inhabitants of the area have for generations been dependent on the Geneva Estate for wage employment and in addition they usually pursue some forms of subsistence agriculture either through squatting or other forms of tenancy. Apart from the estate lands, the main village, Berrikua, is hemmed in by steep mountains, hence the alternative to employment on the Geneva Estate was ekeing out a living on the surrounding difficult terrain. It is apparent that the villagers at different times faced problems of eviction, restrictions of terms of tenancy, as well as depletion of employed labour force, concurrently with the phasing out of crops. Needless to say the villagers at the time of the revolt lacked basic services and amenities.

^{386/} Ibid. p. 10.

^{387/} Summary of the Account of the revolt derived from Caribbean Dialogue, vol. 2, No. 5 and 6, June-July 1976. New Beginning Movement and Race Today Collective, Toronto 1976.

In the early 1970s the majority of the population was below the age of twenty with very little educational opportunity as well as no possibilities of employment in the area or in the island in general. They obviously faced a future of frustration and it is not surprising to find out that Grand Bay was a major centre for the "Dreads".^{388/}

Towards the end of March 1974, the general malaise took the form of an armed rebellion focusing on the Geneva Estate. The estate of 1390 acres was then owned by a merchant of Lebanese ancestry. A group of villagers, mainly young unemployed workers, occupied it and gave vent to their frustrations. The devastation included slaughtering of cattle, chopping down of trees, burning of estate houses, seizure of guns, trucks, furniture and food, and distribution of food. The youth barricaded the entrances to the village to prevent Police access. Throughout, they enjoyed the complicity of the villagers who were themselves actively hostile to the Police Forces. The situation of rebellion continued in spite of an imposed state of emergency in the entire county of St. Patrick.

The immediate outcome of the revolt was a meeting of village representatives with the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture to air their grievances and negotiate a settlement of their demands. They demanded that government should purchase the estate and turn it over to the villagers. The purchase was in fact negotiated but further problems arose concerning the terms under which the land was made available to the tenants.

June 1976
Civil Service Strike^{389/}

This was the occasion of a six day strike of the members of the Civil Service Association. The workers struck in support of the nurses, who, as members of the Association, were protesting the lack of uniforms and other conditions of work. The aim of the strike was to force the government to meet with the Civil Service Association to discuss the situation.

^{388/} Such information derived from interviews in Dominica, July, 1982.

^{389/} Information obtained from interviews in Dominica, July, 1982.

1976

Acts of Parliament

The following were the acts passed in 1976:-

1. The Industrial Relations Act and the Amendments Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 of 1976 (and 1977) intended to formalize industrial relations procedure in the light of increased activity of the Civil Service Association.
2. The Police Amendment Act No. 29 of 1976 prohibited any action against the Police Force in pursuance or execution of duty on the basis of any Act or any Law.
3. The Public Order Act. No. 35 of 1976 further restricted demonstrations and defined public processions. It gave the power of granting permission for such to the Premier.
4. The Praedial Larceny Amendment Act No. 32 of 1976 provided for imprisonment for one year for anyone convicted of praedial larceny. It implicated the parent or guardian of any young person arrested for that crime.

September 1977

Civil Service Strike ^{390/}

The Civil Service Association went on strike to press for payment of wages owed to its members since 1975. The strike reportedly lasted 47 days and was supported by nurses, officers in the prison and fire services. The Dominican Council of Churches had to mediate to bring an end to the strike.

1978

Farmers' Demonstration ^{391/}

Vague accounts inform that the demonstration was mounted by farmers to press for recognition of a revived farmers' union. The farmers were also demonstrating against the numerous problems they were facing in the banana industry due to disease attack on banana trees. In addition, they were seeking better prices and secure markets for their food crops. It is import-

^{390/} Ibid.

^{391/} Dominica Farmers Union, Banana and the Dominican Economy - What to be done? Roseau 1981, p. 1. Minimal information on this demonstration was derived from this document.

ant to note that school children participated in this demonstration showing support for their parents.

29 May 1979
Mass Demonstration 392/

Prior to the protest of May 1979 salary negotiations between the Civil Service Association and the Government were inconclusive and the Association had announced its intention to take strike action. It is apparent that the discussion of a bill to amend the Industrial Relations Act was being proposed with undue haste by the Government without allowing time for consultation with the trade unions. The amendment was intended, according to the government, "to make better provision for the stabilisation, improvement and promotion of industrial relations". Agitation was spearheaded by the trade unions which perceived the bill as "inimical to the best interests of the trade unions", and aiming at frustrating their operations and restricting freedom of association.

The urgency of government action was geared towards preventing the Civil Service Association from taking action. A massive demonstration was announced on the day that the proposed bill was to be debated. The government retaliated by a Proclamation prohibiting public meeting in Roseau for a seven day period (29 May to 4 June). The mass protest took place in spite of the Proclamation. 29 May 1979 has been described as a day never to be forgotten in the annals of Dominican history. The massive demonstration took place in the precincts of the Government Headquarters Building, with a crowd estimated at between 8,000 to 15,000 persons (believed to be the largest crowd ever assembled in Roseau).

The Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the events of that day states that the use of ammunition and teargas on the crowd by the Defence Force, was unwarranted and impulsive. The unplanned strategy of the Police and Defence Forces for crowd control resulted in the fatal shooting of one person and injury to approximately 10 others - all by gunshots from Defence Force personnel. The report concludes that the use of force was in the final analysis the result of the government's decision to inhibit opposition through the use of force.

392/ Government of Dominica. Report of the Enquiry into the Defence Force, Roseau, March 1981.

Government action on 29 May was followed by a strike lasting 57 days. The increasing pressure exerted on the Government resulted in its resignation. It is important to note that prior to this resignation, public awareness of a secret free port agreement between the Government of Dominica and a United States firm acting on behalf of South African and United States oil interests had stirred up general dissatisfaction and led to street demonstrations. Eventually the agreement was cancelled.^{394/}

^{394/} Dominica Farmers' Union, op. cit., p. 1.

-B-

The two previous chapters have attempted to sketch the principles for the distribution of returns obtained in the most important industry of the country. The conclusions reached are that the Dominica economy cannot be conceived as a free market system and that it shows clear similarities with centrally planned systems. The account of the 1970 disturbances confirms that in Dominica all major economic and social conflicts result in placing one or another actor in opposition to the state machinery.

In the absence of the market as the basic institution responsible for the allocation of resources, the political and administrative apparatus has to carry out these functions and must in consequence respond directly to any important social demands. The state machinery has even less leeway than its Western counterparts to behave as a referee and moderator of on-going social dialogue. Its role is comparable to the activities entrusted to the director of an orchestra.

Roseau has always been the seat of political power. The present study focuses on "the inner Dominica". In view of the conditions in which national states have emerged in the Caribbean, one needs to clarify why the internal arrangement of social groups is sufficient to explain the core of social relations in the capital city, even in its capacity as seat of external political power. In any event, the changes in the relationships of the urban groups can favour the country as a whole, only if they originate from "inside" the country, *i.e.* if they are self-propelled. Even if it were for this sole reason, the methodological approach chosen would be justified. Hence the formulation of some working hypothesis on the structure of Roseau as perceived from the set of social relations between local actors. Subsequently, the relationship between the state and the social groups which were vocal during the last decade will be examined.

The original seizure of Dominica by the United Kingdom or France was motivated by the need of these countries to counterbalance their respective influences in the Eastern Caribbean. The capital city, appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century as a garrison town, fulfilling mainly military and administrative functions. Early efforts to add a commercial dimension to these functions and to transform Roseau into an emporium failed as a consequence of modifications in the political and economic geography of the Caribbean and Latin America. The

city retained only a limited commercial sector, responsible for the management of a depleted import-export trade. Subsequently, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, rivalries between France and the United Kingdom over Caribbean territories diminished considerably. The military function of the city gradually faded out and became subsumed within the maintenance of law and order in the colony.

Notwithstanding its reliance on the hinterland - particularly for domestic food supply and merchandise for export - the history of Roseau has always been intimately linked with developments in the world at large. It is commonly believed that these two basic parameters - on the one hand, its very participation in a colonial empire, and on the other hand, the set of changes taking place in its zone of influence - should explain its internal class structure. But given the characteristics of the colony of Dominica as described in the monograph, its capital city has never been a major centre for government and other administrative bodies. Conversely, its population has not grown accustomed to resort to a central focal point for the usual urban-based social services. Trade and market facilities as well as the accompanying financial institutions remained embryonic. Indeed, Roseau could not be considered a centre of communication and intercommunication between people, goods and services before 1950. It is against this background that the banana boom gave rise to a series of social innovations.

In the context of marginal participation in the British Empire and in the International World, the history of the capital of Dominica does not show any tradition of manipulating its hinge-like position to maintain its peculiar social order. On the contrary there are indications that during two centuries, Roseau became indebted to a large number of innovations originating in the rural areas, while exercising limited influence on the countryside.

Therefore, the urban apparatus of Dominica - that is to say, the set of city-based institutions responsible for formulating and implementing a given formula of economic and social development - was particularly weak at the time when the expansion of the banana industry provoked the gradual disruption of the level of self-sufficiency achieved through multi-crop peasant agriculture. The ideological slant inherited from colonialism and the blindness built into this form of dominance, whereby rural folks were portrayed as uneducated people, unalterably traditionalist and devoid of any significant

level of aspirations, were functional in preventing any questioning of the changes in the workable arrangements between estate and peasant-like agriculture, mentioned in previous chapters. As a consequence, the official institutions of Dominica were unprepared to cope with the pressure from the countryside resulting from the destruction of customary rural-urban relationships.

The numerous socio-political upheavals during the 1970s and their final disruptive effect on the state administrative machinery are a result of a gradual build-up. The eruptions took the form of mass demonstrations within the town of Roseau, revolts on two large estates and general unrest among the population. The dissatisfied were drawn from all segments of the society - youths, farmers, workers organized in trade-unions, public servants, business organizations, religious organizations, and last but not least, political parties and leaders.

The 1970 disturbances could be conceived as a breakdown in social dialogue caused by mismanagement of the conflicts originating in the structural changes brought about by the banana boom. But given the extent of the malaise, it cannot be assumed that the conflicts would not have escalated if different individuals had been in charge of the ruling institutions. It seems more appropriate to consider these disturbances, as a search for a new social equilibrium or an expression of on-going negotiations towards the institutionalization of new patterns of behaviour attuned to the changing positions of the contending social forces. Hence the issues raised in the 1970s outgrew the frame of the traditional outlook of city dwellers as well as the ambit of existing official institutions.

If the capital city was basically a spokesman for its hinterland, the ruling élite would necessarily have looked for a compromise and a new societal consensus. On the contrary, if the city was mainly an exponent of external economic interests, it would have been endowed with sufficient power to impose a new version of the old system of relations upon the rural population.

To understand how the situation could deteriorate to the extreme described, some dimensions of Roseau implied in the analysis carried out so far must be highlighted. Both the weakness of Roseau, as the seat of foreign influences and as the nerve centre of the country - i.e. its loose linkage with its local and foreign bases for support - was exposed by the areas and degrees of

inadequacy between practices enshrined in the official institutions and new demands fostered by the rearrangement of the economic system. The institutionality of Dominica seemed to have realised the importance of these demands only after the disturbances reached an uncontrollable magnitude.

Apparently the banana boom put into socio-political contact the two main sectors of the population living traditionally in separate cultural clusters. However, taking into account the penetration of urban life by rural values, and the influence though limited, of urban outlook on rural life, it seems proper to consider the main consequence of the banana boom as the unforeseen establishment of relations between the two cultural clusters themselves. The underlying philosophy of the official institutions could not cope with the sudden presence within the socio-political activities of values emanating from the counter-plantation system. This would explain a decade of agony lived by individual Dominicans, their families and their communities, vehicle for and witnesses to both cultural frames of reference.

The study of the relations between Roseau and its hinterland should be complemented by an analysis of the links between the Dominican urban élite and its Caribbean counterparts. One suspects that important transformations in the country's political system - the attainment of universal suffrage and representative government, the creation of political parties and the emergence of national leaders, as well as the obtention of self-government and subsequently of statehood - bear at least as much relation to the regionwide agitations preceding and following the West Indies Federation as to the restructuring of the economic base of the society provoked by the banana boom.

In other words, there is need to find out the extent to which the city after 1950 conveyed the interests of its hinterland to regional institutions and through them or on its own, to the outer world, or inversely the extent to which the city functioned mainly as the presence of the outer world including the regional institutions in the affairs of the country. It seems that in the short and medium term the decolonization process may have assisted in a rapprochement between the local, the regional and/or the worldwide ruling classes, to the detriment or at least with no obvious profit to the strengthening of the links between élite and masses.

In this context, the political crisis of the 1970s seems to result from a mutation in the sources for legitimizing social power. The population as a whole was claiming a greater say in the ruling of the society; the élite at the same time by its very conservatism opposed these internal demands while outwardly fostering decolonization.

The inconsistencies between the local institutional apparatus and the new social circumstances were further aggravated by some unforeseen consequences of out-migration. A specific inquiry into the relations between local and foreign-based Dominicans is necessary to understand fully the dynamics of urban change. With the participation of Dominicans in the international labour market, the élite residing in Roseau seems to have ceased to be the only social group to elaborate, receive and convey new ideological developments.

During the 1970s the shock between the cultural background of the Dominican migrants and the metropolitan countries' frame of reference seems to have fostered an articulated expression, by young intellectuals abroad, of norms and values rooted in the country - particularly those related to self-appreciation and ethnic identity. This cultural development fed back into the local circumstances added an accrued challenge to the urban establishment. The presence of the Dominican nation beyond the physical border of the island-country should be studied, and economic, political and cultural relations between Dominicans at home and abroad should be clarified.

Before and after the 1970 demonstrations, the government, being unable to solve the economic and social demands of the citizens, attempted to prevent any expression of discontent by imposing severe restrictions on their fundamental freedoms through the instrument of the law. This could indicate that the officialdom was not really aware of the forces unleashed by the expansion of the banana industry. In numerous instances, legislation was proposed and sanctioned by the Legislature, with the precise aim of curtailing all opposition and preventing the eruption of public protest. In fact, two of the largest demonstrations were in response to proposed legislation. In addition, heavy dependence upon the Police and Defence Forces to control the manifestations of popular dissatisfaction make sense only if the leaders were relying, as they had during the period of Crown colony rule, on support from external powers.

The ability of the ruling élite in Dominica to resist changes originating in its national basis of support derives indeed from traditional colonial linkages between Roseau and the outer-world. Profound structural changes in the country began (in 1950) under Crown Colony government and spanned self-rule, associated-statehood and full independent status. The coincidence of the social convulsions characteristic of the 1970s with the culmination of constitutional development is an issue which deserves more attention. It cannot be dismissed as a consequence of an erroneous perception by the political directorate of the milieu in which it emerged and evolved.

Firstly, it would appear that the attainment of universal suffrage made possible the mobilization of the urban masses and the development of a city-based labour movement. One aspect of the decolonization process would then be the creation of new avenues of upward social mobility resulting in an enlargement of the élite groups. The immediate consequence would be a decrease in the cohesion of the highest strata in the society.

Secondly, the traditional élite having monopolized economic negotiations with the outer world, the population at large was not exposed to the regional implications of the economic crisis and/or recovery. To a large extent, the well-being of the nation was discussed in the framework of the West Indies Banana Association (WINBAN), which operated as a sort of private club, as far as the average farmer was concerned.

Thirdly, exposure of the masses, who had recently been integrated into the institutionalized political process to the regional dimensions of constitutional development took place through the intermediary of the newly created political élite. Without monopolizing political power, this new élite would lose its claim to social pre-eminence and would have no credentials to oppose the traditional élite.

The concurrence of these three factors - the novel heterogeneity of the ruling élite, the opacity of external economic relations and the opacity of external political relations - may have created a vacuum which facilitated political manoeuvring aimed at postponing clear-cut solutions to social demands and at wearing down the contending forces while exacerbating an already authoritarian political culture.

The main issue of the 1970s was not the extent of the economic crisis which was far from being novel in the history of Dominica; usually since

not only did the parameters of economic crises escape the control of Dominicans but they were usually perceived as soing so. The main issue was how an economic crisis could give rise to such a divorce of the political directorate from the masses, at a moment when one would expect this directorate to be responding to clear popular mandates related to the gradual achievement of statehood.

Had the decolonization process taken place with closer rapport between élite and masses, public institutions would have been more responsive to popular demands; or alternatively these demands would not have been formulated outside the normative framework of the institutions designed to solve them. The issue therefore is the occurrence of social conflicts in which the masses opposed the élite, while the very élite was leading them out of colonialism.

It appears that the relative autonomy of the state apparatus explains the untimely opposition between élite and masses. The variety of demands made by the different social actors allows the state machinery and those in control, to play the role of director of orchestra as suggested earlier. Nonetheless, one has to propose that in this case the conductor seemed to have his own score which was at considerable variance with that of the orchestra.

The following interest groups openly resisted government actions in the 1970s: the Civil Service Association and other trade-unions, the farmers and agricultural workers, youth and especially secondary school students. Out of 12 situations of conflict, four were spearheaded by the Civil Service Association and took place from 1973 to 1979, during a six-year period. It would therefore seem that at least the second half of the decade was a period of constant confrontation between the administrative and political arms of government. It must be noted that these protests were carried out on the basis of prevailing constitutional norms and principles.

The situation is particularly odd for a developing country, since public servants constitute the most effective watchdog of established law and order, and as such a practically unchallengeable pressure group. Even more remarkable was the difficulty of government to pay the salary of public servants. This calls for specific inquiry into the sources of income of the state apparatus. A state with no control over its revenue cannot contract a stable technocracy and therefore cannot ensure the management of the country's affairs. It follows that it cannot, on the basis of known systems of government, ensure compatibility

between the diverse interests which enter into conflict in any society, much less implement policies capable of producing a minimum of consensus. In fact, the Civil Service in Dominica was the most prominent force in the overthrow of the regime in 1979.

The trade-unions confronted the government (incidentally a labour government) on several matters of principle. Accounts are that they supported nearly all lawful protest movements taking place during the decade. This detachment of the trade-unions from the policy of a labour government gives the impression that the crisis facing the society was due to the characteristics of the leadership, and not to any structural quandary. It seems difficult, in the light of the previous analyses to grant that the crisis was primarily one of leadership. Nonetheless, it appears that this idea became more and more accepted after 1973 and helped in asserting a short term solution by forcing the government to resign.

Protests by farmers and youth on which the decade of disturbances opened were of a totally different nature in comparison with the confrontation spearheaded by organized labour. The Civil Service Association had immediate quarrels with the government, while farmers and the youth defied the very foundations of the country's institutionality and overtly expressed the basic class antagonisms of the society. In Castle Bruce and Grand Bay, foreign and local capital were challenged. The students of St. Mary's College questioned "white domination", and subsequently the "Dreads" were perceived as antagonizing local and expatriate whites. Government intervened in these conflicts to preserve law and order and to negotiate solutions acceptable to the parties involved, without being an immediate party to the contentious issues.

The farmers' protests though based in Castle Bruce and Grand Bay, could only be solved in the town, where farmers' demonstrations were carried out. These conflicts were addressed to the original distribution of agricultural land and were not strictly speaking matters of economic relations. They were political issues and were dealt with on such grounds. Only the state had access to resources capable of modifying the land tenure system of these sub-regions, confirming Yankey's assessment quoted earlier. These rural

rebellions were both an acknowledgement and an erosion of the primacy of the capital city. They may also be conceived as one of the very first political statements by the rural people for the rural people. The degree to which their demands were satisfied can be viewed as an indicator of the rapprochement between city and countryside or the degree of political influence of the countryside in the ruling of the country.

The third group of actors to participate in the 1970 disturbances comprised the youth. Their agitation, which in one instance was not distinguishable from that of the rural folk, was the most challenging of all and will be referred to again in the next chapter. It must be noted that the youth constituted a marginal group in Dominica, either because their more vocal sector, the secondary school student, did not form part of the economically active population, or because most of them and particularly their most rebellious sector, the "Dreads", were basically unemployed or about to enter the labour force for the first time.

The protests and rebellions staged by the youth of Dominica questioned the whole ideological and economic structure of the state. On the one hand, the Black Power doctrine was at variance with accepted norms of the country's policy. A specific study on the matter will probably show that Dominica as part and parcel of the exploited Black community participated in its own right in the worldwide movement of Black renaissance. The fact is that in 1970, at Sir George Williams University in Canada, a number of West Indian students retaliated against what they perceived as racism. Their action involved occupation of a computer centre where much physical damage was reported. Now, one of the main activists was a Dominican student of a prominent family. Instead of enquiring whether the youth were influenced by or have influenced their fellow companions from the Caribbean, it seems more prudent to observe them as part of a global trend.

On the other hand, and this is more relevant for the line of study followed in this monograph, while the students were clamouring for an ideological re-orientation of the society, the members of the Rastafarian cult were taking concrete steps to "return to agriculture" and to "the land." If one were to overlook the history of class relations in Dominica, one would be at a loss to understand why the political regime found it convenient to assimilate them to the "Dreads" or why the "Dreads" saw it fit to identify themselves with the external distinctive notes of Rastafarianism.

It appears that on the basis of a well-articulated doctrine distinguishing their origin and culture from the current Western definition of mankind, the members of the Rastafarian cult proposed as a means of overcoming the economic crisis a radical return to self-reliant, multi-crop peasant agriculture. Their aim seems to have been to transform a peasant-like economy into a genuine peasant economy. Moreover, after the deterioration of the Dominica counter-plantation system brought about by the generalization of the profit motive which accompanied the expansion of the banana industry, the members of the cult went further to withdraw from all pursuit of economic well-being. The unemployed youth of Dominica did not have many choices, and could have no difficulty with this general attitude. However, without an articulated concept of life as proposed by the cult, the sharing of the Rastafarian attitude made a "dread" of most dissatisfied unemployed youth.

Since the returns from the main industry of the country were obtained by transforming the pseudo-peasant into a "seamstress-like farmer", the society at large could not come to terms with the Rastafarian formula of return to the land, since this would checkmate what was perceived as achievements due to the banana industry. The "modern" sector of the society simply could not cope with a deepening of the peasant economic model. If the Rastafari were not actually "dread", their statement then would have appeared "dreadful" to the whole society, the youth excepted. So much so that the rejection of the profit motive as an organizational principle for youth behaviour was an explicit and overt statement of the cult which made serious inroads in the school-aged population.

One understands then why the "return to agriculture" or the "return to the land" by the "Rastas" was being opposed by the official proponents of this universally accepted policy orientation. The ideological stance of the youth, far from overcoming the economic crisis and assisting to insert Dominica into the contemporary world, was raising further problems. The new generation visualized an organization of isolation and withdrawal and did not cater for the demands of other interest groups - particularly urban ones - which were already enmeshed in worldwide intercourse.

It should be noted that while most sectors of the society joined forces to oppose the government's infringements of civil liberties during the decade, the "Dreads" and "Rastas" - international expressions of sympathy aside - had to face the wrath of the regime with the support of no known urban-based

group. On this issue, the government enjoyed tacit approval from the whole urban world. It can therefore be argued that the "Dread Act" along with consequent infringements of all civil rights was not a product of some deranged minds. Rather it expressed the violent reaction of a social system against its own youth who were raising the most irritating and insoluble problem, namely why the pursuit of modernization since it was leading nowhere? The society refused even to consider such a radical statement.

Should the above line of argument be correct, it would follow that the Labour Regime appeared to the urban élite as the guardian of institutionality, increasing its legitimacy in spite of its use of questionable methods. Subsequent efforts aimed at mobilizing public opinion in favour of independence could be viewed in the same light. These efforts tended to satisfy a plea for self-assertiveness advanced by the young generation and acceptable to the urban-based groups. More room for political manoeuvring would have derived therefrom and this would also help to explain why the crisis lasted so long.

However, progress towards independence must also have strengthened the position of the Civil Service. The Civil Service, in a country without a university or centres of scientific research, is the most stable and organized sector of the intelligentsia. The accrued assertiveness of the Civil Service Association, in its opposition to the political arm of the government during the second half of the decade, suggests the gradual upgrading of the technocratic élite to the position of an interest group distinct from the other sectors of the labour force, church organizations and business community. The financial crisis made it impossible for the government to co-opt the Civil Service since it could not even meet its contractual arrangements. The ensuing agitation escalated and increased the cohesiveness of the political opposition, while adding to the ambiguity of a decisive progress towards independence with no consensus on a prospective economic system capable of ensuring a minimum sharing of profits and sacrifices.

XIII

CONCLUSION

An understanding of Dominica's social structural changes requires attention to the main economic institutions or set of institutions, rather than the main economic activities. Up to the Second World War the society evolved undisturbed by the successive and sudden growths of different export-oriented agricultural ventures, which stagnated before transforming and polarizing the economic and social fabric of so small and so sparsely populated a territory. Transient economic growth activity was never strong enough to put an end to activities in decline. Coffee, cacao, sugar cane or citrus did not even force the specialization of any particular geographic area of the country. None of these staples required rigid arrangement of productive factors which would impede the successive re-orientations of the economic system.

At present banana is the mainstay of the economy and there is no evidence that it would not fall into oblivion if another crop were discovered. But contrary to the case of the above-mentioned staples, the production of bananas on a massive scale affected the whole social structure. This monograph attempts to describe the main features of the social organization of the country and to map out the structural elements which intermix in different ways both before and after the Banana Boom. Social development policies, predicated on the self-reliant participation of the population in the implementation process, must acknowledge both the structure and organization of Dominican society.

In the first chapter, it has been shown how an indigenous organization of the space had been destroyed and how the activities carried out by the Caribs bear witness to the strength with which a regional outlook can be rooted locally. The deliberate resistance of the Carib nation made Waitukubuli a harbour for all persons having some reason to "run away" from or "desert" the new set of regional relations designed by the rising colonial empires. In their efforts to survive, the Caribs and early settlers created an economic institution which underwent serious transformations only with the advent of the banana industry in the 1950s.

The owner-operated agricultural venture is not a self-sustained, isolated enterprise (Chapter X and XI). It emerged in opposition to, and as an offshoot of, the plantation system. Its human and material resources had to be protected from the expansion of the system, while capitalizing in the

process on the opportunities offered by the same system to recruit and harness more human and material resources. Organized around the owner operated agricultural ventures was then a total set of self-reliant institutions comprising what we prefer to call a counter-plantation system instead of a peasant society.

The present study does not follow the evolution of the counter-plantation system. It is based on the analysis of historiographic data, which does not convey such information. Nonetheless the deployment of the country's social structure cannot be explained if the existence of such a system is not postulated (Chapters X, XI and parts of Chapter XII).

A comparison of the social situation just before and shortly after independence with the socio-political organization of the country prior to its official entry into the colonial world (1763) would reveal that the counter-plantation system is not a traditional world resisting changes fostered by a dynamic modern one; nor is it the lower echelon of some sort of underdeveloped/folk-developed/urban continuum. The counter-plantation system is a world as complex as the modern, or rather the visible one.

Before 1763, Dominican society was not a plantation society, and after this date, progress in this direction was not particularly remarkable. For the Caribs and early settlers, in spite of their strained relationships with the neighbouring islands, local activities and economic and cultural exchanges evolved and were perceived to operate in an inter-island milieu. Their simple mercantile economy which entertained relations with the surrounding plantation systems, was basically servicing their own needs through direct consumption or exchange for foreign goods. In like manner, the local political order, while highly dependent on the interplay of colonial forces within the Caribbean, was the reflection of negotiations and agreements among the so-called adventurers and other settlers. Pseudo-national or pseudo-tribal cleavages dividing the population had an impact on both private and public life (Chapters I and II). Thus island-wide intercourse was regulated according to the peculiarities of existing villages. Therefore, in the period of time which elapsed between the destruction of the core of the Carib organization and the establishment of colonial institutions, metropolitan influence in the island community resulted from the influence of the metropolitan settlers within the island community itself.

After 1763 social power could no longer emerge from the community: colonialism being by definition the exercise of power over a community, as opposed to the exercise in the community of self-generated impulses. Local politics became centred on the designs of the metropolitan country and cut off from the interplay of indigenous interests. The eventual differentiation of owner-operated businesses and the achievement of higher degrees of economic complexity rested on the range of self-reliant actions tolerated by the colonizing institutions and, experienced a blockage which lasted for the whole period of external rule. In other words, initiatives emerging from any self-managed enterprise, from any hamlet or village, and from the island community as a whole, could not evolve beyond the institutional frontiers imposed by the colonial power.

Traditional inter-island relations lost their self-propelled dynamism and became limited to what could materialize within the political ordering of the archipelago, as dictated by the rapports between the metropolitan countries. Thus, in spite of the physical proximity, the neighbours of Dominica, namely Guadeloupe, Martinique and Saint Lucia, became far removed places; and the bulk of the population together with their self-reliant initiatives were offered but one alternative to overcome their nearly complete isolation i.e. to accept the imposed proximity of London as a God-given reality.

Several obstacles impeded the establishment of a plantation system in Dominica (Chapter IV). Chief among them was the fact that the territory was actually taken over by a colonial power at a very late stage. In other words the same factors which presided over the organization of a counter-plantation system, impacted on the insertion of the country into the colonial world. The island's strategic position became her only exploitable asset for the colonial powers. Hence new economic practices sponsored by them could not be interfaced into any close-knit set of economic and social relations with the existing pre-colonial organizations. A common policy to provide the goods necessary to maintain a population, however small, never materialized. One cannot observe, in colonial Dominica, the emergence of a set of collective principles and guidelines aimed at managing the total environment, or at adapting it to the material needs of the metropolitan country or of the indigenous population.

Colonial administration, being concerned almost exclusively with the political control of the island's resources, never contemplated their management for economic purposes, never thought of any form of spacial arrangement of productive activities nor of the adequate integration of these activities into the imperial economy. Dominica did not inherit from its colonial masters any particular direction of growth for its available resources.

This situation was of extreme importance for the nationals of the metropolitan countries residing in the colony. The failure of large-scale agricultural production and the demise of commercial enterprises resulted, in the final analysis in the out-migration of both planters and merchants (Chapter IV). It should be noted, en passant, that these migrants could rightly be termed "deserters" or "runaways". Their flight from the Dominica situation was duly assisted by the partially successful resistance of black settlers, maroons and enslaved (Chapter V).

The peculiar incompleteness of the Dominican class structure is described in Chapter VI. This structure differs from those observed in the plantation islands where the fragility of the economically dominant groups was offset by the sponsorship of a metropolitan power. In Dominica, social dominance was not necessarily accompanied by economic success. The control of the island by Britain resulted in the super-imposition of an imported class structure on an indigenous arrangement of social groups. The dominant imported structure was not consistent with the economic fabric of the society while the indigenous social structure had no political dimension.

The territory harboured a fragmented society, but this fragmentation did not result from the lack of interrelations between the main economic institutions linked individually with the metropolitan country. Fragmentation derived in Dominica from the occupation by local economic institutions of the empty space left in the economic fabric of the society by the type of colonial policy implemented (Chapters III, VII, X).

The logic of Dominica's historical development cannot be built around the haphazard evolution of predominant economic activities. A matrix of indigenous institutions evolved unimpeded by any colonial policy of growth, but obstructed by political and juridical regulations, consistent with the objectives of the colonizers. The institutional framework superimposed by the metropolitan power circumscribed an area of interaction, where selected activities and social groups

were granted legal status to the detriment of other aspects of the total social environment, which were assessed as null, void and of no consequence.

Laws, regulations and administrative instructions emanating from London referred from the very beginning to the "subjects" of the Crown, without any concern for actual differentiations between Carib, black, mulattoe, white, protestant and catholic settlers. No consideration was directed to indigenous institutions, such as family lands, since the territory was assumed to comprise private estates as opposed to Crown lands. Attention was diverted towards aspects of Dominica, unforeseen in the institutional frame of colonization, with the sole purpose of destroying, restraining or changing them.

Dominica was lumped within the British Caribbean, a social milieu-to-be, alien to the scope of the day-to-day activities of its population. The territory within a normative system valid for all countries dominated by the United Kingdom, experienced some sort of delocalized and arbitrary homogenization. It had imposed upon it characteristics which approximated it to Trinidad, Jamaica, and eventually Kenya or Tanzania, while setting it far apart from the neighbouring territories of Guadeloupe, Martinique and even the day-to-day Saint Lucia (as opposed to colonial official Saint Lucia).

Moreover, given the emphasis on its strategic importance and the lack of economic policy designed for its peculiar circumstances, the colony was of interest to the empire but not to the British entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs. So, after their abandonment of the country, their assets became gradually owned by the freed men and their descendants. The emergence of the Mulatto Ascendancy and their skillful manipulation of the political ladder to pursue their economic objectives evidenced both the economic dereliction of the island and its strategic value ^{395/} (Chapters VIII and IX).

The absence of a plantation system or of an alternative economic infrastructure on which the Mulattoes could capitalize to support their nationalistic fervour, circumscribed the whole process within the political

^{395/} This situation seems unique in the Caribbean and approximates quite closely the case of the southern peninsula of Haiti at the end of the eighteenth century, when the mulattoes felt strong enough to challenge Toussaint Louverture.

arena. It resulted in the deepening of colonial dependency, in exchange for financial support at least for the political and administrative bureaucracy of the territory. After being forced into the Federation of the Leeward Islands, Dominica became a Crown Colony towards the end of the century.

Locally generated efforts to negotiate a workable political settlement conducive to some form of economic development did not meet with any success. Even though the élite of Dominica, comprising landlords, merchants, administrators, intellectuals and professionals were able to safeguard some economic well-being by monopolizing the highest positions of the political ladder, the deterioration of the local economy and successive failures of estate agriculture were inimical to their class interests.

The alliance of the Dominican élite with her Caribbean counterparts came rather late in history, in fact during the twentieth century. The Mulatto Oligarchy was aware of its distinct characteristics vis-à-vis the plantocracies of the Leeward and Windward Islands. Its political during the nineteenth century brought to the surface the prevalence in the colony of a specific set of knowledge and principles for social organizations responsible for its difference from other British Caribbean colonies. It attempted then to secure a locally monitored voice in the negotiations with the masters, resisted colonial regionalization and tried its best not to be swamped by the Leewards and Windwards political élite (Chapter VIII).

Having failed to secure separate colonial government, the Dominican elite were left with only one avenue to circumvent the impact of external domination: namely to negotiate, with the other British colonies in the Caribbean, a diminution of the hold of the metropolitan power over the community. The Dominica Conference of October 1932 challenging Crown Colony rule should be seen in this light.

The fact that Dominica, in spite of its self-evident uniqueness, was able to fit easily into the Caribbean process of decolonization highlights the ambiguity of the process where national and class interests made separate and distinct impacts. Neither plantation-like, nor peasant-like agriculture as practised in Dominica were self-contained ventures. The artificial inaccessibility of the economies of Guadeloupe and Martinique was in a way replaced by the political proximity to London and the British Caribbean. For the inhabitants of the island, access to the metropolitan country in the frame of colonial

subordination offered some possibility for development of their self-reliant initiatives which would be absent under total isolation. The commerce with the neighbouring islands decreased in all its dimensions, while imperially-sponsored interaction imposed themselves and were perceived as imposing themselves as the sole accessible basis for improving the conditions of living.

Intra- and inter-regional relations gained increasing strength and consistency as the empire developed. Gradually the reality of this imperial division of the world became the inescapable frame of reference of any society and any economy for their institutionality and polity. In these circumstances, local merchants, planters, bureaucrats, workers and intellectuals, as well as any category of persons evolving within public life (the only sector of social life where money circulated) became involved in interchange with partners located in this political space. Similar sets of political issues and practices gave rise to some commonality of interests.

The mutation of the empire into a worldwide Commonwealth, and the specification of the Commonwealth into sub-regions resulted in the formation of a geopolitical area identifiable as the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The evolving cultural, judicial, political and economic institutions created a relatively distinct milieu within the Caribbean and (by the same token) generated distinct class conflicts and solidarities. The so-called labour unrests of the 1930s are a point in case, but more significant are the numerous regionwide institutions channelling the demands of producers and workers's associations, groups of professionals, churches and local governments. The process of Caribbean decolonization, marked by the gradual control over the community by the community itself, progressed towards universal suffrage and self-rule, the creation of the Caribbean Federation, and finally the organization of CARIFTA and CARICOM. At the same time individual territories moved towards political independence.

The process is, however, still incomplete, and this incompleteness is particularly obvious when the design and implementation of a self-reliant economic development policy are considered. The prospects of economic viability deriving from integration and co-operation between the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean bring into the discussion a number of regional and world-wide issues which have not been analysed in this study. Because of this limitation, the analysis of the social structure of the

capital city of the country is particularly lopsided (Chapter XII).

The pattern of Dominica's participation in regional schemes resulted from a series of compromises forced upon the country as a consequence of the trying economic circumstances in which it evolved. Now, participation in these schemes, while assisting the country out of colonialism, increases the alienation of the élite from the masses on both economic and cultural grounds. The inner characteristics of the local society - particularly those deriving from its ever present counter-plantation system - had to be set aside in order to facilitate progress towards self-rule and eventually independence and to facilitate the development of the Caribbean Community.

Dominica shared with her Caribbean sister countries a general pattern of fragmentation which needs to be specified. Colonialism brought about three sets of cleavages which framed intercourse in the country. In the first place, the dislocation of the geographical environment since neighbouring islands belonged to different empires; secondly the disarticulation of economic activities which was more severe than that obtaining in classical plantation societies; and thirdly, the significant distance between prevailing indigenous economic institutions and the world of politics and policy formulation.

Peasant economy was, so to speak, cordoned off and in large measure isolated from the developments experienced in the plantations systems, even within the British Caribbean. Daily activities of the labouring population retained some efficacy only in ordering and transforming their immediate environment; and the differentiation of the regional space in terms of economic, political and cultural activities, evolved with no impact on the concrete experiences controlled or generated by the population.

Besides, in the plantation islands, colonial policy was geared towards developing existing plantation systems. In Dominica actual policy formulation only applied to a plantation economy-to-be. The prevailing peasant forms of producing goods and services were ignored. The political network within which the élite was evolving - and particularly the regional élite - bore no relationship to the distinct indigenous social fabric. The changes experienced after the Second World War took place against this background.

Before considering the last thirty years of Dominica's history, there is need to describe the aspect of the society, where social consensus emerged in spite of the referred cleavages. One often wonders how such fragmented societies

as those in the Caribbean did not fall apart. In the case of Dominica, the question can be answered if the areas of strength of the British Empire are considered in a single process of reflexion with their built-in powerlessness. Since colonial economic policies were not an exercise in transforming actual economic institutions, the organizational structure of the local community, though not acknowledged by the prospective plantation sector, remained relatively untouched.

In other words, even though the power over the community (colonialism) aimed at destroying the power of the community, it missed its objective. It wasted all its energy on a destructive endeavour, which it perceived as an effort towards development. The actual legacy bequeathed to independent Dominica is proof enough that the colonial government could not deliver any cumulative and constructive process of betterment adapted to the country. The question of deliberately fostering the organization of social life on the basis of existing resources, could not even be raised by the colonial administration.

For the population of Dominica to be ignored by the colonial administration was not a novelty, nonetheless it managed to live and reproduce itself even though at a low level of well-being. The point is that this is also true for the élite of the country. It must be understood that while negotiations were being carried out from the times of Falconer - mid-nineteenth century - to those of C.E.A. Rawle in the 1930s, the aristocracy of Dominica - when not indulging in day-dreaming - had to organize its living using the resources at hand. Therefore its failure to achieve a style of economic development consistent with its class interests and with the nineteenth century colonial world, is an indication of its adoption and participation in such local institutions responsible for the daily life of the population. Had the Dominican aristocracy insisted in living according to the colonial plantation culture, it would have had to leave the country as the white merchants and planters had done.

Current historical and sociological literature has emphasised ad nauseum the importance of the process of creolization, seen as the adaptation i.e. the seasoning of the Caribbean people to the imposed rules of the plantation system. In Dominica at least it is rather clear that the élite, which incidentally was not white, had to participate with the dominated classes in managing the local

resources according to principles elaborated locally and alien to the core values of colonial plantations. One must therefore postulate the existence of a national consensus emerging gradually, and encompassing the landed aristocracy of Dominica. This proposition would explain why a workable arrangement between estate and peasant agriculture was possible.

There is need to clarify that the cleavage between peasant and plantation society was not an element of the physical space. The aristocracy of Dominica was also the vehicle of this cleavage. Its distinctive characteristic, when compared to other landed aristocracies in the Caribbean, is its dual frame of reference. The Mulatto Ascendancy was in fact a set of well-to-do peasants - (always in want of money like any peasantry) whose specific class interests as an aristocracy was kept alive by prospects of better days built into the colonial connection. These interests were, however, grounded in their aspirations rather than in actual material infra-structures.

The same can be said of the small-scale farmers whose economic activities included the possibility of remunerative employment on local plantations-to-be or on plantations of neighbouring islands. Regular gang labour, though seasonal, on the estates was a welcome opportunity which unfortunately did not occur often enough.

Therefore beneath the outbursts of enthusiasm provoked by the disconnected succession of main export-oriented activities, the everyday life of the community evolved, organized around owner-cultivated farms and other own-account activities, pursuing acknowledgedly economically unsound undertakings in spite of all contrary odds and for want of better alternatives. Hence internal conflicts created by each sudden, ephemeral spurt of economic renewal remained unsolved and became gradually submerged in the public awareness. Conversely the potentially conflictive relationships which accompanied plantation development continued to operate as parameters of social behaviour, even though their existence was not necessarily openly recognized.

In Dominica, quite obviously the tribal cleavages and the disaggregation of the population into quasi-national groups, prevalent during the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth appear to be forgotten. In 1930 however there was need for a Commission to report on the disturbances in the Carib reserves (Chapter I). One cannot find any written principles regulating the relations among or between Caribs, Blacks, Mulattoes, French

or British. But the person who was born a Carib or a Mulattoe had very specific life expectations and aspirations.

The continuing presence of apparently remote conflicts and the ability to deal with them as intervening variables in most contemporary issues, point to the substantive themes of social consensus in the country. It is this actuality of a specific past, in spite of its withdrawal from current public awareness, which constitutes the main parameters of the island's social fabric beyond class conflicts and actual fragmentation.

For instance, the demarcation line between the urban élite assembled around the newspaper The Dominican and the planters and merchants gathered around The Colonist may have gradually moved with the passage of time, but it did not change substantially. This would explain therefore the continued opposition of this elite to being lumped and eventually swallowed up in a federal structure well into the twentieth century.

So even though the inescapable reality of imperial rule created a space where communality of interests with other members of the British Caribbean emerged, the "frontier" of the original negotiations with the United Kingdom and other dominant groups in the English-speaking islands did not vanish.

Federation came alongside the struggle for internal self-government and, subsequently the integration process was pursued under the CARICOM movement compatible with full political independence. Potentially or in actual fact, however, the underlying specificities of Dominica were present in the positions carried to the different negotiating tables.

During the decolonization process, a modified political directorate emerged in close relationship with its counterparts in the former British Caribbean. The peculiar requirements of the Dominican context, forcefully put forward during the 1970 disturbances, called the attention of this directorate to the primacy of internal parameters for achieving political status into a decolonized setting (Chapter XII).

It is therefore possible to describe the frame of social relations in the twentieth century as two interlocking systems. The first one evolved from an own-account venture to a village community, from this limited community to an island-wide one, thereafter to the neighbouring islands

and then to other external contexts. It is a dimension which filled the void produced from the blocking of Dominica's self-propelled activities and its isolation from its natural neighbours. This frame is best illustrated by the itinerary of the local artists, originating in their village, going to Roseau, then to Paris, via Point-a-Pitre. The second system evolved from within the British colonial Empire, from which it departed when the Dominican political directorate joined forces with the Caribbean élite antagonistic to external rule, and created the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The evolution of the social structures during the last 30 years of Dominican history is framed by these two aspects of its nation-building process. The constitutional history of the country, particularly as it relates to its regional connections and their impact on the society, is not considered in the monograph. Attention has been paid to the re-arrangement of the local institutions provoked by the entry of the country into the international market, i.e. by the introduction of bananas on an extensive scale.

The relaxation of colonial rule which began with universal suffrage and internal self-government, occurred within an unchanged frame of economic organization. The validity of the indigenous and self-reliant institutions which had ensured the daily life of the Dominicans therefore expanded and the potential for self-expression by the island community acquired a renewed relevance and instrumentality. The growth of the banana industry and the social conflicts of the 1970s occurred under such circumstances.

There were two main impediments to the economic growth of the past decades producing multiplying effects in the country. The seminal economic enterprise being an own-account family venture, possibilities for increased differentiation and for more complex division of labour were by definition meagre. Such enterprises can multiply or reproduce themselves ad infinitum. The three-century-old patterns of settlement, reinforced by state monopoly on the cultivable portion of the so-called Crown land was broken to ease the multiplication of owner-managed farms, and landlords made large proportion of their estates available to tenants. Agricultural family ventures cannot, however by themselves up-grade their internal structure to explore new productive areas.

Owner-operated farms evolving within the global cultural framework of the counter-plantation system were not equipped to control the circulation of their output on the international market, nor were they assisted in negotiating with

the buying firms. This activity was carried out before the banana boom by the merchants belonging to the traditional Roseau-based ruling class. They were subsequently joined by Portsmouth-based growers, who were sufficiently influential to participate in the main political institution of the country, the Parliament.

As the production of banana developed, the small-scale farmer lost the possibility of choosing between different alternatives of production, the possibility of negotiating the price of the inputs he absorbs in the productive process (i.e. of interfering in the cost of production), as well as the possibility of negotiating the price of his output on the market. His self-reliance was destroyed and not recuperated in the collective management of the Dominica Banana Growers Association (DBGS).

Efforts made to restructure the DBGA did not meet with much success. The Association has not so far achieved an effective integration of the small-scale farmers through the creation of a sufficiently large number of self-managed Branches and Boxing Plants, as proposed in two important occasions.

Thus the alienation of the Dominican producers from their own produce accompanied their entry into the world economy; and the possibility of their controlling the returns expected from their work decreased. It must be remembered that at the same time the distance between the elite and the masses was also increasing on political and cultural grounds, in view of the turn of events linked with the progress towards decolonization. The country was moving towards independence with an exacerbated set of class conflicts which were not expressed openly at the beginning but were evidenced by both the prevalent levels of unemployment and the rates of out-migration (Chapter XI).

It would appear on the one hand that the social groups linked with the service sector, particularly with the trade sub-sector, developed considerably in the last 30 years, but they failed to give the necessary impetus to the rest of the society. On the other hand, the counter-plantation system of Dominica seemed to have lost the economic battle and to be destined to disappear sooner or later. However the events which took place in Roseau in the 1970s (Chapter XII) do not presage the end of the counter-plantation system.

The 1970 disturbances in particular the social revolution initiated by the "Dreads" are of the utmost importance to an understanding of the complexity of the country and to assess the conditions in which the ungoverned dimension of a Caribbean society surfaced. An essay of interpretation is offered in the following lines.

The crisis of the 1970s is firstly a nation-building crisis and secondly a crisis of management of the society. The second half of the decade witnessed an escalation in the protests spearheaded by the trade-unions and most particularly by the Civil Service Association. These pressure groups dealt with the issue of social management. The national question is addressed to the basis of social cohesion in the countries of the Caribbean which is an underlying issue of the decolonization process still open to discussion. Moreover it indicates that the issues of management of natural and human resources cannot be separated from the problems of cultural identity.

Taking into account the changes in the economic structure initiated in 1950 together with the transformation of the political order, those who were coming to adult life in 1970 found most posts already encumbered by their elders. Irrespective of their position in the social ladder, no avenue for achievement and self-fulfilment was open to them. Lacking any participation in concrete economic and political institutions and in the daily negotiations aimed at improving their well-being and unaware of any prospect of the sort, they became the outward expression of the general malaise of the society.

Detached from the current class struggle, the youth reacted as the point of convergence of the national conflicts. They brought to the surface their hopelessness and later their helplessness. From 1976 onwards their statement lost its radicalism thanks to the adults' agitation, which achieved the feat of transforming a revolutionary question into a matter of opposition to a concrete political regime.

In 1970, one observed in Dominica a generation expressing deep-seated social conflicts in which they were not direct actors and which had not surfaced in the public awareness for open discussion. There could have been no confrontation between the bulk of "potentially proletarianized" youth,- actually unarticulated, unattached, inexperienced in economic endeavours, newcomers to the labour force,- and employers, precisely because they were unemployed or about to look for their first job. Sons and daughters of relatively rich families, enjoying the best educational

facilities at home and abroad, together with the descendants of the rural-based, presumably peasant families, found themselves virtually "unemployable".

Such "unemployable" youths could not possibly raise any issues affecting them within the accepted norms regulating the various social conflicts. The process through which they increased the visibility of the "ungoverned" (counter-plantation) side of the society can be presented in the following manner.

Unemployment and "unemployability" appear for the persons concerned as a total availability of rather well-endowed human resources, facing an absolute void of opportunities. No specific social class, dominant, dependent or otherwise, could be blamed for a situation created by "the system". So the youths scolded the system as such - Babylon-, by appealing to the very basis of Dominican nationhood.

It is difficult, however, to understand how the "never-employed" youth started to make significant impacts on the interplay of social forces; how they opposed the older generations, - which did not constitute a social class -, while sharing with them a wide range of commonalities originated in this officially ungoverned side of the national circumstances.

It has been seen how the self-reliant activities of Dominica were contained within a regional frame designed under colonialism. The youths of Dominica raised the issues affecting them within the context of a nation-building process, where they shared common interests with the local establishment and its counterparts in the Caribbean. But their position departed from the official one on two accounts. Firstly, they questioned, through the Black Power platform, the cultural and ideological basis of colonial institutionality. This issue was not being debated by the Caribbean political directorate. Secondly, they challenged the insertion of owner-operated economic ventures into the market economy, by organizing self-contained communities, quite similar to the model in operation before 1763.

Their uncompromising search for the original principles of social cohesion and nation-building provoked the equivalent of a cataclysm which challenged the mental images of the ruling cadres. No dialogue seemed possible, since the older and younger generations were using different postulates for their demands and counter-proposals. The ensuing irritation was expressed in the appellation "Dreads" given to the most vocal spokesmen

of the youth.

The British style of education was the first bastion to be assaulted in 1970. Then the "Dreads" deepened their position and started to undermine the accepted principles of socialization, particularly with respect to private property. The "Dread Act" clearly acknowledged the impact of such behaviour on public order. It was not possible to oppose what was called "dreadism", without addressing the very concrete difficulties experienced in the whole economy especially in the rural sector in the 1960s and 1970s.

The economic impasse reached by the society failing to distribute the banana bonanza more equitably is the outcome of the traditional neglect of the counter-plantation system by the various spheres of institutionalized political initiatives. From the attainment of universal suffrage and self-rule, the pre-requisite to eliminate the inherited colonial cleavage between the day-to-day living of the population and the world of policy formulation was laid down. The process of reformulation of Dominica's polity, i.e. the search for a bridge between private and public forms of living, was initiated by the youth during the first part of the 1970s.

A careful reading of the "Dread Act" will show that the document in fact set two basic institutions in opposition namely the state and the family. The former, for the sake of the common good - as perceived by the elite in the 1970s - undertook to implement draconian measures to safeguard the traditional colonial pattern of public life and to curb the specific type of Dominican family and its built-in pattern of private life into the Western mould as propounded by the educational and other official institutions.

"Dreads" could not be seen in any place but at their parents' home. They could not therefore have a home of their own. They could not participate in the multiplication of independent owner-operated agricultural ventures. So "in accordance with the Dread Act", the superposition of private life and own-account economic enterprises characteristic of traditional Dominica could no longer operate.

The articulate sector of the youth, which represented 50 percent or more of the population, was made outcast. A general malaise spread through the whole society. The Draconian measures of the "Dread Act" found no accommodation in the framework for the rights of the individual as obtained in the inherited legal system; this created much embarrassment in the regional political milieu.

The explosiveness of the situation arose out of the conflict between the statement of the youth and the authoritarian principles of the colonial administration. The youth were unable to discriminate between eventual poles of class antagonisms. They were, addressing the global arrangement of the society and the vicious circle created by this peculiar arrangement, resulting in constant labour surpluses which the country had no prospect of absorbing in an expanded export-oriented sector or in domestic ventures. There existed no set of common concepts and norms for dialogue, discussion or quarrel over such an issue. The local establishment and the youths resorted to the use of brute force.

This study has shown the existence of an inherent underlying hiatus in the society. Phenomena and structure relating to the self-reliant expression of the people evolved side-by-side, and more often than not, imprisoned by structures and phenomena superimposed by colonialization. It is interesting to note that social actions resulting from this type of hiatus had occurred in Dominica and in the Caribbean on previous occasions and had produced rather similar consequences.

While the urban middle class of Dominica and the political authorities during the 1970s viewed all protesting youth as "Dreads", the persons involved in the protest movement established a distinction between the "Dreads" and the Rastafari. This distinction suggests a comparison between the "Dreads" and the maroons.

In the case of the Maroons, their opposition to enslavement resulted firstly in groups of Blacks, male and female, establishing themselves in separate communities with forms of social organization parallel to the global society. Like the Rastafari, these maroons could have, - in their opinion - coexisted peacefully with the plantation society. But their very existence, as an alternative of social life, was considered subversive.

Secondly and together with this form of structured withdrawal, there were also groups of maroons composed mainly of adult males, who wandered in the woods and around the plantations and appeared to the existing establishment as bandits and were treated as such. The pattern of behaviour of the "Dreads" sensu stricto does not seem very different.

In comparing the maroon and Rastafari communities, one observes a return to nature, to own-account economic ventures, to local or indigenous

languages, habits and institutions, as well as a suppression of the profit motive. In both cases, when relations with the global society worsened, the community generated a sector of "guerillas", which approximated (fringe element of) the "Dreads" or "bandits" and facilitated their fusion with the actual community. Even the specific characteristic of the Dominican maroons, entertaining some loose contacts with their counterparts in neighbouring islands was also present in the recent disturbances, with the novelty though that the Jamaican Rastafari speech was used as a king of lingua franca between these groups, alongside with the local Kreol.

It should be recognised that the youth of 1970 Dominica was the main actor questioning the validity of the institutions carried over from its colonial past. Very gradually this questioning generation is entering the ruling sector of the society. Even though the main institutions have not greatly changed, under the surface new forms of social cohesion are being experimented with, through an enhancement of the local culture and the local language. This is even more relevant at a time when the economy of the island, for structural reasons or due to natural disasters, is facing its most serious economic crisis.

Hence, the dimension which emerged from the self-reliant initiatives of the community is being discreetly mooted as another alternative for development. New avenues for openness are being explored and could become specialized areas of public management. The total environment of the Dominican is now becoming visible to the community and one may expect the evolution of the indigenous perceptions for national development. In any event, thanks to the Dread Revolution, the stage is set for a nationwide dialogue where economic returns and sacrifices can be discussed and shared. At present compromises between private and public life can be elaborated in an effort to achieve some form of cumulative progress instead of the cyclical ups and downs resulting from the cleavages fostered by colonialism.

The questioning of the bases of nationhood had then the advantage of putting the internal class conflicts into proper perspective. While each social class will pursue its economic, political and ideological interest, a set of common denominators, referring to the norms of social intercourse within the country, will operate as a background for these class interactions. It appears that in the first instance the institutionality of the country will more and more address the inhabitants of Dominica, in the second the regional environment in which the country is located, and finally the frame for other international relations.

Bibliography

1. Armytage, F. The Free Port System in the British West Indies, Longman, Green and Company, London, 1953.
2. Atwood, T. The History of the Island of Dominica, West Indian Studies, No. 27, F. Cass, London, 1871.
3. Augier, F. R. and Gordon, S.C. Sources of West Indian History, Longman Caribbean Ltd., 1962.
4. Banks, E.P. A Carib Village in Dominica, Social and Economic Studies Vol. 5, No. 1. University of the West Indies, Mona, 1976.
5. Barlett, C.J. "A New Balance of Power: The 19th Century, in Chapters in Caribbean History 2. Goveia, E.V. and Barlett C.J., Caribbean University Press, 1973.
6. Bartel, E. National Income Statistics: Dominica 1961-1964. Statistical Series No. 3, I.S.E.R. University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, 1965.
7. Bell, Sir H. Notes on Dominica and Hints to Intending Settlers. Advocate Co. Ltd., Barbados 1919.
8. Boromé, J. George C. Falconer Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. VI, 1969.
9. Boromé, J. Spain and Dominica 1493-1647. Aspects of Dominican History, Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
10. Boromé, J. How Crown Colony Came to Dominica. Aspects of Dominican History, Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
11. Boromé, J. The French and Dominica 1699-1763. Aspects of Dominican History, Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
12. Boromé, J. Dominica During the French Occupation, 1778. Aspects of Dominican History, Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
13. Burn, W.L. Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies: Cape, London 1937.
14. Casimir, J. Aperçu Sur La Structure Economique D'Haiti. America Latina. Rio-de-Janiero, 1964.
15. Corten, A. "Haiti: Estructura Agraria y Migración de Trabajadores a los Centrales Azucareros Dominicanos", Azúcar y Política en la República Dominicana, in Acosta, M. et. al. Santo Domingo, Ediciones de Taller, 1976.

16. Cracknell, B.E. Caribbean Island with a Problem. Geographic Magazine Nos. 6 + 7, 1971.
17. Dominica: Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Conduct of the Operations of the Board of Management of the Dominica Banana Association. Government of Dominica, Roseau, 1958.
18. Dominica: Annual Report - Education Division. Government of Dominica, 1968.
19. Dominica: Annual Reports on the Dominican Police Force. Government of Dominica.
20. Dominica: Dominica Annual Reports and Accounts, 1959-1978, Government of Dominica.
21. Dominica: Report on the Committee of Inquiry into the Disturbances at the St. Mary's Academy. Government of Dominica, June 1972.
22. Dominica: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances at the Supreme Court Building and Its Environs in Roseau. Government of Dominica, 1972.
23. Dominica: Dies Dominica. Public Relations Division, Government of Dominica, 1972.
24. Dominica: Report on Dreadism in Dominica. Government of Dominica, 1975.
25. Dominica: Report of the Task Force on the Dominican Banana Industry. Government of Dominica, 1982.
26. Douglas, R. Chains or Change: Focus on Dominica. Dominica, 1974.
27. Evans, J. Notes on Conditions in the Windward Islands - Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent. Royal Commonwealth Society, London, 1971.
28. Fonchard, J. Les Marrons de La Liberté. L'Ecole Paris, 1972.
29. Goodridge, C. Dominica, The French Connexion. Aspects of Dominican History. Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
30. Government of the Federation of the West Indies. Dominica - Development Proposals, 1959.
31. Government of the Federation of the West Indies, Dominica - Development Programme, 1959-1964, 1959.
32. Grieve, S. Notes on the Island of Dominica. Adam and Charles Black, London, 1906.

33. Hodge, W.H. A Botanist's Dominica Diary: IN AND ABOUT ROSEAU. Scientific Monthly, Vol.58, 1944.
34. Honychurch, L. The Dominica Story. Letchworth Press Ltd., Barbados, 1975.
35. Howes, P.G. The Mountains of Dominica. Natural History. Vol. 29, No. 6, 1944.
36. Marie, J.M. Agricultural Diversification in a Small Economy: The Case for Dominica. Institute for Social and Economic Research, Cave Hill, Barbados, 1979.
37. Marshall, B. Society and Economy in the British Windward Islands, 1763-1823. University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, 1972.
38. Narendran, V. Socio-economic Survey of Dominica - Small Farms. CARDI, Dominica, 1981 (mimeo.).
39. O'Loughlin, C. A Survey of Economic Potential and Capital Needs of Leeward Islands, Windward Islands and Barbados. Department of Technical Co-operation Overseas Publication, No. 5, London. H.M. Stationery Office, 1963.
40. Owen, N. Land, Politics and Ethnicity in a Carib Indian Community. Ethnology, Vol. 14, No. 4, London, 1975.
41. Parry, J. M. and Sherlock, P. A Short History of the West Indies. Mac Millan, London, 1966.
42. Proesmans, Fr. R. CSSR. Notes on the Slaves of the French. Aspects of Dominican History. Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
43. Riviere, B. The Movement for Socialism in the Caribbean. A Case Study of Dominica. Craig, S. (ed) Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader, Craig, 1981.
44. Sewell, W.G. Ordeal of Free Labour in the British West Indies. F. Cass, London, 1968.
45. St. Cyr, E.B.A. Some Fundamentals in the Theory of Caribbean Type Economy. Department of Economics, U.W.I. St. Augustine, June 1983. (mimeo.).
46. Taylor, D. Columbus Saw Them First. Aspects of Dominican History. Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
47. Taylor, D. The Island Caribs of Dominica, B.W.I. Aspects of Dominican History. Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.

48. Taylor, D. Kinship and Social Structure in the Island Carib. Aspects of Dominican History. Government Printery, Roseau, 1972.
49. Tempany, M.A.H. Agricultural Labour in the Leeward Islands, Bureau de L'Association Scientifique Internationale d'Agronomie Coloniale, Paris.
50. United Kingdom. Report of a Commission on the Conditions in the Carib Reserve and the Disturbances of 19th September, 1930. H.M. Stationery Office, 1932.
51. United Kingdom, Colonial Reports, Dominica 1951-1952. H.M. Stationery Office, London, 1954.
52. United Kingdom, Report From the Select Committee on the Commercial State of the West Indian Colonies. London House of Commons, 1832. Shannon Irish University Press, 1971.
53. United Kingdom, Report of West India Royal Commission on Public Revenues Expenditures, Debts and Liabilities of the Islands of Jamaica, Grenada, Saint Vincent, Tobago, Saint Lucia and Leeward Islands. Shannon Irish University Press, 1971.
54. United Kingdom, Report from the Select Committee on the State of the West India Colonies, 1806-49, in British Parliament Papers; Select Committee Reports and Correspondence on the Trade and Commerce of the West Indies, 1806-1849. Shannon University Press, 1971.
55. United Nations, ECLA. Economic Activity in Caribbean Countries, 1972-1978 (ECLA).
56. United Nations, Production of Food for Consumption and Export. The Need to Achieve Optimal Balance. October 1983. (CDCC/PWG/A/83/1).
57. United States AID. Agricultural Development in the Eastern Caribbean. 1977.
58. Weirs, C. Small Farming Study in the Lesser Developed Member Territories of the Caribbean. Vol. 1(a) Country Reports. Weirs Consulting Services Ltd., 1976.
59. West India Royal Commission Report. London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1884.
60. West India Royal Commission Report. London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1897.
61. West India Royal Commission Report. London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1930.

62. West India Royal Commission Report on Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Veterinary Matters. London, H.M. Stationery, 1945.
63. White, M. The Dominican Banana Industry: An Economic Hazard. Proceedings of the Second Agricultural Economic Conference. University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, 1967.
64. White, M. Gomes, P. et.al. Rural Sector Case Study Report, Proposals for the Development of the Geneva Estate. Grandsay, Dominica Caribbean Agro-Economic Society, Roseau, 1976.
65. Williams, E. From Columbus to Castro - The History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969. Andre Deutsch, London, 1970.
66. Williams, R.L. Industrial Development of Dominica. Institute of Social and Economic Research, Mona, Jamaica, 1971.
67. Wood, H., Hon. E.F.L, West Indies Report, London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1922.
68. Wood, D. The Manpower Situation in Dominica, 1946-1976. National Planning Organization, Roseau, August 1978.
69. World Bank. Economic Memorandum on Dominica. May, 1981.
70. Yankey, B.J. An Efficient Approach to the Process of Agricultural Development in the West Indies with Particular Reference to Dominica. Proceedings of the First Agricultural Economic Conference. U.W.I. St. Augustine, 1966.
71. Yankey, B.J. A Study of the Situation in Agriculture and the Problems of Small Scale Farming in Dominica. Phd. Thesis, University of Wisconsin.

